

## **CABINET**

**Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday 14 May 2026 at 10.00 am in the Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One, Telford, TF3 4JG**

**PUBLISHED ON TUESDAY 19 MAY 2026**

**(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: FRIDAY 22 MAY 2026)**

**Present:** Councillors L D Carter (Chair), R A Overton (Vice-Chair), P Davis, Z Hannington, C Healy, A D McClements, S A W Reynolds, P Watling and O Vickers.

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

### **Apologies for Absence:**

None.

### **CAB-60 Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest received from members.

### **CAB-61 Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

**RESOLVED** – that the minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **CAB-62 Leader's Announcements**

No announcements were made by the Leader.

### **CAB-63 Building Safer & Stronger Communities in Telford and Wrekin**

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Highways, Housing and Enforcement presented a report, which provided an update on the Building Safer and Stronger Communities investment since 2021. If approved, the report sought approval to utilise Council funding as set out in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), to deliver initiatives and develop partnerships that promoted neighbourhood safety, which included measures to strengthen the Council's commitment to tackle domestic abuse and violence against women and girls (VAWG) while further enhancing the Youth Offer.

Councillor Overton presented a short video confirming that there was now around one in eight fewer crimes, and that antisocial behaviour and fly tips

had almost halved. Youth clubs, sports, chances to volunteer, mentor and coach - Building safer, stronger communities not only mattered, but it also worked.

The Council had provided funding of £1.5m to save a project that delivered.

Since 2021, the Council had taken a clear and decisive approach to standing on the side of its residents and through its Building Safer and Stronger Communities programme, it had made a conscious decision to do more, to invest, to intervene early, and to work in partnership to tackle the issues that mattered most to its communities. This approach had delivered real results, because this was not theory, but evidence.

Since the programme began, there had been a 12 % reduction in crime in key areas of the borough, a 45 % reduction in antisocial behaviour reports and a 43 % reduction in fly tipping in some areas, which was a significant achievement since it showed that when the Council invested locally, worked with partners and focused on prevention, it made a real difference to people's lives.

This programme started with a £2.5m investment in partnership with the West Mercia Police and the Police and Crime Commissioner. It had grown into a £6.5m programme of investment, which delivered targeted action where it was needed most. Also, it did not only reduce crime, but it had also improved neighbourhoods.

The Council had carried out over 700 proactive housing inspections to improve standards; acted on over 3,000 fly-tip incidents, with enforcement on more than 600 cases, and had supported thousands of residents through community environmental work. This was about visible, practical action that residents could see in their streets.

The Council needed to be honest about where it was today. Despite the success of this partnership approach, the Police and Crime Commissioner had withdrawn funding from April 2026, at a time when this approach was working, delivering and supporting policing priorities. That decision was quite simply backwards, because this programme reduced demand on the police, prevented crime before it happened and supported safer communities across the borough. Yet, despite this, the funding had been removed.

The Council would not step back and would continue this work by committing a further £1.5m Council funding to keep this programme going and evolve it into its next phase, which would build on what worked and what the Council would continue to deliver. It would also continue to drive down crime, antisocial behaviour and environmental crime, ensure a faster coordinated response to local issues and use data and intelligence to target resources where these were most needed.

The Council would strengthen its neighbourhood approach with local coordinators, clear area action plans and closer partnership work with police

and communities as well as a fast, visible response that residents expected to tackle fly -tipping, address antisocial behaviour and the installation CCTV, which would resolve issues quickly on the ground.

One of the most important parts of this programme was prevention and if young people were supported earlier, problems would be prevented later through this programme.

Over 14,000 youth activity sessions have been delivered through Urban Games, alongside 16,000 sessions through holiday activity programmes, with weekly programmes such as Talbot Kicks having engaged over 130 young people regularly. The borough now had 32 youth clubs, which provided safe spaces, activities, and opportunities. Evening and late-night provision would be extended and more activities at weekends and during holidays would be provided, which would continue to give young people positive alternatives to crime and antisocial behaviour.

Giving young people something to do and places to go, reduced boredom for many of them and provided positive outcomes of building better cohesive communities. The programme was not just about enforcement, but stronger communities, better well-being and people feeling safe where they lived.

The Council was already supporting over 30 community activity groups, which was improving health and reducing isolation and environmental volunteering through the borough's 2,000 Street Champions, was helping keep neighbourhoods clean. This was about pride in place and the programme showed exactly what the Council stood for.

