

NON-CONFIDENTIAL



Borough of Tamworth

12 November 2013

Dear Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend a **meeting of the Council of this Borough** to be held on **TUESDAY, 19TH NOVEMBER, 2013** at 6.00 pm in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER - MARMION HOUSE**, for the transaction of the following business:-

AGENDA

NON CONFIDENTIAL

- 1 Apologies for Absence**
- 2 To receive the Minutes of the previous meetings held on 10 September 2013**
(Pages 1 - 12)
- 3 State of Tamworth Debate** (Pages 13 - 112)

Report attached and brief presentation to further debate

(Members are invited to debate what their views are about Tamworth, present and future)

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A. OOT', written over a circular stamp or mark.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE

People who have a disability and who would like to attend the meeting should contact Democratic Services on 01827 709264 or e-mail committees@tamworth.gov.uk preferably 24 hours prior to the meeting. We can then endeavour to ensure that any particular requirements you may have are catered for.

Marmion House
Lichfield Street, Tamworth

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**MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE
COUNCIL
HELD ON 10th SEPTEMBER 2013**

PRESENT: Councillor J Garner (Chair), Councillors M Clarke, S Claymore, T Clements, D Cook, C Cooke, M Couchman, S Doyle, J Faulkner, D Foster, M Gant, M Greatorex, G Hiron, A James, J Jenkins, A Lunn, M McDermid, R McDermid, K Norchi, J Oates, S Peale, R Pritchard, S Pritchard, E Rowe, P Seekings, P Standen and M Thurgood

The following officers were present: Anthony E Goodwin (Chief Executive), John Wheatley (Executive Director Corporate Services), Jane Hackett (Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer), Stefan Garner (Director of Finance) and Lara Allman (Democratic & Election Services Officer)

25 ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE MAYOR

The meeting commenced with a minutes silence as a mark of respect following the death of Brian Leake, former Chief Executive.

26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Bates, K Gant and R Kingstone.

27 TO RECEIVE THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 25 JUNE 2013 AND 23 JULY 2013

The minutes of the meetings held on 25 June 2013 and 23 July 2013 were approved and signed as a correct record.

(Moved by Councillor D Cook and seconded by Councillor R Pritchard)

28 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

29 TO RECEIVE ANY ANNOUNCEMENTS FROM THE MAYOR, LEADER, MEMBERS OF THE CABINET OR THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

None.

30 QUESTION TIME:**QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC NO.1**

Under Procedure Rule No 10, Mr K Forest, 64a Foxglove, Amington, Tamworth will ask the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Education, Councillor S Claymore, the following question:-

"Could you please supply the housing completion figures for the 6 months up to 1st April 2013?"

The Portfolio Holder for Economy and Education, Councillor S Claymore gave the following reply:

The Council estimates that for quarter 3 and quarter 4 of the monitoring year 2012 to 2013 there were 47 completed units. This gives an estimated total net completions for the year of 135.

As the question was asked by the Mayor in the absence of Mr K Forest, there was no supplementary question.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC NO.2

Under Procedure Rule No 10, Mr K Forest, 64a Foxglove, Amington, Tamworth will ask the Portfolio Holder for Economy and Education, Councillor S Claymore, the following question:-

"There is compelling evidence that housing occupiers are seeking to downsize for both market and social housing. Based on the latest information could you please supply the percentages of anticipated housing needs for 1, 2, 3, and 4 bedroomed properties for both the market and social housing?"

The Portfolio Holder for Economy and Education, Councillor S Claymore gave the following reply:

The Southern Staffordshire Districts Housing Needs Study and SHMA Update 2012, which is available on our website, says the following:

Based on the quantitative need modelling against residents' aspirations, viability and the characteristics of the existing stock, the following market housing sizes are required in Tamworth: 4% 1 bed flat; 42% 2 bed flat/house/bungalow; 39% 3 bed house/bungalow; 15% 4 bed house.

For affordable dwellings, the comparable figures are 9% 1-bedroom; 50% 2-bedroom; 32% 3-bedroom and 9% 4-bedroom +.

As the question was asked by the Mayor in the absence of Mr K Forest, there was no supplementary question.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL NO.1

Under Procedure Rule No 11, Councillor J Jenkins will ask the Portfolio Holder for Operations and Assets, Councillor R Pritchard, the following question:-

"In view of the absence of Talkback deliveries in Wilnecote and other areas could the people of Tamworth be informed of the cost of this Summer's edition, the procedures to monitor its delivery, the results of those procedures and how these results fit in with the Council's policy on access to information by its taxpayers?"

The Portfolio Holder for Operations and Assets, Councillor R Pritchard gave the following:

Thank you Mr Mayor,

Thank you for your question but as you already know the answer I'm not in a position to provide you with new information at this time.

As per the information already sent to you, officers routinely ask delivery companies to provide evidence of the areas it was delivered to. No issues have been identified as per the information provided and the council is satisfied it has been delivered in this instance.

The delivery company has agreed to carry out additional checks and in future, will be providing a breakdown of streets the publication has been delivered to at the end of each week. We could deliver via Royal Mail or a similar service but this could increase delivery costs alone up to £5,000.

I am aware of missed deliveries before, and mistakes do happen, in the case of my example it was an administrative error, but I left the issue with officer to resolve, which they did accordingly.

In terms of costs for this issue, as you are already aware, the cost of printing 32,000 copies is in the region of £2,400, delivery costs are around £1,800 for the whole borough.

The council can use a variety of methods for delivery, such as doubling up with other council publications or delivering with poll cards, so this is just a price for this particular issue.

You ask if the public can have access to this information. They already do have access to this information.

These costs are published on the council website. All invoices over £500 are made public to ensure openness and transparency.

There is no requirement for the council to publish a magazine, indeed the only legislation on council publications limits the number we can publish at four a year.

Supplementary Question:

At least half of Wilnecote have not received a copy and I can back this up with examples of roads and any survey will show that not everyone is IT literate or has access to a computer. Is there any way you can recompense those residents who have not received a copy of Talkback?

The Portfolio Holder for Operations and Assets, Councillor R Pritchard gave the following:

No we cannot provide any form of recompense. Talkback is available on line and anyone who has not received a copy can phone up and request one but we won't deliver as the cost would be prohibitive.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL NO.2
Under Procedure Rule No 11, Councillor C Cooke will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor D Cook, the following question:-

"What benefits for Tamworth people would the Leader of the Council cite in support of his party colleague, Mr Christopher Pincher, Tamworth's representative in Parliament, who voted for British military action in Syria."

The Leader of the Council, Councillor D Cook gave the following reply:

Cllr Cooke, thank you for your question. I note your, through no-one's fault, question has altered slightly from its original point. I will try to answer both as fully as I can.

Firstly, let us understand what exactly we are talking about here. The Syrian military and its government has admitted to the world that it was conducting a major military operation in the area at that time that chemicals weapons were used against a population center killing innocent civilians. The regime refused calls for immediate and unrestricted access for UN weapons inspectors, while artillery and rocket fire in the area reached a level about four times higher than in the preceding 2 weeks. The cynic in me would say someone was trying to obliterate any evidence. There is also evidence that Syrian armed forces took precautions associated with chemical weapons use. Not one MP disputes these facts.

It is fair to say this has shocked the world. I am deeply appalled. Whatever political rankles there are over the complex situation in Syria and the Middle East as a whole, I believe that there should be no denying that the use of chemical weapons in any way is wrong. We must recall our history, almost a century ago the world came together to agree the 1925 Geneva treaty and to outlaw the use of chemical weapons, of which Britain is a principle signatory and international law since that time has reflected a determination that the events of the First World War should never be repeated. It put a line in the sand; it said that, whatever happens, these weapons must not be used. President Assad has quite simply crossed that line and there should now be consequences. This was the first significant use of chemical weapons this century and, taken together with the

previous 14 small-scale attacks that have been proven, it is the only instance of the regular and indiscriminate use of chemical weapons by a state against its own people for at least 100 years. This must have consequences or international law is not worth the principles it was founded on by great men who wanted us globally to be better.

I believe interfering in another country's affairs should not be taken except in the most exceptional circumstances. There must be a humanitarian catastrophe, and the action must be a last resort. Well currently there are at the last count over 4 million refugees fleeing or have fled Syria, most have gone to Lebanon. Are you aware Cllr Cooke that most are children; in fact it is estimated over 2 million children. These children will now not be able to have the childhood we wish for our own children, nor any kind of education, they are now a generation that is lost, any potential is gone. By any standards, this is a humanitarian catastrophe and if there are no consequences for it, there will be nothing to stop Syria or other dictators using these weapons again and again. Doing nothing was not the vision when international law in these matters were formulated.

On August 29th 2013 MPs voted against possible military action against Syria, (or did they?), the defeat of a government motion by 285-272, ruling out joining US-led strikes. Mr Cameron must "find other ways" to put pressure on Mr Assad.

You have pointed out Tamworth's MP Christopher Pincher, a Conservative like myself, voted for the motion put to the House of Commons. You have asked me if I agree with my colleague. Yes, I do but not out of any party loyalty. Let me explain, first we must understand the motion put to Parliament in regards to the Syrian Crisis.

