

# Public Document Pack

## CABINET

**Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Tuesday 6 January 2026 at 5.00 pm in the Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One, Telford, TF3 4JG**

**PUBLISHED ON MONDAY 12 JANUARY 2026**

**(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: THURSDAY 15 JANUARY 2026)**

**Present:** Councillors R A Overton (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Highways, Housing & Enforcement) (Vice-Chair), P Davis (Cabinet Member for Communities & Civic Pride), Z Hannington (Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance & Customer Services), C Healy (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning & Sustainability), A D McClements (Cabinet Member for Leisure, Tourism, Culture & The Arts), S A W Reynolds (Cabinet Member for Children & Young People, Learning, Employment & Skills) and O Vickers (Cabinet Member for The Economy & Transport).

**Also Present:** Cllr A J Eade (Conservative Group Leader) and Cllr W L Tomlinson (Liberal Democrats Group Leader).

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillors L D Carter and P Watling (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Health).

### **CAB-36 Declarations of Interest**

None.

### **CAB-37 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED** that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 4 December 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **CAB-38 Leader's Announcements**

The Deputy Leader (chairing the meeting) wished all present a happy new year.

The Council had received additional finance from the Government, which was welcomed in dealing with the issues ahead, especially the rising costs of adult social care.

### **CAB-39 2025/26 Financial Monitoring Report**

The Cabinet Member: Finance, Governance and Customer Services presented the report of the Director: Finance, People & IDT which provided

the latest financial monitoring position for the year relating to the revenue budget, capital programme and income collection.

Thanks to proactive financial management, the Council was projected to remain within budget at year end with a very similar position to the last round. The main pressures remained in social care and full Council was being asked to approve the changes to the Capital Programme, as detailed in Appendix C to the report.

Commenting on the report, the Leader of the Conservative Group and the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group felt that adult social care should be funded centrally by Government to prevent passing the continuing increasing demand being passed to local authorities. The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group reflected that Telford had been created as a new town 50 or so years ago and, therefore, it was expected that the population would grow and would become an ageing population.

Cabinet Members welcomed the report and, in response to comments, raised a number of issues, which included:

- the Government was looking at the issue of funding adult social care, which due to increased demand was a challenge for the service since it could not turn people away when the most vulnerable needed to be supported.
- the increasing adult social care demand had been a challenge for many years, including when the previous government was in power and it would have been helpful for the Conservative Group Leader to have challenged the way this was funded at that time.
- As well as Adult Social Care, SEND provision had not been properly funded for years.
- In terms of the adult social care budget, there had been an enormous amount of work undertaken by officers but given that people in the borough were living longer, it created more demand and the Council was working hard to look at how it worked and how it supported people in different ways.

**RESOLVED, that:**

- (a) The 2025/26 revenue budget position, which showed that due to the proactive in-year financial management, the Council was projecting to be within budget at year end, be noted.**
- (b) The estimated total reserves at the end of 2025/26 of £57.3m, which included the £21.7m Budget Strategy Reserve and £4.1m in General Balances, which both remained unused during 2025/26, be noted.**

**(c) The position in relation to capital spend be noted and that FULL COUNCIL be RECOMMENDED to approve the changes to the Capital programme, as detailed in Appendix C to the report, and all associated changes to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, which included Treasury and Prudential Indicators.**

**CAB-40 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026/27 to 2029/30**

The Cabinet Member: Finance, Governance and Customer Services presented the report of the Director: Finance, People & IDT, which provided an update on the medium-term financial strategy, which gave an update on the key uncertainties, financial pressures and increased demand for some services.

A consultation would take place during the period 7 January 2026 and 3 February 2026 with key stakeholders, including the voluntary and community sectors, Town and Parish Councils, businesses, and the Council's cross-party Business and Finance Scrutiny Committee, as well as through the issuing of media releases and seeking views from residents through the Council's website.

The proposals demonstrated that despite £195m in cuts to the Council by previous governments, the Administration's commitment to protect, care and invest to create a better borough had remained.

