Telford & Wrekin Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest to create a better borough

Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Cabinet

Thursday 12 November 2026

Adoption of Telford & Wrekin Local Plan

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Carolyn Healy – Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member: Neighbourhoods, Planning & Sustainability
Lead Director:	Ross Cook – Executive Director: Place
Service Area:	Prosperity & Investment
Report Author:	Gavin Ashford – Head of Strategic Planning
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Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key Decision:	Key Decision
Forward Plan:	Yes – 18 June 2026
Report considered by:	SMT – 13 October 2026 Business Briefing – 22 October 2026 Cabinet – 12 November 2026



1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

It is recommended that Cabinet:-

1.1 Note the Inspectors have, subject to approval of recommended modifications found the Local Plan sound.

1.2 Note that this approval will ensure a Local Plan is in place which will protect green spaces, care for existing communities and invest in the future as it will remove the risk of speculative development, create jobs and bring forward new affordable housing opportunities and support regeneration of existing housing stock.

1.3 Accept the recommendations set out in the Inspectors' report on the Examination of the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan (Appendix A) and accept their Schedule of Main Modifications (Appendix B).

1.4 Approve the further Local Plan Additional Modifications and Policies Map Modifications (Appendix C, D and E).

1.5 Recommend Full Council adopt the Local Plan on 26 November 2026 and agree it will form part of the Development Plan for the borough.

1.6 Approve the Local Plan Policies Map (Appendix H and I) incorporating changes set out in Appendix D and F, which illustrates geographically the policies in the new Local Plan 2021-2041 and forms part of the Local Plan documents.

1.7 Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Place (or any other authorised officer), in consultation with the Cabinet Member, to undertake all necessary administrative and publication steps consequential upon and following Full Council's adoption of the Local Plan, including publication of the adopted documents, including the Policies Map and related notices.

1.8 Delegate authority to the Executive Director of Place (or any other authorised officer), in consultation with the Cabinet Member, to update the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, when required.

1.9 Agree that on adoption by Full Council, the Telford and Wrekin Local Plan 2031 in Its entirety will be withdrawn and cease to have effect.

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 The new Local Plan provides a clear vision for sustainable growth which will ensure that Telford & Wrekin remains one of the greenest, and most popular boroughs in the UK. Telford and Wrekin has been recognised as the best place in England to raise a family in a recent Money Supermarket poll. This is validation of the area being a great place to not only live, but also to study, work and invest. Those components provide a great basis to set out the spatial vision for the borough in this new Local Plan.

2.2 The vision for Telford continues the Forest Community approach of setting the town in the landscape, this has been positively recognised and strengthened throughout the Plan as a result of the examination process. The Forest Community will see new developments with additional tree planting, accessible open space, parks and recreation areas that will benefit not only our existing and new residents but help extend the towns diverse natural environment and green network of interlinked green areas. The borough has amazing green spaces and more accessible open space and access to nature will help improve the physical and mental wellbeing of all our residents.

2.3 Addressing climate change through the planning process is a key priority for the plan with more energy efficient buildings helping to lower the cost of living by lowering the cost of running homes and businesses, especially for our most vulnerable residents. Policies have also been introduced to reduce carbon emissions and improve sustainability in areas such as electric vehicles and renewable energy, getting the borough climate ready.

2.4 The plan delivers new areas of employment land which will help retain existing jobs and secure new jobs through the growth of existing businesses and new businesses investing in the borough. As part of improving the economy the plan will support investment into our established communities, towns and district centres by revitalising high streets and tackling derelict and vacant sites that blight local people's daily lives. This will support wider Council led regeneration programmes such as Pride in Our High Street and Pride in Place, creating communities that are great places to live.

2.5 The Plan will provide good growth for our existing residents and new householders with funding for new infrastructure including six new schools, investment into existing schools, new parks and open space, better transport connectivity and investment into utilities and flood risk management. A plan led approach provides all our partners including the NHS, highway authorities, utilities providers, education establishments and transport operators with a clear long term 15 year forward plan of where and when growth will come forward. This enables our partners to plan for the long term with certainty, as most other public and infrastructure providers plan on five yearly cycles. In the absence of a plan there would be a loss of investment into public services and infrastructure.

