



FULL COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the Full Council held on Thursday 26 February 2026 at 6.00 pm in Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One, Telford, TF3 4JG

Present: Councillors E Aston, K T Blundell, M Boylan, A J Burford, S P Burrell, E M Callear, L D Carter, C Chikandamina, E Davies, P Davis, F Doran, N A Dugmore, A J Eade, A R H England, N A M England, S Handley, Z Hannington, C Healy, T L B Janke, A S Jhavar, J Jones, J Kaur, L Lewis, G Luter, A D McClements, R Mehta, K Middleton, H Morgan, T J Nelson, R A Overton, N Page, L Parker, I Preece, S J Reynolds, S A W Reynolds, H Rhodes, R Sahota, P J Scott, S Syrda, P Thomas, J Thompson, K L Tomlinson, W L Tomlinson, K Tonks, R Tyrrell, J Urey, O Vickers, P Watling and D R W White

In Attendance: A Lowe (Director: Policy & Governance) and D Sidaway (Chief Executive)

Apologies: Councillors S Bentley, G H Cook, S Davies, G C W Latham-Reynolds and G Thomas

57 Prayers and Reflections

Les Pointer, from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, said prayers.

58 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest received from members.

59 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 January 2026 be confirmed and signed by the Mayor.

60 Leader's Report & Announcements

The Leader of the Council said he had been asked to reflect on the great people who had shaped the borough.

Abraham Darby III, who was an industrial genius, changed the world, but also believed his workers deserved decent homes, food on their table and fair pay.



Captain Matthew Webb remembered not just for being the first person to swim the channel unaided but for risking his life to save others.

Edith Picton-Tuberville, who had fought for women's suffrage and stood for working women in wartime.

William Ambrose Wright, a local lad who became a national sporting hero, the first footballer to get 100 England caps, and who sometimes cycled from Ironbridge to Molyneux to achieve his dream.

Their achievements were remarkable, but what truly inspired us was how they achieved them, with dedication, with hard work, and above all else, with courage. Courage was not just a word from history; it was a quality that had carried this Council through some of the toughest years local government had ever faced.

After 14 years of austerity, it took courage to stay the course, to protect, to care, to invest in the borough's communities and always putting people first.

Here in Telford and Wrekin, the Council had for more than a decade, the courage to block out the noise and was proposing another positive budget, one that protected, cared and invested while keeping Council Tax amongst the lowest in the country. Looking after those who needed it most was the Council's priority, and it was also its biggest responsibility.

This budget tonight invested £150m in care, an £18.5m increase on last year, which meant 70 pence in every £1 the Council spent went towards supporting vulnerable children, people with disabilities and older residents.

The Administration was able to do this because there was a government that was listening and after years of being ignored, the Council's long-standing plea had finally been heard. This settlement delivered an additional £6m for this Council and every penny of this would go directly into protecting the most vulnerable.

Even with this investment, the Council continued to have the lowest Council Tax in the Midlands and amongst the lowest in the country, while other Councils were imposing rises of nearly 9 or 10%.

This increase was equivalent to £1.20 per week for the average household and every penny of that £4.7m went back into care, which meant dignity in old age for residents' parents, grandparents and loved ones, support for vulnerable children and better outcomes for families, which was something the Council would never apologise for.



Because of strong financial management, the Council was also investing £90m in highways, tackling potholes and improving the roads people relied on every day. The Council was committed to funding better homes, expanded schools, improved bus services and thriving high streets as well as backing the borough's veterans with real action, which included the purchase of the first ever homes for veterans.

The Council was also extending its £2 bus fares across all routes in the borough as well as delivering more SEND places, 300 more secondary school places and replacing the £250,000 to create safer communities, which had been halted by the Conservative Police and Crime Commissioner.

In addition, more grit bins, a revived amphitheatre, protection of the Priorslee Campus, new nature reserves and more protected green space, £30m for the regeneration of Woodside, Brookside and Sutton Hill, and free green waste collection, free parking where it had always existed, and continued investment in the borough's high streets.

The Council would extend the current two-year freeze on all Council allowances and would support the Lingen-Davies campaign to bring Telford its first-ever cancer treatment centre with £250,000.

The Leader said tonight's decision came down to courage - the courage to invest, protect, stand up for its residents, and the courage to back this budget.

61 Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor began by asking Members to note the engagements she had undertaken since the last Council meeting, as detailed in the list circulated.

Since the meeting in January, both she and the Deputy Mayor had had the privilege of attending numerous engagements across the Borough, one of which that stood out for her was the Veolia Envirogrant Celebration event, a special event, which had seen a number of local groups awarded, and included Friends of Dawley Park, Hub on the Hill, and Telford Community Basketball CIC, to name just a few.

