

CABINET

**Minutes of a meeting of the Cabinet held on Thursday 6 November 2025
at 10.00 am in the Council Chamber, Third Floor, Southwater One,
Telford, TF3 4JG**

PUBLISHED ON WEDNESDAY 12 NOVEMBER 2025

(DEADLINE FOR CALL-IN: MONDAY 17 NOVEMBER 2025)

Present: Councillors L D Carter (Leader of the Council), R A Overton (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Highways, Housing & Enforcement) (Vice-Chair), P Davis (Cabinet Member for Communities & Civic Pride), Z Hannington (Cabinet Member for Finance, Governance & Customer Services), C Healy (Cabinet Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning & Sustainability), A D McClements (Cabinet Member for Leisure, Tourism, Culture & The Arts), S A W Reynolds (Cabinet Member for Children & Young People, Learning, Employment & Skills) and O Vickers (Cabinet Member for The Economy & Transport).

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillor P Watling (Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care & Health).

CAB-22 Declarations of Interest

None.

CAB-23 Minutes of the Previous Meeting

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the previous meeting held on 25 September 2025 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

CAB-24 Leader's Announcements

(i) Pride in Place

The Leader announced that the Council would receive Government funding of £20m over 10 years, into Woodside, which the Council would match with £10m for Woodside and Sutton Hill to bring those two areas into the programme also.

The Leader said there remained a lot more detail to come from the Government as to how this would work but said that the ambition of the fund was absolutely clear that it was a fund which would help the borough, once in a generation opportunity to tackle some of the generational issues, which

existed in some of those communities for a number of years now and that this was a fantastic opportunity to try to address these.

(ii) Ironbridge Gorge Museums' Trust

The Leader was delighted to share that, following an announcement by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, the National Trust would take over the Ironbridge Gorge Museums' Trust, which, he said was brilliant news for the borough since this would preserve the museums and secure their future. The Leader said that the Council had played its role in a number of different ways in the process and had started many months ago in helping to ensure that the Ironbridge and Gorge Museums' Trust continued to the point where they were taken over.

He said the news that the National Trust was brilliant now just from an economic development point of view but from a tourism perspective, with the ability to generate jobs and the opportunities for people across the borough, and particularly young people, to learn about the fantastic industrial heritage and history of this brilliant borough.

The Leader said that the above announcements showed that a Labour Council, working with a Labour MP and a Labour Government willing to listen but also to act by providing funding and solutions to benefit the borough.

(iii) Remembrance Day Commemorations

The Leader acknowledged that everyone in the Chamber would attend remembrance events and that over the coming weekend, the Council would play its fullest part in this not only in its own commemorations but also those across the piece. He acknowledged the work Councillor Davis had undertaken to ensure that the borough's war memorial was ready, and the Leader said the Council would do its utmost to recognise the borough's veterans, and those who had served in conflicts.

CAB-25 2025/26 Financial Monitoring Report

Councillor Zona Hannington, the Cabinet Member: Finance, Governance and Customer Services provided Cabinet with the latest financial monitoring position for the year, which related to the revenue budget, capital programme and income collection.

She said that the Council had demonstrated outstanding financial management by maintaining a balanced budget for 16 consecutive years, despite the previous government having made cuts to its spending of more than £181m since 2010. She said that this reflected the Council's unwavering commitment to prudent financial planning, robust governance and strategic decision-making. Over this period, she said, the Council had also received unqualified accounts from external auditors, which reaffirmed the integrity and transparency of its financial reporting.

Councillor Hannington said that, despite the extreme challenges faced nationally, particularly with regard to adult social care, children safeguarding and school travel assistance, the Council remained resilient. She said that the current year's projected revenue position initially indicated a £11.3m overspend, which was a significant increase since the last financial monitoring report and that this had been due to the increased demand for adult social care. However, she said, thanks to the Council's proactive financial management, the application of targeted adult social care contingencies, general budget contingencies and identification of in-year services had put the budget back into balance.