2.6 The plan is an opportunity to introduce new policy approaches that extend housing choice and provide our residents with good quality affordable housing for affordable and social rent across the borough. It will also provide homes to meet the needs of our community, including homes for our young people, families, older people, key workers and care leavers. Good quality adaptable housing will enable residents to live at home longer and reduce pressure on the NHS and social care services.

2.7 The Plan underpins the Councils commitment to deliver high quality, affordable homes that meet the needs of our residents and to support residents tackle rising costs of living. This includes supporting the delivery of more energy efficient, accessible and affordable homes and providing a framework for further direct intervention in the housing market through the proposed new Council Housing

Delivery Programme which will see 300 new affordable social homes for local residents.

2.8 It is critical the borough has a robust up to date plan in place that provides a clear framework for decision making when determining planning applications and protect our communities against unwanted speculative development. The Five Year Housing Land Supply (FYHLS) position will be 6.2 years on adoption of the Plan, giving the Council a strong basis for defending the borough against unwanted speculative development. If the Council did not plan to meet its development needs and demonstrate a FYHLS, it would lose planning powers making it easier for developers to seek planning permission in areas this Plan seeks to protect.

2.9 Population growth of c28,500 is projected over the 20 year plan period, with a total borough population still well below the original vision by Telford Development Corporation of a new town consisting of 260,000 people. Telford remains the key population centre, most accessible location and destination for jobs and inward investment and will continue to grow. The Council are also planning for development needs of our communities in Newport and the rural area.

3.0 Background

3.1 The existing Telford & Wrekin Local Plan was adopted in Feb 2018 so is subject to review. The adoption of the new plan is the final stage in this process. The purpose of this report is to present the main modifications recommended by the Planning Inspectors to Cabinet for acceptance in readiness to present the plan to Full Council for formal adoption as the boroughs new development plan.

3.2 This final stage in the plan making process follows extensive examination of the plan by the independent Planning Inspectors' appointed by the Secretary of State.

3.3 In line with national guidance the Council previously consulted on Issues & Options (I&O) during 2020/21. The findings from the Issues & Options consultation informed the draft plan (Regulation 18) which was consulted on between October 2023 and January 2024. The Council reviewed comments received and amended the plan where deemed appropriate. A further period of public engagement was undertaken on the Publication Version of the plan during early 2025, following which the Plan was submitted to the Governments Independent Planning Inspectorate for examination in September 2025.

3.4 Public hearings were held in February and March 2026, the Inspectors' concluded that the Plan could be made sound subject to modification. A set of main modifications recommended by the Inspectors, as well as additional minor modifications identified by the Council were consulted on during June and July 2026. The responses received were forwarded to the Planning Inspectors for consideration to inform the final set of main modifications and Inspectors' report on the Local Plan.

3.5 A total of 3,323 residents and stakeholders engaged with the plan making process across all four periods of consultation.

3.6 Nationally government planning policy through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has over a number of years been clear that LPAs are expected to meet their obligations to maintain up to date local plans. National planning policy expects Councils to review and update local plans regularly, with a review at least every five years. The Government requires Councils to objectively assess their area's development needs and plan accordingly.

3.7 The Plan has been progressed taking account of the changes set out in the revised NPPF, which was published on 12 December 2024. The Government has released a new version of the NPPF (August 2026), this does not impact on the adoption of the Local Plan, and it is broadly aligned to the new NPPF.

3.8 The changes to the planning system continue to place significant weight on having an up-to-date local plan and on maintaining a five-year housing land supply in order to maintain control of local housing supply policies.

3.9 The local plan review will support the delivery of Council strategies that will help the borough thrive and grow in a sustainable manner, this includes the Economic Development Strategy, Local Transport Plan and Health & Wellbeing Strategy. The proposals in the Draft Plan will make a positive impact on the Council's ambition of a carbon neutral borough by 2030 as set out in the Councils Climate Change Action Plan.

