

CABINET

Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday 16 July 2026 at 10.00 am in the Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One, Telford, TF3 4JG

Present: Councillors L D Carter (Chair), R A Overton (Vice-Chair), P Davis, Z Hannington, C Healy, A D McClements, K Middleton, 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)

CAB-9 Declarations of Interest

None.

CAB-10 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2026 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

CAB-11 Leader's Announcements

No announcements were made.

CAB-12 Best Start in Life Delivery Plan 2025/26 - 2027/28

The Cabinet Member: Children, Young People, Education & Skills presented the Best Start in Life Plan 2026-2028.

The Plan set out the Council's partnership ambition to ensure that every child in Telford & Wrekin had the best possible start in life and reached their development potential by the age of five. It built upon the Council's Children and Young People's Strategy, Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Child Friendly Borough commitments and reflected strong partnership working between the Council, NHS organisations, schools, early years providers, Family Hubs and voluntary and community sector organisations.

The report highlighted the importance of early intervention and supporting families through services such as Family Hubs, health visits, speech and language support and SEND provision. Progress already achieved included increased engagement with Family Hubs, expanded developmental health checks, targeted support for children with emerging needs, improved use of local data and successful speech and language initiatives.

The Plan included ambitious targets to improve the proportion of children achieving a Good Level of Development (GLD) by the end of Reception Year

and placed particular emphasis on reducing inequalities and improving outcomes for disadvantaged children.

Cabinet Members welcomed the report and highlighted the importance of early intervention, preventative services and partnership working in improving outcomes for children and families. Members emphasised the significance of supporting parents during a child's earliest years, reducing inequalities and ensuring that all children, particularly those facing disadvantage, had the opportunity to achieve their full potential. The Council's ongoing commitment to becoming a Child Friendly Borough and programmes such as 5 by 5 and 10 by 10 were recognised as important elements in helping children to thrive.

The Leader of the Conservative Group acknowledged the work undertaken through Family Hubs but noted that children in the Borough currently achieved lower than average Good Level of Development outcomes. He welcomed the Council's ambition to improve performance targets and sought clarification regarding delivery plans and future reporting arrangements to monitor ongoing progress.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group welcomed the report and praised the support provided by Family Hubs and voluntary organisations. He reflected on the changing nature of family support networks for residents and their families and highlighted the valuable contribution made by community organisations in supporting parents and young families particularly at a time of need.

In response, the Cabinet Member: Children, Young People, Education & Skills highlighted the Council's long-standing commitment to early years support and noted that the Council had retained support services for families despite previous reductions in national funding. She emphasised that whilst targets were important, the Council remained committed to ensuring that every child had the opportunity to thrive. She confirmed that progress would continue to be monitored through the Council's existing governance and scrutiny arrangements.

RESOLVED that – the Telford & Wrekin Best Start in Life Plan 2026-2028, which has the aspiration that every five-year-old in the borough reaches their development potential be approved.

CAB-13 Better Buses in Telford & Wrekin - Update

The Cabinet Member for Jobs, Transport & Digital Connectivity presented an update on the Better Buses programme.

The report outlined the significant improvements made to bus services across the Borough since 2022, including the introduction of six Travel Telford routes which had collectively carried more than one million passenger journeys. Passenger numbers had continued to grow, with a 21% increase in patronage since the network was refreshed in 2025.

The Cabinet Member highlighted the Council's commitment to affordable transport through the continuation and extension of the £2 adult and £1 under-19 fare cap across all bus services beginning and ending within the Borough. Additional investment had included new bus shelters, real-time passenger information, expansion of the Citymapper journey planning app, improvements to safety measures and the introduction of on-demand transport services.

Cabinet Members welcomed the report and recognised the positive impact that affordable and reliable public transport was having across the Borough. Members highlighted the role of improved bus services in supporting employment, education, healthcare access and tourism whilst helping to tackle social isolation, reduce transport costs and support environmental objectives.

Members also welcomed the success of the Work Express service and recognised the value of affordable fares in improving access to employment, education and essential services, particularly for residents without access to private transport. The continued investment in both urban and rural routes, together with the introduction of innovative services such as on-demand transport, was particularly welcomed. Members also commended improvements to transport links serving tourism destinations, including the Ironbridge Gorge and recognised the benefits of the park and ride and on-demand transport provision for both residents and visitors.