The Administration's promise to do that was always underpinned by three core principles. Firstly, the Council would maintain one of the lowest Council Taxes in the West Midlands and nationally and would ensure that any increases directly supported those most in need of the Council's services. Secondly, the Council was committed to maintaining an efficient Council, using only the necessary buildings and employing a streamlined workforce dedicated to providing the highest possible service for all of the borough's residents. Thirdly, the Council consistently sought to generate income from sources other than Council Tax and business rates and that this approach had helped the Council weather the financial cuts imposed by the Conservative government whilst also allowing the Council to protect the services that mattered the most to its residents, protecting every library and leisure centre, the ice rink and theatre, but has also allowed the Council to attract new businesses and jobs and build new homes for residents.

The Council had and would continue to put Telford and Wrekin residents first, the basic premise of which had and always would be to safeguard essential care and invest confidently in Telford and Wrekin's future.

Throughout the country, adult social care demand and costs had surged, and Telford and Wrekin was no different. Next year, around £97m would go towards adult social care, and over £52m would be dedicated to children safeguarding, which added up to almost £150m or the equivalent of 70% of

the Council's net budget, directed at supporting the borough's most vulnerable residents.

Every pound from the proposed Council Tax increase would be invested in social care services and this reflected a conscious commitment to fairness, dignity and compassion. To sustain this commitment, an average increase of £1.20 per week for a Band B home was proposed, which was made up of 72p general and 48p adult social care precept.

Despite this, Council Tax would remain the lowest in the Midlands for the services Council provided, with Band D Council Tax around 19% lower than the Midlands average and £649.21 per year less than the highest midland authority. Behind every statistic was a person, a neighbour needing home care, a family in crisis or an older person seeking support to live independently. The investments the Council made translated directly into outcomes and the investment package outlined today was the equivalent to more than 585,000 home care hours or over 60,000 two-pound bus fare rides, easing everyday pressures for residents and carers alike.

The Council's £437m Capital Programme was a practical expression of the Administration's promise to deliver safer streets, green neighbourhoods, thriving towns, and opportunities for all. For homes and regeneration, over £88m for New Place and Telford and Wrekin homes, which would deliver high quality, affordable, and specialist housing.

Councillor Hannington said that, since 2015, the Council's New Place Portfolio had regenerated 47 acres of brownfield land and generated £17.8m in income for frontline services. For jobs and growth, she said that more than £59m growth fund initiatives had been recently exemplified by the provision of 24 new industrial units and 75 jobs at Orchard Business Park at Hortonwood, which met clear gaps in the commercial market and supported local prosperity. In respect of transport and highways, she said that over £103m for highways and transport.

The Council's "Find It, Fix It" queries had contributed to a 15% reduction in potholes over the last four years and the borough's roads conditions were above the regional average, which reflected targeted investment proactive maintenance.

£41m in school expansion and education capital projects had ensured more local places and improved facilities for children and young people.

Telford and Wrekin was unique in that it had rebuilt almost its entire secondary school estate, and it had continually kept pace with the demand for school places. £16.3m was in place for leisure and cultural schemes, which included the new Captain Webb Swimming and Fitness Centre and the refurbishment of Town Park Amphitheatre. Over £56m was secured through the local regeneration fund, towns fund in Oakengates and Wellington plus levelling-up for Station Quarter in the theatre brought visible change to the borough's centres. There was community investment of over £22m in the

Pride in Place Programme with £20m secured for South Telford, and the Council was adding £10m to extend benefits across Woodside, Brookside and Sutton Hill to tackle inequalities with a decade-long, community-led approach.

The Council's track record mattered and had delivered a balanced budget for over 15 years, which had achieved £195.3m in savings, while still investing in what residents valued. The Council would save a further £19.1m from 2026. The local government settlement increased the Council's spending power by 8.8% in 2026-2027, with over £6m additional general funding and further ring fence grants for areas like homelessness and children's services.

The Cabinet Member thanked the borough's MP, Shaun Davies, and the Leader of the Council for their work to secure a fairer funding settlement from the Government with updated formulas for need, multi-year certainty and simplified grants, something the Council had long waited for.