The motion read and can be found on Hansard, column 1426.

That this government - Notes that the use of chemical weapons is a war crime under customary law and a crime against humanity, and that the principle of humanitarian intervention provides a sound legal basis for taking action;

Notes the wide international support for such a response, including the statement from the Arab League on 27 August which calls on the international community, represented in the United Nations Security Council, to "overcome internal disagreements and take action against those who committed this crime, for which the Syrian regime is responsible";

Believes, in spite of the difficulties at the United Nations, that a United Nations process must be followed as far as possible to ensure the maximum legitimacy for any such action;

Therefore welcomes the work of the United Nations investigating team currently in Damascus, and, whilst noting that the team's mandate is to confirm whether chemical weapons were used and not to apportion blame, agrees that the United Nations Secretary General should ensure a briefing to the United Nations Security Council immediately upon the completion of the team's initial mission;

Believes that the United Nations Security Council must have the opportunity immediately to consider that briefing and that every effort should be made to secure a Security Council Resolution backing military action before any such action is taken, and notes that before any direct British involvement in such action a further vote of the House of Commons will take place; and

Notes that this Resolution relates solely to efforts to alleviate humanitarian suffering by deterring use of chemical weapons and does not sanction any action in Syria with wider objectives.

Let me sum up what Mr. Pincher voted for. That the government supports the UN in discovering the whole truth of the matter and supports any UN mandate. That until the UN has reached a position that NO military action can be undertaken until another vote is taken in Parliament at a later stage. Cllr Cooke, at no point has anyone in parliament voted for military action. I agree with this motion, it is right. In fact those that opposed it have in my opinion played to the gallery and all they have achieved is saying that our government has no interest in what the UN discovers.

So yes I agree with Mr. Pincher's stand on the matter.

As to your question in regards to what benefits are there to the people of Tamworth in regards to any military action in Syria. I think we both accept that is a complicated question, but I will give you my opinion. I could give us all a lecture on oil production in the Middle East and that petrol prices are cheaper and more stable when peace exists, but I will not. What would Tamworth benefit, Pride, pure and simple, thus we have to decide what kind of nation we want to be. Are we a nation that turns it back on Children's suffering or a nation that s prepared to stand behind the most simple parental principle there is?

I believe lessons have to be learned from the Iraq conflict in 2003. However, this situation is not like Iraq, Syria is fundamentally different. We are not occupying Syria, there is no sexed up dossier about potential WMD's, I think we all know there are WMD / chemical weapons in Syria, we all saw it with our own eyes on the news. The fact that the Syrian Government used chemical weapons against the public is not in doubt, they are bang to rights. The evidence that the Syrian regime has used these weapons, in the early hours of 21 August, is right in front of our eyes.

In 2003 the Arab world opposed action in Iraq. In regards to Syria they are demanding action. Yes we got stuck on the ground in Iraq, but we did not in Libya. We need as a Western Liberal State to be known as a nation that stands by our principles; the fact that children were gassed and we intend to do nothing is shameful. Please recall In Afghanistan and Iraq that our European partners opposed our actions. On Syria they all agree action is required.

It's at times like these I have pity for Tony Blair, a rarity I accept. After the Twin Towers fell in 2001 he stood up and asked the British people did we want a war on terror. If we are honest with ourselves over 80% of us said yes. There was no actual public vote, but we all know support was there. So off we went to the rogue evil terrorist supporting states of Afghanistan and Iraq. There are lessons to learn

certainly, but yet now there are those who call Mr Blair a criminal; well sorry he gave us what we asked for if we are honest. Hindsight is a wonderful tool.

I don't know how many Councillors are avid listeners to a British Band called James. They have a song released a few years ago called 'Hey Ma' and it is about the Iraq war. The opening lines are very powerful – "now the towers have fallen, so much dust in the air, it affected your vision, couldn't see yourself clear, please don't preach me forgiveness, you're hard wired for revenge".

This time there is no hint of revenge, it is about a humanitarian disaster caused by an evil government who murder their own people, especially Children. I want Britain to a nation that stands up with all its resources and says NO. We will act and we will defend those who cannot defend themselves. Those are the actions of a proud and just nation and one Tamworth could take pride in, but I accept others may disagree.

Britain have clearly decided that isolationism is the way forward, well how did that work for the USA between 1918 and 1941 when they ignored the world's problems?

Do I support boots on the ground, not entirely sure at this point. But I do think I have the information, so yes I support Mr Pinchers vote and his belief there should always have been a second vote for direct military action. But it was not to be.

Many years from now my grandchildren may be studying history and may ask me why my generation did nothing to oppose the slaughter and displacement of Children in Syria. I will answer that on the 29th August 2013 I was ashamed to be British. We were once a shining light of morality in the world, on August 29th that light was shamefully turned off.

Supplementary question

I'm surprised the answer was so long. Although I would agree with much of what Cllr Cook has said, I would dispute much too. But to get it back to more local concerns, in view of the fact that 9 out of 10 people in Tamworth are against using military force in Syria would the Leader consider asking Mr Pincher to join the Council's Tamworth Listens campaign? Or do you think he would still listen more to his Westminster leaders and bureaucrats than to Tamworth people?

The Leader of the Council gave the following reply:

It's not for me to comment. I suggest you write to Christopher Pincer direct.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

NO.3

Under Procedure Rule No 11, Councillor C Cooke will ask the Leader of the Council, Councillor D Cook, the following question:-

"I am very grateful for the full, frank and helpful written answers to my two previous questions from the June Council. Clearly there is a developing and serious situation regarding people not being able to meet council tax and rent liabilities and I ask that this be kept under review. Can the Leader understand how such people, unable to meet these Council bills, might be very unsympathetic to your answer to my other question last time on Open Space Standards? That this Council had spent a lot of time and effort throwing away £26,650 on consultants whose work was ignored and is now in the council's rubbish bin."

The Leader of the Council, Councillor D Cook gave the following reply:

Cllr Cooke, I can assure you that Council Tax and rents in all forms are key forms of income for this Council and as such are constantly reviewed. The income pays for key services that support our residents and tenants. We bring quarterly performance reports to Cabinet, we have an audit department and each director monitors the income streams constantly with portfolio holders.

We are aware that Welfare reforms will hit some residents hard and as such have additional budgets in place to provide help and support for those who seek it. This Council takes its safeguarding responsibilities very seriously and monitors those who need this protection with our public sector partners.

On the issue of the open space strategy, it is required by legislation and informs the Local Plan, it was key. I suggest you arrange a meeting with Matt Bowers and fully discuss the matter and then come and see me with the key concerns in regards to this matter.

Supplementary question:

The Open Space standards recommended by that Consultants Report - which was approved by Cabinet at the time, but never got put out to public consultation, which is the reason why it failed - would have given a much greater degree of protection against the inappropriate development of what's left of Tamworth's green and open spaces. Does the leader agree that by not implementing those Open Space standards Tamworth Council has effectively given the green light to developers and has badly let down the people who live here - as well as wasting the £26,650?

The Leader of the Council gave the following reply:

No

31 ANNUAL REPORT ON THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT SERVICE AND ACTUAL PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS 2012/13

The Report of the Cabinet and the Portfolio Holder for Operations and Assets seeking approval for the Annual Report on the Treasury Management Service and Actual Prudential Indicators 2012/13 was considered.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1 The actual 2012/13 Prudential Indicators within the report and shown at appendix 1 be approved, and;
- 2 The treasury Management stewardship report for 2012/13 be accepted.

(Moved by Councillor R Pritchard and seconded by Councillor D Cook)

32 TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING MOTION, NOTICE OF WHICH HAS BEEN GIVEN IN ACCORDANCE WITH PROCEDURE RULE NO. 12.1 BY COUNCILLORS R MCDERMID, M MCDERMID, P STANDEN, K NORCHI AND M CLARKE:-

The motion put forward to amend Article 6 of the Constitution to add "That the chairs of scrutiny committees be selected from members of the opposition groups, to further the goals of holding the Executive to account and supporting the work of the Executive" was moved by Councillor R McDermid and seconded by Councillor P Standen.

The motion was rejected.

33 REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION AND SCHEME OF DELEGATION

The Report of the Leader of the Council and Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer regarding the proposed changes to the Constitution and Scheme of Delegation was considered.

RESOLVED:

That:

- 1 The Constitution and changes as presented and agreed be accepted, and a small working party be formed to continue the review and present a report to Annual Council, and;
- 2 The revised Constitution and Scheme of Delegation as presented in the appendix to the report be adopted.

(Moved by Councillor R Pritchard and seconded by Councillor J Faulkner)

34 OUTSIDE BODIES LIST 2013/2014

RESOLVED: That the revised list of Outside Bodies following the annual review was received.

