

NON-CONFIDENTIAL



Borough of Tamworth

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CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

10 March 2025

Dear Councillor

A Meeting of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee will be held in **Town Hall, Market Street, Tamworth on Tuesday, 18th March, 2025 at 6.00 pm.** Members of the Committee are requested to attend.

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. C. V.'.

Chief Executive

A G E N D A

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- 1 Apologies for Absence**
- 2 Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 5 - 12)**
- 3 Declarations of Interest**

To receive any declarations of Members' interests (personal and/or personal and prejudicial) in any matters which are to be considered at this meeting.

When Members are declaring a personal interest or personal and prejudicial interest in respect of which they have dispensation, they should specify the nature of such interest. Members should leave the room if they have a personal and prejudicial interest in respect of which they do not have a dispensation.

- 4 Chair's Update**
 - 5 Responses to Reports of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee**
 - 6 Consideration of Matters referred to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee from Cabinet / Council**
 - 7 Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution (Pages 13 - 24)**
(Report of the Leader of the Council)
 - 8 Update on Housing Voids (Pages 25 - 36)**
(Report of the Assistant Director, Assets)
 - 9 Update on Asset Management Strategy & Plans (Pages 37 - 54)**
(Report of the Assistant Director, Assets)
 - 10 Draft Annual Report of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee (Pages 55 - 76)**
(Report of the Chair of Corporate Scrutiny)
 - 11 Working Group Updates**
To provide an update on any working groups
 - 12 Forward Plan**
(Discussion item – link to the Forward Plan attached)

[Browse plans - Cabinet, 2024 :: Tamworth Borough Council](#)
 - 13 Corporate Scrutiny Committee Work Plan**
(Discussion Item – to review the Committees work plan)
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Access arrangements

If you have any particular access requirements when attending the meeting, please contact Democratic Services on 01827 709267 or e-mail democratic-services@tamworth.gov.uk. We can then endeavour to ensure that any particular requirements you may have are catered for.

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FAQs

For further information about the Council's Committee arrangements please see the FAQ page [here](#)

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To Councillors: S Smith, G Coates, M Couchman, H Hadley, K Norchi, B Price,
M Summers, J Wadrup and A Wells

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MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD ON 6th FEBRUARY 2025

PRESENT: Councillor S Smith (Chair), Councillors G Coates, M Couchman, H Hadley, M Summers and A Wells

CABINET Councillor Carol Dean

The following officers were present: Anica Goodwin (Executive Director Organisation), Joanne Goodfellow (Interim Executive Director Finance and Deputy Section 151 Officer), Amerdip Kaur (Assistant Director – Policy and Performance), Christie Tims (Corporate Project Co-ordinator) and Leanne Costello (Senior Scrutiny and Democratic Services Officer)

66 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J Wadrup and B Price.

67 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 19th November 2024 were approved as a correct record.

(Moved by Councillor M Couchman and seconded by Councillor M Summers)

68 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

69 CHAIR'S UPDATE

There was no update

70 RESPONSES TO REPORTS OF THE CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

There were none.

71 CONSIDERATION OF MATTERS REFERRED TO THE CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FROM CABINET / COUNCIL

There were none.

72 CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE REPORT AND ACTION PLAN

Report of the Leader of the Council to advise members of the Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge Report and seek approval for the draft action plan in response to its recommendations and any follow-up actions to complete the challenge in the required timescale.

The Chair welcomed the Leader of the Council, the Assistant Director, Policy & Performance and the Corporate Project Coordinator.

The Leader of the Council introduced the report confirming that the Council had received a comprehensive and complementary report. The report had been published to comply with the 31st January 2025 deadline and deadline of the 31st March to publish the final version of the action plan and the progress review from the LGA expected in September were highlighted.

The Committee made the following comments/observations and asked the following questions:

1. It was acknowledged that the report noted that the Council was doing and that well, it noted the financial situation and that it is being addressed. Officer confirmed that the financial situation was highlighted, and a lot of work was going on to factor in the financial challenges, which is why they are not able to finalise the action plan until this process is completed.
2. Why had it taken so long for the Council to hold a Peer Review following the previous review in 2013?
Officers confirmed that there had been two changes in Chief Executive since 2013. The review was carried out under one Chief Executive, the Council then had to allow time to work through the development plan. Another review was planned but a number of factors, including the passing of the LGA Member supporting them, followed by a member of staff, as well as timing around political factors. However, the Council continued to engage with the LGA and when the previous Chief Executive announced their retirement the decision was taken for this happen.
The Chair highlighted that the current Chief Executive had raised the Peer Review in their first conversation.
3. How are we addressing the comments around lack of engagement from some Members.
Officers confirmed that Member engagement was highlighted in terms of lack of take up of training and learning opportunities, in particular in relation to the Audit and Governance Committee and this something that the Council needed to get to the bottom of, to support Members to access learning meaningfully. There was also limited take up of opportunities for Members to join in during the three-day Peer challenge and that is something that we would want to see improving when they return in

September. It was noted the majority of members attended the member briefing held recently to relay the findings from the report.

4. How are we going to manage our assets to ensure that there is no more burden on the Council and taxpayer? Clarification around the steering group and confirmation that the Asset Management Strategy would be coming back to Corporate Scrutiny Committee?

It was confirmed that this was picked up by Officers prior to the review and discussions were held during the review, at the same time that the Asset Management Strategy was approved. Work now needed to make sure that details plans were in place to close any risks down and maintain assets. It was confirmed that the steering group was currently officer based, made up of Executive and Assistant Directors who meet quarterly, and that the frequency was being increased.

The Committee suggested that following the review that the report needed looking at again and highlighted the importance of the plans being progressed at pace.

5. Concerns around the events of last August and the time taken to respond to support communities, so they know that Council are listening. Clarification around the work around honest conversations and that this was not a holding exercise whilst the Government strategy was being prepared. The importance of an honest conversation amongst themselves, whether with the public or cross-party about why events happened and how the Council should respond and how the Council could ensure that these conversations could be truly honest without respondents feeling they will be judged for their views.

It was confirmed that there were consultants in place carrying out a piece of work which was planned to come to Cabinet in April with an action plan of what was to follow based on the recommendation from the specialists. The Leader confirmed that they had a meeting scheduled with the consultants for an update coming up and they would let Members know as soon as possible what was happening. It was highlighted that it is incumbent on Councillors to continue to make sure they are listening to residents as leaders in our communities. They highlighted that it is important that they find out the reasoning behind the actions of residents and why they are feeling disenfranchised.

6. What 'asset-based community engagement' was?

It was confirmed that this was about recognising the strength, skills and diversity within the community and the Council supporting and facilitating communities to use these tools to support their own development and growth and support each other. Good examples of this could be found via the Cooperative Councils' Innovation Network. [Co-operative Councils' Innovation Network Home Page](#)

7. There are lots of action plans, but how will the Council ensure that they prioritise in terms of delivery, and how will they compromise and try not to do everything and achieve nothing? It was confirmed that Scrutiny would like to review the actions quarterly and understand what can be achieved. Officers confirmed that the Council were trying to focus on what they needed to deliver in the next year and to bring transparency and oversight to those recommendations. Officer oversight would be through the Corporate Management Team performance board and as part of the quarterly cycle this will be brought to Cabinet.

8. Clarification over the Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment as section four seems quite generic?
Officers confirmed that this is the first cycle of the new style impact assessment which is far more detailed than it was, and that this was not just a one off and as the plan develops would be revisited and will have a contribution from all officers involved in the plan.
9. Clarification around the impact of devolution planning and how the council would manage resourcing and how this will affect delivery of the action plan when all of the policies and structure that the Council have in place would no longer exist?
The Leader confirmed that they had been at a meeting of the Staffordshire Leaders Board talking about next steps but that for the moment the day job must go on serving the residents and getting Tamworth in the best place it can be for the future.
It was confirmed that an internal project group has been set up and these matters were being considered. Some key risks have been identified, such as retaining staff, managing budgets and what happens in year three. There are lots of unknowns but that they would come back to the Committee in the future with what they do know and what they are planning but for now they will continue to deliver with what they have.
10. In relation to Future High Street Fund and communication, whether digital notice boards had been considered?
The Leader confirmed that they had concerns over communications, and this has improved with the hoardings. The communications team have done a lot including making videos to let residents know what is going on. The Leader and Portfolio Holder also went around and spoke to retailer down the middle entry, and they were surprised at the amount of misinformation out there. Digital signs had not been considered.
11. Clarification around the performance management framework and what this is?
It was confirmed that this is an internal document that was included in the position statement for the LGA and links into the annual Performance Development Reviews for employees.
12. A comment was made in respect to the home/hybrid working that a recent study from nature.com that a hybrid schedule with two days working from home does not damage performance but that more than that could affect productivity.
13. Why the BRAG key was not filled out?
Officers confirmed that this was a draft and that timings and objectives were still being confirming making it impossible to fill in but that this would be completed for the deadline of the 31st March 2025.

The Committee acknowledged the committed and hard-working staff and moved a motion to:

Extend thanks to all staff who have presented Tamworth in a positive light during the recent peer review.

(Moved by Councillor M Couchman and seconded by M Summers)

Resolved that the committee

1. noted the publication of LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Report as set out in Appendix 1
2. commented on the draft action plan developed to respond to the recommendations as set out in Appendix 2
3. endorsed the delegation to finalise development of this plan and publish it before the 31 March 2025 deadline
4. endorsed the plans to provide updates on a quarterly basis and identified any further reports it may need as part of the workplan to support this review

(Moved by Councillor M Couchman and seconded by Councillor G Coates)

73 CORPORATE PLAN 2025 TO 2030

Report of the Leader of the Council to advise members of the consultation responses that have supported the development of the priorities of the Corporate Plan 2025 to 2030 and advise on the development of the draft Annual Delivery Plan which will support these being achieved.

The Chair welcomed the Leader of the Council, the Assistant Director, Policy & Performance and the Corporate Project Coordinator.

The Leader of the Council introduced the report and highlighted that they felt it was one of the most collaborative and extensive consultation exercises that the Council had undertaken.

The Officers provided the Committee with a presentation.

The Committee made the following comments/observations and asked the following questions:

- 1) The Committee thanked officers for the presentation as it answers a lot of questions and it was noted that the document was smaller and more streamlined and that this was an improvement on the previous Corporate Plan document.
- 2) The thinking behind the tagline and whether this was set in stone as it did not capture the heritage of Tamworth?
The Leader confirmed that the tagline needed to be succinct and memorable.
- 3) What the Councils heritage offer would be and how they are going to promote that and their buildings?
The Leader confirmed that she was looking to move this on and that there were people coming to the town tomorrow (7th February) to look at its

heritage, and that we need to be coordinated in our approach and get the right people together to discuss what is possible.

Members commented that all heritage partners should be included and that this could improve tourism.

- 4) Concerns around the lack of engagement from residents in responding to the survey.

Officers confirmed that whilst they had hoped for more responses, 1200 conversations had taken place and what could not be captured in a survey was the positivity and passion of the residents of the borough.

- 5) In reference to appendix C and the consultation responses within Place Shaping, how do we address the issue around people feeling safe.

The Leader confirmed that based on community safety updates residents perceptions were different to what they hear from the police and that perhaps a piece of work needed doing to change those perceptions.

The Committee commented that a recent update from the Inspector was very data driven but that this does not seem to match what they are hearing in terms of anti-social behaviour and that this may be due to the public not reporting crime as they do not think anything will be done, where as they should be encouraged do this and get a crime number for each incident.

Members acknowledged that things had improved with the new area commands.

- 6) The Committee highlighted that the response to priority areas residents felt were missing from the survey, were the County Council's responsibility.

They referred to a recommendation that was made to Cabinet in the previous year around communicating what the Tamworth Borough Council was responsible for and what the County Council was responsible for and that there was a wider problem around communication with some residents not having access to social media. It was asked whether a paper flyer/newsletter could be considered to be sent out to communicate to all residents.