The Council had stepped in when others would not and had invested where it mattered most and had delivered results for its residents. The Council was on its residents' side and would continue to protect its communities, care for its neighbours, and invest in what worked, because safe and stronger communities did not happen by chance. These were built through leadership, partnership, and investment, and that was exactly what the Council would continue to deliver by protecting, caring, and investing, creating a safer, stronger and better borough for everyone.

In supporting the recommendations, Cabinet Members said the report:

- reflected both the priorities as a Council and its responsibilities to its residents, ultimately the people it served and ensuring every resident in every neighbourhood felt safe supported and part of a community that they could be proud of.
- told a strong and positive story about the borough through action, investment and results that have been delivered for residents.
- outlined the progress the Council had made together through the Building Safer and Stronger Communities programme and working with partners, which was important.

- noted some of the achievements this brilliant programme had achieved across the borough.

The Leader of the Conservative Group welcomed the reduction in crime, violence and criminal activities in the borough the PCC and his budget, however stated that the government had provided an uplift of only £5.1m in the settlement, on top of a national insurance increase introduced by the Chancellor of £8.5m, which partly contributed towards a £19.1m increase in the cost of employing police officers, which was purely down to the government of the day.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group welcomed the thrust of what the Council was doing and, in particular, its working in partnership with its partners.

**RESOLVED that:**

- 1. The achievements to date in Building Safer and Stronger Communities across the borough, be noted.**
- 2. From April 2026, the withdrawal of funding previously provided by the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner to Building Safer and Stronger Communities, be noted.**
- 3. The Council's allocation of funding to maintain the Building Safer and Stronger Communities programme, as set out in this report, to deliver initiatives and develop partnerships that promoted neighbourhood safety and youth activity across the borough, be noted.**
- 4. The prevention interventions and initiatives, as outlined in this report, which reinforced the Council's commitment in addressing violence against women and girls (VAWG) as part of the domestic abuse strategy, be enforced.**
- 5. The co-ordinated and rapid deployment of resources for youth engagement and community concerns by integrating current response times for environmental, highway, and antisocial behaviour matters, as outlined in this report, be endorsed.**
- 6. The Director for Neighbourhood and Enforcement, in consultation with the Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for Highways, Housing and Enforcement, be authorised to submit bids for external funding that enhanced neighbourhood safety.**

**CAB-64 Better Homes for All Update**

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Highways, Housing and Enforcement presented a report, which sought the approval of Cabinet for (1)

the revised Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy (attached at Appendix G to this report), which had been updated to reflect the changes introduced by the Act; (2) an updated fee scale to reflect those changes; (3) the designation of a borough-wide Additional Licensing Scheme of all small HMOs comprising 3-4 occupants (which were not currently covered by the existing mandatory licensing regime) under the Housing Act 2004, and which included those buildings which fell within the definition of s.257 of the Housing Act 2004; and (4) the fees set out in Appendix F associated with the proposed scheme as well as updated fees in respect of the mandatory licensing regime.

Councillor Overton said that over recent years, the better homes for all programme had taken a clear and determined approach to improving housing standards across Telford and Wrekin since 2018 from building a strong track record tackling rogue landlords, to carrying out inspections and improving the quality of private rented homes for the borough's residents.

The Council had also to recognise that the borough had changed, was growing and with its population having increased significantly in recent years, demand for housing continued to rise. As a result, more people were turning to the private rented sector and with that, the borough was seeing a rapid increase in houses of multiple occupation (HMO). Historically, a higher concentration of HMOs had been seen in areas such as Sutton Hill, Brookside, Woodside, Hollinswood and Randlay, however, what was different now and what the report clearly highlighted was that this growth was no longer confined to those areas.

HMOs were expanding to parts of the north of the borough, including areas such as Wellington and Hadley, and an increase in mixed communities and emerging in neighbourhoods that would not previously have experienced this type of housing at scale.

This mattered since while HMOs were a vital part of the borough's housing solution, when these were unlicensed, unmanaged or poorly run, the consequences of this could be clearly seen. These consequences were being felt by tenants who lived in poor or unsafe conditions and by residents who experienced the impact on their communities. The evidence in the report showed clear links between HMOs and higher levels of antisocial behaviour and crime near those properties.