The Mayor was delighted to have attended a special event at Squatters Cottage in Lightmoor to see the work that Smallwoods was doing to support veterans in the borough, and she had also attended the opening of the new Veterans Well-being Hub in Brookside. She said that veterans had given so much to this country and it had been wonderful to see the support that was offered locally across Telford and Wrekin.

The Mayor paid tribute to True North Bikers and the wider biker community once again, who had supported an amazing campaign to help a little girl with



terminal cancer, from the Midlands, to break a world record for the most birthday cards received – which stood previously at around 8,000. People of Telford got behind this in a heartwarming and spectacular way – and the number of cards received was over 100,000. The Mayor thanked every person that sent a card to Amelia and said that this had brought home the importance of the Sunflower Appeal by Lingen Davies to bring cancer treatment to the borough's Princess Royal Hospital, which she knew was something the Council was actively supporting across the borough.

At the start of February, the Council marked LGBTQ+ History Month, with the LGBTQ+ flag flying proudly in Southwater Square, which the Deputy Mayor attended.

On Friday 6 March, the Mayor would be hosting her Mayor's Charity Ball and she sincerely thanked everyone who had bought tickets, donated, or contributed prizes. She looked forward to seeing everyone there for what promised to be a wonderful and enjoyable evening.

In conclusion, the Mayor expressed her deepest appreciation for the incredible staff at Telford and Wrekin Council. As this was her last full meeting as Mayor, she wanted to say that it had been an absolute joy, a true honour, and a privilege to serve in this role. She said she had loved every moment and was immensely grateful for the experiences she had had, the people she had met, and the impact made together.

The Mayor said her term of office was not over quite yet, and she looked forward to making the most of the time she had left and continuing to support the local community in every way she could.

62 Public Questions

There were no questions received from the public.

63 Councillor Questions On Notice

The following questions were asked under Council Procedure Rule 6.2.2:

- (a) Councillor Andrew Eade asked the following question of Councillor Lee Carter, Leader of the Council.

“Will the Leader of the Council guarantee that local elections in Telford and Wrekin will go ahead in 2027 despite any potential Local Government reorganisation?”

In response, Councillor Carter said he wished to make it absolutely clear to Councillor Eade and to those who may have been reporting on this, that the



current administration had never sought any action that prevented residents exercising their democratic right, nor would it ever do so.

He recognised that did not align with those who had political advantage in suggesting that local Councils or councillors were doing so however, that was the material for conspiracy theorists.

Decisions about whether elections took place were not matters for the Leader of the Council. At present, the Council was not part of any local government reorganisation process and if it was, he was clear that the Council would not merge with Shropshire.

He confirmed that elections in Telford and Wrekin would proceed in 2027 in the normal way.

In response to a supplementary question from Councillor Eade, Councillor Carter reminded Councillor Eade that there were Councils led by all political parties involved in local government re-organisation.

(b) Councillor Andrew Eade asked the following question of Councillor Lee Carter, Leader of the Council.

“Will the Leader of the Council join with me in writing to Baroness Anne Longfield CBE as Chair of the Grooming Gangs Inquiry to urge that her promised consultation on Draft Terms of reference, plus additional information, promised for January this year be provided as soon as possible?”

In response, Councillor Carter said he had checked the current position in relation to the National Grooming Gangs' Inquiry, which was still current and widely available on the internet earlier this evening.

The draught terms of reference had already been published and were subject to public consultation, which would close on 6 March. In those circumstances, he did not consider it necessary to write to the Chair of the Inquiry to urge her to do something that she had already done.

In response to a supplementary question from Councillor Eade, Councillor Carter said the Council would absolutely do anything it could to support the Government, the first government to have had a national inquiry into grooming gangs and was sure that it would deliver all the recommendations from that inquiry.

As to the point about being included within the scope of the Inquiry, Councillor Carter said Councillor Eade would recall that the Council had written to the Government asking that it be included following the inquiry in Telford and Wrekin, which was in depth and went back for over 40 years, there was a lot



that the Council could share with the country, including best practice, about tackling that horrific crime.

- (c) Councillor Peter Scott asked the following question of Councillor Richard Overton, Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Highways, Housing and Enforcement.

“The recent icy weather has led to more potholes appearing on our roads. I am pleased to see the Council is out there making repairs. Is the Council confident that all reported potholes will be repaired to a high standard and be long lasting?”