- 7) The Leader confirmed that this was important to them and agreed to look at ways to communicate this to all residents.

Resolved that the committee

1. reviewed and commented on the new Corporate Plan 2025-2030 (Appendix A).
2. reviewed and commented on the updated performance management framework and the plan for quarterly reporting going forward. This included the draft template for the Annual Delivery Plan (Appendix B) to be used to develop the framework for assessing the progress to deliver the priorities from the Corporate Plan 2025-2030.
3. noted the outcomes from consultation and engagement set out in Appendix C that have been used in the refinement of the final

Corporate Plan.

(Moved by Councillor M Summers and seconded by Councillor M Couchman)

74 **QUARTER 3 2024-25 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Report of the Leader of the Council to provide the Committee with an overview of Council performance for the third quarter of the 2024/25 financial year (October to December 2024). It reports the council's position in relation to progress with strategic corporate plan projects and updates on the financial position, corporate risks, audits, information governance, compliments, comments, complaints and health & safety. Cabinet will consider the report on 6th March 2025.

The Executive Director, organisation, interim Executive director, Finance and the Leader of the Council attended for this report.

The Leader of the Council introduced the report and ran through the highlights adding that the county boundary review was now complete, and the local review was now underway.

The Committee made the following comments/observations and asked the following questions:

- 1) At the last meeting the Committee commented that it would be concerned if the outturn variance rose again, and it had now risen to 0.971 million. Did they expect this to exceed a million and for planning purpose what we you assuming it will be?
Officers confirmed that this was monitored on a monthly basis and that the figures could change as there may be additional grant money received and the potential for use of reserved and retained fund, so it is difficult to say. For planning purposes, they were working on this figure.
- 2) Whether an update had been provided on the recovery proposals for key items requested at the last meeting as well as whether there was any update on the piece of work being carried out around the assembly rooms?
It was confirmed that commentary was provided at 3.2 around recovery of the key items and that a piece of work was being done around the Assembly Rooms and that this would be going to Cabinet and would be brought to the Committee first.
- 3) Clarification around the figure for stage one complaint responses which appear to have gotten worse?
Officers confirmed that the figures were disappointing considering work that had been done in this area. A number of meetings had taken place, and a number of actions were underway and they were looking at ways to address this including additional resourcing and improvements to processes.
- 4) The Committee requested more detail in respect of housing around the number of evictions and hardship payments made.

Resolved that the committee

1. endorsed the contents of this report for consideration by Cabinet.

(Moved by Councillor M Couchman and seconded by Councillor G Coates)

75 WORKING GROUP UPDATES

There were no working groups.

76 FORWARD PLAN

The Chair confirmed that the Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution report has been added to the Forward plan for April and it has been suggested that this be considered by the committee first. The Committee agreed for this to be added to the work plan.

77 CORPORATE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PLAN

The Chair confirmed that the next meeting was on the 18th March when they would consider the devolution paper.

The Chair asked that the Asset Management Strategy be added to the next meeting. A discussion was held on this as it was highlighted that the strategy was considered at Infrastructure, Safety and Growth Scrutiny meeting in November as agreed by the Chairs and constitutionally the same report should only be considered at one meeting. Following the discussion, it was agreed that they would like to see the Asset Management Strategy Plans. The Chair agreed to complete a work planning proposal form and circulate this with sufficient time for this to be added to the agenda for the next meeting.

Chair

Corporate Scrutiny

18 March 2025

Report of the Leader of the Council, Councillor Carol Dean

Tamworth Borough Council: Local Government Reorganisation & Devolution

Purpose

The purpose of the **Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution Cabinet Report** is to present the initial proposals for Tamworth Borough Council's response to the Government's plan for local government reorganisation and devolution. The report recommended that the Full Council endorsed the recommendations approved by Cabinet on 6 March 2025. This included the initial proposals for submission to Government by 21 March, consider other potential options, and authorise the development of a final proposal to be submitted by the Government's deadline of 28 November 2025.

Recommendations

Full Council were asked to endorse the following recommendations made to Cabinet:

1. The initial proposals as outlined in this report and explore other potential options. Additionally, the Cabinet authorise the development of a final proposal to be submitted by the Government's deadline of 28 November 2025
2. The Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be delegated the responsibility to prepare and submit the initial proposals to the Government by the 21 March 2025 deadline. This should be done in collaboration with other local authorities
3. The Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be delegated the authority to commission expert advice and support as needed to optimise the Council's position. This may include commissioning or cost-sharing with other authorities as required
4. The Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, be delegated the authority to draw funds from the Transformation Reserve, with an allocation of up to £100k to be ringfenced. This is to enable the council to meeting legislative deadlines and ensure the council has sufficient resources to progress delivery.

Executive Summary

On 16 December 2024, the Government published a White Paper titled "Power and Partnership: Foundations for Growth" outlining their plans for devolution and local government reorganisation. While the Government views these proposals as parallel processes, they are distinct from each other.

The Government aims to facilitate local government reorganisation in England for two-tier areas like Staffordshire and for unitary councils where size or boundaries may hinder the delivery of sustainable, high-quality public services. Tamworth Borough Council is included in these proposals to form part of a larger Unitary Council.

Proposals are also invited for the formation of Strategic Authorities, with an expectation of moving to mayoral models where this is not part of the original proposal. The English Devolution Bill is expected to start its journey through Parliament in the spring, and councils have been invited to submit initial proposals for Local Government Reorganisation by 21 March 2025.

Background Information

THE ENGLISH DEVOLUTION WHITE PAPER

Strategic Authorities - Devolution

The Government is introducing the concept of "Strategic Authorities" through legislation.

These authorities will be categorised into two levels:

- **Foundation Strategic Authorities (FSAs):** These authorities will have fewer powers and will be encouraged to form partnerships through Combined Authorities or Combined County Authorities. The Government may consider non-mayoral devolution arrangements for single local authorities as a temporary measure towards forming a Mayoral Combined Authority or Mayoral Combined County Authority
- **Mayoral Strategic Authorities (MSAs):** These authorities will have more powers and will automatically begin as Mayoral Strategic Authorities. Those meeting specific criteria may be designated as Established Mayoral Strategic Authorities, unlocking further devolution and access to an Integrated Settlement.

The Government prefers partnerships that bring multiple Local Authorities together over a large geographic area. Strategic Authorities will be composed of local unitary councils, and the Government will initiate a programme of Local Government Reorganisation to remove two-tier structures.

Proposed Areas of Competence for Strategic Authorities

The White Paper outlines the following areas of competence for Strategic Authorities:

- Transport and local infrastructure
- Skills and employment support
- Housing and strategic planning
- Economic development and regeneration
- Environment and climate change
- Health, wellbeing, and public service reform
- Public safety.

Directly Elected Mayor

Regions that adopt a Directly Elected Mayor will benefit from:

- Prioritisation by the Government for devolution agreements
- Powers from the strengthened Devolution Framework, with a growing devolution offer
- A pathway to higher levels of devolution, including access to the Integrated Settlement
- Flexible allocated funding and a long-term investment fund
- Representation on the Council of Nations and Regions and the Mayoral Council
- A mandate to develop a Local Growth Plan with government-agreed priorities
- Membership of the Mayoral Data Council.

Principles for Strategic Authority Geographies

When determining Strategic Authority geographies, the Government will consider the following principles:

- **Scale:** Authorities should be comparable in size to existing institutions, with a combined population of 1.5 million or more, though smaller authorities may be considered in some cases.
- **No ‘devolution islands’:** Geographies must not create isolated areas without natural partners.
- **Delivery:** Geographies should ensure effective delivery of key functions.
- **Economies:** Authorities must cover sensible economic geographies, reflecting travel-to-work patterns and local labour markets.
- **Contiguity:** Proposed geographies must be contiguous across constituent councils.
- **Alignment:** The Government will promote alignment between devolution boundaries and other public sector boundaries.
- **Identity:** Local identity is crucial for successful devolution and public engagement.

Future Funding

Established Mayoral Strategic Authorities will be eligible for the Integrated Settlement, starting at the next Spending Review. The scope and value of Integrated Settlements will be determined by functional responsibilities and a formulaic process. Integrated Settlements will have a streamlined approach to spending controls and an overarching assurance and accountability framework.

The Devolution Framework also commits to a simplified funding landscape for Mayoral and Foundation Strategic Authorities, including consolidated funding pots for Mayoral Strategic Authorities and dedicated local growth allocations for Foundation Strategic Authorities.

The Government will reform the local growth funding landscape, moving away from competitions and recognising the centrality of Strategic Authorities for economic growth. Funding will continue for Mayoral Combined Authorities with Investment Zones to create jobs and economic growth in underperforming areas.

Mayoral Combined and Combined County Authorities will be able to raise a mayoral precept for their full range of functions. The Government will legislate to enhance the value for money of this power. The Local Government Finance System will be reformed, building on the Fair Funding Review, and a new model of business rate retention will be considered to support Strategic Authorities.

Current Regional Position – Devolution

In 2023, the Staffordshire Leaders Board proposed a non-mayoral model of co-operation and joint working to the Government. The White Paper now requires proposals for a Strategic Authority which must consider the benefits of a Mayoral form of authority.

Strategic Authority Options for Staffordshire

It is proposed that an initial preference for a Staffordshire Strategic Authority is expressed, but alternative options are assessed before final submissions by 28 November 2025.

Option 1 - Single Strategic Authority for Staffordshire

The Government has proposed that the population level for a Strategic Authority should be around 1.5 million. A Strategic Authority would have a population of around 1.1-1.2 million which is slightly lower than the Government’s proposal. Given the coterminous nature of the County (including Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner area, Integrated Care Board, and other structures) the case for a single Strategic Authority for Staffordshire is strong.

The estimated regional population figures (based on 2021 Census data) are:

- Tamworth – 78,600
- South Staffordshire – 110,500
- Cannock Chase – 100,500
- Lichfield – 106,400

- East Staffordshire – 124,000
- Staffordshire Moorlands – 95,800
- Stoke-on-Trent – 258,400
- Newcastle-under-Lyme – 123,300
- Stafford – 136,800

Option 2 - Combined Strategic Authority with neighbouring areas

An alternative proposal would involve forming a Combined Strategic Authority with neighbouring areas. Discussions with neighbouring areas would assess the viability and advantages of this option.

The Government has made it clear that there will be no 'devolution islands'. If a Strategic Authority is not created where local leaders have not been able to reach agreement, the Government will legislate for a ministerial directive to create the Strategic Authority on the local areas behalf.

Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

The White Paper announces a programme of reorganisation for two-tier local government areas, with new unitaries to be delivered in April 2027 and 2028. Reorganisation should complement devolution plans and not delay them.

The Government's priorities for LGR include:

- Creating councils with a population of 500,000 or more, with exceptions considered on a case-by-case basis
- Developing proposals for reorganisation in all two-tier areas and smaller or failing unitaries
- Prioritising high-quality and sustainable public services
- Encouraging innovative approaches to neighbourhood involvement and community governance
- Collaborating on unitary proposals in the best interests of the whole area
- Working with the Government to implement changes swiftly
- Supporting decision-making with effective governance models

On 5 February 2025, the Minister for Local Government, Jim McMahon, provided further details on LGR in a letter, which can be found in Appendix 1.

Current Regional Position – Local Government Reorganisation

The Government has requested initial proposals for local government reorganisation from Staffordshire Councils by 21 March 2025. These proposals will outline the direction of travel and may include multiple options, that will need to be considered prior to the final submission of the business case in November 2025.

Early discussions between Staffordshire authorities have taken place at Leader and Chief Executive levels. The Government has indicated that unitary authorities need a minimum size of 500,000 residents. Councils must be sustainable and able to grow and thrive. Effective representation of people in the new strategic authority is also important.

There are a number of options to consider for local government reorganisation in Staffordshire:

- **Option One:** Create two-unitary authorities: North Staffordshire Council and South Staffordshire Council
- **Option Two:** Form two-unitary authorities: Stoke-on-Trent and the rest of the county
- **Option Three:** Establish a single unitary authority for the entire area, named Staffordshire Council.