4.0 Summary of main proposals

Main Modifications consultation

4.1 Following the closure of the public hearing sessions the Council consulted on a proposed schedule of main modifications to the Publication Version of the Telford and Wrekin Local Plan. The consultation received representations from 74 different residents, organisations, community groups, charities and government bodies. The 74 representations resulted in 305 individual comments in relation to the proposed main modifications.

4.2 The consultation ran for 6 weeks between the 8 of June 2026 to the 20 of July 2026. Responses could be submitted via e-mail, physical response forms or the Councils online consultation platform. Alongside the consultation on proposed main modifications the Council also provided opportunity for comments on proposed additional minor modifications, proposed policy map changes as well as the updated Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) Addendum document, these are explained further below:

- The main modifications are a list of proposed changes which have a material impact on the plan.
- The additional modifications address typographical and grammatical errors, number corrections, formatting changes and factual updates that do not materially change policy.
- The Policy Map changes are proposed to ensure the plan policies map stays consistent with the local plan and to amend any labelling errors.

- The updated Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) Addendum assesses the impact that the proposed modifications would have on the conclusions drawn in the previous IIA document.

4.3 All of the above-mentioned documents were posted on the Telford and Wrekin Local Plan Review website accompanied by a press release. Hardcopies were made available at community and Council libraries and community hubs across the Borough.

4.4 Letters were sent out to all parties which had commented at the previous Regulation 19 Publication Version stage of the plan making process as well as other key stakeholders such as infrastructure providers to make them aware of the consultation. Residents, visitors and stakeholders on the Councils Local Plan database were also informed.

4.5 Ward members, local Town and Parish Councils were informed by e-mail in advance of the start of the consultation.

4.6 Other methods of communications included the Councils e-shott notifications, social media and press releases.

4.7 The six-week consultation on proposed main modifications and additional modifications was undertaken as described, and the responses were forwarded to the Inspectors for consideration before finalising their report.

4.8 The consultation met applicable legal standards for fairness, accessibility, and representations were duly considered.

Main Modifications

4.9 The plan is subject to 147 main modifications and 18 additional modifications. The number of main modifications proposed by the inspectors is lower than the number of changes required for other midland authorities whose plans were adopted in 2026.

4.10 The key changes, recommended by the Inspectors' included within the schedule of main modifications are as follows:

- An update to the housing requirement figure as a result of the plan period being pushed back a year from 2020-2040 to 2021-2041 to ensure the plan period provides 15 years of certainty from adoption, consistent with national policy expectations.
- Positive recognition of the *"Forest Community"* throughout the plan to further clarify the desired outcome of development set within the landscape by ensuring new development remains committed to enhancing, for example, tree coverage, provision of open space and improved ecology and biodiversity.
- Further clarity provided on the Councils expectations that development will take a holistic approach to tackling climate change throughout the design process to

ensure that Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), development greening, heating / cooling strategies and sustainable drainage systems all work together to facilitate sustainable development.

- Recognition of the Councils ambitious approach to working with developers to aim to secure increased levels of BNG above the statutory minimum.
- Strengthening of town centre protections through restrictions on change of use and floor space allowance to ensure our local, district and market town centres remain prosperous and viable places for our residents to meet up, work and shop.
- Strengthening of policy HO2 to ensure consistent delivery across all 3 Sustainable Communities and to appropriately control the nature of development on the relevant allocations.
- A retention of the 35% affordable provision on homes in Newport and the Rural Area and an additional requirement for developers to seek affordable housing grant funding on schemes which would otherwise deliver below the policy requirement.
- The introduction of a clawback mechanism to ensure the Council receives fair contributions when viability of a scheme improves during the lifetime of a development.
- Modifications have been made to the plans Heritage and Natural Environment policies through productive work with Historic England and Natural England respectively, both of which expressed support during the most recent consultation.

4.11 The majority of main modifications add clarity, respond to new information which has become available since the plan was drafted and / or strengthen the plans policies to make them more effective in practice.