Through consultation engagement, residents had raised concerns about increasing antisocial behaviour, noise issues, litter, waste and untidiness, and the wider impact on the feel and cohesion of their communities. In some areas, particularly where HMOs had grown rapidly, there was also a perception and a stigma that neighbourhoods were changing ways that were not always positive. At the same time, the Council knew that many tenants living in these properties were among the most vulnerable in its borough and often felt unable to raise concerns directly, because they feared the consequences of speaking up.

Therefore, what was in place was a system that, in part, was reactive rather than proactive, reliant on complaints that may never come and unable to fully address the scale of change now being seen. This was why the Council was bringing forward these proposals today. It was about the next step since the Council could not manage today's housing challenges with yesterday's tools.

A borough wide licencing scheme meant the Council would know where every HMO was. The Council would inspect every property before a licence was issued and it could ensure that standards were applied consistently, not just to the largest properties, but to all HMOs. Critically, this was why the scheme needed to be borough wide. If the Council we focused on certain areas, it ran the risk of pushing problems elsewhere, create inconsistency and fail to protect residents equally across Telford and Wrekin.

The reality was clear. HMOs existed across the borough, and the Council's response needed to match that reality. This was not about being anti-landlord or stopping HMOs but was about raising standards, supporting good management and protecting communities.

Most landlords wanted to do the right thing, and the Council recognised the valuable role they played in providing housing, which was why this approach was balanced. Alongside licencing, the Council offered dedicated support for landlords. Advice and guidance on new regulations helped to manage tenancy issues early and practical tools to support compliance because the Council knew that good, well supported landlords, created better outcomes for everyone.

This was about helping landlords manage shared living property, to ensure tenants had safe, decent homes, and restore confidence in neighbourhoods.

In terms of fees, there was a cost to the HMO landlords to have this additional licence, which cost approximately 75 pence per day. This licence would show landlords were good, honest and had the standards their tenants deserved. It was also about tackling some of the misunderstandings and stigmas that could grow around HMOs.

Well-managed HMOs should be clean, safe, and a positive part of the borough's community. Poorly managed ones should not define the whole sector, and this was exactly what licencing would help the Council to address. Ultimately, this came back to the Council's values. It was on the side of its residents and was committed to protecting people, caring for its communities and investing in the future of this borough. The proposal did exactly that. It protected tenants, supported landlords and improved the places the Council's residents lived in. It ensured that the borough continued to grow, that the Council took people with it, and that it protected its neighbourhoods whilst maintaining the standards that people rightly expected by creating better homes, better standards for all and a better borough for everyone.

In supporting the recommendations, Cabinet Members said the report:

- showed the Council was committed to every resident having a safe and affordable home.
- sent a message to those landlords who were taking advantage of the fact the Council did not have the powers to enforce.
- set out the Council's proactive, resident-focused approach to raising housing quality, tackling inequalities and ensuring everybody had access to a safe, secure and decent place to live, which reflected the Council's values of fairness, opportunity and protecting the most vulnerable.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group said that, for landlords, naturally any increase in administrative costs was always an additional burden and which inevitably they would probably pass on to the tenants, but overall the Council had to think of protection of the majority of people out there, particularly those vulnerable tenants and was pleased the Council was strengthening that protection.

The Leader of the Conservative Group said that everyone present wanted to see rogue landlords removed and the conditions that they brought to some of their properties and the way that they treated their tenants who should have security of a good home. However, he feared that the Renters Rights Act would reduce or have the effect of reducing rented housing supply and could push up rents and make some landlords more selective of tenants which would not help.

**RESOLVED that:**

- 1. The updated Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy, which incorporated new provisions under the Renters Rights' Act 2025 (attached at Appendix G), be approved.**
- 2. The designation of a borough-wide Additional Licensing Scheme for Houses in Multiple Occupation ("HMOs"), as set out in this report, for a period of five years, with effect from 20 August 2026, be approved.**
- 3. An enhanced support package for landlords to assist compliance with the new requirements under the Additional Licensing Scheme and The Renters' Rights Act 2025, be approved.**
- 4. The revised HMO licensing fees (attached at Appendix F to this report), be approved.**
- 5. A 10% discount for all full and valid additional licence applications received within the three-month period immediately prior to the commencement date of the additional licensing scheme; namely from 20 May 2026 to 19 August 2026, be approved.**

6. **The Director of Housing, Commercial and Customer Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Highways, Housing and Enforcement, be authorised to take such steps as are necessary to finalise and implement the Additional Licensing designation.**

#### **CAB-65 Annual Governance Statement 2025/26**

The Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance and Customer Services presented, for approval, the Annual Governance Statement (“AGS”) for the year 2025/26, in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

Councillor Hannington said that the AGS for 2025-26, formed part of the Council’s statutory responsibilities and accompanied the Statement of Accounts.