The majority view supports Option One, a two-unitary authority option (North Staffordshire Council and South Staffordshire Council), but alternative options will be assessed before final submissions by 28 November 2025. Tamworth Borough Council prefers smaller unitaries, ideally two for the

south of the county, recognising the value of smaller councils in connecting place and community wellbeing. However, this option falls short of the 500,000 threshold and raises doubts about long-term financial stability. Details will be explored between March 2025 and November 2025 to ensure the best solution for residents.

Timescales

While submission deadlines to the Government are known, the implementation timetable is not yet clear. The following dates are indicative:

- 21 March 2025: Initial proposals for LGR to be submitted to Government
- 28 November 2025: Final LGR proposal to be submitted to Government
- 2026: Government will hold a public consultation on LGR proposals
- May 2026 or 2027: Inaugural regional mayoral elections
- Spring 2028: New unitaries 'go live'.

Conclusion

The Government White Paper clearly states that their goal is “universal coverage in England of Strategic Authorities” and “devolution by default” is the direction of travel. This presents a seismic shift in local government landscape. The Government have also made clear their ambition to reform local government and implement unitary authorities across England.

There are clearly strategic and operational risks to the Council arising from these devolution and local government reorganisation proposals that will need to be mitigated. For example, the Council needs to ensure that day-to-day services for local people are kept running whilst these strategic and structural changes are implemented.

The Council will need to ensure that sufficient resources are allocated to ensure it can play a proactive part in the discussions for Tamworth Borough Council. Further, the council will need to ensure the transition is carefully planned and communicated to ensure stability and public confidence and therefore, officers will need to establish internal processes and resources to deliver the programme, making sure that we also engage and work with other partners and stakeholders across the district.

Options Considered

As detailed above.

Resource Implications

To progress Local Government Reorganisation, the call on resources will be significant. It will be necessary to utilise external capacity where necessary resulting to call on funding from the Transformation Reserve. An allocation of up to £100k will be ringfenced to ensure the Council meets all legislative deadlines and has sufficient resources to progress delivery.

Government has stated that any current local authority debt needs will not be written off and will therefore need to be dealt with by successor authorities. Tamworth has £63m long-term debt relating to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). Tamworth Borough Council has been able to deliver a balanced budget (General Fund for 3 years and HRA for 5 years with estimates for the next 30 years as part of the HRA business plan) and going forward this council's budget will need to be taken into consideration for the budget planning process for any new council.

Local Government Reorganisation, and the creation of a Strategic Authority, will lead to changes in employing organisations. TUPE will apply to the reorganisation.

Legal/ Risk Implications Background

The White Paper proposals are expected to be legislated over the Spring/Summer 2025. The Council will need to submit (along with other Staffordshire authorities) a final proposal by 28 November 2025. If a local consensus by the Staffordshire authorities cannot be agreed, individual authorities can make their own submissions. However, the Government has a clear preference for an agreed position to be submitted. Any alternative proposal may not be the favoured position for Tamworth and therefore the authorities within Staffordshire are working closely together to agree proposals.

The implications and risks of the proposals will have significant impact on the council which include:

1. **Governance and Leadership:** The council must ensure strong governance and leadership to navigate the reorganisation effectively
2. **Service Continuity:** Ensuring that day-to-day services for local residents continue to run smoothly during the transition is a significant concern that will need to be managed carefully
3. **Resource Allocation:** The reorganisation process is resource-intensive, requiring significant officer and member time, which could impact other council activities
4. **Staff Morale and Retention:** The uncertainty and changes associated with LGR can affect staff morale and retention. Ensuring clear communication and support for staff during the transition is crucial
5. **Public Engagement:** The council needs to maintain clear communication with residents to manage expectations and gather input on the reorganisation
6. **Community Impact:** The reorganisation could impact community wellbeing and cohesion, requiring careful management to maintain public trust.

Equalities Implications

Although the implementation of Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution will have significant impact across the Borough, this initial stage is commencing the development of the outline proposals to be submitted to Government. The Legislation will be subject to an impact assessment. It is therefore not possible at this stage to adequately assess any local equalities implications. However an initial screening has been completed.

Environment and Sustainability Implications (including climate change)

N/A

Report Author(s)

Stephen Gabriel, Chief Executive
Amerdip Kaur, Assistant Director for Policy & Performance

List of Background Papers

[Local Government White Paper, December 2024](#)
[February 2025, the Minister for Local Government, Jim McMahon, LGR Letter](#)

Appendices

N/A

Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA)

An ESHIA is a review of a new or existing policy, strategy, project, report or service change to establish whether this has a differential impact on specific equality groups and identifies how we can improve equality of opportunity for different groups of people.

An ESHIA aims at improving Tamworth Borough Council’s work, by promoting equality, social inclusion, health and wellbeing by ensuring that the proposed or existing policy promotes equality and can benefit a wide range of people.

Details

Title of the proposal	Tamworth Borough Council: Local Government Reorganisation & Devolution	
Director responsible for the project or service area	Stephen Gabriel, Chief Executive	
Officer completing the assessment	Amerdip Kaur – AD for Policy and Performance	
Date conducted	26/2/25	
Who are the main stakeholders?	Members, TBC Employees, Residents	
What is being assessed?	A decision to review or change a service	
	A strategy, policy, report or procedure	X
	A function, service, or project	
What kind of assessment is it?	New	X
	Review of existing	

Part One - Initial screening:

This section should be used to carry out an initial screening of changes or decisions to help to decide whether a full ESHIA is required.

The following six screening questions are designed to assess whether this proposed change is likely to have an impact on equality, social inclusion, health and wellbeing.

		Yes	No
1	Does this new or revised project, proposal, policy, report, procedure likely to have an impact?		X
2	Does the proposal seek agreement to a key decision involving allocation of resources, such as changes in funding or resources, initiation of a new programme or project or procurement?	X	
3	Does the proposal seek agreement on restructuring or reorganising of staffing?		X

4	Will this policy or proposed change have any impact on potential suppliers?	X	X
5	Does this policy or proposed change impact on any HR policy or practice within the council?		X
6	Does this policy or proposed change have any implications for equalities, social inclusion and health and wellbeing not covered above?		X

1. If the answer is **no** to all the questions, please provide a summary below outlining why this conclusion has been reached.
2. If the answer is **yes** to any of the questions, please conduct the full ESHIA as detailed in Part two.

If you are unsure of any of the answers, please seek advice from Human Resources.

Summary of initial screening outcome:

Although the **implementation** of Local Government Reorganisation and Devolution will have significant impact across the Borough, this initial stage is commencing the development of the initial outline proposals to be submitted to Government.

The Legislation will be subject to an impact assessment. It is therefore not possible at this stage to adequately assess any local impacts.

Decision	Yes	No
Initial screening only	X	
Proceed to Part Two, full assessment		X

Initial screening completed by	Amerdip Kaur – AD Policy & Performance
Date	26.2.25

Full screening completed by	
Date	

Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA)

Part Two: Full assessment

Section 1

The purpose of the project, proposal or decision required. Set out the aims, objectives, purpose and outcomes of the area being impact assessed. Are any other functions, policies or services linked to this assessment?

Section 2

Evidence used and considered. Include analysis of any missing data.

Section 3

Consultation undertaken with interested parties who will/may be affected proposal? What were the outcomes of the consultation?

Section 4

What are the potential or actual impacts of the proposal? Please consider both the direct and indirect impact and refer to the guidance for additional information.

Impact Area	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of the impact	Action to address negative impact
Protected Characteristic, as outlined in the Equality Act 2010			
Age			
Disability			
Gender reassignment			
Marriage and civil partnership			
Pregnancy and maternity			
Race			
Religion or Belief			
Sex			
Sexual Orientation			

Are there socio-economic groups likely to be affected? If yes, please provide detail below			
Other social exclusion			
Digital exclusion			
Veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families			
Young people leaving care			
Health and Wellbeing: Individuals and communities in Tamworth	Impact: Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Explanation	Action to address negative impact
Will the proposal have a direct impact on an individual's health, mental health and wellbeing?			
Will the proposal directly impact on housing?			
Will there be a likely change in demand for or access to public services such as health and social care services?			
Will there be an impact on diet and nutrition?			
Will there be an impact on physical activity?			
Will there be an impact on transport, travel and connectivity?			
Will there be an impact on employment and income?			

Will there be an impact on education and skills?			
Will there be an impact on community safety?			
Will there be an impact on the environment, air quality, climate change?			

If there are no adverse impacts or any issues of concern or you can adequately explain or justify them, please move to section 6.

Section 5

Where a potential negative impact has been identified, can continuation of the proposal be objectively justified? If yes, please explain your reasons.

Section 6: Decisions or actions proposed

The assessment may result in some recommendations or suggestions to mitigate any negative impact and maximise positive impacts or actions to reduce the risk of an adverse impact.

Section 7: Monitoring arrangements

Who will be responsible for monitoring	
Frequency of monitoring	
Where will the impact assessment be reported to?	
Where this impact assessment will be stored and for how long	

Section 8: Summary of actions to mitigate negative impact (if required)

Impact Area	Action required	Lead officer/responsible person	Target date	Progress

Tuesday, 18 March 2025

Report of the Assistant Director, Assets**Update on Housing Voids****Exempt Information**

Not exempt

Purpose

This report provides an update on actions taken in relation to voids since the last report in April 2024.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. Committee notes and comments/provides feedback on the proposals around the Equans contract reset in relation to void works

Executive Summary

An update on void performance was provided to Scrutiny Committee in April 2024, this resulted in 3 recommendations being made by Cabinet in June 2024.

The recommendations and actions are as follows

Recommendation	Actions	Further Actions	Risks
1. to instruct Officers to review the costs versus return, of employing an in-house inspection team to see if we can drive down the costs of voids.	<p>All notified voids are now subject to a notice period inspection by a member of the voids team. This visit identifies issues that the tenant needs to address prior to vacating the property and highlights any items of recharge back to the tenant.</p> <p>This approach has allowed us to directly test the benefits of undertaking pre-void period inspections.</p> <p>This does not appear to have brought down the</p>	<p>Following the recommendation from Scrutiny and as part of the contract reset there is a proposal that a technical officer and representative of the contractor carry out the notice period inspection.</p> <p>It is expected that the technical staff will be able to identify more issues at the pre-void stage, they will also be able to partially schedule the void works before the property becomes void.</p>	<p>There will be cases where there is no notice and as such this process will not apply.</p> <p>In some cases, personal circumstances are such that moves take place despite issues being identified during the pre-void inspection process.</p> <p>It is not known at this stage whether technical inspections at the pre-void period will have any greater effect on the overall void costs.</p>

	<p>average void cost and we are still seeing voids that require large amounts of work and with large amounts of rubbish to be removed.</p> <p>There has been no additional cost to the Authority in undertaking these inspections in this manner, conversely there has been no significant impact on void costs.</p>	<p>There should be no additional cost to this but staffing resources and effectiveness will need to be monitored regularly</p> <p>This approach may identify more rechargeable repairs and will also mean that the contractor is able to plan works before the property is void.</p> <p>Excess rubbish removal remains an issue.</p>	
<p>2. to review how we recover damages costs from existing tenants and see if there is a more proactive way, we can approach this long term</p>	<p>As set out above there is a pre-void inspection where voids are notified to the council. At this stage tenants are notified of any items that need to be rectified or that are likely to be rechargeable. Moves can be delayed where until recharges are paid.</p> <p>Following the recommendation an updated recharges policy is in draft form, this has been produced as part of the Social Housing Regulatory Programme. It is anticipated that this will be presented to the Housing and Homelessness Advisory Board in or around June 2025 (subject to agreement of dates).</p> <p>The policy seeks to formalise the arrangements for the application of recharges.</p>	<p>Involving technical officers in the pre-void inspection process will assist in identifying rechargeable items.</p> <p>Consideration could be given to offering incentives to tenants who return their property in good condition and free from rubbish.</p>	<p>As above, where notice isn't given it is not possible to undertake pre-void inspections and in some cases it is not possible to delay moves even if recharges are not paid.</p> <p>Where tenants move out of a Tamworth property the Council have very little influence or leverage over them.</p> <p>Many tenants are vulnerable and lack the financial means to pay for the recharge items. Recharges can't be added to the tenants rent account.</p>

3. that the Portfolio Holder calls Equans in to address Members major concerns around void turnaround times and ask them what their action plan is to improve this.	The Portfolio Holder has been involved in the contract reset process and has provided feedback to the consultants on the Member perspective. Equans to attend meeting of Corporate Scrutiny on 18 th March 2025.	Portfolio to have continued involvement in the contract reset process and to kept up to date on contract performance and KPI data.	
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In October 2024, Cabinet approved a “contract reset” with Equans, this reset is intended to reframe key areas of the current contract with a focus on addressing the commercial viability of the contract for Equans which will allow both parties to focus their efforts and attentions on contract performance and service delivery. One of the key workstreams within this contract reset is voids. Working groups have been in place since December and workshops are taking place through March with the aim that all of the contract reset details will be agreed and in place by April 2025. There will be a new suite of KPIs, ongoing monitoring and quarterly performance reporting providing updates on the outcomes of the contract reset.