(Moved by Councillor J Faulkner and seconded by Councillor D Cook)

The Mayor



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF THE EXTRAORDINARY COUNCIL HELD ON 10th SEPTEMBER 2013

PRESENT: Councillor J Garner (Chair), Councillors M Clarke, S Claymore, T Clements, D Cook, C Cooke, M Couchman, S Doyle, J Faulkner, D Foster, M Gant, M Greatorex, G Hirons, A James, J Jenkins, A Lunn, M McDermid, R McDermid, K Norchi, J Oates, S People, R Pritchard, S Pritchard, E Rowe, P Seekings, P Standen and M Thurgood

The following officers were present: Anthony E Goodwin (Chief Executive), Jane Hackett (Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer) and Lara Allman (Democratic & Election Services Officer)

34 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors L Bates, K Gant and R Kingstone.

35 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

36 HONORARY FREEDOM OF THE BOROUGH - THOSE MEMBERS OF ALL THE BRANCHES OF THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION, ROYAL NAVAL ASSOCIATION AND ROYAL AIR FORCE ASSOCIATION, BASED IN TAMWORTH.

An amendment to the original motion was moved by Councillor R Pritchard and seconded by Councillor S People that the Council should confer the Title of Honorary Freeman of the Borough to The Royal British Legion, Royal Naval Association, Mercian Regimental Association and Royal Air Force Association in Tamworth.

RESOLVED: In pursuance of the provisions of Section 249 of the Local Government Act 1972, the council permit The Royal British Legion, Royal Naval Association, Mercian Regimental Association and Royal Air Force Association in Tamworth to hold Honorary Freedom of the Borough of Tamworth.

The Mayor

COUNCIL

19th NOVEMBER 2013

REPORT OF THE LEADER

STATE OF TAMWORTH DEBATE

EXEMPT INFORMATION

Not applicable.

PURPOSE

To inform Council of progress made towards the corporate priorities and inform of the outcomes from the Tamworth Listens Question Time Event.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Council debate the contents and findings of the report.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report looks at progress made against the corporate priorities;

- To aspire and prosper in Tamworth,
- To be healthier and safer in Tamworth.

It highlights achievements and issues backed up by performance information and public opinion gained through a range of consultation activities including budget consultations, workshops and on-line questionnaires, where available.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are none.

LEGAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS BACKGROUND

There are none.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are none.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

REPORT AUTHOR

John Day
Corporate Performance Manager

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

APPENDICES

- Appendix A Delivering the Goods Annual Report 2012-13
- Appendix B Health Profile
- Appendix C Feeling the Difference Survey
- Appendix D Budget Consultation 2014/15
- Appendix E Tamworth Listens Question Time Event Responses

State of Tamworth Debate

19th November 2013

Introduction

This year the report will look at progress made against the corporate priorities;

- To aspire and prosper in Tamworth,
- To be healthier and safer in Tamworth.

It highlights achievements and issues backed up by performance information and public opinion gained through our consultation activities, where available.

This approach is intended to encourage debate in the Council Chamber on those things important in Tamworth.

Appendices are attached.

Appendix A Delivering the Goods Annual Report 2012-13

Appendix B Health Profile

Appendix C Feeling the Difference Survey

Appendix D Budget Consultation 2014/15

Appendix E Tamworth Listens Question Time Event Responses

To aspire and prosper in Tamworth

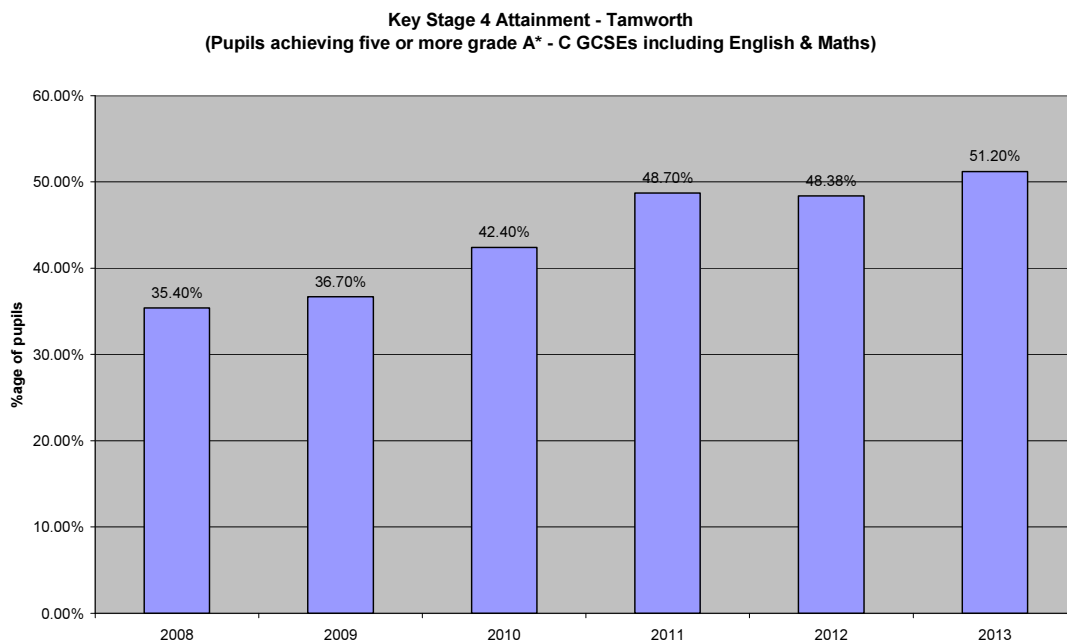
Raise the aspiration and attainment levels of young people

Good literacy and numeracy are essential to further study and employability. Improving performance in these is important as those areas with low levels of educational attainment and skills are more likely to be associated with high levels of worklessness and other socio economic issues.

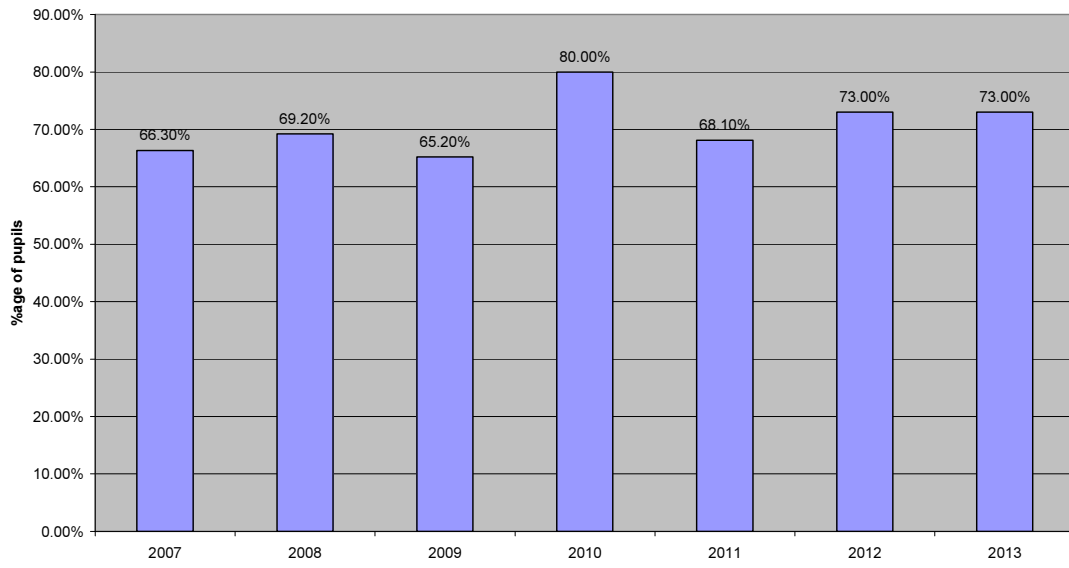
Whilst not a direct responsibility of the Council, we take a very keen interest and involvement in this important objective. Indeed, we developed, and are an active member on the Education and Skills Board and have now included education into one of the Cabinet's portfolios.

This objective was seen as important by 65% of responders to the 2014/15 budget consultation exercise. With 51% of respondents believing that good education provision is an important factor in making somewhere a good place to live. (Appendix D)

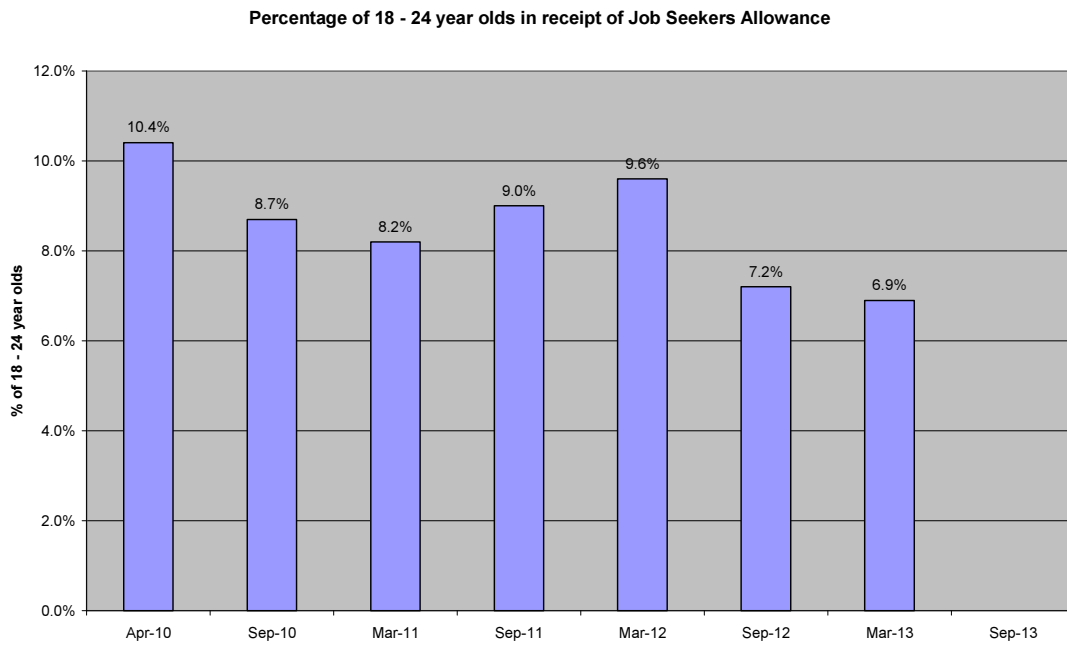
Tamworth's improving progress in both key stage 2 and key stage 4 attainments over the last few years can be seen below.



