



Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Cabinet

17 July 2025

2025/26 Financial Monitoring Report

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Zona Hannington - Cabinet Member: Finance, Governance and Customer Services
Lead Director:	Michelle Brockway - Director: Finance, People and IDT
Service Area:	Finance, People and IDT
Report Author:	Pauline Harris – Finance Manager
Officer Contact Details:	Tel: 01952 383701 Email: pauline.harris@telford.gov.uk
Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key Decision:	Key Decision
Forward Plan:	21 May 2025
Report considered by:	SMT – 17 June 2025 Business Briefing – 26 June 2025 Cabinet – 17 July 2025 Full Council – 17 July 2025

1.0 Recommendations for Decision/Noting

It is recommended that Cabinet:

- 1.1 Notes the 2025/26 revenue budget position, which shows that the Council is projecting to be within budget at year end, without having to use the Budget Strategy or General Fund reserves;
- 1.2 Notes the position in relation to capital spend; and recommends 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

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1.3 Notes the collection rates for NNDR, council tax and sales ledger.

It is recommended that Council:

1.4 Notes the 2025/26 revenue budget position, which shows that the Council is projecting to be within budget at year end, without having to use the Budget Strategy or General Fund reserves;

1.5 Notes the position in relation to capital spend and approves 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.

1.6 Notes the collection rates for NNDR, council tax and sales ledger.

2.0 Purpose of Report

2.1 To provide Cabinet with the latest financial monitoring position for the year relating to: the revenue budget, capital programme and income collection.

3.0 Background

3.1 The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2025/26 to 2028/29 was approved at Full Council on 27 February 2025, which included the 2025/26 revenue budget and medium term capital programme. Since the MTFS was approved, the economic climate has continued to be challenging with cost and demand pressures being experienced, particularly in relation to the provision of Adult Social Care.

3.2 Good financial management is an essential element of good governance and long-term service planning which are critical to ensuring that local service provision is sustainable and the use of resources is maximised in order to meet the needs of our residents.

3.3 Financial management is the responsibility of budget holders and is supported by Finance staff using a risk-based approach: more focus is given to higher risk areas (high value/more volatile) whilst less frequent financial monitoring is undertaken on budgets deemed to be medium to lower risk. Financial monitoring provides Cabinet and Senior Management Team with a focussed view on the Council's financial performance, to inform and support decision making and to ensure financial sustainability.

3.4 This Financial Monitoring Report for 2025/26 provides the latest projections in relation to the projected outturn position i.e. how projected net revenue spend compares to the budget set for the year - progress against the approved 2025/26 capital programme - the key issues to be highlighted; together with a summary of collection information in relation to Council Tax, Business Rates and Sales Ledger income.

3.5 The Government has committed to reforming the Local Government Finance System with the intention that 2026/27 will be the first year of a new funding regime for Local Authorities. The new system will include an updated assessment of relative needs and resources and a reset of the Business Rates Retention Scheme.

While there will be some transitional measures to smooth the impact of changes, the detailed implications for individual authorities are unlikely to be known until December 2025. As part of the process, a consultation was launched in June: The Fair Funding Review, which is seeking views on determining new funding allocations for local authorities and outlines proposals to update the overall funding system. This will feed into a Policy Statement to be published in the Autumn. This context makes financial planning extremely challenging. The funding outlook for the medium term therefore remains very uncertain and will clearly continue to be challenging, particularly given the Council has already had to deliver £181.7m ongoing budget savings since 2009/10.

- 3.6 There is a statutory duty for local authorities to set a balanced and robust budget each financial year and to take timely action to address financial pressures. In order to support unforeseen pressures the approved budget for 2025/26 includes contingencies of £7.2m (£3.95m General contingency and £3.25m specific contingencies including £2m for Adult Social Care). This supports the Council's aim to continue to deliver quality services whilst ensuring a balanced budget.

4.0 Summary of main proposals

- 4.1.1 Nationally, Councils continue to face extreme challenges in 2025/26 with unprecedented pressures driven by high costs and high demand for services – particularly Adult Social Care, Children's Safeguarding and School Travel Assistance.
- 4.1.2 On 11 June 2025 the Chancellor announced the Spending Review which set out budgets for all government departments for the period 2026/27 to 2028/29, and up to 2029/30 for capital investments.

The Local Government settlement showed an additional £3.3 billion grant funding in real terms for local authorities in 2028/29 compared with 2023/24, resulting in an average overall real terms increase in local authority core spending power between 2023/24 and 2028/29 of 3.1% per year.

The key announcements relating to local government at a national level include, additional housing investment, early intervention funding for the prevention of homelessness, additional funding for Adult Social Care (via increases to NHS budgets), funding to transform Children's Social Care, a SEND reform (with a White Paper due in the Autumn) and consolidation of the Household Support Fund into a new Crisis and Resilience Fund for households..