It is recognised that performance on voids is still not where it needs to be and whilst the contract reset will be a key driver for change work is already underway on trying to resolve the underlying issues. Equans have brought on board a series of new sub-contractors dedicated to void delivery, there is a void tracker that is updated on a daily basis, this is reviewed and discussed by the operational teams on a weekly basis. and we are finalising an arrangement with a company to ensure that issues with energy supplies are addressed quickly so as not to delay void delivery. In addition to the operational meetings, issues relating to performance are discussed at a more senior level through weekly meetings between Tamworth and Equans.

Void Turnaround Times

	Average Contractor time	Average Period With Housing	Average Void period	Total Voids
2021-2	30	24	54	294
2022/3	35	24	59	273
2023/4	37	23	61	250
2024/5	42	46	88	241

Void costs remain higher than seen across the sector, Housemark benchmark figures suggest an average void cost of £3,600 whereas in Tamworth the average void cost has consistently been in the region of £4,000 - £4,500 with a relatively large number of higher cost voids. Clearance of excess rubbish left in voids remains an issue.

Void turnaround times also remain high; this is something that appears to have affected many social housing providers since 2020 but it is recognised that there is significant room for improvement and that this needs to be an outcome of the contract reset process. The full details of the contract reset process will have been agreed by the end of March 2025, this will include a full review of all KPIs along with a timetable for improvements. It is recognised by all parties that void performance is a key area for improvement and performance against the revised KPIs will be monitored on a monthly basis. The expectation is that all standard voids will be completed within the contractual timescales by June 2025, this recognises that there will be some residual voids that carry over from the 2024/25 financial year that will be outside the agreed timescales.

Options Considered

No specific options considered as this report is intended as an update only. The executive summary sets out the work being done in relation to contract reset and its impact on voids.

Resource Implications

No specific resource implications are arising from this report, as it is intended as an updated only. Any resource implications have been set out in the Cabinet report of October 2024 in relation to the Equans contract reset.

Legal/Risk Implications Background

No specific legal implications or general risks arising from this update.

Equalities Implications

See appendix 1

Environment and Sustainability Implications (including climate change)

None arising from this update.

Background Information

There was an update to Corporate Scrutiny Committee in April 2024 leading to recommendations by Cabinet in June 2024.

In October 2024 Cabinet approved a “Contract Reset” with Equans.

Report Author

Paul Weston – Assistant Director Assets

List of Background Papers

None

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment

Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA)

An ESHIA is a review of a new or existing policy, strategy, project, report or service change to establish whether this has a differential impact on specific equality groups and identifies how we can improve equality of opportunity for different groups of people.

An ESHIA aims at improving Tamworth Borough Council’s work, by promoting equality, social inclusion, health and wellbeing by ensuring that the proposed or existing policy promotes equality and can benefit a wide range of people.

Details

Title of the proposal	Void Repairs	
Director responsible for the project or service area	Executive Director, Communities	
Officer completing the assessment	Assistant Director, Assets	
Date conducted	01/03/2025	
Who are the main stakeholders?	Tenants, prospective tenants, Void & Allocations Team, Tenancy Management, Contractors	
What is being assessed?	A decision to review or change a service	
	A strategy, policy, report or procedure	
	A function, service, or project	X
What kind of assessment is it?	New	
	Review of existing	X

Part One - Initial screening:

This section should be used to carry out an initial screening of changes or decisions to help to decide whether a full ESHIA is required.

The following six screening questions are designed to assess whether this proposed change is likely to have an impact on equality, social inclusion, health and wellbeing.

		Yes	No
1	Does this new or revised project, proposal, policy, report, procedure likely to have an impact?	X	
2	Does the proposal seek agreement to a key decision involving allocation of resources, such as changes in funding or resources, initiation of a new programme or project or procurement?		X
3	Does the proposal seek agreement on restructuring or reorganising of staffing?		X
4	Will this policy or proposed change have any impact on potential suppliers?	X	

5	Does this policy or proposed change impact on any HR policy or practice within the council?		X
6	Does this policy or proposed change have any implications for equalities, social inclusion and health and wellbeing not covered above?	X	

1. If the answer is **no** to all the questions, please provide a summary below outlining why this conclusion has been reached.
2. If the answer is **yes** to any of the questions, please conduct the full ESHIA as detailed in Part two.

If you are unsure of any of the answers, please seek advice from Human Resources.

Summary of initial screening outcome:		
Housing voids will have an impact on current and future housing tenants. It also impacts on internal teams and external suppliers		
Decision	Yes	No
Initial screening only		X
Proceed to Part Two, full assessment	X	

Initial screening completed by	Assistant Director, Assets
Date	01/03/2025

Full screening completed by	Assistant Director, Assets
Date	01/03/2025

Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA)

Part Two: Full assessment

Section 1

The purpose of the project, proposal or decision required. Set out the aims, objectives, purpose and outcomes of the area being impact assessed. Are any other functions, policies or services linked to this assessment?

This report relates to the provision of void maintenance and recharges associated with void maintenance.

Section 2

Evidence used and considered. Include analysis of any missing data.

**Void numbers
Void completion times
Void costs
Recharges
Housemark Benchmark data**

Section 3

Consultation undertaken with interested parties who will/may be affected proposal? What were the outcomes of the consultation?

**Voids and allocations team
Tenancy management
Contractor
External consultants for contract reset work**

Section 4

What are the potential or actual impacts of the proposal? Please consider both the direct and indirect impact and refer to the guidance for additional information.

Impact Area	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of the impact	Action to address negative impact
Protected Characteristic, as outlined in the Equality Act 2010			
Age	Ne	Whilst there is no specific impact on this group arising from this report as the report largely addresses internal delivery mechanisms.	

		It should be recognised that this group is more likely to leave a property without notice with unrecoverable recharges.	
Disability	Ne	As above	
Gender reassignment	Ne	There is no specific impact on this group arising from this report as the report largely addresses internal delivery mechanisms.	
Marriage and civil partnership	Ne	There is no specific impact on this group arising from this report as the report largely addresses internal delivery mechanisms.	
Pregnancy and maternity	Ne	There is no specific impact on this group arising from this report as the report largely addresses internal delivery mechanisms.	
Race	Ne	There is no specific impact on this group arising from this report as the report largely addresses internal delivery mechanisms.	
Religion or Belief	Ne	There is no specific impact on this group arising from this report as the report largely addresses internal delivery mechanisms.	
Sex	Ne	There is no specific impact on this group arising from this report as the report largely addresses internal delivery mechanisms.	
Sexual Orientation	Ne	There is no specific impact on this group arising from this report as the report largely addresses internal delivery mechanisms.	
Are there socio-economic groups likely to be affected? If yes, please provide detail below			

Other social exclusion	Ne	There is no specific impact on this group arising from this report as the report largely addresses internal delivery mechanisms. People on low incomes are less likely to be able to pay any recharges incurred.	
Digital exclusion	Ne	There is no specific impact on this group arising from this report as the report largely addresses internal delivery mechanisms.	
Veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families		There is no specific impact on this group arising from this report as the report largely addresses internal delivery mechanisms.	
Young people leaving care	Ne	There is no specific impact on this group arising from this report as the report largely addresses internal delivery mechanisms.	
Health and Wellbeing: Individuals and communities in Tamworth	Impact: Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Explanation	Action to address negative impact
Will the proposal have a direct impact on an individual's health, mental health and wellbeing?	Ne	There is no specific impact on this group arising from this report as the report largely addresses internal delivery mechanisms.	
Will the proposal directly impact on housing?	P	There is no direct impact arising from this update report, however the void process impacts on the timings of access to housing and as such improving void turnaround times will allow new tenants access to their new home more quickly.	

Will there be a likely change in demand for or access to public services such as health and social care services?	Ne	There is no specific impact on this group arising from this report as the report largely addresses internal delivery mechanisms.	
Will there be an impact on diet and nutrition?	Ne	There is no specific impact on diet and nutrition arising from this report as the report largely addresses internal delivery mechanisms.	
Will there be an impact on physical activity?	Ne	There is no specific impact on physical activity arising from this report as the report largely addresses internal delivery mechanisms.	
Will there be an impact on transport, travel and connectivity?	Ne	There is no specific impact on transport and travel arising from this report as the report largely addresses internal delivery mechanisms.	
Will there be an impact on employment and income?	Ne	There is no specific impact on employment and income arising from this report as the report largely addresses internal delivery mechanisms.	
Will there be an impact on education and skills?	Ne	There is no specific impact on education and skills arising from this report as the report largely addresses internal delivery mechanisms.	
Will there be an impact on community safety?	Ne	There is no specific impact on community safety arising from this report as the report largely addresses internal delivery mechanisms.	
Will there be an impact on the environment, air	Ne	There is no specific impact on environmental	

quality, climate change?		matters arising from this report as the report largely addresses internal delivery mechanisms.	
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If there are no adverse impacts or any issues of concern or you can adequately explain or justify them, please move to section 6.

Section 5

Where a potential negative impact has been identified, can continuation of the proposal be objectively justified? If yes, please explain your reasons.

Technical inspections will assist tenants in understanding their obligations in relation to voids and the void maintenance process.

Mechanisms are in place to ensure that vulnerable people are not disadvantaged by the void maintenance process.

Section 6: Decisions or actions proposed

The assessment may result in some recommendations or suggestions to mitigate any negative impact and maximise positive impacts or actions to reduce the risk of an adverse impact.

No changes arising from this report.

Section 7: Monitoring arrangements

Who will be responsible for monitoring	Assistant Director, Assets
Frequency of monitoring	Annual
Where will the impact assessment be reported to?	Housing and Homelessness Advisory Board
Where this impact assessment will be stored and for how long	

Section 8: Summary of actions to mitigate negative impact (if required)

Impact Area	Action required	Lead officer/responsible person	Target date	Progress

Tuesday, 18 March 2025

Report of the Assistant Director, Assets

Update on Asset Management Strategy & Plans

Exempt Information

Not exempt

Purpose

This report provides an update on the implementation of the Asset Management Strategy and the production of the associated Asset Management Plans.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. Review and provide feedback on the draft Asset Management Plan at Appendix 2

Executive Summary

In October 2024, Cabinet approved the update Asset Management Strategy, this strategy sets out the Council's reasons for holding built assets and the approach for managing those built assets now and into the future.

The key next stage following the approval of the strategy is the production of Asset Management Plans, these are intended to assess the performance of the asset which in turn will assist the Council in determining the future of the asset.

Work has now commenced on the production of high-level plans based on the broad groupings of property, the high-level plans are being produced internally using data already held by the Council, this includes financial and condition data.