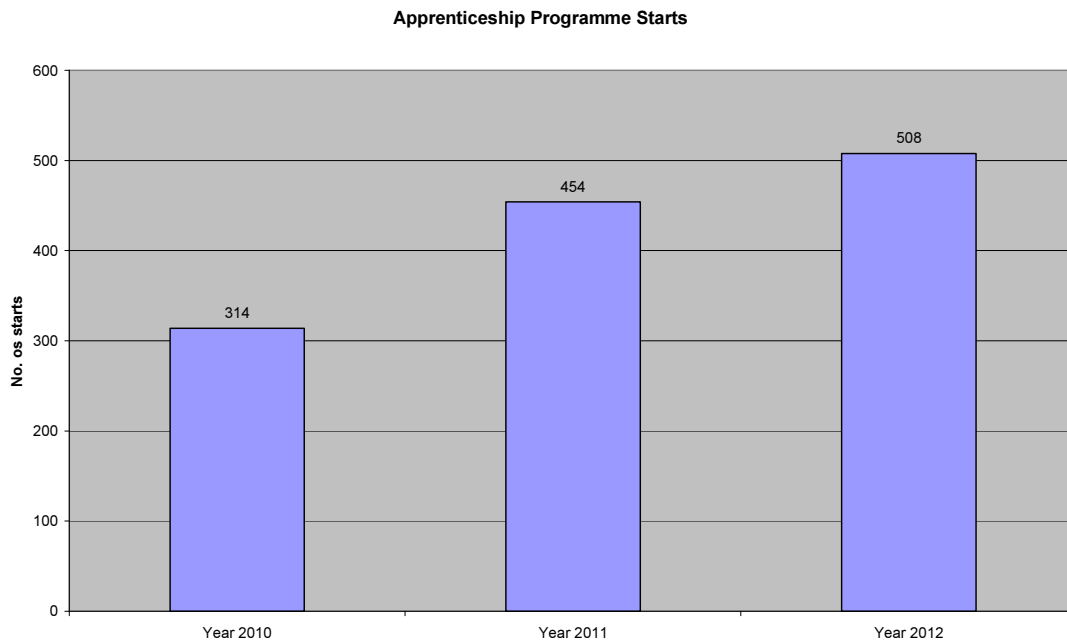
Key Stage 2 Attainment
(Pupils achieving Level 4 in reading/writing/maths)



Youth unemployment is an issue in Tamworth. However, it has fallen over the last eighteen months.



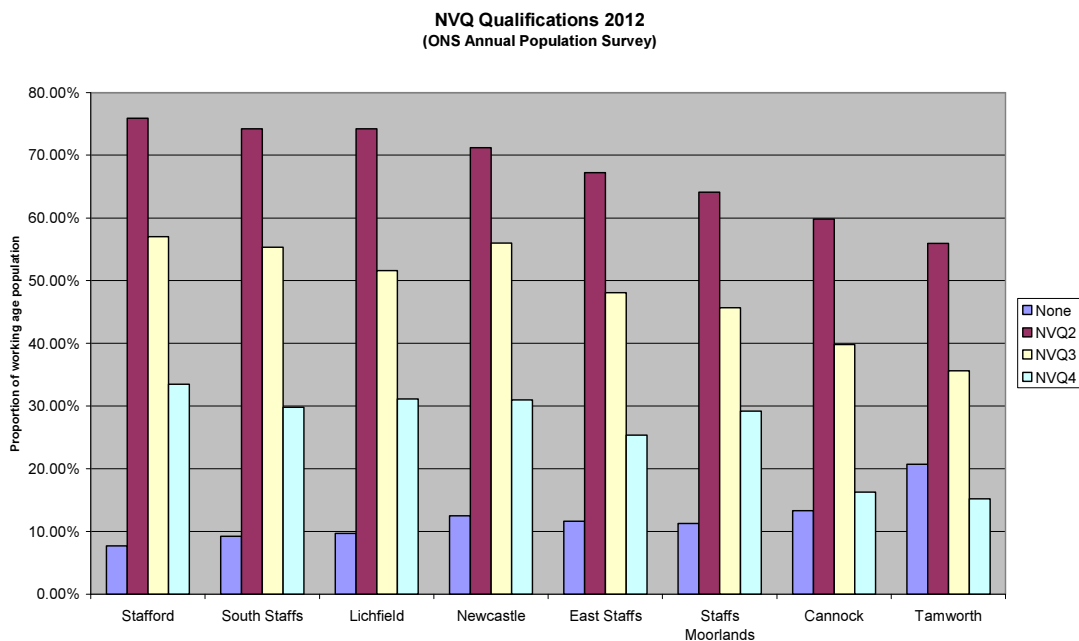
Apprenticeship programme starts show an encouraging rise.



Create opportunities for business growth through developing and using skills and talent

Although improving the educational attainment of young people in Tamworth will have substantial benefits over the longer term, tackling skills issues for the current working age population is just as important. This is to ensure that people have the right skills to access employment and in particular the higher value added jobs that are being targeted across the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent area.

This objective was seen as important by 82% of responders to the 2014/15 budget consultation exercise.