This AGS provided an assurance that the Council continued to operate with strong, transparent and accountable governance arrangements and it drew on a wide range of evidence, which included internal audit, external audit, risk management, service assurance statements, complaints and standards activity and the Council’s financial and performance monitoring.

The Council’s vision was clear to protect, care and invest to create a better borough where people could grow up, work, prosper and grow older with confidence and opportunity. The Council Plan set out how it delivered this, guided by five priorities and the Council’s longer-term Vision 2030, which described the ambition it shared with partners for the future of the borough. To achieve this vision, the Council recognised the need for strong governance and sound financial management.

Despite continued financial pressures in 2025-26, the AGS gave an assurance that the Council had responded responsibly, had put in place robust savings and management plans that protected frontline services, where possible.

No significant governance failures had been identified this year. Instead, the AGS had highlighted consistently strong governance, which had been delivered despite the national pressures facing local government. This strength was driven first and foremost by the efforts of the Council’s staff, whose hard work, resilience and commitment ensured that the Council continued to operate to a high standard, and their contribution was evident throughout this statement.

These were hallmarks of a Council that took its responsibilities seriously and delivered them well. The past 12 months had also brought some exceptional successes for the Council and its community. The Council continued to be a high performing authority that put residents at the heart of everything it did. A highlight included being awarded Council of the year in 2025 by the Local Government Chronicle - national recognition of the strength, ambition, and impact of the Council’s work.

The Council's staff and its dedication and professionalism were the reason the Council continued to deliver such strong governance. Despite national pressures, they consistently went above and beyond for the borough's residents, and the strength of this statement was a direct reflection of their hard work and commitment.

The Council continued to maintain robust financial management, strong oversight of major programmes and clear, well-documented decision-making processes. Its scrutiny arrangements remained effective, constructive and transparent, and the Council's commitment to openness was demonstrated through its public reporting and the continued expansion of digital access to meetings.

The AGS also identified the areas where the Council would continue to strengthen its governance in the years ahead. These included financial resilience, particularly in light of ongoing pressures being experienced nationally within the local government environment.

Workforce capacity, especially in specialist areas where national recruitment challenges persisted. Cyber security and information governments, where the Council continued to invest and adapt to an evolving threat landscape.

Governance of major programmes, ensuring consistent oversight, risk management and benefits realisation. And finally, regulatory and community safety responsibilities, which included household standards and the Council's domestic abuse commitments. No matter how good the Council's governance was, it was considered to be good practice to take proactive action to address identified challenges.

The Council's governance action plan for 2026-27 set out clear, targeted actions to address these areas. This demonstrated the Council's commitment to continuous improvement, forward planning and proactive risk management.

Overall, the AGS showed that this Council continued to uphold high standards of governance, managed risks effectively, and remained focused on delivering the best possible outcomes for its residents. It reflected an organisation that was well run, well led, and well prepared for the challenges ahead.

This AGS provided reasonable assurance that the Council's governance arrangements and internal systems of control were effective and fit for purpose.

In supporting the recommendations, a Cabinet Member said the report provided assurance that Telford and Wrekin Council continued to maintain strong and effective governance arrangements and that it remained committed to transparency, accountability and the continuous improvement in the way services were delivered and decisions were made.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group said that he fully welcomed the report, which was important particularly since many failed local authorities up and down the country had not taken governance seriously at all.

The Leader of the Conservative Group said that Telford and Wrekin had a long history of good governance and that others, not too far away, had suffered and had considerable problems.

**RESOLVED that the Annual Governance Statement 2025/26, attached as Appendix A to this report, be approved.**

The meeting ended at 11.01 am

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

Anthea Lowe  
Director: Policy & Governance  
Date: **TUESDAY 19 MAY 2026**

Signed .....

Date: Thursday 11 June 2026