A draft plan is available for review at Appendix 2; this plan identifies income and expenditure for the asset, the book value of the asset and provides an indication of the general condition of the asset, demand for the asset, and the quality of the typical covenant. These items are brought together in order to provide a series of options for consideration by the Asset Strategy Steering Group before being presented to Members for consideration.

It is anticipated that a similar Asset Management Plan document will be available for all key asset groups by the end of March 2025.

In addition to these high-level plans a separate piece of work is being commissioned with external consultants to look at the future demands and options for sites. This work is being commissioned externally as it is recognised that that Council does not have the resources and skillsets inhouse to undertake this more detailed review of how the assets could be utilised in the future. This additional work forms part of the 2025/26 delivery plan and it is anticipated that draft reports will be available for consideration by the Asset Strategy Steering Group in July 2025.

Options Considered

This report is intended to provide an update on progress following Cabinet approval. There are no other options considered as part of this report.

Resource Implications

It is recognised that there are limited internal resources available to deliver this work and to produce the Asset Management Plans. It also recognised that the Council does not have the skillsets internally to review and consider the wider emerging demands from the market that will impact on the Asset Management Plans and that these skills will need to be bought in by way of external consultants.

There are no specific resourcing implications arising directly from this update at this time. The detailed Asset Management Plan work will be funded through existing budgets.

Legal/Risk Implications Background

There are no specific legal risks arising from this update or from the production and consideration of Asset Management Plans. Legal consideration will need to be given when looking to implement the Asset Management Plans.

Equalities Implications

There are no specific equalities implications arising from this update at this time. Consideration will however need to be given to the individual Asset Management Plans at the point at which any recommendations of those plans are to be implemented.

Environment and Sustainability Implications (including climate change)

There are no specific environment, sustainability or climate change issues arising from this report. Individual Asset Management Plans will however consider these issues at an asset level and they will form part of the decision making process.

Background Information

This report provides an update on Asset Management Plans.

Report Author

Paul Weston – Assistant Director Assets

List of Background Papers

None

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Asset Management Plan outline

Appendix 2 - Sample Asset Management Plan

Appendix 3 – Equality, Social Inclusion, and Health Impact Assessment

Appendix 4 – Asset Management Strategy

Asset Management Plans

Contents

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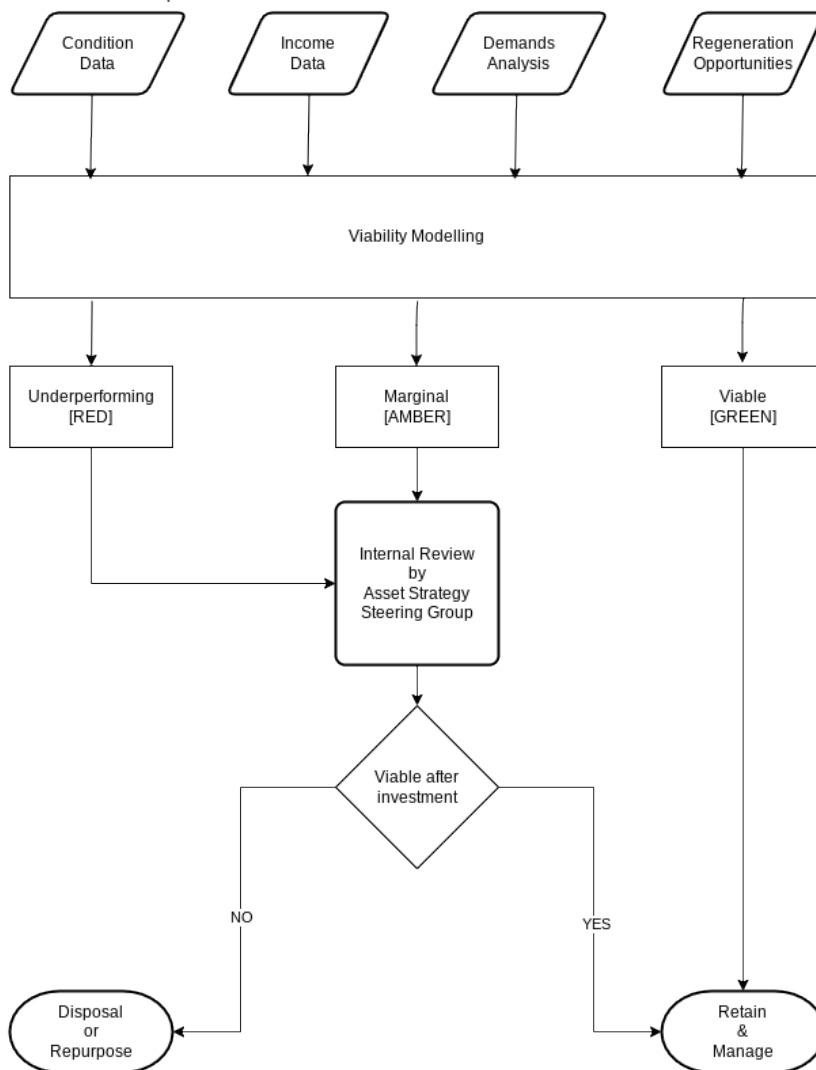
Context

The development of Asset Management Plans for Council owned land and building assets is referenced in the Asset Management Strategy, its primary purpose being to act as a toolkit to aid the decision-making process in relation to the future of a given asset.

An Asset Management Plan will be developed for each asset or where appropriate group of assets. Asset Management Plans will make use of a variety of data sources which will result in a recommended course of action.

It will be the role of the Asset Strategy Steering Group to review the Asset Management Plans and to make recommendations on the course of action to be taken.

Process Map



Data Inputs

- Condition Data – Information on condition will be collected for all built assets. This data will be used to determine the investment requirements for the asset over a 30-year period.

Condition data should be refreshed on a 5-year cycle to ensure that Asset Management Plans are being reviewed using current data. Included within condition data will be information on the planned and reactive expenditure required to maintain the property fit for use.

- Income Data – Income data is to be collected for all Housing properties and those assets held for investment/operational purposes.
- Demands Analysis – The demands analysis process will make use of a number of data sources. Information on void rates, void periods, churn and known waiting lists will be considered. Subjective demands data will be collected from those involved in operational management of assets. Suitability data will be considered under this data source.
- Regeneration Opportunities – Consideration will be given to wider Council aspirations for regeneration. The Regeneration Board will feed into the process by identifying assets that may be needed to facilitate regeneration projects.

Viability Modelling

The collated data will be fed into a software-based viability modelling tool. The tool will consider income vs expenditure, Net Present Values and needs/demands. The Asset Strategy Steering Group will set the thresholds that need to be met for the various outputs.

Generally, the financial viability modelling will consider a period of 30 years, however for some assets the Asset Strategy Steering Group may agree a different period.

Outputs

- RED – properties that significantly fail to make a return on investment and are proven to have little to no demand and are unlikely to be in demand. Properties that don't pass the suitability test and would be difficult to make suitable.
- AMBER – properties that are in high demand but fail to make a return on investment or properties that make a return on investment but are considered to be generally in low demand or properties that barely break-even financially. Properties that don't pass the suitability test but that could be made suitable.
- GREEN – properties that show a return on investment, are in demand and pass the suitability test.

Review Process

The Asset Strategy Steering Group will review all categories of output. There will be a 'reality check' of the categorisations. A review of all AMBER assets will be carried out with a view to moving them into either the RED or GREEN categories; this is likely to be a subjective process based on knowledge of the asset, cost of any investment required and a forecast of likely future performance.

Each asset in the RED category will be reviewed individually and a decision made on the most appropriate course of action to be taken.

Outcomes

- Disposal – it is likely that the most appropriate course of action for those assets in the RED category will be disposal. The method of disposal will be in line with the Disposals Policy.
- Repurpose – assets falling into either the RED or AMBER categories may be suitable for retention through a process of repurposing. Any proposed repurposing would need to be run through the viability modelling process to ensure that the repurposed asset would be suited to retention.

- Retain – assets falling into the GREEN category will generally be retained and managed in line with the data collected at the input stages. Assets identified for repurposing will fall into the retention category upon completion of the repurposing process.

Other considerations

Budgets – despite an asset being considered viable it is possible that the expenditure required is not available within the MTFs. Consideration will need to be given as to how to fund the retention of such assets. There may also be a need to dispose of assets as a means of generating a capital receipt for reinvestment purposes. The Asset Management Strategy and Asset Management Plans will be used in the annual budget setting process.

Regeneration – the Council may wish to use its assets as part of a regeneration project. Any project that makes use of existing assets and/or that will result in new or repurposed assets will need to take account of the viability modelling process so that its impacts on assets and budgets are fully understood.

Assets out of scope – some properties are likely to fall outside the scope of the Asset Management Plans. Assets held for community benefit or assets of historic nature are unlikely to present themselves as being viable, however the Council has a stewardship responsibility for these assets and will need to make provision for their retention and upkeep.

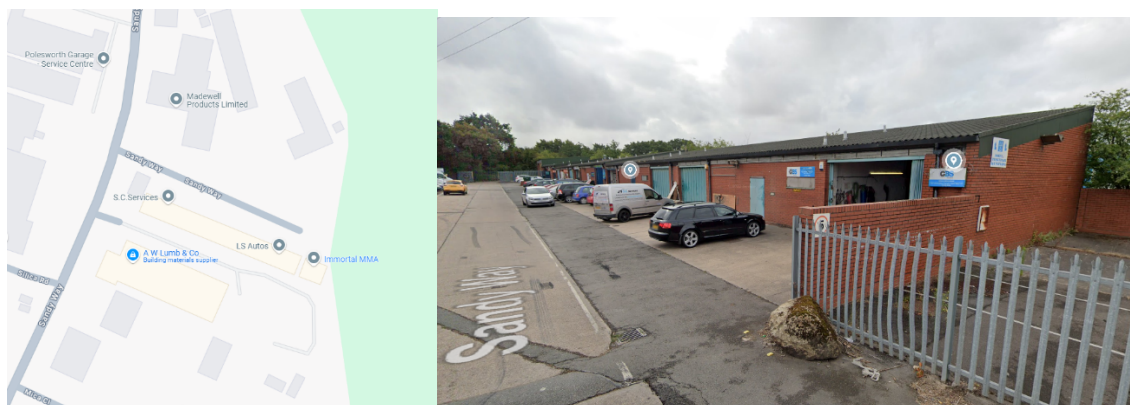
Industrial Units – Amington Industrial Estate (phase 3)

Asset Description

Located in the Amington area of Tamworth, this is a purpose-built estates of 10 industrial units. The surrounding area is predominantly light industrial. The units range from 660sqft to 1200sqft and are typically intended for light industrial/engineering use although most are currently used for businesses related to vehicle repair.

The units are single storey with roller shutter doors to the front. Roofing has been replaced across the units at some point in the last 10-15 years.

There is parking on the site and the access road is shared with other businesses not owned by the Council as well as the Council depot.



Purpose of Asset

These units are held for investment purposes and are let at commercial rent rates. The size of the units means that they are typically of interest to small local businesses and for use a starter unit.

The size of the units means that they do not generate significant employment opportunities.

The units are predominantly occupied by businesses related to vehicle repair and a local synergy between businesses has developed.

General Condition of Asset

The units have seen minimal investment over the years and tenant repairing obligations in many cases have not been completely fulfilled. The units have benefited

from a new roof at some point in the past 10-15 years. The general condition of the units is moderate.

The general structure of units is sound and the roofs have been replaced in the past 10-15 years. The state of decoration is generally acceptable as is the land surrounding units.

Internally, units are provided with limited facilities consisting of basic electrical and plumbing services. The energy performance of the units is poor and typically heating systems are removed prior to letting in order to achieve the required EPC [Energy Performance Certificate].

Units are typically let on a “Fully Repairing Lease” where the tenant has repairing obligations for the internal and external elements of the building including the roof. Limited resources within the “Commercial Team” mean that repairing obligations are not enforced as vigorously as they should be.