The Council continued to manage risks prudently and its budget strategy reserve remained at £21.7m and general balances at £4.4m. Everything in this report provided opportunities for all residents to have well-delivered public services, protection of the local environment and responsible financial management, which would keep tax low in challenging years, and to protect libraries and leisure, investing in roads and schools and to fight for better local health services.

The Council had kept its promises, had made every pound count and would continue to do so. The consultation would run from 7 January to 3 February with the Council's Business and Finance Scrutiny Committee meeting three times in January.

In conclusion, the Cabinet Member said that final decisions would be taken at full Council on 26 February 2026, and asked that colleagues, partners and residents engaged to bring forward ideas that strengthened care, sharpened efficiency and widened opportunity in order that the Council could refine this budget and the future of the borough together. It protected, cared and invested in residents' future, was fair, resilient and ambitious and the Council wanted everyone in the borough to live well, feel safe and share in the benefits of growth.

**RESOLVED, that:**

- (a) The proposed revised Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), as set out in this report (and available for consultation between 7 January 2026 and 3 February 2026), which included a council tax increase for 2026/27 equivalent to £0.72 per week general council tax increase for the average (Band B) property and £0.48 per week for the Adult Social Care precept, and which would be fully invested in the provision of social care services for the most vulnerable members of the borough's community to deliver the Council's vision to protect, care and invest to create a better borough, be approved.**

**(b) The following, be noted:**

**a. The Council's priorities to deliver its vision:**

- Every child, young person and adult lived well in their community.**
- Everyone felt the benefit from a thriving economy.**
- All neighbourhoods were a great place to live.**
- The natural environment be protected, and the Council was taking a leading role in addressing the climate emergency.**
- Telford and Wrekin was a community focussed innovative Council which provided efficient, effective and quality services.**

**b. The continued strong track record of sound financial management of the Council, which included delivery of a balanced budget for over 17 years.**

**c. That 70p in every £1 the Council spent was allocated to Social Services.**

**d. The net investment of £15.8m into Adult Social Care, £2.7m into Children's Social Care and the investment into the Capital Programme, which totalled £437m over the period.**

**The cumulative net investment into Social Care Services since 2020/21 was over £67m.**

**e. That a number of the investments made in this report also generated a financial benefit, as well as fulfilling their primary purpose, which was invested in front line services.**

**This was equivalent to provision of over 585,000 home care hours or over six million £2 bus fare rides.**

**f. The savings of £195.3m delivered since 2009/10 as a result of reduced government funding from 2011, whilst the cost and demand for many Council services had been increasing and, in particular, for Adult Social Care.**

**g. The changes to the Local Government Finance Settlement, which were welcomed by the Council, with the implementation of the Fair Funding Review 2.0 for 2026/27, including a multi-year settlement and an updated formula incorporating updated data for deprivation and population, which would better reflect needs.**

**h. The changes to the Business Rates System, effective from 1st April 2026, which introduced three new multipliers as well as a reset of the system and a revaluation.**

- i. **National and international economic pressures, which had resulted in a challenging financial outlook with interest rates and inflation remaining higher than Bank of England forecasts.**

**CAB-41 Telford & Wrekin Becoming Carbon Neutral and Climate Change Adaptation - update report**

The Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning and Sustainability, presented the report of the Director: Housing, Commercial & Customer Services, which updated Cabinet on progress being made to meet the Council's target of becoming carbon neutral by 2030 and meeting the challenges of current and future impacts of a changing climate.

The Cabinet Member said that this report was the annual update on progress to Becoming Carbon Neutral by 2030 and she wanted to thank the teams across the Council since this was embedded across the organisation, which took climate change very seriously. In thanking the teams, the Cabinet Member paid particular thanks to Ian Wykes, the Council's climate change lead, for bringing everything together into this quite lengthy report. The update, which related to the 2024/25 Municipal Year, would usually be brought to Cabinet in the autumn and the Cabinet Member would look to doing so moving on.

The Council continued to be on track to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030, having reduced its carbon emissions by 63% since it declared climate emergency in 2019. There was a lot of misinformation being deliberately circulated on this subject and it was clear that some of this was now starting to affect the political consensus, which had up to now been united in the need to reduce carbon emissions in order to stop the planet getting warmer and warmer.

