Telford & Wrekin Co-operative Council

Protect, care and invest to create a better borough

Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Cabinet

3 December 2026

Child Friendly Implementation Progress Update

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Shirley Reynolds - Cabinet Member: Children, Young People, Education and Lifelong Learning
Lead Director:	Helen Onions – Director of Public Health
Service Area:	Children Services & Public Health
Report Author:	Gabrielle Britton – Project Officer (Child Friendly)
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Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key Decision:	Key Decision
Forward Plan:	Yes – 13 October 2026
Report considered by:	SMT – 3 November 2026 Business Briefing – 19 November 2026 Cabinet – 3 December 2026

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

It is recommended that Cabinet:

1.1 Recognise the progress made towards Telford & Wrekin becoming a Child Friendly Borough; and endorse the next phase of implementation to ensure the Child Friendly programme continues to develop borough-wide so that children and young people are at the heart of decision-making, service design and community development.

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 This report provides Cabinet with an update on the implementation progress of the Child Friendly approach across the Council, and the key actions in the next phase of implementation into 2027-2028 are outlined.

2.2 Creating a Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin starts with making sure every child has the opportunities, experiences and support they need to thrive. The programmes 5 by 5, 10 by 10 and our youth offer are all part of the shared ambition for children and young people, building on the strengths that already make our Borough a great place to grow up. That ambition is underpinned by a strong track record, including Telford recently being recognised as one of the best places in the UK to raise a family and our children's services achieving back-to-back Ofsted Outstanding ratings.

2.3 Our achievements provide a strong foundation, but becoming truly child friendly is about what comes next. We are bringing together partners, communities and families to support a shared vision, ensuring children and young people are at the heart of decision-making and to create a Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin, where every child feels valued, supported and able to reach their full potential.

2.4 This update report highlights work which is strengthening the way the voice of children and young people is shaping services and decision-making, including improved feedback arrangements to ensure participation activity is captured, shared with services and considered by decision makers. This increases transparency around how young people's views influence our strategy and policy work and service delivery, while providing clearer feedback to young people on the impact of their contributions.

3.0 Summary of Main Proposals

3.1.1 Our Children & Young People's Strategy, approved in February 2025, included the ambition for Telford & Wrekin to become a child friendly borough, putting children and young at the centre of decision-making. The Cabinet received a further report on adopting the child friendly vision and outlining the approach being taken In July 2025. Aligning young people's voices with the council-wide offers, and working alongside partners and service providers should ensure that services, opportunities, reflect what matters most to young people.

3.1.2 Child Friendly Telford & Wrekin is guided by the **seven wishes**, created by local children and young people themselves, which set out what they need to grow up happy, healthy, safe and successful in Telford and Wrekin. Together, the seven wishes provide a shared vision for the Council, partners, and providers to help every child and young person thrive.


The 7 Wishes
Working together for a happier Telford and Wrekin
A brighter future for everyone
1
I am Heard
My views are listened to and make a real difference.
2
I am Healthy
I can enjoy good physical and mental health and feel well.
3
I am Safe
I feel safe at home, at school and in my community.
4
I am Achieving
I have the opportunities and support to learn, develop and reach my potential.
5
I am Independent
I have the skills and confidence to make choices and prepare for my future.
6
I have Relationships and Friends I Trust
I have people in my life who care about me, respect me and support me.
7
I am Happy
I have fun, feel positive about my future and belong in my community.
Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin
Children and young people at the heart of everything we do
Your voice matters!
Listen
Include
Respect
Make it happen
Happier | Brighter | Telford and Wrekin


Telford & Wrekin Co-operative Council
Protect
Care and Invest
to create a better borough
Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin
Child Friendly Telford & Wrekin
Strategic Delivery Roadmap
Creating a borough where every child and young person can thrive, participate and be heard.
Strategic Foundation
Building the Framework
Internal alignment
Leadership engagement
Governance & reporting
Cabinet endorsement
Evidence & Content Development
Showcasing Existing Good Practice
Collation of Child Friendly examples
Service contributions
Best practice capture
Website content development
External Engagement & Recognition
Embedding Child Friendly Principles
Stakeholder engagement
Child Friendly stamping
Partnership development
Launch readiness
Ambassador Programme
Empowering Young People
Recruitment
Induction & training
Outreach support
Youth advocacy
Digital Development
Creating the Child Friendly Hub
Website design
User experience development
Content integration
Accessibility review
Launch Event
Celebrating Children & Young People
Borough-wide celebration event
Programme showcase
Stakeholder recognition
Website Launch
Going Live
Website go-live
Communications campaign
Public promotion
User engagement
Continuous Improvement
Maintaining Momentum
News & updates
Calendar events
Impact reporting
Ongoing engagement
Annual review & development
A brighter Telford & Wrekin for every child
CHILDREN AT THE CENTRE
WORKING TOGETHER
FAIRER OPPORTUNITIES
BRIGHTER FUTURES

3.1.3 The strategic delivery road map outlines our on-going approach, including the corporate and external alignment phasing approach with partners, identifying our key steps in delivering a Child Friendly Borough.