In response, Councillor Overton said like many areas across the country, the winter weather had frustratingly increased the number of potholes, but the Council had deployed additional crews as well as extended working hours to ensure that every pothole could be repaired as quickly as possible and was committed to repairing all reported potholes to a high standard.

He asked members to note the periods of intense bad weather such as that seen over the last few weeks and said that temporary repairs were sometimes unavoidable. Where a pothole presented an immediate safety risk, the Council had to act quickly to make the road safe however, these temporary fixes were exactly that and the Council would always return to undertake a full permanent repair on a planned basis once the conditions and programming allowed.

The Council would also closely monitor the performance of repairs to ensure they met the high standards expected. He was pleased to say that over 98% of all repairs were completed first time and had remained defect free. In the small number of cases where repair did not meet the required standards expected, the contractor would revisit the site and put this right.

In response to a supplementary question from Councillor Scott, Councillor Overton said that if a resident was unhappy with the repair, they should report it to the Highways Team which would then get to go out and revisit it to make sure it met the right requirements. Where it did not, the contractor would revisit the site and put a full repair in place.

- (d) Councillor John Thompson asked the following question of Councillor Ollie Vickers, Cabinet Member for the Economy and Transport.

“Please can the Cabinet Member outline the planned changes to the fare cap on bus services across Telford and Wrekin, which was announced last week ahead of the Budget debate this evening?”



In response, Councillor Vickers said that members of this chamber would have heard last week that the current administration's proposal to introduce a flat £2 fare across bus journeys within Telford and Wrekin as part of its budget for 2026-27 recognised that affordable, reliable transport played an important role in people's daily lives, which was why the Administration took the bold step in 2022 to develop and bring forward the Council's Travel Telford bus routes.

The Chamber had been updated previously on how these affordable routes had evolved, which was founded on valuable feedback from the borough's residents.

The Council's commitment to affordable and well-connected public transport had seen these services, routes 99 to 104, grow in popularity and was well on track to reach a significant milestone in completing one million passenger trips on these services by the summer.

The £2 single fare currently applied to only Travel Telford Council operated services, which made up around 24% of the local bus network. It was the Council's intention to extend the flat fare across all journeys within Telford and Wrekin, which offered a consistent single journey fare for passengers across the borough. This would be a game changer for residents across the borough, would save regular bus users hundreds of pounds a year and was only possible because the borough had an MP, a Government and a Council working hand in hand with each other to deliver positive change for people across the town.

For the past two years, the Council had maintained the lowest single bus fare in the Midlands and one of the lowest in the whole country with the Travel Telford routes. Extending this offer borough-wide would support more people to make regular journeys confidently and affordably and once plans were finalised, it would make bus travel simpler and more affordable for residents.

Buses were not just about getting from A to B, they connected people to work, school, healthcare and family and the Administration would continue to improve public transport across Telford and Wrekin.

- (e) Councillor Lyndsey Parker asked the following question of Councillor Ollie Vickers, Cabinet Member for the Economy and Transport.

"I have seen the positive impact that the Pride in Our High Street programme has had across the borough, including in Dawley High Street which is within my ward. I welcome the efforts by the council to reduce empty shop units in our high streets and bring more footfall into our market towns. Please can the Cabinet Member for the Economy and Transport provide an update on the



progress this council has made through the Pride in Our High Street programme in Dawley and the rest of our borough?"

In response, Councillor Vickers said that here in Telford and Wrekin, the Council understood that when the borough's high streets thrived, its people thrived.

The pride in the Council's high street programme was about more than investment and was about belief in the borough's businesses, communities and its future. That was why this programme had been a priority for the current administration and had been a success. While the national vacancy rates on high streets persisted at around 13%, in Telford and Wrekin it sat at just 3.3% and the Council had awarded 74 start-up grants to bring new businesses to the borough's high streets, which would create an additional 441 good jobs in the town. Also, 88 eco grants and 27 digital grants had been awarded to support the borough's local businesses in becoming sustainable and efficient.

In addition, the Council had further awarded 82 diversification grants and 47 facade grants to ensure that all of the borough's high streets were diverse and vibrant places for people to shop.

Councillor Vickers said that both Councillor Burford and Councillor Parker had been community champions for Dawley's High Street and had worked with the Administration to secure over £1m of investment into the high street there to ensure that businesses and the local community flourished.

The Administration would always support thriving businesses, strengthen local economies and revitalise the borough's towns and local centres.

(f) Councillor Eileen Callear asked the following question to Councillor Carolyn Healy, Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning and Sustainability.