Carbon dioxide was a natural gas, which existed in the atmosphere and was needed as it was part of the natural carbon cycle. It was a gas that trapped some of the heat from the sun around the earth, which made the earth habitable. The cause of climate change was primarily the burning of fossil fuels, coal, oil and gas, which released carbon that was locked away deep underground. Since the start of the industrial revolution, the excess carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels in huge quantities had been building up in the atmosphere and was now approximately 50% higher than it was at pre-industrial levels. Aesthetic excess carbon dioxide was now trapping more of the sun's heat, causing global temperatures to rise and the rate of change was faster than any observed in millions of years.

The fast pace of change being seen did not allow time for species to evolve and adapt to a warmer climate, and this had huge implications for our own species. When talking about carbon neutral or net zero, this did not mean removing all carbon dioxide from the atmosphere but was about returning to that balanced carbon cycle where the amount of carbon dioxide released from people's activities into the atmosphere and through natural processes was

then matched by that, absorbed, and removed from the atmosphere. There was not a debate on this and the scientific consensus for climate change was overwhelming.

The Cabinet Member said there were those who agreed that climate change was happening, but say that the UK had done enough, and this was a problem for countries like China, but that wilfully ignored the last 300 years of developed countries like the UK burning fossil fuels and the impact that that had on today. It also ignored the fact that western countries had effectively offshored carbon emissions as a lot of the products that people bought and often then discarded were manufactured in countries like China.

The climate change being witnessed was caused by human activity, and was a global challenge, which required a global response including that of the borough. The Council would continue to play its part with action on climate change bringing many other benefits, not least reducing the actual costs of delivering the Council's services. The borough's residents also understood the importance of taking action on climate change, and both nationally and locally, surveys showed that a majority of residents remained concerned about climate change and wanted to see action taken and the Council would continue to work to improve the energy efficiency of its buildings with retrofitting renewable sources of energy where possible.

The two major projects of the year, which were the installation of air source heat pumps and thermal efficiency upgrades at Wellington Leisure Centre and Open Gates Leisure Centre, and a Newport Swimming Pool and Fitness Centre where the Council had previously installed an air source heat pump. The Council had now added a pool cover that again helped just to keep the heat in the water when the pool was not in use and that these measures had reduced carbon emissions from leisure facilities by over 230 tonnes per annum. This significantly reduced the Council's operating costs for those facilities, meaning that they were more efficient for the Council to run and keep those leisure facilities open and available for residents.

Since 2019, projects like this, along with the rolling out of LED street lighting, had reduced the Council's energy consumption by 28%, which had been a significant help at a time of globally rising energy costs. Rising energy costs, which were pegged to gas prices, did not just affect the Council, it also affected its residents and businesses too. Therefore, to help households reduce their energy bills, the Council continued to support those residents in fuel poverty through its Warm and Well Telford grant that extended the eligibility beyond the national government scheme, meaning the Council could help more people and through its Telford Energy Advice Service, which had advised over 4,000 residents at four thousand households, since its inception.

Through New Place, the Council had built 132 rental properties that were highly energy efficient with solar PV and EV charge points and made them cheaper to live in. It reduced the actual bills for the tenants in those properties and, in Donington Wood Way, the Council had 18 homes that had been built to the emerging future home standard and was monitoring how those

performed now that they were lived in, just to see what this was like before the Council began to roll out more of that.

For the borough's business tenants, the Council would continue to identify energy efficiency and renewable energy generation projects within the property investment portfolio, with solar PV fitted commercial units and more being planned. This supported those businesses and their costs and the Council continued to support the business community more broadly through the Telford Sustainability and Energy Cluster, who worked together to share best practise and identify opportunities for collaboration and who were excellent champions of taking action on climate change because they knew it made absolute economic and business sense.