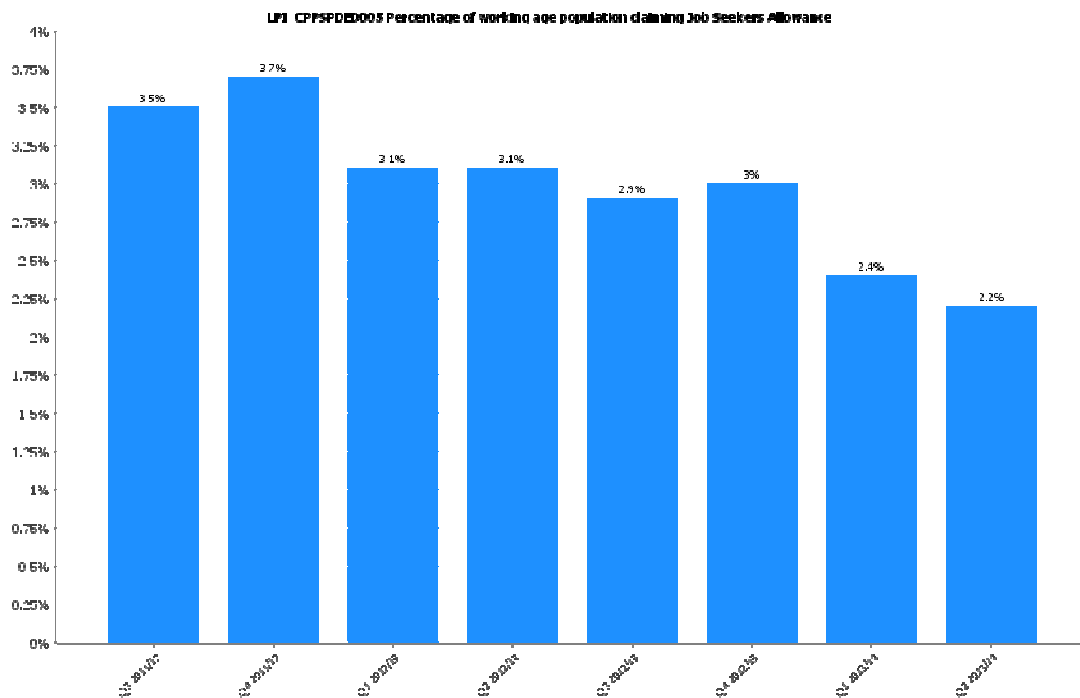


Promote private sector growth and create quality employment locally

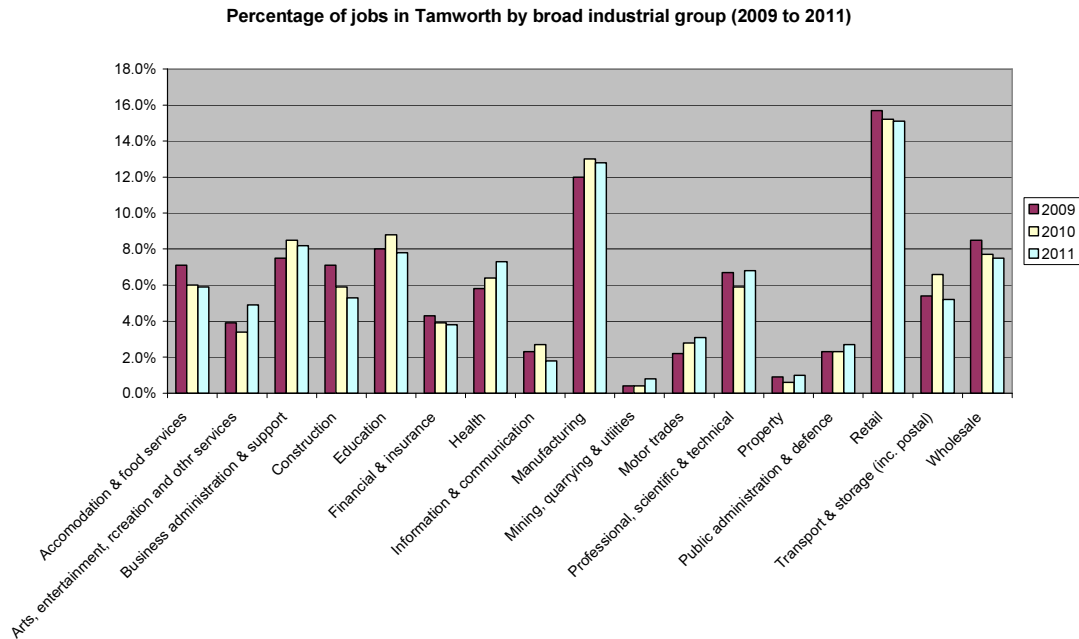
This objective was seen as important by 85% of responders to the 2014/15 budget consultation exercise, the highest under this priority. With 72% of respondents believing that good job prospects are an important factor in making somewhere a good place to live.

Claimant count is a key measure of unemployment and measures those people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance benefit (JSA).

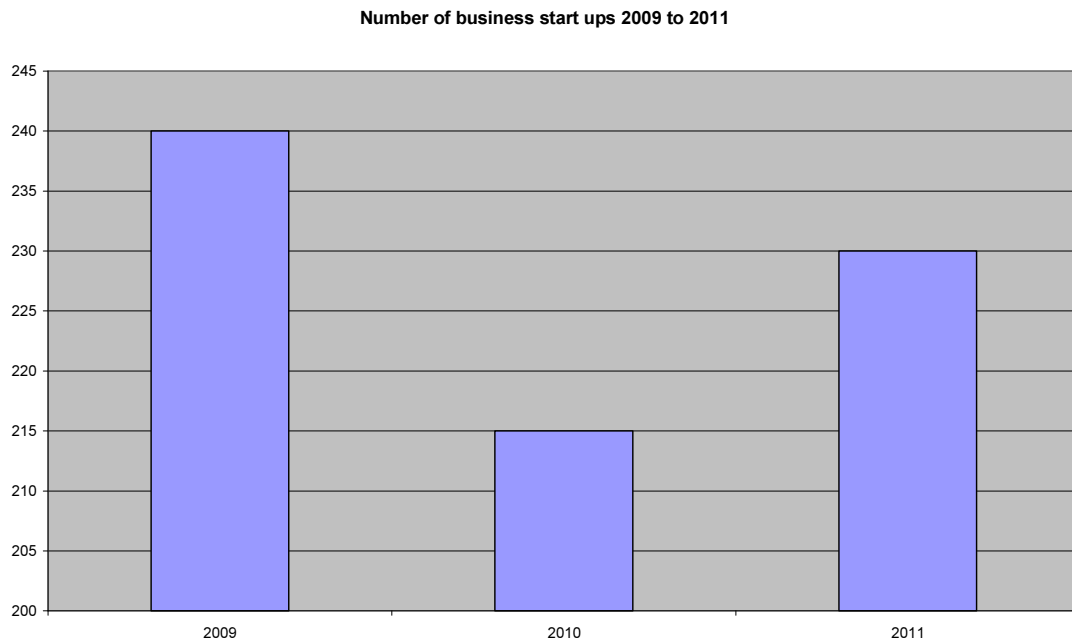
In September 2013 there were 1,103 people claiming JSA in Tamworth, 2.2% of the working age population. This was slightly higher than the county rate of 2.1%, but lower than regional (4.0%) and national (3.2%) rates. Since 2009, the overall numbers and rate have fallen and despite a slight increase in March 2012, the trend is downwards again.



In total there are around 26,200 employee jobs in Tamworth with retail and manufacturing being the main employment sectors.



After a period of decline, the number of business start ups is beginning to show improvement.



Tamworth Borough Council and Lichfield District Council operate a shared economic development and enterprise service. The service won the ‘Best All Round Small Business Friendliness’ award recognising the significant improvement in communication between the public and private sector, helping

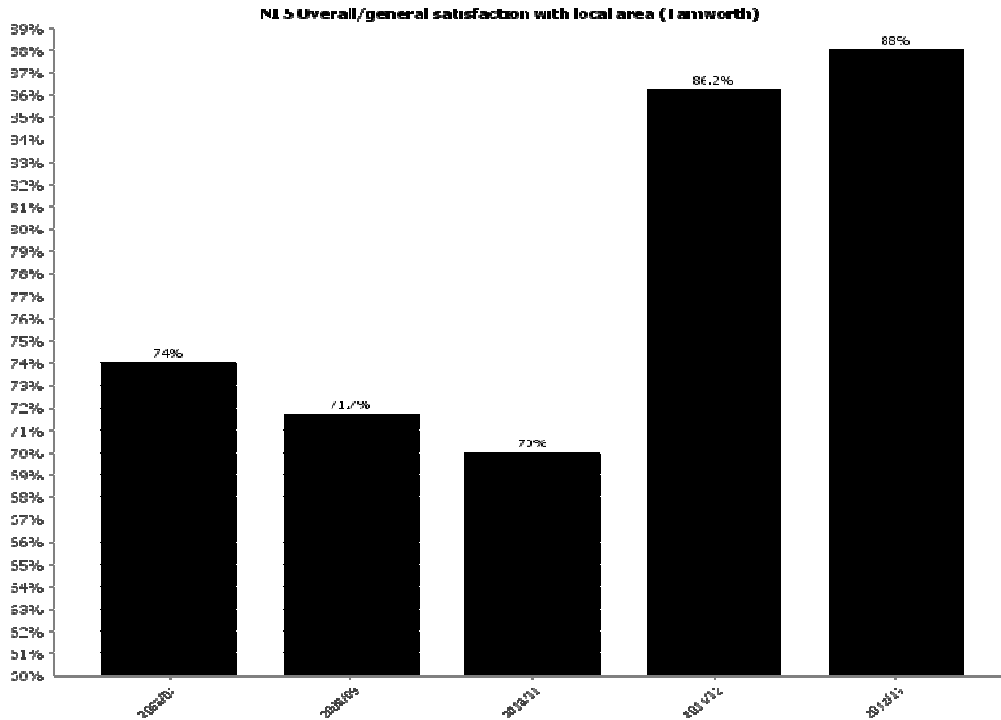
to raise local business issues and forging strong links between networks across the area.

This year has seen the specific delivery of projects and initiatives on the themes of business support, business engagement and shared strategic thinking. Examples of the work undertaken can be found in the *Delivering the Goods, Annual Report 2012/13 at Appendix A*.

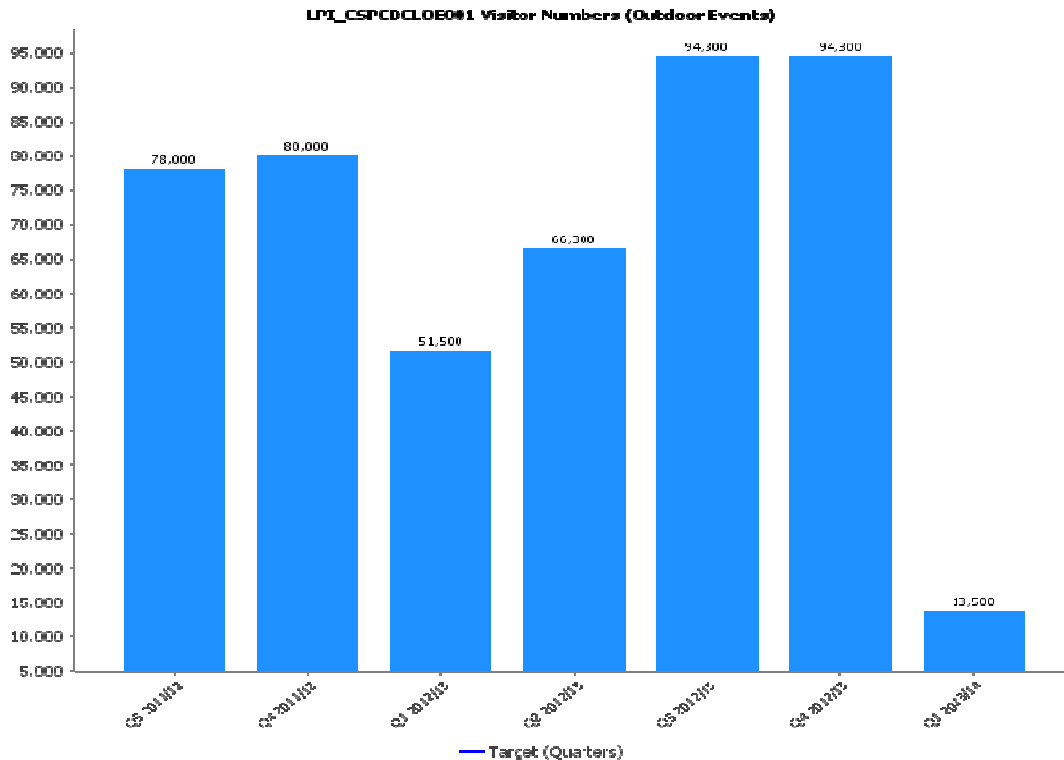
Brand and market “Tamworth” as a great place to “live life to the full”

This objective was seen as important by 49% of responders to the 2014/15 budget consultation exercise. The lowest under this priority.