Additional Modifications and Policies Map changes

4.12 The additional modifications predominantly aim to address formatting errors within the plan. In total, there are 18 additional modifications proposed and as previously stated, these modifications do not have a material impact upon the plan and are a matter to be addressed by the Council not the Inspectors.

4.13 Similarly, the Policies Map proposed changes include 6 modifications primarily to address the formatting of the map. These changes include adding clearer labels to allocated sites, re-labelling certain allocations to reflect consequential changes in the main modifications and updating the extent of the green network in line with the most up to date mapping that reflects an increased area of protection.

Next steps

4.14 Subject to Cabinet approval of the main modifications a 'Consolidated Version' of the Local Plan will be produced which incorporates all main and additional modifications. A recommendation will be made to adopt the Local Plan at Full Council on 26 November 2026. Following adoption, the adopted Local Plan and

Policies Map will be published, together with an adoption statement, and made available on the Council's website and at appropriate locations. Those who submitted representations will be notified.

5.0 Alternative Options

5.1 The alternative to progressing with the adoption of the Plan would be withdrawal of the plan at this late stage. This is a highly risky and damaging approach that would expose the borough to a considerable period of unplanned speculative development.

5.2 The Council is required to maintain an up-to-date local plan under the NPPF in order to demonstrate a FYHLS and maintain control of its housing supply policies. The FYHLS position will be 6.2 years on adoption of the Local Plan, giving the Council a strong basis for defending the borough against unwanted speculative development. This would also see reduced protection for the boroughs green and natural environment as the Council would be forced to rely on increasingly out of date policies in the current Local Plan.

5.3 Not progressing the plan would result in a loss of infrastructure funding from developer contributions and government grants to support growth in the borough. This would impact the Councils ability to make improvements to the highway networks, fund improvements bus, walking and cycling networks as well new and expanded schools. It would also result in less good quality affordable and adaptable housing for rent for our residents coming forward.

6.0 Key Risks

6.1 There are a number of risks associated with alternative options to the timely adoption of the Plan these include:

- A delay in adoption of the plan or withdrawal which would undermine the Councils Housing Land Supply position increasing risk of unplanned speculative development. If developers feel the Council is unduly delaying the process they are increasingly likely to challenge the adopted local plan.
- As plans age policies require updating. A delay in the adoption process or withdrawal of the Plan would leave the Council unable to maximise benefit from development and provide the protection for areas of value such as conservation areas, landscapes and the natural environment. It also means the opportunity to introduce new policy approaches that extend housing choice and support climate change mitigation and resilience will be missed.
- The Plan will help create new jobs and bring forward new affordable housing opportunities as well as support regeneration of existing housing stock. Failure to bring the plan forward, either by delay or withdrawal, will put the boroughs most vulnerable residents at risk.

7.0 Council Priorities

7.1 The report recommendations link to the following Council priorities:

- Every child, young person and adult lives well in their community;
- Everyone benefits from a thriving economy;
- All neighbourhoods are a great place to live;
- Our natural environment is protected, and the Council has a leading role in addressing the climate emergency; and
- A community-focussed, innovative council providing efficient, effective and quality services.

8.0 Financial ~~I~~mplications

8.1 The Local Plan review obtained Cabinet approval on 2nd January 2020 with funding covered by approved budgets. All costs associated with this review to adoption stage will be met from within this funding allocation.

8.2 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) details and quantifies the impact on the Borough's infrastructure if the developments set out in the Local Plan were to be delivered. The IDP does not commit the Authority to undertaking any works if sufficient funding cannot be secured from central government grant, private funding and developer contributions, although the Authority may choose to use council prudential borrowing to bridge the funding gap for projects, either on a temporary basis whilst funding is secured or to facilitate developments which are of strategic importance. There is currently no budget provision for this, and any Council prudential borrowing would add pressure to both the capital and revenue budgets in future years. Projects will be brought forward for funding approval as the subject of separate reports, if necessary.

9.0 Legal and HR Implications

9.1 The planning system in England and Wales is plan-led. This means that the process of managing the development and use of land centres around policies set out in development plans. LPAs must prepare a local plan under Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (PCPA 2004). The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) The Local Planning Regulations 2012 set out the statutory requirements for the form and content of local plans.

