



Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Cabinet

17 July 2025

Becoming a Child Friendly Borough

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Shirley Reynolds, Cabinet Member for Early Years, Children, Young People, Education, Employment & Skills.	
Lead Director:	Helen Onions, Director of Public Health	
Service Area:	Children's Safeguarding and Family Support	
Report Author:	Laura Moore, Service Delivery Manager, Service Improvement and Efficiency	
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Wards Affected:	All Wards	
Key Decision:	Key Decision	
Report considered by:	SMT - 17 June 2025 Business Brief – 26 June 2025	

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1.1 Approves Telford and Wrekin Council working towards becoming a Child Friendly borough, with SMT operating as the reporting Board for agreeing Child Friendly standards, implementation and impact monitoring.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 This report outlines the “Child Friendly” programme and requests approval to advance the adoption of our vision for this as part of the wider Telford and Wrekin Children and Young People’s Strategy.

3.0 Background

- 3.1 Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin part of our new Children and Young People’s Strategy. It is a whole Council endeavour that will also include a partnership

approach, between the Council, partners and local businesses, to make Telford and Wrekin the best place in the UK for children and young people to live and grow-up in.

- 3.2 The vision for 'Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin' has co-production at its heart, with children and young people across the borough key to driving this forward, and co-ordinating stakeholder involvement.
- 3.3 Current context:
- a) Telford and Wrekin Council already has been graded Outstanding for Children's Services in two consecutive OFSTED ILACS Inspections.
 - b) The local area partnership's has also been Inspected under the Ofsted and CQC SEND Inspection, which recognised that our 'arrangements typically lead to positive experiences and outcomes for children and young people with special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND).'
- 3.4 In Telford, the vision is that "every child, young person and adult lives well in their community". This vision is supported by various initiatives focused on children's services, family support, and community well-being. Telford and Wrekin Council is committed to providing support to families and ensuring children have the best possible start in life.
- 3.5 To deliver on this vision, a significant programme of work is already taking place with children and young people front and centre. It is proposed that 'Child Friendly' becomes the overarching umbrella to achieving our local ambition, with existing and new initiatives all feeding in, to ensure that Telford and Wrekin is and continues to be the best place for children and young people to live and grow up.
- 3.6 Some of the examples of our current activities, across multiple service areas demonstrating meaningful coproduction with children and young people include:
- The implementation of Family Hubs, which offer a range of services and support to families, including early help, family support, and help with childcare.
 - 5 by 5 Initiative: This initiative focuses on supporting children's readiness for school by encouraging activities that promote well-being and healthy development.
 - '10 by 10' Programme: This earlier initiative encourages children to complete 10 life-enhancing experiences by age 10, such as visiting a museum; learning to swim; taking part in a performance. It's designed to broaden horizons and build confidence. This includes free swimming lessons.

- Free swimming for children and young people borough-wide.
- Ring-fenced apprenticeship team for young people with lived experience.
- The annual Leader and Cabinet Member Young Person's grant scheme where young people can apply for up to £500 to support with employment, education or training needs.
- The Young People's Forum (YPF) is a consultation action group for 11 - 18 year olds from across the borough.
- The increasingly popular Urban Games initiative, where those aged 8-16 have the ability to participate in a range of sports and physical activity at no cost. During the 2024 summer holidays over 3,000 children and young people attended the free sessions and since launch in 2022 approximately 9,000 children and young people have attended to date.
- Urban Games has been complimented by Telford Kicks which is a Friday night free football offer across the borough that regularly has over 130 children and young people attend each week.
- Working with partnering Town and Parish Councils, investment has supported the development of youth clubs at Park Lane Centre, Woodside, Arleston Community Centre, Wellington, Great Dawley Town Hall, Dawley, with two more opening in Ketley Bank and Wrockwardine Wood. These youth clubs are well attended with 30 children and young people attending weekly.
- Youth Clubs are supported by engagement with education settings to complete safety surveys with pupils to understand safety concerns on the journey to school and any gaps in provision. This invaluable feedback has supported the implementation of additional street lighting and/or removal of vegetation as well as the development of the 'Making A Change' competition where children and young people have the opportunity to bid for funding to implement their ideas. This competition has developed 'art and dance' classes providing children and young people the opportunity to engage with the elderly as well as wellbeing initiatives to take a 'break' from social media. This competition is now in its third year.
- Further specialist youth provision has been commissioned to support children and young people with specific vulnerabilities; this comprised external support through St Giles Trust who provided lived experience mentors to complement the existing offer for young people at risk of criminal exploitation.
- Crucial Crew, which is a training programme designed to teach year 6's essential life skills is in it's 30th year, with approx 2,700 pupils taking part this year with a focus on:
 - Road Safety, Water Safety, Electrical Safety, Fire Safety