The Leader of the Conservative Group welcomed the report and noted that the Bus Service Improvement Plan had delivered a range of positive outcomes including improved routes, affordable fares and better infrastructure. He highlighted the importance of securing future funding once developer contributions came to an end.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group welcomed the report and particularly praised the restoration of services to Shawburch, noting the importance of bus services to residents on lower incomes and those without access to private transport.

In response, the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Transport & Digital Connectivity thanked Members for their comments and reiterated the Council's commitment to further investment in bus services and public transport connectivity.

RESOLVED – that:

a) the continued improvements in bus travel and connectivity across Telford and Wrekin over the last two years be noted as follows:

- The provision of six new bus routes, that have now completed 1million passenger trips;
- £2 fare cap across the borough (£1 for under 19's) as part of the Council's wider commitment to provide cost of living support to our residents;

- Infrastructure improvements including new bus shelters;
 - Improved journey experience through development of the 'Citymapper' app;
 - Introduction and expansion of the Travel Telford 'On Demand' bus network; and
 - The delivery of two electric buses.
- b) the continued investment in our bus network made possible by recent government funding, Council investment and user of developer funding to bring forward improvements be noted;
- c) delegated authority be granted to the Director: Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Jobs, Transport & Digital Connectivity to take necessary steps to continue to evolve the bus network in Telford and Wrekin. In doing so, ensure the evolution continues to be founded on resident and user feedback to ensure affordable, reliable and well connected bus services are brought forward; and
- d) delegated authority be granted to the Director: Policy & Governance to execute any legal documentation required to facilitate and implement the recommendations within this report.

CAB-14 Annual Customer Feedback report 2025/26

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resident Services presented the Annual Customer Feedback Report 2025/26.

The report provided an overview of customer feedback received across Council services, including corporate feedback, Adult Statutory Complaints, Children's Statutory Complaints and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Annual Review.

The Cabinet Member highlighted the Council's achievement in becoming the first local authority in the United Kingdom to receive the Institute of Customer Service ServiceMark accreditation and noted continued improvements across a range of customer service indicators. Compliments had increased by 24% during the year, customer satisfaction within the Contact Centre stood at 96%, and average response times for corporate complaints had reduced to seven working days.

The report also demonstrated improvements in Adult Social Care and Children's Services complaint handling and confirmed 100% compliance with Ombudsman recommendations during the reporting period.

Cabinet Members welcomed the report and paid tribute to officers and frontline staff across the Council for their professionalism, dedication and commitment to customer service. Members recognised that customer feedback, including complaints provided valuable opportunities for learning,

service development and continuous improvement, and welcomed the Council's continued focus on using feedback to inform and improve services.

Members particularly noted the increase in compliments received and the Council's national recognition for customer service excellence. They highlighted the significant volume of customer interactions handled by the Council, noting that complaints represented only a small proportion of overall contacts and welcoming the commitment to maintaining a range of accessible contact channels for residents, recognising the importance of ensuring services remained available to those who may be digitally excluded.

Members further acknowledged the positive performance within Children's Services, including improvements in response times and the work of the Voice of the Child Team, recognising the value of both positive and negative feedback in supporting learning and service improvement. The report was welcomed as evidence of the Council's commitment to openness, transparency and the delivery of high-quality services for residents.

The Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group welcomed the report and praised officers for their diligence in responding to customer concerns. He highlighted the importance of maintaining telephone access for residents and suggested further improvements to automated customer contact systems.

In response, the Leader noted the pace at which technology continued to develop and highlighted ongoing work to improve customer contact systems and service accessibility.

RESOLVED – that:

- a) **the Customer Feedback Reports for 2025-26 in respect of Adult Statutory Complaints, Children's Statutory Complaints and Corporate Customer Feedback and the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman Review Letter 2026 be reviewed;**
- b) **the positive performance highlighted in this report, including the continued increase in positive feedback, reduction in the average time to respond to complaints, growth in mystery customer volunteers and being the first council in the UK to receive ServiceMark accreditation from the Institute of Customer Services for customer service excellence be noted;**
- c) **the commitment for all directorates of the Council to provide an excellent customer experience in line with the vision and aims set out in the Customer Strategy 2025-2030 be noted; and**
- d) **the findings of this report and the importance of robust open and transparent complaint handling and feedback processes that we have introduced for our residents be welcomed.**

The meeting ended at 11.04 am

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

Anthea Lowe
Director: Policy & Governance

Signed _____

Date: Thursday 24 September 2026