The Spending Review also reaffirmed the Government's commitment to multi-year allocations and moving to a more up-to-date assessment of each council's needs and resources as part of the 2026/27 Local Government Finance Settlement.

Overall, the Spending Review provides some additional investment for local government which is welcome however financial pressures will continue in 2025/26 and detailed information for individual council is unlikely to be fully available until the Local Government Finance Settlement is announced in December 2025, and further detail relating to grant funding is available, to determine the implications for Telford & Wrekin Council.

- 4.1.3 Whilst inflation is expected to reduce in the medium term, current indicators show that the economy will be slower to recover than was expected when the Council's budget was set. In May 2025, CPI was 3.4% which is above the Bank of England's 2% target. The Bank of England reduced base rate from 4.5% in April to 4.25% in May but is still higher than was anticipated when the Council's budget was set.
- 4.1.4 Given these factors, monitoring for 2025/26 indicates a number of variations from the approved budget, notably relating to Adult Social Care where in order to meet the needs of the most vulnerable residents, additional investment is required.
- 4.1.5 Strong financial management and prudent financial planning mean that the Council has budgeted contingencies in place, £3.95m General Contingency and £3.25m specific contingencies including £2m for Adult Social Care, to meet the financial pressures currently being projected. This will ensure that the overall position will be within the budget set at year end.
- 4.1.6 The Council has an excellent track record of strong financial management and Cabinet Members and budget holders will continue their work to manage budgets as effectively as possible during the year.
- 4.1.7 Projections will continue to be refined as the year progresses. Whilst extremely challenging, the Council's aim is to continue to deliver quality services to the residents of the borough and protect critical front-line services.
- 4.1.8 A summary of the current projection for the year end position is:-

	£m
Net Revenue Budget	167.640
Projected Net Revenue Outturn	172.503
Projected Pressures	+4.863
Use of One off Budgeted Contingency (earmarked for Social Care Pressures)	-2.000
Use of One off Budgeted Contingency (earmarked for general pressures)	-0.750
Use of General Budget Contingency	-2.113
Projected Year End Variance i.e. net spend will be within budget	0.000

- 4.1.9 There are a number of variations from the approved budget, detailed in Section 5. The key variance is Adult Social Care (ASC), with £5.6m additional investment currently being required relating to the cost of providing care packages across all client groups. This includes the impact of market price increases, more complex needs, higher demand and longer periods of care being required; all of which are being analysed by the Service with the aim of refining projections and managing spend. This is after additional net investment of £7.7m into ASC in 2025/26 as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

4.2 Capital

The capital programme totals £138.6m for 2025/26 which includes all approvals since the budget was set. Schemes are in progress and at the time of compiling this report spend is projected to be under budget which indicates that there is likely to be re-phasing into 2026/27 at year end. It is, however early in the year and the programme will continue to be monitored and updates brought in future reports.

4.3 Corporate Income Collection

Income collection rates are currently behind the targets set, however it is early in the year and work continues to actively pursue all income due. Ultimately, all debt will be pursued and will continue to be collected after the end of the financial year with all appropriate recovery avenues being pursued.

5.0 Additional Information

5.1 The overall 2025/26 monitoring position against the budget is summarised in the table below:

Service Area	Budget	Total Current Variation
	£m	£m
Finance, People & IDT	18.836	0.000
Policy & Governance	1.282	0.045
Adult Social Care	77.235	5.569
Housing, Commercial & Customer Services	6.253	0.000
Children's Safeguarding & Family Support	49.565	(0.004)
Education & Skills	14.308	0.483
Health & Wellbeing	0.828	0.000
Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	31.612	0.001
Prosperity & Investment	(6.318)	0.000
Council Wide	(25.960)	(1.231)
Total Pressures	167.641	+4.863
Use of Budgeted Contingencies		-4.863
Projected Year End Position - Within Budget		0.000

5.2.1 Projected variances over £0.250m are highlighted below, all other variances over £50k are detailed in Appendix B.

Service Area	Variance £m
<u>Adult Social Care</u>	
Longer Term Care Purchasing –expenditure relating to block and spot contracts continues to be under significant pressure. The trajectory of growth is being monitored closely. The service continues to work on delivering care which maximises prevention and independence where possible.	+5.370
Income – anticipated to be higher than income targets	-0.433
My Options – in house purchasing - the impact of increased demand and increased charges.	+0.950
Short-term Reablement Care & Prevention Work continues with the ICB to reduce the pressure on the Better Care Fund budget, this will be closely monitored through the year	
<u>Children’s Safeguarding & Family Support</u>	
Children in Care, Leaving Care Team & Speciality Services, Family Solutions:	
CIC placements, Post 18 Staying Put & Leaving Care Support – lower than budgeted costs which includes the full year impact of savings from the work with Impower and ongoing work on prevention, early intervention and review of placement costs.	-0.257
Homelessness – relates to homelessness accommodation costs	+0.353
<u>Education & Skills</u>	
Employee costs – additional costs due to inflationary pressures relating to historic teacher pension costs	+0.268
<u>Council Wide</u> - various underspends, including higher than budgeted Business Rates Retention Section 31 grant and release of provision for savings which do not benefit general fund.	-0.989