- Vaping, Alcohol Awareness and Mental Health and Wellbeing
 - Criminal Exploitation and Knife Crime
 - Online Safety and Stranger Danger
 - The Young Person's Year of wellbeing campaign was initially launched by the YPF at their mental health summit in October 2023. This 12 week email campaign encourages young people to take steps to improve their wellbeing, and to date has in excess of 1,000 subscribers. The new web platform SUPER has resulted from this and will be launched in Summer 2025, to evolve the YYoW campaign into an emotional health and wellbeing support toolkit.
 - The Belonging Strategy, provides a framework for partnership working across services and schools to ensure that support is available to develop the sense of belonging for young people in schools. The permeates all practice across education, for example, the Fair Access Panels ensure places are available for young people in schools as quickly as possible and support from the Behaviour Support Advisory Team, where appropriate, to help the integration into school. There is a drive to implement 'Relational Practice' in mainstream schools to ensure that relationships within all schools are positive and respectful and that Behaviour Policies recognise the needs of young people. The multitude of approaches under the umbrella of the Belonging Strategy have ensure that Telford and Wrekin are now has the lowest rate of Permanent Exclusion in the West Midlands.
 - The SEND and Alternative Provision Strategy and approaches described within this supports young people to be successful in a school within their community, where appropriate. This is supported by, for example, the Inclusive Schools Forum which ensures that help and resources are allocated as early as possible. There has also been the development of 'SEND Hubs' and 'Resourced Provisions' in mainstream schools. Both of these initiatives enable young people to thrive and succeed within their local mainstream environment.
 - The Virtual School works closely with services from across the council and with partners in school to ensure the best possible outcomes for Children in Care and Children with a Social Worker. All schools in the borough are members of the 'Attachment Research Community' with the vast majority being recognised with awards for their Attachment and Trauma Informed approaches.
- 3.7 Across Telford and Wrekin, we want everyone to think about 'what is it like to be a child growing up in Telford and Wrekin and how can we make it better'. The Child Friendly initiative is about being proud of our children and young people and including them in everything we do, so that they are valued and engaged, grow into confident adults, stay with us (in borough) and contribute to our economy and help us grow our communities.

3.8 Also, key to Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin is the partnership approach across the borough. While Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin will be largely driven by the Council, there are aspirations for Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin to be viewed not only as a Telford and Wrekin Council initiative but an opportunity for the whole borough to come together for Telford and Wrekin's children and young people.

3.9 Our Child Friendly borough will aim to ensure all children are able to have a meaningful say in, and truly benefit from, the local decisions, services and spaces that shape their lives.

3.10 Child Friendly means that the voices, needs, priorities and rights of children are an integral part of policies, programmes and decisions in Telford and Wrekin. At the heart of this is our ensuring that 7 identified wishes are delivered upon:

- I am healthy.
- I am heard.
- I am safe.
- I am achieving.
- I am independent.
- I have friends and people that I trust.
- I am happy.

3.11 The 7 wishes have been informed by the voice of children and young people in Telford and Wrekin by analysing data and feedback from:

- The UK Youth Parliament's 'Make Your Mark' ballot included votes from 4,855 children and young people aged 11-18 from nine secondary schools and three youth groups in Telford and Wrekin. The top issue concerning young people was identified as health and wellbeing. Following this local focus groups, carried out by members of the Telford & Wrekin Youth Parliament Forum identified mental health as the main issue raised by young people. This also resulted in the Year of Wellbeing campaign for Young People.
- CYP mental health - extensive engagement was undertaken from Jan - March 2025 seeking views of CYP, families, carers and professionals on CYP to inform the recommissioning of the new service.
- Our Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Engagement told us that:
 - Parents of babies and young children want to hear about the support of offer to them, especially the free activities.
 - Parents feel youth activities and clubs are a priority and these should be affordable and in a safe environment.
 - Young people say that exercising and eating well makes them feel healthy.

- Coproduction within the Children's Services:
 - Dandelion's Parents Group who have been supported to become expert parent advisors for the Family Hubs Programme, which has now expanded across broader children's services.
 - The recruitment of a Voice of the Child lived experience apprentice team within children's services.
 - PODS parent carer forum annual survey.
 - Bright Spots surveys through Coram Voice.
 - Young Carers Consultation.
 - Family Hubs engagement.
- Participation events and activities across all services in Children's Safeguarding and Family Support.
- The Children and Young People's Panel, run jointly by colleagues in Education and Social Care, captures the voice of Children in Care against the outcomes of the Corporate Parenting Strategy which has fed into these wishes.
- Make Your Mark Youth Parliament ballot and focus groups.
- [UK Youth Parliament manifestos](#).
- Our local Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.
- Our Youth Officer has been engaging with YP in the community to ascertain their aspirations for further developing our youth offer.
- Our SEND and Alternative Provision Framework is focused on these wishes.
- The borough's mayor, Councillor Eileen Callear, is focusing her mayoral charity work on a charity that helps parents of children with disabilities, Parents Opening Doors (PODS).