3.2 Children & Young People's Participation

3.2.1 The participation and voice element of Child Friendly is a crucial component, and there is an ambition that children and young person's voice is captured corporately across service areas to systematically embody the heard wish. Our participation work with young people is wide, covering an impressive range of a cross Council activities. A quarterly participation report now captures engagement activity and within children's social care, and CYP services, the Youth Offer and other offers more broadly, specifically demonstrates how participation contributes to the delivery of the seven wishes.

3.2.2 The latest report (published in August 2026) highlighted the breadth of voice which is being gathered through participation with CYP, creating a holistic and thematic approach to identify gaps in offers and reoccurring patterns of feedback. The report also identified opportunities for future development, supporting the continued embedding of the wishes within service planning, decision-making and engagement activity.

3.2.3 An overview of the breadth and depth of our participation work is shown below.

Child Friendly Telford & Wrekin – Participation as the Foundation for Change

Telford & Wrekin is committed to being a Child Friendly Borough where children and young people are listened to, valued and actively involved in shaping the decisions, services and communities that affect their lives. Participation is therefore not a standalone activity or programme of work; it is a fundamental principle that underpins how Children's Services, partners and the wider Council work alongside children, young people and families.

1.0 Participation Overview – within Children's Services

Participation Activity	Audience
Leavers Come First	Care Leavers (16–25)
Future Voices (formerly Children in Care Council)	Children in Care (8–16)
Kinship Forum	Children and Young People in Kinship Care (11–17)
LGBTQ+ Forum	Care Experienced LGBTQ+ Young People
Separated and Migrant Forum	Separated and Migrant Children and Young People
Sibling Sessions	Children in Care
Family Safeguarding Participation Events	Children, Young People and Families
Care Leaver Participation Activities	Care Leavers (16–25)
Virtual School Enrichment Programme	Children in Care and Previously Looked After Children
Voice of the Child Apprentice Activity	Across all Participation Groups
Family Hubs Child Participation Days	Children and young people accessing Family Hubs Support
CATE Participation	Children and young people affected by exploitation
Children with Disabilities / ICAN2 Short Breaks	Children and young people with disabilities accessing CWD support and ICAN2 short breaks

2.0 Wider Services – Participation Activity

Participation Activity	Audience	Frequency
SEND Participation	Children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND), their families and parent carers	Ongoing
Make a Change	Young people aged 11-18 in Telford and Wrekin	Annual Programme
Young Peoples Forum	Young people aged 11-18 across Telford and Wrekin who wish to influence local services, policies and community issues that affect their lives.	Fortnightly
Youth Parliament	Young people aged 11-18 across Telford and Wrekin who participate in the Youth Elections and are represented by elected Members of Youth Parliament	Annual/Cyclical
Voices in Unity Board	Young people aged 10-19 (and up to 25 for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) who want to work alongside professionals to shape youth services, influence strategic priorities and improve opportunities	Ongoing
AFC Telford Kicks	Children and Young People (variety of sessions available for different age groups)	Weekly
Youth Club/4 All Foundation	Children and young people within the local community, including those accessing mainstream youth provision and specialist ICAN2 activities for children and young people with disabilities	Weekly/Ongoing
Crucial Crew	Primary-aged pupils	Responds to local safeguarding and safety prioritise

3.2.4 The participation offer for children and young people growing up in Telford and Wrekin has grown significantly, with a strong focus on providing a diverse range of opportunities for young people to get involved, influence decision-making, and have their voices heard.