Councillor Hannington said that key pressures would be addressed through efficient service delivery. She went on to say that the borough's population of those aged over 65 had risen by 6.13% since 2021, which now made up 17.9% of the borough's total population. However, she said, the Council's statutory reserves of £21.7m remained untouched, which showed the Council's readiness for unexpected challenges and its commitment to maintaining essential services.

Councillor Hannington then listed the following key financial achievements and figures for the Council:

1. Income generated from its Grade Fund investment was over £10m per year, which yielded a return of just over 2% after the cost of borrowing, which she said, was good borrowing as it invested in the borough's communities and delivered a return to the Council and was one of the reasons why the borough's Council Tax levels remained one of the lowest in the West Midlands.
2. Additionally, she said that the nett income received from New Place included loan interests and dividends amounting to £2m per year after covering the Council's costs.

The long-term return on the Council's equity investment on New Place was forecast to be around 6%.

In terms of what this meant in respect of numbers and people within the borough, Councillor Hannington said that New Place provided accommodation for over 2,000 tenants and had brought back 48 acres of brownfield land, with 4,656 sq. metres of redundant floor space being brought back into use and working with partners to accelerate the development of brownfield land for residential use through the Telford Land Deal.

Councillor Hannington went on to say the Council was working with partners to deliver intergenerational mixed tenancy developments at Wild Walk, Donnington (329 homes that included 189 affordable homes).

She added that dementia friendly extra care was also being delivered through multi-partnership working.

Councillor Hannington said that the Council's authorised limit for borrowing was £665m for 2025/2026 and its capital financing requirement for the same period was estimated to be £489.5m, which indicated that the Council was well within its borrowing limits. She said that the Council's Capital Programme remained robust with changes that included new allocation slippage, detailed in Appendix C, all of which required the approval of the full Council.

She said that Treasury and Prudential Indicators monitoring had confirmed full compliance with governance standards, with no issues reported. She said the Council's investments were targeted, strategic and aligned with the Council's priorities. They were, she said, not only financially sound but socially impactable.

Councillor Hannington said that the Council had secured £7.3m through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which was an additional grant to support homelessness initiatives. She said that capital investments had included regeneration projects such as Dawley Swimming Pool, Wellington Time Fund and affordable housing schemes, all backed by capital receipts and external funding. She added that commercial investments continued to generate income to support local economic growth and helping the Council maintain financial resilience.

Councillor Hannington then spoke in the impact of this on the services and the community:

- Investments were helping to protect and enhance vital services, support vulnerable residents and create opportunities for growth and innovation.
- A commitment to investing wisely to secure value for money and to build a better borough for all.

She said that the Council's track record spoke for itself and it would continue to lead with integrity and purpose.

She went on to say that income streams such as Council Tax and business rates were on target, whilst sales ledger transactions were actively being pursued. She said that these efforts reflected the Council's commitment to maintaining financial stability and accountability throughout the year.

In conclusion, Councillor Hannington said that this report reaffirmed the Council's strong financial position and effectiveness of its long-term planning. It was, she said, a testament to the investments made across the borough and managing the Council's resources properly. She said that the Council remained committed to its residents while navigating economic uncertainty with confidence and clarity.

Cabinet Members spoke on the Council's commitment to keeping Council Tax low; recognised that adult social care was the biggest single issue within the Council's budget and that a lot of work was being done to reduce costs. It

was noted that savings had been and continued to be delivered, and officers were thanked for all their hard work.

It was recognised that local government was struggling, financially and that local authorities had to respond to demands, despite limited resources.

Members raised a number of issues, which included:

- A lot of work was being done to reduce the increasing costs of adult social care (currently, over 50% of the Council's budget was spent on adult social care).
- A belief that adult social care should be funded via Central Government.
- The Council was committed to building a better borough and would continue to deliver for its residents due to its good financial management and commitment to keep Council Tax low.
- Running a Council was not like running a business – it had to respond to demand, despite having limited resources.
- Because of the Council's financial management, it was still delivering a full range of services, which many other Councils had started to cut back on.
- The Council still managed to balance its budget at the end of the year, whilst not dipping into its reserves.
- The Council had managed its finances in a robust way, and has allowed it to put money into growth, new homes and leisure facilities, which not only generated new jobs for residents but also generated income for the Council.