On transport, another EV minibus was added to the fleet in the year covered by the report, which meant that the Council now had 15 EV vehicles across a number of Council areas. The Council was installing EV charge points in Council car parks and had secured further funding for on-street charge points, which would make it easier for more residents to switch to electric vehicles if they wanted to. The Council would continue to promote active travel with the new school journey project, with bikeability training, and further investment in the Council's cycling and walking network. These projects had much wider benefits, helping people stay healthy because they were being physically active whilst getting around, but also provided social interaction. Those children walking to school now in groups, along with their parents, were getting that social connection that they might not otherwise have. The Council's solar farm at Wheatley Sows continued to generate clean energy and bring revenue funding into the Council directly supporting frontline services and, despite some recent damage to the site, the solar farm still continued to bring income in and the Council was actively looking for another suitable site for renewable energy generation.

The report also set out the work the Council was doing to adapt to climate change that was already evident. As previously discussed, and agreed by the Environment Scrutiny Committee, the Council was taking a risk management approach to climate change adaptation to ensure that the Council could continue to provide services to its residents despite the impacts of storms, flooding etc. which were set out in the risk register appendix.

There was much more in the report and a lot of work around biodiversity enhancement had been done as well as a lot of work to protect and enhance more of its borough and green spaces.

In conclusion, the Cabinet Member said there were those who wished to challenge the political consensus and undermine action on climate change. She had been very proud that when this had been brought to full Council in 2019 that the Council did have that political consensus and a unanimous support for action on climate change and she was also proud of the way that the Council had worked with the Environment Scrutiny Committee again in a cross party way on this agenda to develop things like the adaptation plan and also to monitor progress on climate action.

**RESOLVED, that the following, be noted:**

- (a) The positive progress the Council had made in its journey to become carbon neutral by 2030 and that, by the end of March 2025, it had reduced its carbon emissions by 63% from a 2018/19 baseline.**
- (b) The importance of climate adaptation and the additional work the Council had done to develop a corporate climate change risk register, as set out in Appendix B to the report.**
- (c) This report was in relation to the Council's response to the Climate Emergency Declaration and would be referred to Full Council for information as part of the 'Matters Determined by the Cabinet' report.**

#### **CAB-42 Youth Strategy**

The Cabinet Member: Early Years, Children, Young People, Education, Employment and Skills, presented a report by the Director: Education and Skills, which set out the proposal of the Youth Strategy in Telford and Wrekin. The proposal was underpinned by the Council's statutory duty, as outlined in Section 507B of the Education Act 1996, to ensure, so far as was reasonably practicable, that sufficient educational and recreational leisure-time activities were available for young people.

The Strategy was forward thinking, inclusive and had a need led approach that truly reflected the best of this Council's work.

The thoughts of the borough's young people who had been involved in shaping the Strategy were shared with Cabinet. Young people had told the Council what mattered most and the Council had listened.

This included being safe, having things to do and having their voices heard. They said that the importance of having a child's opinion on their community was very important as the child was going to grow up in the community that residents lived in, and it was not all just based around adults but also the opinions and the sacrifices that children would like to make for their community.

The Cabinet Member thanked every young person who shared their ideas and helped develop the strategy and their voices had guided the Council every step of the way and that, as a Council it had set its ambition to be truly child-friendly and one of its key outcomes was ensuring that children and young people felt heard.

That message had come through loud and clear as a priority throughout this process and this strategy was more than words on a page, it was a commitment shaped by the voices of those who mattered most and together

everyone could make the borough a better place where every young person felt valued, supported and empowered to thrive.

The strategy was not just a statutory requirement under Section 507b of the Education Act 1996 but went far beyond to create a child-friendly borough where every young person could thrive, was a vital investment in the future of the borough's young people in its communities. The purpose of this strategy was to ensure that as far as reasonably practical, the Council was able to provide sufficient education and recreational leisure time activities for young people aged 13 to 19 and for those with learning difficulties or disabilities up to the age of 24.

This, aligned with the national priorities such as the national youth guarantee and strategy guidance for improving young people's well-being.

This strategy was built on three pillars of excellence. Firstly, universal youth activities with a wide range of inclusive opportunities like sports, urban games, uniformed groups such as cadets and scouts, arts and leisure opportunities, many free or low-cost to ensure that every young person had access to enriching opportunity experiences. Secondly, targeted youth clubs, a commissioned model that strengthened youth work with a youth worker-led provision for priority groups, that embedded quality assurance, long-term sustainability and innovation. And thirdly, specialist youth support delivered through the Council's family hubs and partners, focusing on supporting children in care and young carers and those with SEND.