5.2.2 Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG)

Dedicated Schools Grant sits within Education & Skills and is monitored separately to the Council's General Fund position shown in Section 5.1. Excluding funds passed to academies and colleges, Dedicated Schools Grant totals £130m in 2025/26. DSG deficits are currently required to be held in a separate reserve in local authorities' accounts.

Telford & Wrekin's DSG had a deficit of £4.66m at the end of 2024/25 which has carried forward into 2025/26. This was made up of £1.82m deficit carried forward from 2023/24 plus the 2024/25 in year overspend of £2.84m.

The deficit arises because of high needs budget pressures. This is a national issue, illustrated by most upper tier Councils having a DSG deficit by the end of 2023/24 which totals £2.148bn nationally. In order to alleviate pressure on the 2025/26 high needs budgets, Telford & Wrekin's schools forum again agreed to transfer 0.5% of the schools block to high needs, amounting to £0.9m. This agreement illustrates the positive relationships with schools and other providers which are invaluable in assisting the Council to maintain budgetary control of DSG, whilst ensuring that we meet our responsibilities to young people.

The increase in the Government's 2025/26 high needs funding allocation to Councils, including Telford & Wrekin, is higher than in 2024/25, which will assist in meeting cost pressures. The Council has established a cost improvement plan to address high needs budget pressures and continues to work hard to tackle the high needs pressures in partnership with the Forum, schools and other providers of education. However, with continuing growth in demand for high needs support, the budget situation will remain challenging in 2025/26.

The way in which local authorities account for DSG deficits was altered in 2020. DSG deficits are now required to be held in a separate reserve in local authorities' accounts and is disregarded from the measure of local authority reserves. These regulations currently apply up to 31 March 2026. The Government is proposing to extend this to March 2028 and will work with local authorities to manage DSG deficits. Further detail is anticipated as part of the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement later in the year.

The position is being closely monitored and updates will be included in future reports when more information is known.

5.3 CONTINGENCIES, RESERVES & BALANCES

- 5.3.1 The 2025/26 budget includes a general revenue contingency of £3.950m which is set aside to meet any unforeseen expenditure or income shortfalls during the year and a one-off contingency of £3.250m set aside specifically for Social Care pressures, PIP and other pressures.

The current projected position would require use of all of the one-off contingency earmarked for Social Care and would leave a balance of £1.837m in the general contingency and £0.5m in the other contingency for the remainder of the year (see table in 4.1.8).

5.3.2 There is also a contingency amount held centrally for contractual and pay inflation. Any residual balance, when the pay award and inflation requirements are known, will be applied to support the overall position.

5.3.3 The Budget Strategy Reserve remains at £21.7m.

5.4 CAPITAL

5.4.1 2025/26 Capital Programme

The 2025/26 capital programme totals £138.6m. The financial position is shown in the table below and shows projected spend at £135.7m which indicates that there will be some re-phasing into 2026/27 required at year end. It is early in the year and the programme will continue to be monitored and updates brought in future reports.

Service Area	Approved Budget	Spend	% Spend	Year End
	£m	£m		£m
Prosperity & Investment	72.96	4.79	6.57%	71.87
Policy & Governance	0.07	0.00	0.00%	0.07
Education & Skills	21.65	1.85	8.57%	21.65
Adult Social Care	0.09	0.00	0.00%	0.02
Neighbourhood & Enforcement Services	21.13	0.87	4.10%	21.13
Hsg, Commercial & Customer Services	14.97	0.95	6.35%	13.58
Finance, People & IDT	5.89	0.46	7.87%	5.91
Corporate Items	1.81	0.00	0.00%	1.51
Total	138.57	8.92	6.4%	135.74

5.4.2 The 2025/26 capital programme is underpinned by capital receipts as part of its funding. Capital receipts included in the medium term budget strategy are kept under continual review and any changes will be reflected in future budget projections but are currently projected to be on target.

5.4.3 Changes to the capital programme are shown in Appendix C for approval.

6.0 CORPORATE INCOME MONITORING

6.1 The Council's budget includes significant income streams which are regularly monitored to ensure they are on track to achieve targets that have been set and so that remedial action can be taken at a very early stage. The three main areas are Council Tax, NNDR (business rates) and Sales Ledger. Current monitoring information relating to these is provided below. The Council pursues outstanding debt vigorously, until all possible recovery avenues have been exhausted, but also prudently provides for bad debts in its accounts.