In the 2012/13 Place Survey, 88% of respondents expressed overall/general satisfaction with the local area. After a period of decline, this has improved over the last few years.



Our outdoor events programme continues to attract large numbers of people, the 2012/13 visitor number figure being boosted by our hosting of the Olympic Torch Relay. Importantly, visitor satisfaction rates with these events have not dropped below 98% for three years.



Tamworth Borough Council plays its part in Destination Tamworth which is Tamworth's Town Team. Its main area of focus is to engage with local businesses, commercial landlords, service organisations and residents to support the wide programme being delivered through Tamworth Borough Council. This organisation is currently drafting a business and marketing plan.

Create the physical and technological infrastructure necessary to support the achievement of this primary outcome.

This objective was seen as important by 62% of responders to the 2014/15 budget consultation exercise.

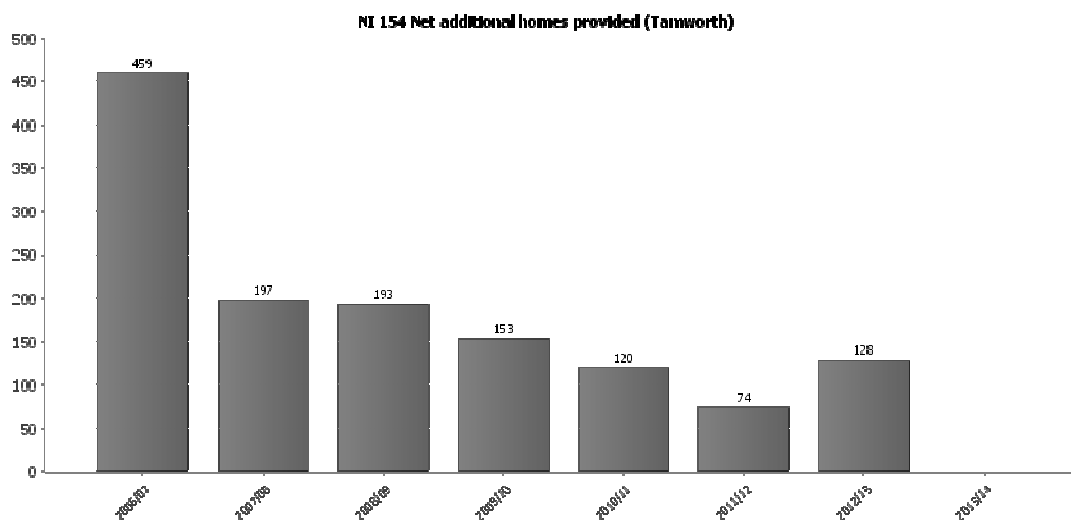
In October, Tamworth's first ever question time event was held. (Appendix E). One of the themes of this was 'the future of the Town Centre'.

This prompted long debate amongst the panel and audience. There was agreement that it is no longer feasible for the former Gungate precinct site to be the area for a multi-million pound retail unit. Instead a combination of housing, niche retail and soft leisure would give the town what it wants and needs and provide the landowner with a return on their investment. This will result in people using the town centre and bring a living community back into it. Within that residential offer, there needs to be provision for our ageing population by way of sheltered housing and flexi care schemes as well as providing 1 and 2 bed properties for the young.

There was also debate on Tamworth having its own Saxon Village to act as a tourist attraction, sitting alongside the current heritage offer. There is no money at this present time to fund such a scheme as budgets are focussed on delivering the priority services that residents require.

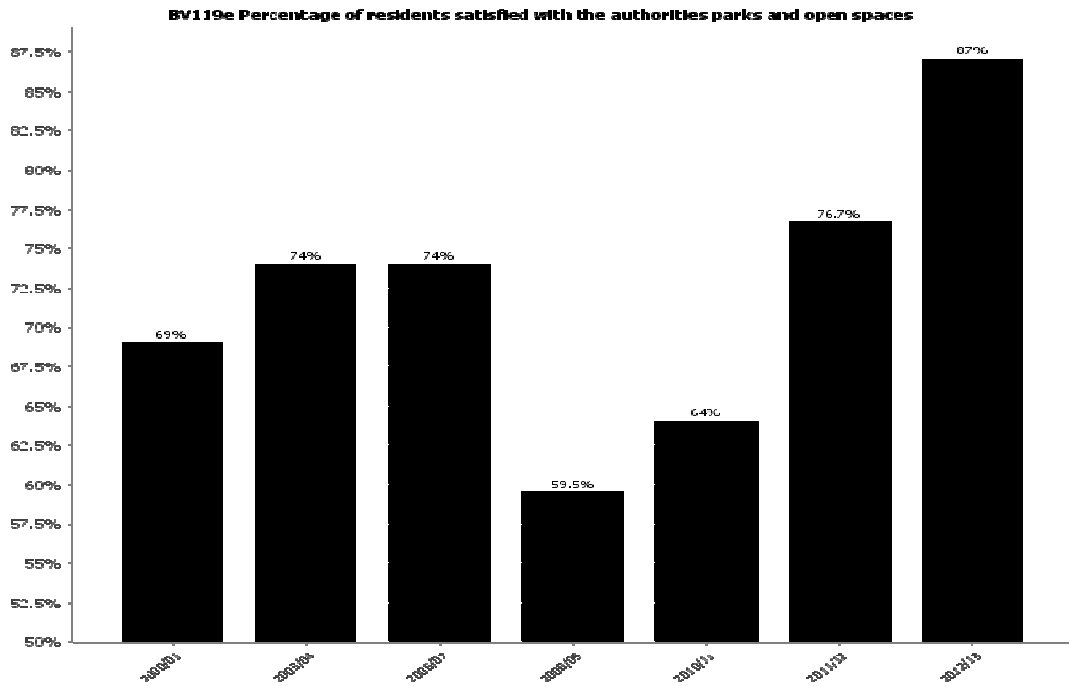
The provision of housing is an important part of this objective but the level of house building had decreased between 2007 and 2011. This is a likely consequence of the recession and the fall in the housing market and is not an issue unique to Tamworth.

In the budget consultation 2014/15 exercise 46% of respondents thought that more money should be spent on the provision of housing services.

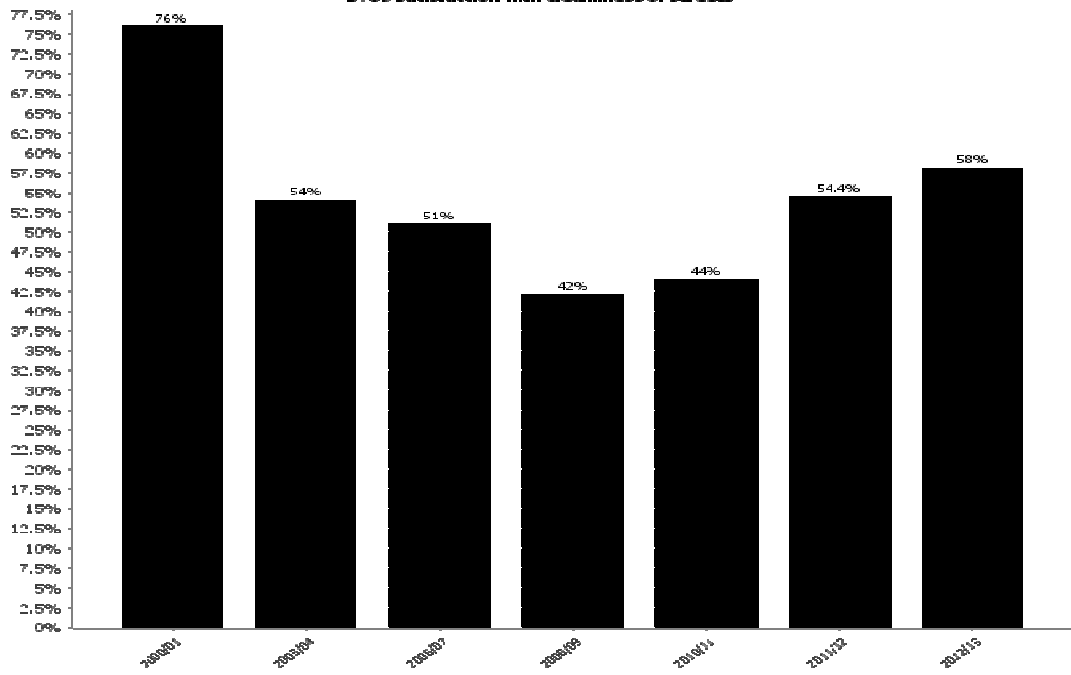


The condition of our area is an important factor in this objective. The two graphs below, measured over the years by our place survey, shows residents' growing satisfaction with parks and open spaces and street cleanliness after a short period of decline.