General Condition of Estate (where applicable)

The estate road is in an acceptable condition and will require resurfacing within the next 5-10 years. The estate road is shared with other non-Council units as well as the Council depot.

There is limited street lighting and no communal CCTV coverage of the estate.

There is no service charge in place for the units meaning that all estate maintenance is funded through the Building Repairs Fund.

Estimated Remaining Life

With minimal investment in line with the current stock condition data it is likely that the maximum remaining life is no more 10-15 years.

With increased investment the remaining life of the units could be extended to at least 25-30 years. This would require improved insulation to all units, and the installation of insulated, automated roller shutter doors.

The wider estate will also require investment in the next 5-10 years to maintain roads and paved areas in a safe and usable condition. This is more important due to the fact that the access road is shared with other users.

Current Demand

Demand has consistently been MODERATE to GOOD. The units are attractive to small local businesses and start-up businesses. Despite the condition of the units and only limited advertising there has consistently been a supply of interested parties.

The units are predominantly occupied by businesses linked to vehicle repair and a local synergy has developed.

Expected Future Demand

More work is needed to understand the likely demand for the period beyond 5-10 years.

Quality of Covenants

The units have typically appealed to small, local, start up businesses as such the covenants are generally poor with many of the businesses being prone to failure. Many of the units are occupied by businesses related to vehicle repair and a local synergy has developed.

A lack of resource within the Commercial Management Team means that enforcement of tenant covenants and responsibilities has been limited. Many businesses vacate units having failed which means that covenants and obligations are not met, and dilapidations have to be met through the Building Repairs Fund.

Income and Expenditure

	Annual Rent	5yr Rent	5yr Spend	5yr Yield	30yr rent	30yr spend	30yr Yield
Stock Condition Investment	£66,093	£330,469	£10,018	3298%	£1,982,815	£153,229	12962%
BRF Spend	£66,093	£330,469	£47,050	702%	£1,982,815	£282,300	702%
Suggested 20% reinvestment	£66,093	£330,469	£66,093	500%	£1,982,815	£396,563	536%
Investment to meet modern standard	£66,093	£330,469	£47,050	702%	£1,982,815	£746,563	265%

The BRF allocation for these units is £9,410 per annum.

The current market value for the site is £XXXXXXXXXXXX

Potential annual return if capital receipts were to be invested with a yield of 3.5%pa is £XXXXXXXXXXXX

Options

Retain with minimal investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • INSERT COMMENTARY HERE
Retain with major investment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • INSERT COMMENTARY HERE
Disposal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • INSERT COMMENTARY HERE
Disinvest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • INSERT COMMENTARY HERE
Repurpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • • INSERT COMMENTARY HERE

Recommendation

The Asset Strategy Steering Group should consider the options available and develop recommendation.

SET OUT RECOMMENDATIONS HERE

Suitability for Housing

SET OUT RECOMMENDATIONS HERE

Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA)

An ESHIA is a review of a new or existing policy, strategy, project, report or service change to establish whether this has a differential impact on specific equality groups and identifies how we can improve equality of opportunity for different groups of people.

An ESHIA aims at improving Tamworth Borough Council’s work, by promoting equality, social inclusion, health and wellbeing by ensuring that the proposed or existing policy promotes equality and can benefit a wide range of people.

Details

Title of the proposal	Asset Management Plans	
Director responsible for the project or service area	Executive Director Communities	
Officer completing the assessment	Assistant Director, Assets	
Date conducted	01/03/2025	
Who are the main stakeholders?	Internal only at this stage	
What is being assessed?	A decision to review or change a service	
	A strategy, policy, report or procedure	
	A function, service, or project	X
What kind of assessment is it?	New	X
	Review of existing	

Part One - Initial screening:

This section should be used to carry out an initial screening of changes or decisions to help to decide whether a full ESHIA is required.

The following six screening questions are designed to assess whether this proposed change is likely to have an impact on equality, social inclusion, health and wellbeing.

		Yes	No
1	Does this new or revised project, proposal, policy, report, procedure likely to have an impact?		X
2	Does the proposal seek agreement to a key decision involving allocation of resources, such as changes in funding or resources, initiation of a new programme or project or procurement?		X
3	Does the proposal seek agreement on restructuring or reorganising of staffing?		X
4	Will this policy or proposed change have any impact on potential suppliers?		X

5	Does this policy or proposed change impact on any HR policy or practice within the council?		X
6	Does this policy or proposed change have any implications for equalities, social inclusion and health and wellbeing not covered above?		X

1. If the answer is **no** to all the questions, please provide a summary below outlining why this conclusion has been reached.
2. If the answer is **yes** to any of the questions, please conduct the full ESHIA as detailed in Part two.

If you are unsure of any of the answers, please seek advice from Human Resources.

Summary of initial screening outcome:		
Decision	Yes	No
Initial screening only	X	
Proceed to Part Two, full assessment		X

Initial screening completed by	Assistant Director, Assets
Date	01/03/2025

Full screening completed by	Assistant Director, Assets
Date	01/03/2025

Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA)

Part Two: Full assessment

Section 1

The purpose of the project, proposal or decision required. Set out the aims, objectives, purpose and outcomes of the area being impact assessed. Are any other functions, policies or services linked to this assessment?

This is linked to the Asset Management Strategy.
The Asset Management Plans are intended to provide a documented understanding of built assets owned by the Council.
The Asset Management Plans will assist the Council in making decisions about the future use of built assets.

Section 2

Evidence used and considered. Include analysis of any missing data.

Data Used

- **Income and expenditure data.**
- **Stock condition data**
- **Asset Valuations**

Information Needed

- **Future markets**

Section 3

Consultation undertaken with interested parties who will/may be affected proposal? What were the outcomes of the consultation?

The completed Asset Management Plans will be considered by the Asset Strategy Steering Group before further consideration by Members.
Further consideration will need to be given to impacted parties at the point at which a decision has been made around the various assets.

Section 4

What are the potential or actual impacts of the proposal? Please consider both the direct and indirect impact and refer to the guidance for additional information.

Impact Area	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of the impact	Action to address negative impact
Protected Characteristic, as outlined in the Equality Act 2010			
Age	Ne	At this stage the council is producing an asset management	

		<p>plan for future consideration.</p> <p>No decisions are being made at this stage of the process.</p> <p>Consideration to impacts will be needed at the point of implementing any changes.</p>	
Disability	Ne	As above	
Gender reassignment	Ne	As above	
Marriage and civil partnership	Ne	As above	
Pregnancy and maternity	Ne	As above	
Race	Ne	As above	
Religion or Belief	Ne	As above	
Sex	Ne	As above	
Sexual Orientation	Ne	As above	
Are there socio-economic groups likely to be affected? If yes, please provide detail below			
Other social exclusion	Ne	<p>At this stage the council is producing an asset management plan for future consideration.</p> <p>No decisions are being made at this stage of the process.</p> <p>Consideration to impacts will be needed at the point of implementing any changes.</p>	
Digital exclusion	Ne	As above	
Veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families		As above	

Young people leaving care	Ne	As above	
Health and Wellbeing: Individuals and communities in Tamworth	Impact: Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Explanation	Action to address negative impact
Will the proposal have a direct impact on an individual's health, mental health and wellbeing?	Ne	At this stage the council is producing an asset management plan for future consideration. No decisions are being made at this stage of the process. Consideration to impacts will be needed at the point of implementing any changes.	
Will the proposal directly impact on housing?	Ne	As above	
Will there be a likely change in demand for or access to public services such as health and social care services?	Ne	As above	
Will there be an impact on diet and nutrition?	Ne	No impact	
Will there be an impact on physical activity?	Ne	At this stage the council is producing an asset management plan for future consideration. No decisions are being made at this stage of the process. Consideration to impacts will be needed at the point of implementing any changes.	
Will there be an impact on	Ne	As above	

transport, travel and connectivity?			
Will there be an impact on employment and income?	Ne	As above	
Will there be an impact on education and skills?	Ne	As above	
Will there be an impact on community safety?	Ne	As above	
Will there be an impact on the environment, air quality, climate change?	Ne	Not directly from the production of Asset Management Plans, however this is a consideration in the development of the plans,	

If there are no adverse impacts or any issues of concern or you can adequately explain or justify them, please move to section 6.

Section 5

Where a potential negative impact has been identified, can continuation of the proposal be objectively justified? If yes, please explain your reasons.

At this stage there are no identified negative impacts. This relates to the production of plans that will be used to assess the future of built assets.

The implications of implementing plans will need to form part of the decision making process at the time of implementation.

Section 6: Decisions or actions proposed

The assessment may result in some recommendations or suggestions to mitigate any negative impact and maximise positive impacts or actions to reduce the risk of an adverse impact.

None at this stage

Section 7: Monitoring arrangements

Who will be responsible for monitoring

Assistant Director, Assets

Frequency of monitoring	Monitoring will form part of the decision making process that arises from the Asset Management Plans
Where will the impact assessment be reported to?	Asset Strategy Steering Group
Where this impact assessment will be stored and for how long	This impact assessment will be superseded by the impact assessments produced when determining the future of the various assets.

Section 8: Summary of actions to mitigate negative impact (if required)

Impact Area	Action required	Lead officer/responsible person	Target date	Progress
N/A				

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Corporate Scrutiny Committee

18th March 2025

Report of the Chair Draft Annual Report of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee 2024/25

Exempt Information

None.

Purpose

To provide the Committee with a draft of the Committee's Annual Report for 2024/25 (Appendix 2) together with a draft of the Introductory Report (Appendix 1) which will be presented to full Council in the 2025/26 municipal year.

Following the Committee's consideration, the draft Annual Report will be updated and following the agreement of the Chair will be presented to full Council together with the Annual Reports for the other scrutiny committees and the Introductory Report.

Executive Summary

The draft Annual Report includes:

- the Committee's membership
- a Chair's overview
- the Committee's remit and function (Terms of Reference)
- an overview of regular activity undertaken by the Committee
- a spotlight on items considered
- a summary of working group activity
- a summary of recommendations made to Cabinet and responses received
- members' attendance
- Current Committee work plan

Recommendations

The Committee is requested to consider and comment on the draft Annual Report and Introductory Report and thereafter endorse the draft Annual Report and Introductory Report for submission to full Council, following agreement by the Chair of any final amendments and updates to reflect the March 2024 meeting.

Implications

The report is a summary only of all work carried out by the Committee for the municipal year 2024-25. All matters referred to will provided more information.

Report Author

Councillor S Smith
Chair of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee

Appendices

Appendix 1 – draft Introductory Report
Appendix 2 – draft Annual Report of the Committee

Appendix 3 – Equality Health and Social Inclusion Assessment

Scrutiny Introductory Report – 2024-25

What is scrutiny?

The term ‘scrutiny’ means ‘**examine carefully, rummage through odds and ends.**’ In the context of local government Scrutiny’s role is to research and examine policies and decisions to assess whether they could be improved or strengthened to deliver better services for residents and visitors to Tamworth. Scrutiny is often referred to as the Council’s ‘critical friend’, its purpose is to provide constructive criticism in order to continually seek improvements to services, secure better decisions and realise better outcomes.

Effective overview and scrutiny should:

- Provide constructive ‘critical friend’ challenge;
- Amplify the voices and concerns of the public;
- Be led by independent people who take responsibility for their role; and
- Drive improvement in public services.

Scrutiny Committees cannot make decisions but can offer recommendations to cabinet and officers to be considered when making their decisions.

What Scrutiny at Tamworth Council looks like?

There are three main Overview and Scrutiny Committees and this year we welcome two new Scrutiny Chair’s. The Committees’ role is to hold the Executive to account and support the work of the Executive and the performance delivery of the Council as a whole. These are shown diagrammatically below:



Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny

- Quarterly performance reports
- Leisure
- Voluntary Sector
- Non HRA Housing
- Disability Service
- Social Care
- Elderly and Vulnerable People Services



Infrastructure Safety and Growth Scrutiny

- Infrastructure
- Education
- Employment/Inward Investment
- Town Centre
- Open Space and Play
- Public space protection orders



Corporate Scrutiny

- Forward Plan
- Corporate Plan
- Major Council led projects
- Investment Strategy
- HRA Function
- Local Authority Trading Company’s activity and Performance



These lead to reports and recommendations which advise the Executive and the Council as a whole on its policies, budget and service delivery. Overview and scrutiny committees also monitor the decisions of the Executive.