"My ward members and I welcome the designation of Hurley Brook as a Local Nature Reserve, and we recognise the importance of protecting and enhancing green spaces for our residents. The report highlights that these new designations will mean that Telford and Wrekin, under the Labour administration, will have over four times the minimum recommended standard of Local Nature Reserve area per person. Can the Cabinet Member explain what this minimum recommended standard is, who sets it, and how it is calculated, so that residents can clearly understand how significant this is for us locally?"

In response, Councillor Healy said that Natural England, the Government's advisor for the natural environment, set the standard. It was the accessible



natural green space standard, and this covered a whole range of types of open spaces and aimed to provide high quality, accessible natural spaces that were managed for biodiversity, nature conservation and public enjoyment.

It set out areas and proximities to green spaces and where people lived. The national standard for local nature reserves was one hectare per thousand people. In Telford and Wrekin, with its new designations, it had just over four hectares per thousand people i.e. four times the amount.

The Council was also held up as best practice by Natural England for green infrastructure due to the Council's our designation and expansion of the green network and green guarantee sites. The 89% of the borough's population were within 300 metres of a green space, two hectares or more. That made the borough one of the greenest places in the country and the Council was held up as a best practice example.

The Council was commended on the way that it prioritised the natural environment and that mattered to people because it meant that they lived in a green area that was good for their health and well-being, they could get close to nature, enjoy those spaces and also it benefitted Telford and Wrekin as a borough as it made it an attractive place for inward investment and that brought jobs as well.

64 Cabinet Decisions Made Since the Last Meeting of the Council

Members received the report on the Cabinet decisions made since the last meeting of the Council.

No questions of clarification were raised.

65 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2026/27 - 2029/30

Councillor Z Hannington, Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance and Customer Services, presented the report of the Director for Finance, People and IDT, which sought approval of the Council's Medium-Term Financial Strategy for the four years 2026/27 to 2029/30.

This overview report, along with the following linked reports on the agenda:

- The Capital Strategy
- The Medium-Term Capital Programme
- The Investment Strategy
- The Treasury Management Strategy and
- The Prudential Indicators report



Together, these reports formed the Council's overall Medium-Term Financial Strategy for the next four years and the budget framework for 2026/27.

The report built on the MTFS report considered at Cabinet on 6 January 2026 which had been subject to public consultation and scrutiny by members of the Council's cross-party Business and Finance Scrutiny Committee since that date. The January report was itself an update of the Council's four-year MTFS approved at full Council on 27 February 2025, and this report remained consistent both with that strategy and the approach to prudent and successful financial management exercised by the Council for many years throughout an unprecedented and protracted period of severe financial constraint.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) Amendment) Regulations 2014, a recorded vote was taken on the recommendations as follows:

For (44)

Councillors E Aston, K T Blundell, M Boylan, A J Burford, E Callear, L D Cater, C Chikandamina, E Davies, P Davis, F Doran, A England, N England, S Handley, Z Hannington, C Healy, T Janke, A Jhavar, J Jones, J Kaur, L Lewis, G Luter, A D McClements, R Mehta, K Middleton, H Morgan, R A Overton, N Page, L Parker, I Preece, S A W Reynolds, S J Reynolds, H Rhodes, R Sahota, P J Scott, S Syrda, P Thomas, B J Thompson, K Tomlinson, W L Tomlinson, K Tonks, J Urey, O Vickers, P R Watling and D R W White

Against (0)

Abstentions (5)

Councillors S P Burrell, N A Dugmore, A J Eade, T J Nelson and R Tyrrell.

RESOLVED that the following, be noted:

- a) **The Councils priorities to deliver its vision to protect, care and invest to create a better Borough:**
- **Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community**
 - **Everyone feels the benefit from a thriving economy**
 - **All neighbourhoods are a great place to live**
 - **Our natural environment is protected, and the Council is taking a leading role in addressing the climate emergency**
 - **A community focussed innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services.**



- b) A proposed Council Tax increase for 2026/27 of £1.20 per week for the average Band B home, supporting investment in social care services, would continue to see Telford and Wrekin Council have the lowest Council Tax in the Midlands for the services it provided, and one of the lowest in the country.
- c) The continued strong track record of sound financial management of the Council, which included delivery of a balanced budget for over 17 years.
- d) That 70 pence in every £1 the Council spent was allocated to Social Services.
- e) That a number of the investments made in this report, such as Nuplace and the Growth fund, 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, which included a multi-year settlement and an updated formula that incorporated 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.

RESOLVED, that the following be approved.

- (i) The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2026/27 to 2029/30 and the budget framework for 2026/27, as set out in this suite of reports.