3.12 Adopting Child Friendly status will require a robust implementation plan, including the following elements:

- introduce the Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin descriptor within the council;
- identify existing Child Friendly initiatives or ideas across the council;
- align initiatives to our 7 Child Friendly wishes and identify gaps;
- strengthen the voice of children and young people in all areas of local decision making;
- identify levels of need across the borough to target initiatives and activities effectively;
- promote Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin with partners; and
- identify how partners, community and voluntary sector organisations, businesses and communities can get involved,
- appointing 'at least' one Council colleague as wish 'lead' for each wish and asking them to write short-term and long-term goals.
- working with the new Voice of the Child Apprentice Team, School Councils, Young Person's Voice, Youth Forum, and other forums to make sure children and young people are always involved in discussions and decision making.

- developing a blog site and social media channels to keep children and families in the loop.
- raising awareness of each wish through CF social media channels.
- asking new CF ambassadors to select the wishes they are interested in partnering on, when they complete our sign-up form.

3.13 Recognising the importance of branding, communications and design for Child Friendly Status to be adopted, the design has been aligned with existing branding for initiatives such as the Leader and Cabinet Member Young Person's Grant Scheme, the 5 by 5 and 10 by 10 initiatives and our Youth Offer web pages.

Mono version



Colour version



White version





4 Summary of main proposals

- 4.1 The initial phase of work will be to identify the standards that we are seeking to achieve in phase one of our vision for Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin.
- 4.2 Engaging with children and young people is fundamental in establishing Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin. They will help to identify their key priorities and help us understand how Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin should look and feel.

- 4.3 Local networks for example Locality Early Action Partnerships and intelligence will also be used to identify priorities and target promotion and activity.
- 4.4 Across Telford and Wrekin, we want everyone to think about 'what is it like to be a child growing up in Telford and Wrekin and how can we make it better'. The initiative is about being proud of our children and young people and including them in everything we do so that they are valued and engaged, grow into confident adults, stay with us and contribute to our economy and help us grow our communities.
- 4.5 Key to Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin is the partnership approach across the borough as a whole. While Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin will be largely driven by the Council, there are aspirations for Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin to be viewed not only as a Telford and Wrekin Council initiative but an opportunity for the whole borough to come together for Telford and Wrekin's children and young people.

5 Alternative Options

- 5.1 Adopting Child Friendly Status is not a requirement, and the Council can choose not to seek this recognition.

6 Key Risks

- 6.1.1 A full risk assessment will be undertaken as part of the application phase of the activity and be monitored by Service Improvement and Efficiency and reviewed regularly through SMT.

7.0 Council Priorities

- 7.1 This entire approach sits comfortably within the council's "vision" as it relates to the strapline most associated by many staff and public to the Council 'Protect, Care and Invest to create a better borough.'

8.0 Financial Implications

- 8.1 The proposals outlined in this report will be funded from existing base budgets, supplemented by grant and reserve funding where appropriate.
- 8.2 Support will be provided by the Finance team to fully cost future proposals, as and when they arise.

9.0 Legal and HR Implications

- 9.1 Many of the workstreams contained within this report are underpinned by legislative requirements placed upon the Council. Where activities or actions are not as a result of such legislative requirements, the Council has the power to undertake those actions as a way of ensuring that it is meeting its statutory obligations towards children within the Borough. Furthermore, seeking to obtain child friendly status is a way in which the Council can demonstrate it is taking proactive action to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty.
- 9.2 The report recognised the need for clear, robust and transparent oversight as the project develops. As individual proposals emerge, legal advice will be sought on a case by case basis to ensure that the Council acts lawfully.

10.0 Ward Implications

- 10.1 This work would be led by the CYP Directorate but would involve the Council as a whole as well as the majority of public sector partners. It is therefore a key decision as it would affect all wards, Elected Members and all Directorates across the Local Authority.

11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

- 11.1 Placing children and young people at the heart of the shared public realm is a moral, economic and public health imperative. Only by engaging consistently with children and young people, considering the evidence and highlighting what works, can we begin to influence policy to give these issues the priority they deserve. By doing this we can then take the steps necessary to create genuinely child friendly communities, towns and neighbourhoods, which will deliver benefits felt by the community as a whole.

12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 12.1 Progressing towards child friendly status would have a positive impact on equality across the borough. As part of the expression of interest phase of activity a full Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken to ensure that the process maximises opportunity to address inequality across the borough.

Children's capability to generate well-being is shaped through relationships they have with other people and the spatial conditions of their everyday life adopting a child friendly way of working can improve health and wellbeing not only for our younger population but also wider communities and residents.

13.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

- 13.1 Adopting a child friendly approach requires the council to analyse the impact decisions have on the lived experiences of children and young people in Telford and Wrekin which includes the commitment to our climate change targets.

14.0 Background Papers

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| 1 | Telford & Wrekin Children & Young People's Strategy – Cabinet Feb 2025 |
| 2 | N/A |
| 3 | N/A |

15.0 Appendices

- | | |
|---|-----|
| A | N/A |
| B | N/A |
| C | N/A |

16.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Director	20/06/2025	21/06/2025	HO
Legal	23/06/2025	23/06/2025	RP
Finance	23/06/2025	23/06/2025	TD