Scrutiny Committees can 'call-in' a decision which has been made by the Executive but not yet implemented. This enables them to consider whether the decision is appropriate. They may recommend that the Executive reconsider the decision. They may also be consulted by the Executive or the Council on forthcoming decisions and the development of policy.

There is a further committee which meets up to twice a year; the Joint Budget Scrutiny Committee. That Committee's purpose is to consider the budget proposals being put forward by the Executive and make any comments or recommendations. The Committee is made up of all non-Executive members of the Council.

The Councils Procedure Rules state that each of the three main Scrutiny Committees should meet at least 4 times a year. During 2024/2025 the Scrutiny Committee met an average of 8 times.

Within each Scrutiny Committee there can be a number of focussed working groups. Each Committee has a work plan detailing the matters being considered by the committee and future items.

Each Scrutiny Committee decides its workplan for the upcoming year, however throughout the year further items can be added to the plan, this can be through items being identified from the forward plan or by the submission of a work planning proposal form and agreement of Committee members.

Training for Members

The Council provides induction and ongoing training which is open to all members. This covers areas to help familiarise Councillors with each service area / directorate of the Council, as well as training aimed to support Councillors in carrying out their roles on Committees; Planning, Licensing, Audit & Governance as well as Scrutiny training. As well as the Committee focussed training, training sessions are provided in person, or on TEAMS and in some cases, through online modules on safeguarding, equality & diversity, treasury management, and on the member code of conduct. Additionally, where specific topical areas are identified within the year further training and briefings are provided, as well as Councillors being sign-posted to support available through the Local Government Association.

This year we received scrutiny training from the LGA in-house, as well as Chairs being invited to attend a two day training session with scrutiny Chairs from other authorities.

We also have a dedicated scrutiny areas in the Members MS Teams channel where there are resources available.

Annual Report of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee

Chair - Councillor Samuel Smith Vice Chair – Councillor Andrew Wells



Members (2024/25)	Appointed for 2024/25 municipal year	Retirement from Committee
Samuel Smith (Chair)	May 2024	
Andrew Wells (Vice-Chair)	May 2024	
Gareth Coates	May 2024	
Marion Couchman	May 2024	
Helen Hadley	May 2024	
Ken Norchi	May 2024	
Ben Price	May 2024	
Martin Summers	May 2024	
Janice Wadrup	October 2024	
Thomas Jay	May 2024	October 2024

Chair's Overview

Welcome to the annual report of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee, which convened seven times during the 2024/25 municipal year. Stepping into the role of Chair was both an honor and a commitment I embraced wholeheartedly. My ambition was clear from the outset: to invigorate our oversight functions and amplify the impact of our collective efforts.

The first meeting of the committee set the tone for a productive year ahead. We appointed Councillor Andy Wells as Vice-Chair, and although from different parties we ensured a collaborative approach to our responsibilities. I took a moment to acknowledge the contributions of the previous Chair and committee members, emphasising the continuity and dedication that define our committee's work.

Building upon the groundwork laid by my predecessor, we continued to address the pressing concerns of damp and mould in council housing. Our persistent advocacy underscored the urgency of the issue and ultimately led to the Council implementing a damp and mould policy. This collaborative effort highlighted our commitment to improving living conditions and safeguarding public health.

In our initial meetings, we also discussed recommendations to the Cabinet concerning housing voids, focusing on reviewing costs, recovering damages, and improving void turnaround times to enhance the efficiency of housing services. These issues have a direct impact on residents awaiting housing and the Council's financial health, making our scrutiny vital.

Understanding the value of focused and collaborative discussions, I suggested utilising our committee meetings for longer in-depth deliberations rather than establishing separate working groups. This approach was intended to streamline our efforts, maximise output of each committee, and enhance the effectiveness of our scrutiny.

We proactively updated our work plan, adding critical items such as a report on the Leaseholders Collaborative Working Group meeting, the ICT Strategy, Housing Repairs Performance, and further developments on the Corporate Plan and Vision. This comprehensive agenda set us on a path to address the multifaceted challenges and opportunities facing our Council.

In our subsequent meetings, we continued to tackle a range of critical issues resonating deeply with our community:

Strategic Leasehold Review

We conducted a thorough review of leasehold service charges, scrutinising communication challenges with leaseholders and the financial intricacies of lease agreements. The committee supported the necessity for a robust service improvement plan to enhance transparency and foster stronger relationships with leaseholders. Our goal was to ensure fairness, clarity, and mutual understanding in all leasehold matters.

Enhancing Customer Service and Embracing Technology

In September, we turned our attention to bolstering customer service and harnessing technological advancements. Discussions on reopening the reception area at Marmion House highlighted our commitment to improving face-to-face interactions—the heartbeat of effective service delivery. We also explored relocating committee meetings to Marmion House to create a more accessible and integrated approach.

The review of our ICT Strategy marked a pivotal step. We were briefed on the transition to cloud-based systems, enhanced security measures, and the critical role of data-driven decision-making. Embracing modern technology isn't just about efficiency; it's about empowering our constituents with improved services and accessibility. We affirmed our support for these initiatives, emphasising the necessity of continuous innovation.

Public Safety and Heritage Preservation

Public safety and the preservation of our town's rich heritage were also at the forefront of our discussions. Concerns about safety in public spaces prompted deliberations on measures to enhance security. Simultaneously, we explored innovative ways to honor and promote our historical legacy. The proposal of a heritage trail emerged—a promising initiative to boost tourism and celebrate the unique cultural identity of our community.

Financial Oversight and Policy Development

In November, our examination of the Quarter Two Performance Report for 2024/25 underscored our commitment to fiscal responsibility. Engaging in robust discussions about financial variances, rent arrears, and the budgetary impacts of services like the Assembly Rooms and the Joint Waste Service, we raised critical questions about financial strategies. Our comments aimed to enhance financial resilience and ensure prudent resource management.

We also scrutinised the Tenancy Management Policy, focusing on succession rights, fixed-term tenancies, and support for tenants facing eviction due to under-occupancy. Balancing efficient use of housing stock with compassion for tenants' circumstances was paramount. By addressing these policy elements, we aimed to foster fair and supportive housing practices responsive to our community's needs.

Confronting Evolving Challenges

In February, we confronted emerging challenges with renewed determination. The Leader presented the LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Report, highlighting areas for improvement, including the need for an action plan to address financial challenges and enhance member engagement. We delved into discussions on the Asset Management Strategy, emphasising prudent management to avoid undue burdens on taxpayers.

Community engagement was a critical theme. Addressing concerns about the Council's responsiveness to community events, we stressed the importance of honest conversations and building genuine connections with residents. Reviewing the

Corporate Plan 2025-2030 consultation responses, we acknowledged the imperative of aligning our strategic vision with community aspirations through improved communication.

Our assessment of the Quarter Three Performance Report identified concerns about rising outturn variances and complaint response times. Recognising these as areas requiring immediate action, we emphasised the need for swift corrective measures to maintain accountability and enhance service quality.

Throughout the year, collaboration remained a cornerstone of our approach. Inviting Cabinet Members and Officers to our meetings enriched our discussions and informed our recommendations. Engaging directly with department leaders allowed us to delve deeper into issues and foster meaningful dialogues about potential enhancements.

The Council's Forward Plan served as a vital guide, enabling us to identify areas for pre-decision scrutiny or post-implementation reviews. This proactive strategy amplified our effectiveness and promoted a culture of continuous improvement within the Council's operations.

Reflecting on the past year, I am immensely proud of the strides we've made. We have achieved tangible improvements that positively impact our residents' lives. Our diligent oversight has bolstered transparency and accountability, strengthening public trust in our governance. We've championed fiscal responsibility, advanced customer service, embraced technological progress, and deepened community engagement—all in steadfast service to those we represent.

I extend my deepest gratitude to the committee members whose expertise and passion have driven our achievements. I also thank the officers and stakeholders who shared their time and insights—their knowledge has been integral to our success.

As we look to the future, I am filled with optimism and enthusiasm. The coming year presents new challenges and opportunities, and I am confident that together, we will continue to make significant contributions to the well-being of our community. Let's embrace the journey ahead with the same vigor and dedication that have defined our work this past year.

Kind regards

Cllr Samuel Smith

Chair of Corporate Scrutiny

Committee's remit and function (Terms of Reference)

The Constitution sets out the Committee's remit which can be summarised as to provide effective scrutiny of the achievement of the Council's strategic priorities by scrutinising the performance of the Executive. Particular areas of focus include reviewing and scrutinising matters relating to: -

- Forward Plan
- Quarterly performance reports
- Corporate plan
- Major Council led projects
- Investment Strategy
- HRA function
- Bi-annually review and scrutinise matters relating to the Local Authority Trading Company's activities and performance

Quarterly Performance Reports

The quarterly performance update is scrutinised by the Committee before it is taken to Cabinet. The report provides the Committee with an overview of the Council's performance for the specified quarter of the financial year. Reporting on the Council's position in relation to progress with strategic corporate plan projects and updates on the financial position, corporate risks, audits, information governance and complaints.

June 2024 - Quarter 4 2023-24

The Committee received the report for the final quarter of the municipal year 2023-24 in June. When reviewing the report, the Committee were concerned with the increasing outturn variance and the red marker against financial stability. The Committee asked for clarification around the risks associated with the Future High Street Fund project; whether leaseholders were being kept up to date with the review of Leaseholder services and what happens to departmental budget underspends.

The Committee also considered the Councils **Sustainability Strategy and Productivity Plan at this meeting**. The Committee asked questions including where the Stability plan was? What the main drivers for the increasing deficit were? How the peer review was initiated and clarification around savings and what impact interest had.

August 2024 Quarter 1 2024-25

In August, the Committee received the quarter 1 report, and it was highlighted that this was in a new format to be more user-friendly. The Committee sought clarification around figures for St Georges day ticket sales; the impact of Castle Bridge repairs on the upcoming fireworks; performer costs for the Assembly Rooms and the shortfall in ticket bookings; the number of press releases as well as why Marmion House was not being used for committee meetings.

The Committee expressed concerns over the number of tenants on Universal Credit and in rent arrears and why this was not the same for Council Tax.

November 2024 Quarter 2 2024–25

The Quarter two report was reviewed by the Committee in November prior to Cabinet in December. The Committee discussed the compliance of funeral directors and how communication was being shared to market traders around the works being carried out in the town centre.

The Committee were concerned with the upward trend in rent arrears as well as the with the general fund and unfavourable variances shown within the report, and key areas of overspends were discussed. A recommendation was moved for an update on recovery proposals for the key overspend items to be brought to the next meeting. A discussion was had around how the Councils plans were preparing for future risks to funding.

Discussions were also held around financial planning, community cohesion; the role of the climate change officers; cyber security; data breaches; audit recommendations and responses to complaints

February 2025 Quarter 3 2024-25

The Committee received the Quarter three report in February 2024. The Committee were concerned that the outturn variance had continued to rise. It was noted that updates had been provided on the key items requested and that a piece of work was ongoing around the Assembly Rooms. Concerns were raised around the rise in the figures for responses to stage one complaints. The Committee requested more detail around the number of evictions and hardships payments made before endorsing the contents of the report for Cabinet.

Spotlight Item – Corporate Projects

Corporate Project Updates

In June 2024 the Committee received a presentation from the Corporate Project Officer to update them on the current position and timeline for delivery of the corporate plan as well as an update on the then upcoming peer challenge. The Committee were interested in how residents were being engaged with during the process; the role of Councillors; time frames and the strategic priorities.