- (ii) A Council Tax increase of 4.99% for 2026/27, which included the Government's 2% Adult Social Care precept, equivalent to £0.72 per week general Council Tax increase for the average Band B property and £0.48 per week for the ASC precept, which would be fully invested in the provision of social care services for the most vulnerable members of the local community.
- (iii) The net investment of £15.8m into Adult Social Care and £2.7m in Children's Safeguarding in 2026/27.
- (iv) The budget savings listed at Appendix 9 with a total of £19.1m ongoing savings, which included new savings of £9.3m in 2025/26 and £11.4m in 2026/27.
- (v) The continuation of work with partner organisations, which included Town and Parish Councils and Voluntary Sector and Community Groups, to seek to identify ways to mitigate the impact of some of the cuts to services that the Council could no longer afford to deliver and to note the availability of the Invest to Save/Capacity Fund which was available to support partnership working.
- (vi) The base budget, as set out at Appendix 7.
- (vii) The policy framework for Reserves and Balances and their planned use as outlined in Appendix 5.
- (viii) The Strategic Risk Register at Appendix 13.
- (ix) The endorsement of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme, a link to which was included within Appendix 15, ready for implementation from 1 April 2026.
- (x) The continuation of the Council Tax Reduction Hardship Assistance Policy, also within Appendix 15.
- (xi) The revenue implications of the medium-term Capital Programme for the period 2026/27 to 2029/30, as set out in the Capital Strategy and Programme reports also on this agenda.
- (xii) That authority be delegated to the Director of Finance, People and IDT, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance and Customer Services, to action any virements required following the final allocation of the Dedicated Schools Grant and other Grants and following the completion of the NNDR1 and final estimates of Business Rates income.



- (xiii) That authority be delegated to the Director of Finance, People and IDT to take all necessary steps to implement any future new NNDR reliefs which are fully funded by the Government and introduced under the Council's Discretionary powers.
- (xiv) That authority be delegated to the Director of Adult Social Care, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health Integration and Transformation, to enter into appropriate Section 256 and Section 75 Agreements under the NHS Act 2006 (as amended).
- (xv) That authority be delegated to the Director of Policy and Governance to execute all necessary contract documentation, which included affixing of the common seal of the Council as appropriate to enable the Council to enter into appropriate Section 256 and Section 75 Agreements under the NHS Act 2006 (as amended).
- (xvi) This suite of MTFS reports as the Council's Efficiency Strategy for 2026/27, which included the documentation at Appendix 12, to enable new capital receipts to be used to fund the revenue costs of transformation and efficiency projects as assumed throughout these reports.
- (xvii) That authority be delegated to the Director of Finance, People and IDT, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance and Customer Services, to amend the use of the contingency in 2026/27 and to make any other associated adjustments to accommodate any difference in funding between that currently assumed and final grant allocations when received.
- (xviii) That authority be delegated to the Director of Finance, People and IDT, following consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance and Customer Services, to make changes to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy with immediate effect to reflect all grants received from Government with authority to incur associated spend.
- (xix) The Pay Policy for 2026/27 included as Appendix 16.
- (xx) The additional recommendations contained in other reports, included in this suite of Medium-Term Financial Strategy reports on this agenda.



Councillor Z Hannington, Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance and Customer Services presented the report of the Director of Finance, People and IDT, which set out the formal resolutions to determine the levels of Council Tax for Telford and Wrekin Council for 2026/27. The levels of tax took account of the requirements of Telford and Wrekin Council, the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner, Shropshire and Wrekin Fire Authority and the various Parish and Town Councils.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014, a recorded vote was taken on the recommendations as follows:

For (48)

Councillors E Aston, K T Blundell, M Boylan, A J Burford, S P Burrell, E Callear, L D Carter, C Chikandamina, E Davies, P Davis, F Doran, N A Dugmore, A J Eade, A England, N England, S Handley, Z Hannington, C Healy, T Janke, A Jhavar, J Jones, J Kaur, L Lewis, G Luter, A D McClements, R Mehta, K Middleton, H Morgan, T J Nelson, R A Overton, N Page, I Preece, S A W Reynolds, S J Reynolds, H Rhodes, R Sahota, P J Scott, S Syrda, P Thomas, B J Thompson, K Tomlinson, W L Tomlinson, K Tonks, R Tyrrell, J Urey, O Vickers, P R Watling and D R W White

Against (0)

Abstentions (0)

RESOLVED, unanimously – that the levels of Council Tax for 2026/27, as set out in the report, be approved.

The meeting ended at 7.51 pm

Chairman: _____

Date: Thursday 21 May 2026