In the budget consultation 2014/15 exercise 46% of respondents thought that more money should be spent on street cleaning and 27% thought more should be spent on parks and open spaces.



BV89 Satisfaction with cleanliness of streets



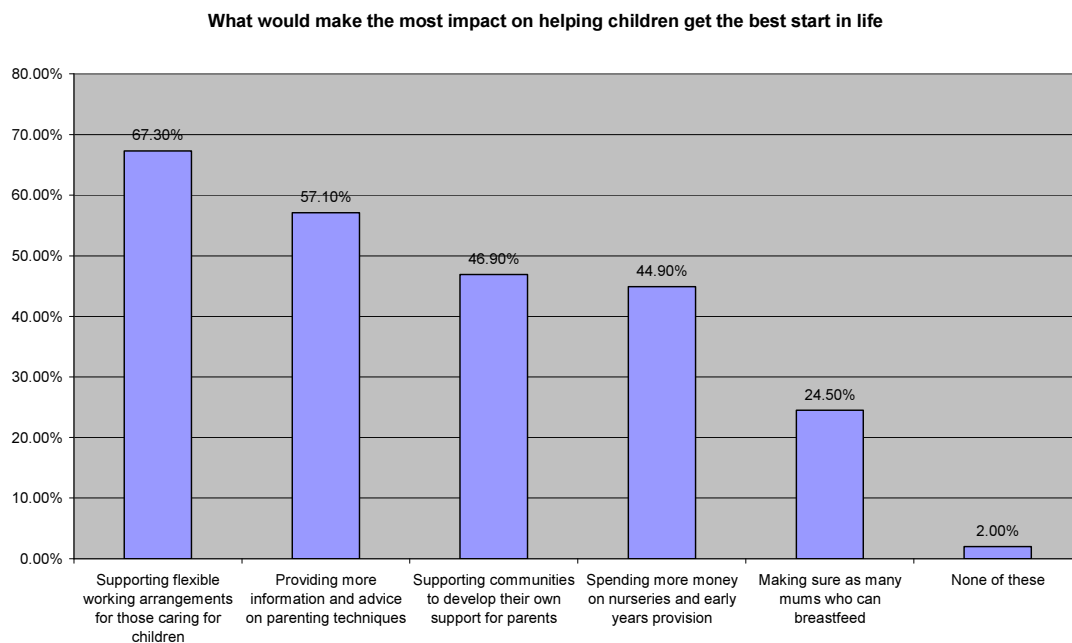
To be healthier and safer in Tamworth

Address the causes of poor health in children and young people

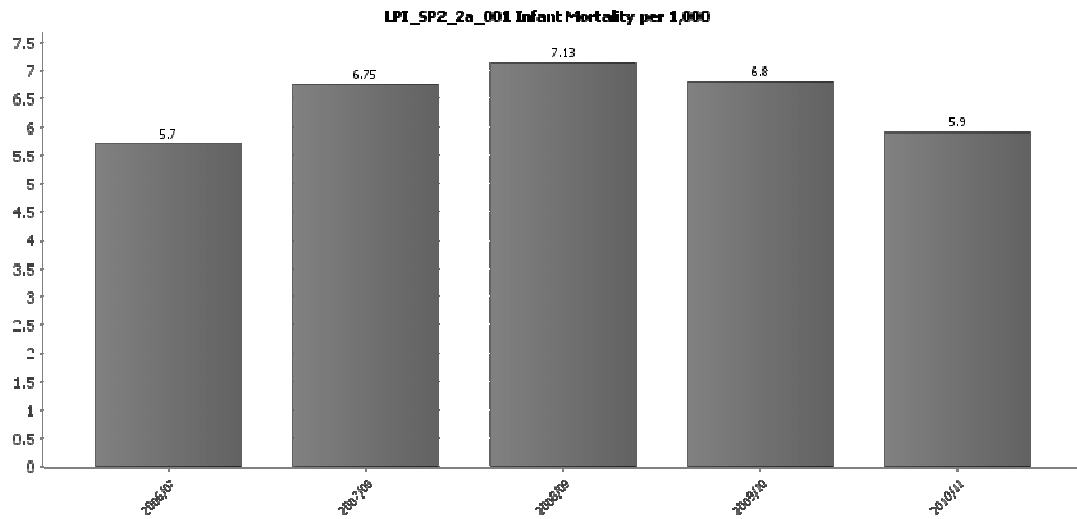
This objective was seen as important by 69% of responders to the 2014/15 budget consultation exercise

In August 2013, Staffordshire County Council, in conjunction with all districts under took consultation on its Health and Wellbeing strategy. Tamworth contributed almost a quarter of the total county replies.

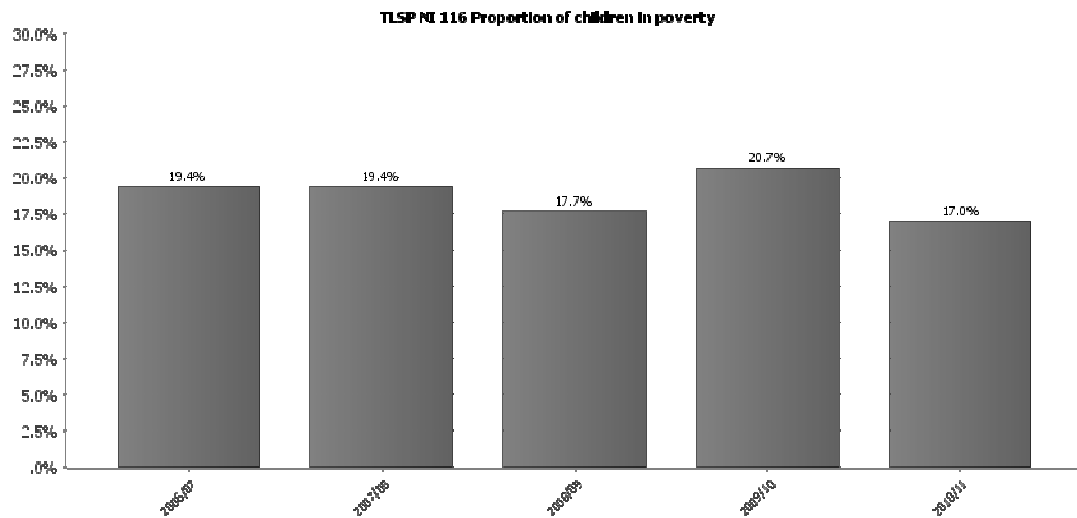
In this consultation the question was asked “what do you think would make the most impact on helping children get the best start in life?” The most popular choice was supporting flexible working arrangements for those caring for children. The graph shows the level of support for the other choices



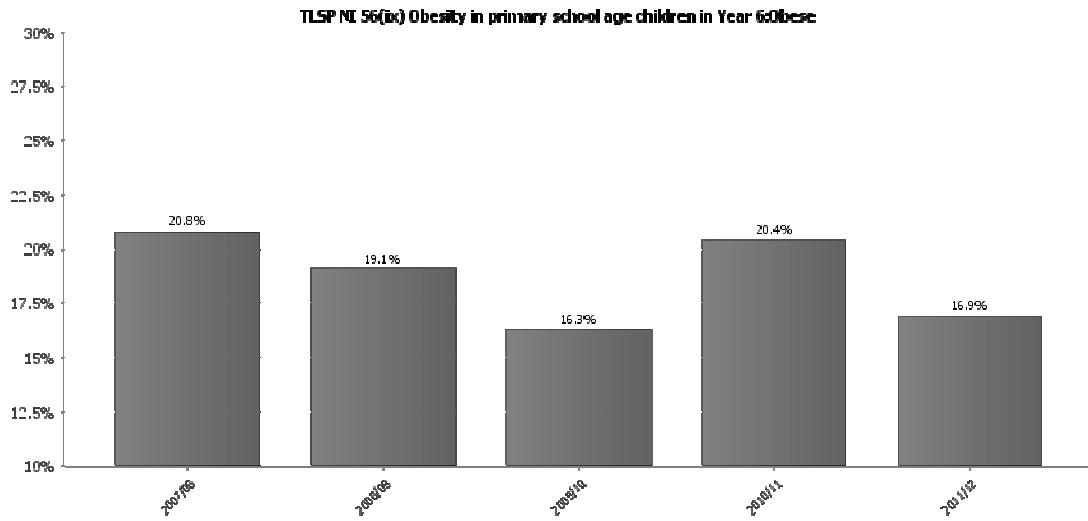
The rate of infant mortality has improved in recent years