9.2 The Local Planning Regulations 2012 at regulation 10 set out specific matters which the LPA must have regard to when preparing a local plan. Regulation 10A of the Local Planning Regulations 2012 provide that in respect of a local plan, a review must be completed every five years, starting from the date of adoption of the local plan.

The product of the review will be a new Local Plan document and the process for review is as follows:

- The Local Planning Regulations, regulation 18 set out specific bodies or persons that the LPA must notify and invite representations from in developing its local plan.
- The LPA must take into account any representation made and set out how the main issues raised have been taken into account.
- After this Regulation 18 stage is completed, the Council prepares the version of the local plan which it considers is ready for submission to the Secretary of State for independent examination. (The draft Local Plan document produced as part of the Regulation 18 consultation).
- The draft plan is then submitted to the Secretary of State (Regulation 19). Approval is sort from Full Council to do this.
- A forum for examination is then decided, and a pre-examination assessment is undertaken by the planning inspectorate.
- The purpose of the independent examination will be to determine whether, in respect of the reviewed local plan, a number of specified requirements are satisfied and whether the local plan is "sound". Details of the examination are published as are the Planning Inspector recommendations. Reasons for recommendations are also given. The outcome of this stage of the process may be a recommendation that the local plan be adopted or that it not be adopted or the independent examiner may recommend modifications which enable the Council to adopt.

9.3 This report proposes that Cabinet recommends to Full Council the adoption of the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan 2021–2041, incorporating the Inspectors' Schedule of Main Modifications, together with Additional (Minor) Modifications and associated Policies Map changes. Full Council is the decision-maker for adoption as set out in this report.

9.4 Public hearings were held in February and March 2026. The Inspectors concluded that the Plan could be made sound subject to Main Modifications. A schedule of Main Modifications and Additional (Minor) Modifications was consulted upon for six weeks between 8 June and 20 July, with responses forwarded to the Inspectors to inform their final report and modifications.

9.5 Adoption is proposed on 26 November 2026, following Cabinet's recommendation. The Policies Map will be adopted to illustrate geographically the policies in the Local Plan 2021–2041. On adoption, the Telford and Wrekin Local Plan 2031 will be withdrawn.

9.6 The Inspectors recommended 147 Main Modifications to make the Plan sound. The Council identified 18 Additional Modifications that do not materially change policy. Consultation has been undertaken on both the Main Modifications and Additional Modifications, and the Inspectors' final Main Modifications and report have been received. Adoption is proposed on the basis of these modifications.

9.7 Adoption of the local plan is a non-executive function to be exercised by Full Council. Section 33A Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 places a legal duty on

local planning authorities and prescribed public bodies to engage constructively, actively and on an ongoing basis to maximise the effectiveness of the local plan and in the context of strategic cross boundary matters. Officers are responding to this duty as required and as explained in this report.

9.8 It is proposed to delegate authority to the Executive Director: Place (and authorised officers) to undertake post-adoption processing, publication and other ancillary steps. This delegation will be limited to administrative actions consequential on Full Council's adoption decision.

9.9 Withdrawal or delay at this late stage would undermine the Council's position on housing land supply and increase risk of speculative development. The approach set out in the report mitigates these risks by progressing to adoption with the Inspectors recommended Main Modifications.

9.10 Section 15C(2) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (PCPA 2004) expressly provides that only one local plan may have effect in relation to a local planning authority's area at any one time. Upon adoption, the new local plan becomes part of the statutory development plan, and the previous local plan ceases to form part of it.

9.11 The proposals contained in this report can be delivered using existing resources.

10.0 Ward Implications

10.1 The proposals contained within the Plan will have implications for all wards in the borough as it will, upon adoption, be used to determine planning applications that are submitted to the Council.