RESOLVED – that:

- (a) The 2025/26 revenue budget position (which showed that the Council was projecting to be within budget at year end, without having to use the Budget Strategy or General Fund reserves), be noted.**
- (b) The position in relation to capital spend be noted and it be RECOMMENDED that full COUNCIL approve the changes to the Capital programme (detailed in Appendix C) and all associated changes to the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, including Treasury and Prudential Indicators.**
- (c) The collection rates for NNDR, council tax and sales ledger, be noted.**

- (d) The current position in relation to Treasury and Prudential Indicators, be noted.

CAB-26 Annual Public Health Report 2025 Smoke Free Telford & Wrekin

Councillor Kelly Middleton, Cabinet Member for Public Health and Healthier Communities, presented a report, which sought Cabinet's endorsement and support of the recommendations of the Director of Public Health's 2025 Annual Report, which were aimed at reducing the impact of smoking and vaping-related harm in the borough.

The 2025 Annual Public Health Report focussed on a smoke free ambition for Telford and Wrekin and covered the health and financial impacts for individuals who smoked, the effects on children and young people and vulnerable adults, and the wider impacts on the borough's communities. The report also introduced key local actions the Council needed to take in Telford and Wrekin to make a smoke free ambition a reality.

Councillor Middleton said that this was the first time in several years, since the Council had had a dedicated focus on this issue. She said that the report set out the scale and impact of smoking in the area and outlined how the Council could work together to deliver the Government's smoke-free ambition. She said that the report also addressed vaping, since it was recognised as a quit aid for many residents, but also highlighted the growing concerns around young people taking-up vaping.

Councillor Middleton said that, locally, the Council's Healthy Lifestyles Team continued to provide excellent substance smoking support with new national funding. She said the Council had set new local targets to strengthen links to tobacco dependency programmes in order that every contact with health services could become an opportunity to quit.

Councillor Middleton said that the Council's Trading Standards Team was working with the Police was tackling the illicit sales of tobacco and vapes, which remained a significant local challenge. She said that, nationally, the Tobacco and Vapes Bill and the NHS Ten-year Plan created opportunities for the borough with more investment, stronger NHS expectations and a greater focus on prevention in neighbourhoods. However, she said, the Council's new targets were ambitious and to achieve these would require more referrals from NHS partners particularly from GPs in community care.

Councillor Middleton said that the report recommended the development of a smoke-free ambition delivery plan, to learn from areas such as Sheffield and Greater Manchester where stronger partnerships had led to faster declines in smoking rates. She said that the Council's four key ambitions were helping more residents to quit; protected children and more vulnerable people; created more smoke-free places and strengthened enforcement against illicit tobacco and vapes.

Councillor Middleton said that Cabinet was being asked to endorse the recommendations and support the development of a partnership plan and engage the NHS and community partners to increase referrals and quit rates.

In conclusion, Councillor Middleton said that the borough's health data was now updated live through the Council's JS and A dashboards and reported on via the Health and Well-being Board ensuring the Council tracked progress throughout the year. In summary, she said that this report provided a care plan to move Telford and Wrekin towards a smoke-free borough and protecting residents and future generations from the harms of tobacco.

Members raised a number of issues, which included:

- the importance of focusing on this given the impact of smoking and the knock-on effects it had on the Council's Adult Social Care budget.
- How could the Council target black market sales of tobacco and vapes?
- There was more the Government needed to do to enhance legislation around the sale of these products.
- Concerns around the increase in numbers of young people vaping.
- Whether the Government would consider vapes, for people determined to stop smoking, being acquired through prescription and not general sale.
- Health risks to those who suffered from passive smoking.

RESOLVED – that the recommendations of the Director of Public Health's 2025 Annual Report, which were aimed at reducing the impact of smoking and vaping-related harm in the borough, be endorsed and supported.

CAB-27 Local Kinship Offer

Councillor Shirley Reynolds, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People, Education and Lifelong Learning, updated Cabinet on services provided to kinship carers (and the children they cared for) who resided in Telford and Wrekin and sought Cabinet's endorsement to the publication of the Telford and Wrekin Local Offer for Kinship Carers.