Vision and Corporate Plan Update

In August 2024, the Committee received an update on the developing vision and corporate plan. The Committee sought clarification over timelines, including for the Members workshop. The Committee highlighted that terminology needs to be consistent and asked for an update on consultation responses.

Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan and Report

In February 2025 the Committee received on the 'Local Government Association Corporate Peer Challenge Report and action plan.'

The Committee acknowledge that the report noted that the Council were doing well.

The Committee were concerned at how long it been since the previous review. Discussions were held around the lack of engagement from Members that was noted in the report. The Committee were concerned with how the Council were going to manage their assets to ensure there was no more burden on the Council and the taxpayer as well as the time that it was taking the Council to respond to the events in the town in August 2024. Discussions were also held around the impact of devolution on Council resources.

The Committee acknowledged the committed and hard-working staff involved and moved a motion to acknowledge this.

Corporate Plan 2025 – 2030

At the meeting in February the Committee received a report to advise Members of the consultation responses that had supported the development of the priorities of the corporate plan 2025 to 2030 and advise on the development of the draft annual delivery plan which would support these being achieved.

The Committee welcomed the smaller, more streamlined document. They were interested in what the Councils heritage offer would be. Concerns were discussed around the lack of responses from residents to the survey and a discussion was held around how the issue of people feeling safe could be addressed. The Committee highlighted the importance of communicating to residents what Tamworth Borough Council were responsible for and what the county council was responsible for.

The Committee also reviewed the below items:

1. August 2024 - Update on Strategic Leasehold Review

Following work by the Committee in the previous municipal year and a motion at Full Council, a Strategic Leasehold Review was held which was presented to the Committee. The Committee sought clarifications around the recommendations from Campbell Tickell and the Officers; the ongoing cost implications of the review; whether the Council benefited from keeping the leasehold properties and whether there were any options to dispose of them; the stock survey and the suggested life span of the roofs and how a first-tier test-tribunal case work? They asked what the next steps were and highlighted the importance of communication.

The Committee moved an amendment to two recommendations and proposed a further two recommendations to be presented to Cabinet.

The Committee requested a further update which was provided at the October meeting before the report was due at Cabinet. The Committee addressed each Cabinet recommendation individually expressing concerns around the assessment of people's ability to pay charges and the letters used to communicate payment options. The Committee welcomed and commented on the service improvement plan. They asked for clarification around varying costs of works required and around the suite of letters being used.

The Committee made an amendment to one of the recommendations for Cabinet and moved an additional recommendation.

2. September 2024 - Marmion House Reception and Committee Meetings

The Committee received a report providing an update on the proposals to reopen Marmion House, and to locate committee meetings to Marmion House and to update audio visual equipment. The Committee expressed concerns that the Council were turning their back on the town's heritage by using the town hall budget and asked whether a piece of work would be done to look at what could be done with the town hall and the possibility of its inclusion on a heritage trail. There were concerns noted around personal safety when using the town hall as a location and it was highlighted that a petition with over 1000 signatures had been previously submitted for the opening of the front desk. Clarification was sought over how estimated figures for the number of expected enquiries were reached and where the decision sat for this project. The Committee endorsed the recommendations being present to Cabinet.

3. September 2024 - ICT Strategy Progress Update

The Committee received a progress report against the Council's 5-year ICT strategy approved in 2021 and sought clarification around the governance of the decision-making process for the new systems at Marmion House as well as the Council's data security. They highlighted the importance of usability, reporting and

integration of systems as well as the importance of being data driven to be effective. A query was raised around the wording within the report around the implementation of a new system at Marmion House.

4. September 2024 - Update on Commercial Lease Negotiations

The Committee were due to receive two updates in August that were delayed until September. These were considered as exempt items and the recommendations were endorsed.

5. October 2024 - Update on Housing Repairs Contract

The Committee received an update on the Council Housing Repairs Contract – this was heard as an exempt item.

6. October 2024 - Social Housing regulatory Update

The Committee reviewed this item to prior to it being considered by Cabinet for approval. They were concerned, and asked for clarification around the number of breaches in electrical inspections, as well as why the Council were not where they wanted to be with repairs. They also asked for clarification around the 'continuous learning' identified and for more information about the proposed tenant advocate. The Committee asked what the Council's relationship with the regulator was like and what impact the report would have on the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) before endorsing the recommendations being proposed to Cabinet.

7. Council Housing Tenancy Management Policy

In November 2024 the Committee received the Tenancy Management policy to review before it went to Cabinet.

Discussions were held around succession rights for tenants; how the Council supported tenants to move to suitably sized properties; how the Council supports tenants with rent arrears; evictions when there is illegal activity taking place; and the reasoning behind the tenancy review. The Committee were interested to hear if there had been any significant changes to rent arrears when fixed term tenancies were previously introduced and how the Council would make sure the adoption of the new policy was cost effective and would not impact services. The Committee requested feedback on the recent training received by the team before endorsing the recommendation for Cabinet.

8. Asses and Plans

to update following March meeting

9. Update on Housing Voids

to update following March meeting

10. Local Government Reorganisation

to update following March meeting

Working groups

The Committee chose to focus on items being heard at the main meetings and therefore no working groups were established this year

Recommendations made to and responses received from Cabinet

Recommendations were made to Cabinet on the following Reports and Cabinet's response is highlighted:

Scrutiny meeting item recommendations	Responses received
<p>13th August 2024</p> <p>1. Strongly recommended that Cabinet adopt the recommendations of the report produced by Campbell Tickell.</p> <p>2. This Council further develops a Service Improvement Plan, and this come back to the Corporate Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>3. The Portfolio Holder and Officers devise an appropriate goodwill payment using industry standards as a small gesture from this Council to these residents in light of the inconvenience and worry caused during this period and seek approval from this Scrutiny Committee for this.</p> <p>4. That Cabinet consider the adoption of a plain English crystal mark or similar alternative across the board for all Tamworth Borough Council communications. (The other recommendations within the report were endorsed)</p>	<p>Cabinet 29 August 2024</p> <p>Cabinet thanked the committee for the recommendations and agreed to look at the recommendations when the report is presented at Cabinet on 10th October and provide a written response to Corporate Scrutiny</p> <p><i>The Committee then requested an update for the meeting on the 9th October</i></p>
<p>9th October 2024</p> <p>1. Cabinet approve the process for remedial works based on the completed surveys and utilising the QLTA approach. A detailed cost breakdown must be submitted to the next available Corporate Scrutiny committee as a briefing note. Both these costs and the final invoices require approval from the</p>	<p>Cabinet 10th October 2024</p> <p>The recommendations from Scrutiny were not moved.</p>

Portfolio Holder for Housing, Homelessness, and Planning 2. Review and revise the payment plan criteria including the statement of means to ensure fairness and consistency.	
The following recommendations were also moved.	
19th November 2024 An update on the recovery proposals for the key items that we need budgetary control over are brought to the next Scrutiny meeting.	An update formed part of the QPR 3 report that was presented to the Committee in February
6th February 2024 The Committee acknowledged the committed and hard-working staff and moved a motion to: Extend thanks to all staff who have presented Tamworth in a positive light during the recent peer review.	Recorded as part of the minutes

Members Attendance to be updated

Member	Number of meetings attended
Samual Smith (Chair)	
Andrew Wells (Vice Chair)	
Gareth Coates	
Marion Couchman	
Helen Hadley	
Ken Norchi	
Ben Price	
Martin Summers	
Janice Wadrup	
Thomas Jay	

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Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA)

An ESHIA is a review of a new or existing policy, strategy, project, report or service change to establish whether this has a differential impact on specific equality groups and identifies how we can improve equality of opportunity for different groups of people.

An ESHIA aims at improving Tamworth Borough Council’s work, by promoting equality, social inclusion, health and wellbeing by ensuring that the proposed or existing policy promotes equality and can benefit a wide range of people.

Details

Title of the proposal	Draft Annual Report of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee	
Director responsible for the project or service area	AD Policy and Performance	
Officer completing the assessment	Leanne Costello	
Date conducted	28/02/25	
Who are the main stakeholders?	Scrutiny Committee Members	
What is being assessed?	A decision to review or change a service	
	A strategy, policy, report or procedure	
	A function, service, or project	X
What kind of assessment is it?	New	
	Review of existing	X

Part One - Initial screening:

This section should be used to carry out an initial screening of changes or decisions to help to decide whether a full ESHIA is required.

The following six screening questions are designed to assess whether this proposed change is likely to have an impact on equality, social inclusion, health and wellbeing.

		Yes	No
1	Does this new or revised project, proposal, policy, report, procedure likely to have an impact?		X
2	Does the proposal seek agreement to a key decision involving allocation of resources, such as changes in funding or resources, initiation of a new programme or project or procurement?		X
3	Does the proposal seek agreement on restructuring or reorganising of staffing?		X
4	Will this policy or proposed change have any impact on potential suppliers?		X

5	Does this policy or proposed change impact on any HR policy or practice within the council?	X	
6	Does this policy or proposed change have any implications for equalities, social inclusion and health and wellbeing not covered above?	X	

1. If the answer is **no** to all the questions, please provide a summary below outlining why this conclusion has been reached.
2. If the answer is **yes** to any of the questions, please conduct the full ESHIA as detailed in Part two.

If you are unsure of any of the answers, please seek advice from Human Resources.

Summary of initial screening outcome:
 This report is a summary of the Corporate Scrutiny Committee and is for information only.

Decision	Yes	No
Initial screening only	X	
Proceed to Part Two, full assessment		

Initial screening completed by	Leanne Costello
Date	28/02/25

Full screening completed by	
Date	

Equality, Social Inclusion and Health Impact Assessment (ESHIA)

Part Two: Full assessment

Section 1

The purpose of the project, proposal or decision required. Set out the aims, objectives, purpose and outcomes of the area being impact assessed. Are any other functions, policies or services linked to this assessment?

Section 2

Evidence used and considered. Include analysis of any missing data.

Section 3

Consultation undertaken with interested parties who will/may be affected proposal? What were the outcomes of the consultation?

Section 4

What are the potential or actual impacts of the proposal? Please consider both the direct and indirect impact and refer to the guidance for additional information.

Impact Area	Impact? Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Details of the impact	Action to address negative impact
Protected Characteristic, as outlined in the Equality Act 2010			
Age			
Disability			
Gender reassignment			
Marriage and civil partnership			
Pregnancy and maternity			
Race			
Religion or Belief			
Sex			
Sexual Orientation			

Are there socio-economic groups likely to be affected? If yes, please provide detail below			
Other social exclusion			
Digital exclusion			
Veterans and serving members of the armed forces and their families			
Young people leaving care			
Health and Wellbeing: Individuals and communities in Tamworth	Impact: Positive (P) Negative (N) Neutral (Ne)	Explanation	Action to address negative impact
Will the proposal have a direct impact on an individual's health, mental health and wellbeing?			
Will the proposal directly impact on housing?			
Will there be a likely change in demand for or access to public services such as health and social care services?			
Will there be an impact on diet and nutrition?			
Will there be an impact on physical activity?			
Will there be an impact on transport, travel and connectivity?			
Will there be an impact on employment and income?			

Will there be an impact on education and skills?			
Will there be an impact on community safety?			
Will there be an impact on the environment, air quality, climate change?			

If there are no adverse impacts or any issues of concern or you can adequately explain or justify them, please move to section 6.

Section 5

Where a potential negative impact has been identified, can continuation of the proposal be objectively justified? If yes, please explain your reasons.

Section 6: Decisions or actions proposed

The assessment may result in some recommendations or suggestions to mitigate any negative impact and maximise positive impacts or actions to reduce the risk of an adverse impact.

Section 7: Monitoring arrangements

Who will be responsible for monitoring	
Frequency of monitoring	
Where will the impact assessment be reported to?	
Where this impact assessment will be stored and for how long	

Section 8: Summary of actions to mitigate negative impact (if required)

Impact Area	Action required	Lead officer/responsible person	Target date	Progress