Youth services nationally had now come under renewed focus and cuts to youth club funding was the responsibility of the former Conservative government and its austerity measures. The savage cuts to local government had led to many youth club closures with significant impacts affecting youth clubs and the borough's young people, and the Council was working to address this. The strategy went beyond just compliance, was designed to be inclusive, need-led, and sustainable, supported safer communities, better health outcomes and improved educational and economic opportunities.

What made this strategy exceptional was its authentic co-production. Young people had shaped this from the start, and their voices were at the heart of every decision, which had been shown by the insightful foreword to the strategy, which had been written by young people.

The Cabinet Member hoped Members had had time to read it as the views of the borough's young people had shaped the strategy, for example, in Appendix A to the report, they stated that they wanted Telford and Wrekin to be a place where young people felt proud to grow up; a borough that celebrated them and invested in them; to give every young person the chance to succeed; to live in a borough where young people's voices were valued, where support was always there when they needed it and where they could thrive and reach their potential.

This strategy was the Council's chance to make that happen together. Young people's voices were not just valued, they were vital and the Council had consulted widely and established the Voices in Unity group and planned an annual youth summit to keep youth voice at the heart of the Council's delivery. The Council had re-established the Local Youth Partnership Board to oversee delivery, monitor outcomes and ensure responsiveness. Also, the Council was introducing borough-wide data tracking systems to track participation and impact.

This strategy also reflected national best practise and aligned with the national youth guarantee while introducing local innovation. It was inclusive, sustainable and empowering, and moved away from short-term grants to multi-year contracts, which would enable continuity and quality. The Council's work had been collaborative and community focused and had involved engagement with schools, providers, parents and the volunteer sector partners to build on a shared vision.

The Cabinet Member said that this shared partnership approach strengthened delivery and ensured that every ward benefitted.

In conclusion, the Cabinet Member said that this strategy supported the Council's corporate vision for 2032. The borough's children and young people strategy, the Council's health and well-being board priorities and its ambition to be a child friendly borough was about prevention, early intervention, tackling inequalities and creating opportunities for every young person to thrive and achieve their potential.

The Administration would always put the borough's young people front and centre and would continue to protect, care, and invest in the borough's young people. Accordingly, the Council's message was clear in that the young people in the borough were not just the future, they were the present and together, a Telford and Wrekin where every young person could achieve and succeed in a welcoming community that supported them, was being built.

In summary, the Cabinet Member said that this was a bold, positive step forward, a strategy that demonstrated the Council's commitment to young people and highlighted the Council's ability to lead with innovation, inclusivity, and excellence.

The Cabinet Member thanked Rebecca Carey and the team for their dedicated hard work in co-producing this report with the borough's young people, the Council's partners and third sector organisations, and asked that Cabinet endorse this strategic approach to delivering youth services across the borough.

**RESOLVED, that:**

- (a) The Telford and Wrekin Youth Strategy, (Appendix B to the report), which set out the Council's strategic approach to delivering a youth offer across the borough, be approved.**

**(b) Authority be delegated to the Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People, Education, Employment and Skills, to amend future versions of the Youth Strategy considering changes to national policy.**

**CAB-43 Armed Forces Covenant Annual Report**

The Cabinet Member for Communities and Civic Pride, presented a report, which highlighted that the Council had made a clear and sustained commitment to support the borough's armed forces community and the report provided an update on the work that had been undertaken during 2025/26 to:

- Support the Armed Forces community within the borough.
- Meet the Council's commitments to the Armed Forces Covenant.
- Further develop the offer made by Telford and Wrekin Council, and partners, to support its Armed Forces Community and those with an armed forces connection.

The report set out the significant progress the Council had made in supporting the borough's Armed Forces community and hopefully gave an insight into the outline and the plans for the year ahead. The Council's Armed Forces Outreach Programme went well beyond the minimum obligations that many other local authorities sadly were in a position to only deliver.