Councillor Reynolds said that, in Telford and Wrekin, the Council believed that every child deserved to grow up in a safe, loving environment, ideally within their own family or close network. She said that when children could not live with their parents, kinship parents, who may have been grandparents, aunts, uncles, siblings or close family friends, could step-in to provide stable love and continuity. She went on to say that these carers played a vital role in keeping

children connected to their roots, culture and identity, which enabled them to maintain strong links with birth parents (but only where this was appropriate) as sadly for some children, contact with their birth family may not be suitable for a number of various reasons.

Councillor Reynolds said that it was an underlying principle of the Children Act 1989, that children should be enabled to live within their family unless this was not consistent with their welfare. She said it was the Council's belief that children should be in loving homes and one of the options was kinship care. To support this, Councillor Reynolds said the Council was proud to publish its kinship local offer, a clear and accessible guide to the services and support available for kinship families across the borough.

Councillor Reynolds said this offer was more than a document, but the Council's commitment to care, compassion and community. She said that, nationally, there was a growing recognition of the importance of kinship care and new statutory guidance from the Department of Education in October 2024, defined kinship care broadly, which covered informal arrangements, private fostering and formal court orders. She said that the guidance called on Councils to appoint a senior kinship lead, publish a comprehensive kinship local offer, provide support based on children's needs (not just legal status) and focus on identifying family networks early. These principles, she said, were imbedded in the Children's Social Care National Framework, which placed children's voices and family connections at the heart of care planning.

Councillor Reynolds said that children's services within Telford and Wrekin had long championed family first approaches and the Council's Family First Strategy already prioritised keeping children within their birth families, wherever it was safe and appropriate. She said the Council had built on this foundation to co-produce its kinship local offer with carers, children and partner agencies. She added that their lived experiences informed service design and ongoing co-production was supported by feedback mechanisms and the voice of the child apprentices.

Councillor Reynolds said the Council's approach had been recognised nationally as best practice example for kinship care support. She said the Council had listened to carers and had responded with training and peer support tailored to real life experiences and therapeutic services to help children and carers heal from trauma and accessible resources, which included leaflets and online guidance.

Councillor Reynolds said that the Council had created a parent worker role to bridge relationships between carers, birth parents and the Council and had expanded well-being support through family hubs, home start, citizens' advice, digital support, peer support groups and emergency food support through the Interfaith Council. She added that children in kinship care benefitted from virtual school support, breakfast clubs, youth services and pupil premium plus funding. She went on to say that ongoing feedback and review mechanisms were in place to ensure the offer evolved with community needs and this offer would be reviewed after six months and again after a year.

Councillor Reynolds said that every elected member and employee of the Council, along with its partner agencies, had a duty to support children, young people and their families to the best of their ability. She said everyone was responsible for providing the best possible care, safeguarding and outcomes for the children who were supported by these services and forming a shared vision as to how this should be achieved.

Councillor Reynolds said, looking ahead, this was a living offer, which would be updated regularly and shaped by those it served. She said the Council was proud of the progress it had made, and it remained committed to working with kinship families to ensure every child in Telford and Wrekin had the opportunity to thrive in a loving and connected home.

In conclusion, Councillor Reynolds said she fully recommended the local offer for kinship carers and asked Cabinet to approve the publication of the offer and to acknowledge the national developments of the kinship care and how the Council had applied these locally.

Members raised a number of issues, which included:

- The provision of a loving home was vital for children to grow up in.
- Children who had suffered early life trauma required ongoing support, as did their families.
- The kinship local offer showed that, as a Council, it absolutely wanted what was best for children in its community.

RESOLVED – that:

- (a) The publication of the Telford and Wrekin Local Offer for Kinship Carers, be endorsed.**
- (b) The content of the report, acknowledgement of the national developments in Kinship Care and how the Council had applied these locally, be noted.**

The meeting ended at 10.58 am

Signed for the purposes of the Decision Notices

Anthea Lowe
Director: Policy & Governance
Date: **Wednesday 12 NOVEMBER 2025**

Signed

Date: Thursday 4 December 2025