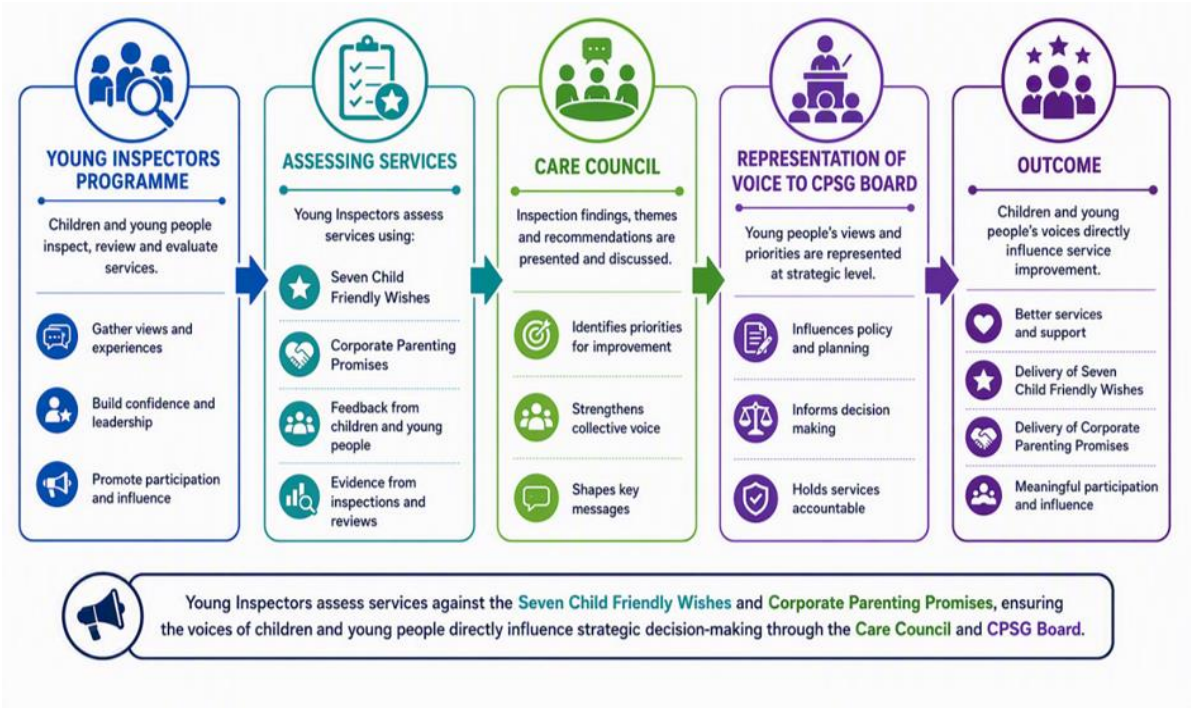
Alongside established participation forums and engagement activities, the offer now includes a broad programme of developmental, educational and wellbeing-focused opportunities. These activities are designed not only to capture youth voice but also to support personal growth, confidence and life skills development.

Young people can access sessions covering topics such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), independent living skills, mental health awareness and wellbeing, and dedicated support forums. The programme also includes sibling sessions to strengthen family relationships, LGBTQ+ Pride celebrations that promote inclusion and belonging, and regular sports and football activities that encourage healthy lifestyles.

Recognising the importance of culture, creativity and social connection, the offer further provides opportunities such as cooking challenges, theatre visits, soft play sessions, and a range of enrichment activities. Together, these contribute to a meaningful participation offer where young people are supported to learn, connect with others, build resilience, and shape the services and communities around them. This offer provides participation provision for Children and Young people that embody and support the seven wishes of Child Friendly, offering opportunities to have their voices heard.

3.2.5 Alongside the quarterly reporting on participation now in place to capture the breadth of voice, it is proposed that the national Young Inspectors model will be adopted. As part of the corporate parenting programme, and the inspectors will become guest representatives of feedback from inspections. Using Young Inspectors as representatives of young voice to champion the heard wish directly will act as a vital feedback delivery method. This will ensure provide a feedback loop from children and young people to decision makers.

3.2.6 The feedback from proposed inspections will offer clear and direct feedback from CYP using a criterion that includes emphasis on the delivery of the seven wishes of Child Friendly. Young Inspectors will feature as a part of on-going work to support and evidence the importance in recognising youth voice. Young Inspectors will feature on the Child Friendly website and support further the opportunities for Young people to influence service change.



3.2.7 A comprehensive participation offer is being developed as part of the Child Friendly Young Person's Zone. This will include a calendar of participation opportunities and key contact information. The Voice and Influence team will be included in upcoming comms promoting Child Friendly and highlighting the work they offer for Children, Young people and their parents/carers/guardians.

3.3 Communications Plan

3.3.1 The Child Friendly communications plan is a key element of the programme, and this includes the creation of the Child Friendly Stamp and Logo with supporting guidance for comms staff and wider teams, to clarify branding hierarchy and placement.

Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin

Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin

3.3.2 The process of collating examples of Child Friendly work across the Council, through service referrals to allow stamping, is on-going, with several early opportunities identified and actioned recently:

- Corporate comms and news stories
- Youth Offer
- 10 by 10
- 5 by 5
- Young Person Newsletter

- Executive/Directors Newsletters
- Best Start Family Hubs promotion
- Young Carers Charter
- BSIL (Best Start in Life) Delivery Plan
- Leisure and Green spaces
- Play Strategy consultation
- Sport England Place Expansion Bid
- Job Box promotion
- Children's Services Policies

These opportunities demonstrate growing awareness of the Child Friendly approach corporately, providing a strong foundation for expanding the recognition process across a wider range of services, strategies, and partnerships. Creating a Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin starts with making sure every child has the opportunities, experiences and support they need to thrive. Through 5 by 5, 10 by 10 and our youth offer we are setting out a shared ambition for children and young people, building on the strengths that already make our Borough a great place to grow up. That ambition is underpinned by a strong track record, including Telford recently being recognised as one of the best places in the UK to raise a family and our children's services achieving back-to-back Ofsted Outstanding ratings.

These achievements provide a strong foundation, but becoming truly child friendly is about what comes next. We plan to bring together partners, communities and families to support a shared vision, ensuring children and young people are at the heart of decision-making and we can create a Child Friendly Telford and Wrekin, where every child feels valued, supported and able to reach their full potential.

3.3.3 A video has been produced capturing early testimonials from those involved in the Child Friendly implementation and youth voice work. Various templates have been produced to support for corporate alignment and branding. These templates promote consistent branding within implementation and have been used to create supporting documentation for staff- including Vision Guide and FAQs.

3.3.4 The existing Child Friendly webpages are in the process of being re-designed, and the website re-design will incorporate the established branding and theming, with an expected launch date in January.

3.3.5 To ensure that co-production is at the heart of Child Friendly implementation, artwork has been created by the Voice of the Child Team, in collaboration with feedback from children and young people. The artwork is being aligned with existing branding for initiates such as: the Leader and Cabinet Member Young Person's Grant Scheme, the 5 by 5 and 10 by 10 initiatives and our Youth Offer web pages.



3.3.6 The communications plan is evolving, with further steps added to provide for on-going implementation. Posters, pamphlets and brochures and other visuals will be created to share the Child Friendly wishes and vision as part of the external alignment phase.



3.4 Corporate Alignment

3.4.1 The Child Friendly referral and stamping process and supporting comms materials, including the FAQs and Vision Guide, were launched at the corporate Leadership Forum session held in September 2026. Through this, positive engagement council-wide has taken place, with referral and stamping becoming corporately embedded and plans with wider comms to teams. Further staff briefings, employee voice groups and lunch and learn sessions are being organised to support ongoing awareness raising and implementation.

3.4.2 Regular Child Friendly briefings are delivered to the Executive Director Senior Leadership Team (SLT), corporate Senior Management Team (SMT) and the Cabinet Member. This is strengthening organisational awareness and understanding, promoting cross service alignment and providing oversight of progress towards Child Friendly.

3.5 Child Friendly Ambassadors

3.5.1 A Child Friendly Ambassador programme is being introduced corporately, and recruitment for this will be council-wide to ensure the seven wishes are being championed across service areas. The Ambassadors will act as a champions for the seven wishes and values of Child Friendly, becoming an employee-led group to further promote the approach.

3.5.2 Ambassadors will identify examples of Child Friendly work within their service area for referral and stamping, and contribute towards on-going Child Friendly promotion such as; the Celebration event (planned for Spring 2027), workshops, corporate alignment promotion, identifying further Child Friendly stamping opportunities.



3.6 Children's and Young People's Board

3.6.1 The CYP Board, developed following the ratification of the CYP Strategy, provides senior leadership, direction, and oversight across services which impact children and young people in Telford and Wrekin.

3.6.2 The Board brings together Directors and the Executive Director to provide strategic oversight of priorities for children and young people, driving collaboration across services, removing barriers to delivery and ensuring timely progress against key objectives. A core function of the Board will be to consider themes emerging from youth voice, engagement and participation activity, using this insight to inform decision-making, shape service development and embed the Child Friendly "Heard" wish across the organisation.