11.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

11.1 The Plan seeks to deliver positive health, social and economic outcomes including:

- Better quality housing meeting a greater range of needs, including the elderly, frail and young residents. This includes supported and specialist accommodation, allowing people to live at home longer, benefitting communities and reducing pressure on health and social care services.
- The protection and creation of green accessible spaces for play, recreation and exercise which will improve the physical and mental wellbeing of residents.
- New job opportunities through new and expanded businesses in the borough.
- New investment into public infrastructure including the green and natural environment, schools, roads, play facilities and utilities.
- Improved air quality through more investment in sustainable travel and improved development layouts.
- Supporting opportunities to regenerate town centres, derelict buildings and older areas of new town estates.
- Greater opportunities for engagement with the health sector to plan for community and primary healthcare provision up to 2041.

12.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

12.1 The Council has had due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty (Equality Act 2010, s149) in preparing the Plan and in recommending its adoption. Equality has been assessed through the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA), which incorporates an Equality Impact Assessment alongside the Sustainability Appraisal, Health Impact Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment.

12.2 Equality and Diversity is a dedicated IIA objective, with the aim of tackling inequalities, ensuring decisions do not disproportionately affect those who share protected characteristic and those who don't, and ensuring services are accessible to all.

12.3 The assessment identified the following positive impacts:

- Age and disability: a wider mix of housing, including specialist and supported accommodation, supporting independent living for older and disabled residents.
- Low income and socio-economic disadvantage: retention of 35% affordable housing in Newport and the Rural Area, a requirement to seek grant funding where schemes would otherwise fall below policy, and stronger energy-efficiency policies that reduce running costs.
- Health inequalities: protected and new accessible green space, and regeneration of town centres and older estates, in areas where the IIA baseline shows greater need.
- Rural and urban access: a balanced distribution of growth across Telford, Newport and the rural area.

12.4 During the development of the plan no significant negative equality impacts have been identified. The plan and its policies will continue to be analysed through an equality lens over the lifetime of the plan.

12.5 The main modifications consultation (8 June to 20 July 2026) used online, email and paper responses, with hard copies at libraries and community hubs, letters to previous respondents, and e-shots, social media and press releases to be as inclusive as possible.

12.6 In conclusion, no significant adverse equality impacts have been identified, and positive impacts are expected for older people, disabled people and low-income households.

13.0 Climate Change, Biodiversity and Environmental Implications

13.1 The Plan will have a positive impact on the Councils ambition for a carbon neutral borough by 2030 and maintaining the borough's position as one of the greenest in the UK. This is demonstrated by:

- The protection and creation of multifunctional green spaces across developments.
- Expansion of Green Network and designation of new Local Nature Reserves helping increase residents' access to green spaces.

- Delivering investment into sustainable travel solutions including walking and cycle networks and public transport routes across the borough.
- Strengthened policies that will deliver thermal efficient climate ready homes, helping to reduce energy bills for residents across affordable and open market homes.
- Greener developments by embedding a development greening factor and Bio-diversity Net Gain into the Draft Plan.
- Strengthening policy to ensure a positive approach to the right renewable energy in the right place and the delivery of renewable solutions that meet the scale and needs of housing and employment developments.

14.0 Background Papers

1 Telford and Wrekin Local Plan – Issues & Options Consultation 24/09/20
2 Telford and Wrekin Local Plan – Draft Plan Consultation 19/10/23
3 Telford and Wrekin Local Plan – Publication Version Consultation 13/02/25

15.0 Appendices

A Inspector's Report on the Examination into the Telford & Wrekin Local Plan
B Inspector's Schedule of main modifications
C Telford & Wrekin Council Schedule of additional modifications
D Telford & Wrekin Council Schedule of Policies Map modifications
E Telford & Wrekin Council Second Schedule of additional modifications and Policies Map modifications
F Telford & Wrekin Local Plan (Publication Version)
G Consolidated Version of the Local Plan incorporating Appendices A, B and C will be appended to the Full Council Report following Cabinets acceptance of the recommended modifications
H Policies Map (Telford) incorporating modifications
I Policies Map (Borough wide) incorporating modifications

16.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Director	01/10/2026	06/10/2026	RC
Legal	17/09/2026	23/09/2026	SH
Finance	17/09/2026	01/10/2026	TD