As an employer, the Council had secured the revalidation of the Armed Forces Covenant Gold, awarded by the Ministry of Defence Employer Recognition Scheme, which the Cabinet Member was very proud of and had had a positive impact on employees and the workforce here within the Council. Equally, it also allowed the Council to think as to how it could help support its veterans across the borough and it had enabled the Council to put some positive initiatives out into the community.

Whether it was a change to the Council's HR policies, which supported those who had served or were reservists throughout the year, the Council had grown that armed forces staff network and it had been key. The offer went beyond the valued employees and also focused, rightly, on veterans and their families across the borough.

The Cabinet Member was pleased that the report had identified many positives, and he touched on the opening of the Christopher Turley Armed Forces Community Hub where a significant amount of work had gone into generating, creating, staffing and making available a centralised hub that all veterans and their families could access throughout the year. There was an ongoing commitment detailed in the report to ensure that this went from strength to strength.

The Hub was a dedicated space, which provided tailored advice and support, and the Cabinet Member said it had been a pleasure to be involved with this year.

The Council had continued the expansion of its Outreach Programme, which now delivered over 55 hours of community engagement on a monthly basis and included cafes, craft groups, drop-in sessions to tackle isolation and improve well-being.

The Models for Heroes Programme had been a runaway success and had attracted a high profile in the press since it was clearly something that was valued. He said it had been a privilege to have joined them on a number of occasions and the work that they had done had provided a lovely, very kind and supportive environment for those veterans, regardless of how and where they had served, to come together and take part in doing something that required some focus and a bit of chit chat.

Another success was Armed Forces Day, and the Cabinet Member thanked the Council's Events Team and everybody else that got involved with the event. Donington hosted again this year and it had been a superb event, and the Cabinet Member looked forward to seeing what would unfold this coming year.

The granting the freedom of the borough to D Squadron, the Shropshire Yeomanry, had been another proud moment for Telford and Wrekin and another way in which the Council recommitted its thanks to those that served.

Pride funding from borough councillors had continued to support many activities, a vital way in which as councillors, could just do a little bit in our local communities to support veterans and their families. The achievements demonstrated the Council's unwavering commitment to the covenant and to the positive impact the work had on local veterans.

The Cabinet Member placed on record his sincere thanks to the Council's officers and, crucially, its partners that had delivered so much value and continued to work tirelessly to deliver those outcomes that supported the borough's' our veterans' community and their families. The dedication and collaboration had been instrumental in making these events and outreach tasks an absolute success and that it would not have been possible without them.

Looking ahead, the report set out plans, which would include strengthening of the office, secure key posts and expanding the outreach activities even more.

Importantly, the Council was preparing to engage with Operation Valour, the Government's £50 million initiative to create national support hubs and that the Council would work to prepare and submit a strong bid, one that was built upon the Council's existing successes locally and it would seek to work closely with Shaun Davis, the Labour MP for Telford and with the Labour Government to ensure that Telford and Wrekin was at the forefront of any opportunity that it might be able to attract.

In conclusion, the Cabinet Member said that the report reflected a clear message, that when everyone worked together, the Council, partners and community, it delivered real tangible change.

The agenda for today's meeting at its core was clearly focused on the way in which the Administration continued to deliver on its commitment to protect, care, and invest in the borough and for its residents, whether it was to those who needed access to award-winning adult and children's services, whether it was looking to provide clean, green, sustainable future for the borough's children, or whether it was recognising and supporting those in the borough's brilliant veterans community. Everything discussed today had been incredibly positive and he was proud of this Administration and the officers in which it leads.

**RESOLVED, that:**

**(a) The progress made in delivering the Council's "offer" to the borough's Armed Forces community and particularly, the opening of the Christopher Turley Armed Forces Community Hub, be noted.**

**(b) Funding of £55,000 to drive and enhance the Council's armed forces covenant offer, be approved.**

The meeting ended at 6.52 pm

**Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices**

Anthea Lowe  
Director: Policy & Governance  
Date: **Monday 12 JANUARY 2026**

Signed .....

Date: Thursday 12 February 2026

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