4.0 Alternative Options

4.1 The Children & Young People's Strategy 2025-2028 committed to the child friendly borough ambition, and this was full endorsed by the Cabinet. If the Child Friendly programme was not progressed the borough would lack an overarching framework for embedding children's rights and voices consistently across Council and partnership decision-making.

5.0 Key Risks

5.1 A risk register will be developed as part of the referral process for Child Friendly activity and this will be monitored by the Service Improvement and Efficiency Team and reviewed regularly through the Children Services and Public Health Senior Leadership Team.

6.0 Council Priorities

6.1 Every child, young person lives well in their community.

7.0 Financial Implications

7.1 The actions and proposals outlined in this report have been and will be funded from existing base budgets, supplemented by grant and reserve funding where appropriate. Support will be provided by the Finance team to fully cost proposals, as and when they arise. (TD)

8.0 Legal and HR Implications

8.1 Many of the workstreams contained within this report are underpinned by legislative requirements placed upon the Council. Where activities or actions are not required by legislation, the relevant powers and any applicable statutory restrictions will be

considered on a case-by-case basis, including how those activities support the Council in meeting its statutory obligations towards children within the Borough. Progressing the Child Friendly programme can support the Council's work to meet the Public Sector Equality Duty, but does not itself demonstrate compliance with that duty. Due regard to the relevant equality considerations must be given when individual decisions are taken. The report recognises the need for clear, robust and transparent oversight as the project develops. As individual proposals emerge, legal advice will be sought on a case-by-case basis to ensure that the Council acts lawfully.

9.0 Ward Implications

9.1 All Wards.

10.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

10.1 Becoming a Child Friendly Borough has the potential to deliver positive health, social and economic impacts by supporting improved physical and mental health and wellbeing through greater attention to the wider determinants of children's health, including: poverty, housing, education, community safety, access to green and play spaces, healthy food, air quality and opportunities for physical activity.

10.2 Social impacts include the strengthening of children and young people's participation in decisions affecting their lives, supporting a greater sense of belonging and connection to their communities, and help to ensure services and public spaces are inclusive and accessible. It will also encourage stronger partnership working across the council, schools, health services, voluntary and community organisations and local communities.

10.3 A stronger focus on prevention, early intervention and the conditions in which children grow up has the potential to reduce demand for higher-cost services over the longer term, creating safer, healthier and more accessible neighbourhoods may also produce wider economic benefits for families and communities.

11.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

11.1 Becoming a Child Friendly area is expected to have a positive impact on equality and diversity by embedding children's rights and participation in local decision-making and increasing attention to inequalities experienced by children and young people. Particular benefits, may arise for children who experience disadvantage, discrimination or barriers to accessing services through Child Friendly.

11.2 There is a risk that our participation activities disproportionately engage children and young people who are already well represented through various forums. This can be mitigated through targeted and accessible engagement with under-represented groups, for example through Child Friendly Ambassadors who have lived experience

of care. In addition, our Family Hubs and best start in life programme includes an approach to outreach to ensure engagement of families who experience disadvantage.

12.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

12.1 Becoming a Child Friendly Borough is expected to have positive climate change and environmental implications by strengthening consideration of children's needs in the design of neighbourhoods, transport, green spaces and the wider environment. It provides opportunities to promote active and sustainable travel, improve access to green space, reduce children's exposure to air pollution and ensure that climate resilience and adaptation take account of children's particular vulnerabilities. In the context of environmental inequalities, children living in disadvantaged communities may experience greater exposure to poor air quality, inadequate housing and limited access to high-quality green space. Any additional environmental implications from the programme can be minimised through sustainable procurement and delivery arrangements.

13.0 Child Friendly Telford & Wrekin

13.1 From January 2027 the report template for Cabinet meetings and other formal Committees will include a standard section on how the report proposals contribute to our Child Friendly ambitions.

13.2 Report authors will be required to outline the direct or indirect impact on children and young people within Telford and Wrekin and how the report proposal supports the Council's commitment to becoming a Child Friendly Borough, and the contribution to one or more of the Child Friendly Seven Wishes.

13.3 Authors will be expected to consider how the views, experiences and needs of children and young people have informed the development of the proposals, providing an overview of where the engagement has taken place and how it is being reported back through the communications plan.

14.0 Background Papers

Cabinet Report 17 Feb 2025	Children and Young People Strategy 2025-2028
Cabinet Report 17 July 2025	Becoming a Child Friendly Borough

15.0 Appendices

None.

16.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Director	23.09.2026	23.09.2026	HO
Finance	28.10.2026	28.10.2026	TD
Legal	28.10.2026	09.11.2026	DTW