- 6.2 In summary, collection is outside the targets, however it is early in the year and work continues to actively pursue all income due.

INCOME COLLECTION – MAY 2025			
	Actual	Target	Performance
Council Tax Collection	18.82%	19.09%	0.27% behind target
NNDR Collection	23.99%	24.25%	0.26% behind target
Sales Ledger Outstanding Debt	9.34%	6.00%	3.34% behind target

6.3 Council Tax (£127.3m)

This measure represents the percentage of the current year liability for council tax which the authority should have received during the year, as a percentage of annual collectable debit. The measure does not take account of debt that continues to be pursued and collected after the end of the financial year in which it became due. The final collection figure for all financial years exceeds 99%.

Year End performance 2024/25	97.1%
Year End Target for 2025/26	97.3%

Performance is cumulative during the year and expressed against the complete year's debit.

Month End Target	Month End Actual	Last year Actual
19.09%	18.82%	18.97%

Collection rates are slightly behind target. There are more accounts paying by 12 monthly instalments than this time last year which should have a positive impact on collection rates by year end.

6.4 NNDR-Business Rates (£86.8m)

This measure represents the percentage of business rates for 2025/26 that should have been collected during the year. This target, as for council tax, ignores our continuing collection of earlier years' liabilities.

The measure does not take into account the debt that continues to be pursued and collected after the end of the financial year in which it became due. As a general rule the final collection figure for any financial year exceeds 99%.

Year End performance 2024/25	98.1%
Year End Target for 2025/26	98.1%

Month End Target	Month End Actual	Last year Actual
24.25%	23.99%	24.25%

Collection rates are slightly behind the monthly target and performance last year, although this does not cause concern so early in the financial year.

6.5 Sales Ledger (£96.9m)

This includes general debt and Social Care debt. Debt below 2 months is classified as a normal credit period.

The target percent is set relating cumulative debt outstanding from all years to the current annual debit. The targets and performance of income collection for 2025/26 are as follows:

	Annual Target %	May 2025	
		£m	%
Total	6.00	9.051	9.34

Sales ledger performance is outside of target, although there are some larger organisational debts which we are working with Finance colleagues to liaise with the debtor to recover.

7.0 Alternative Options

- 7.1 Budget holders will investigate a number of options to seek to deliver required service outcomes from within budgeted resources. Options to deliver savings and additional income have been explored.

8.0 Key Risks

- 8.1 Budget holders actively manage their budgets and the many financial risks and challenges that council services face, examples include the risk of a particularly harsh winter which would impact adversely on the winter gritting and adult social care budgets, the increasing dependency on income from a wide range of activities and the risk of interest rate movements and further inflationary pressures, the risk of changes in legislative or accounting requirements impacting on budgets etc. The Council has comprehensive risk management arrangements in place, which are reviewed and updated by the Senior Management Team.

9.0 Council Priorities

- 9.1 Delivery of all Council priorities depends on the effective use of available resources. Regular financial monitoring in the financial management reports helps to highlight variations from plan so that prompt action can be taken to effectively manage the Council's budget.

10.0 Financial Implications

- 10.1 The financial impacts are detailed throughout the report.

11.0 Legal and HR Implications

- 11.1 The S151 Officer has a statutory duty to monitor income and expenditure and ensure that the Council takes action if overall net overspends /shortfalls emerge. There is also a legal requirement to ensure that the statutory service provision meets demands.

- 11.2 Legal services will provide ongoing advice in relation to specific proposals relating to the making of savings, including on any requirement to undertake consultation as such proposals are brought forward for consideration, the impact of any proposed savings on the delivery of statutory services and any other legal matter arising.

12.0 Ward Implications

- 12.1 There are no impacts on specific wards

13.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

- 13.1 There are no Health, Social and Economic Implications directly arising from this report.

14.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 14.1 There are no Equality & Diversity implications directly arising from this report. Proportionate impact assessments are carried out and a range of consultation mechanisms are used where appropriate.

15.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

- 15.1 There are no Climate Change and Environmental Implications directly arising from this report.

16.0 Background Papers

- 1 Medium Term Financial Strategy 2025/26 to 2028/29 Council 27/02/2025

17.0 Appendices

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|------------|---|
| Appendix A | Summary of 2025/26 Projected Variations |
| Appendix B | 2025/26 Revenue Variations over £50,000 |
| Appendix C | Capital Approvals |

18.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Director	11/06/2025	20/06/2025	MLB
Finance	10/06/2025	20/06/2025	ER
Legal	11/06/2025	19/06/2025	ACL