And the proportion of children (under 16) in families receiving means tested benefits and low income is slowly improving and lower than the England average of 21.1%



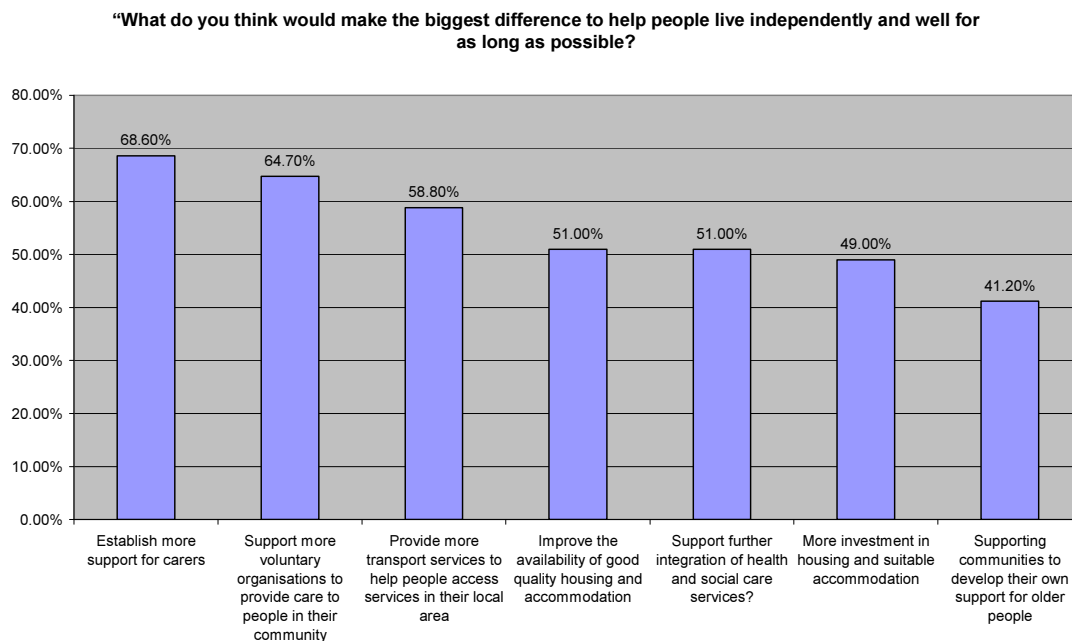
Obesity is a significant public health issue as it impacts on a person's quality of life. Obesity in children is showing improvement amongst year 6 schoolchildren.



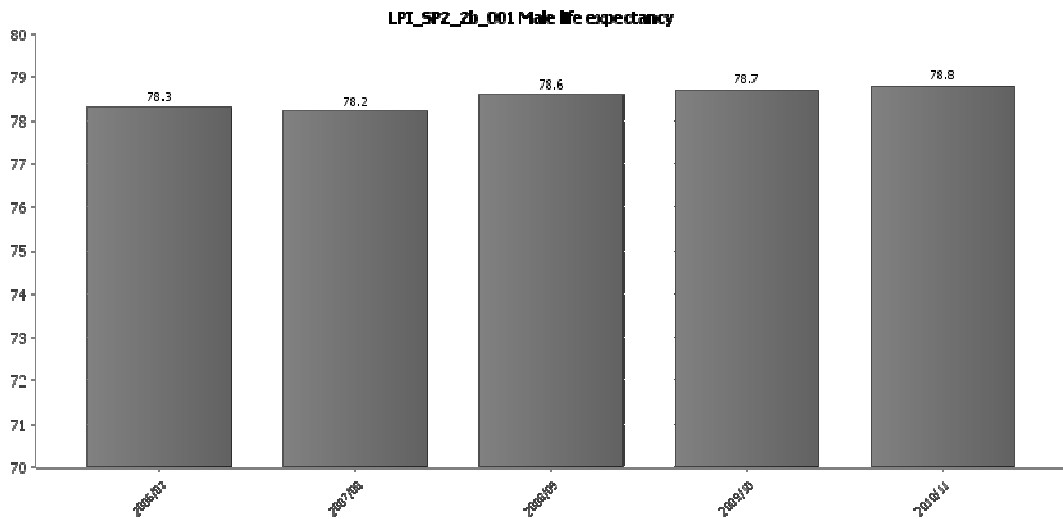
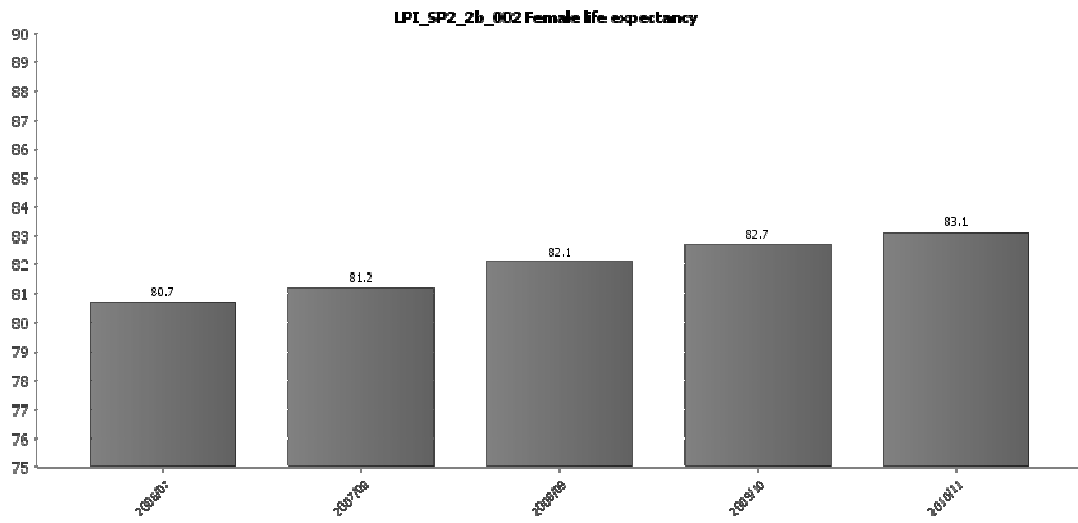
Improve the health and well being of older people by supporting them to live active, independent lives

This objective was seen as important by 69% of responders to the 2014/15 budget consultation exercise

In the Health and Wellbeing strategy consultation the question was asked “What do you think would make the biggest difference to help people live independently and well for as long as possible?” The most popular choice was establish more support for carers. The graph shows the level of support for the other choices



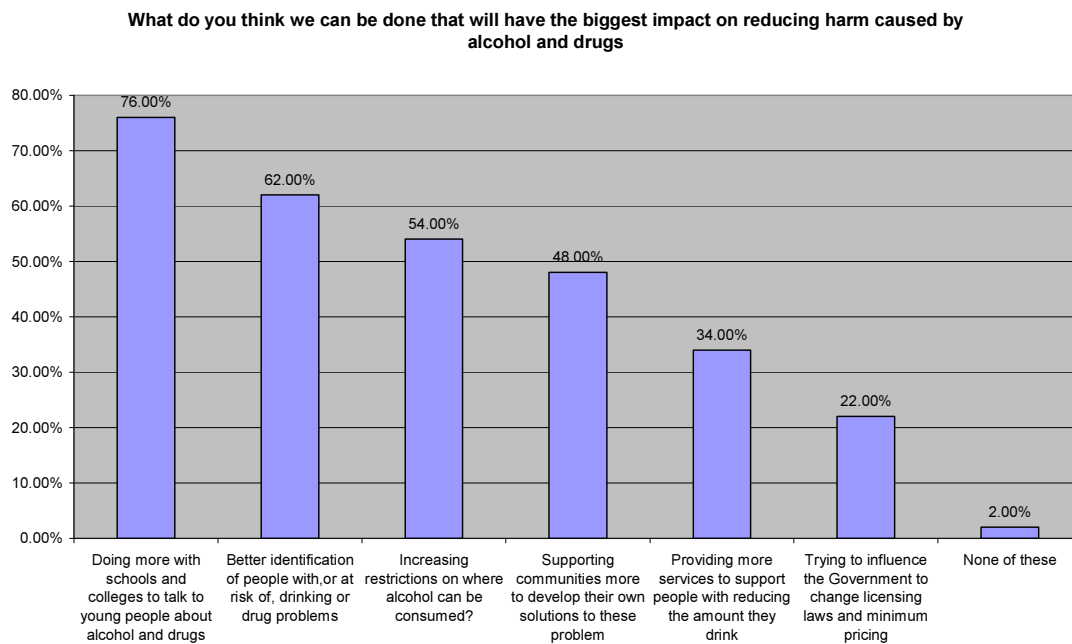
The overall health of people has improved over the past decade; people are living longer. Life expectancy for a female is 83.1 (compared to 82.9 nationally) and a male is 78.8 (compared to 78.9 nationally).



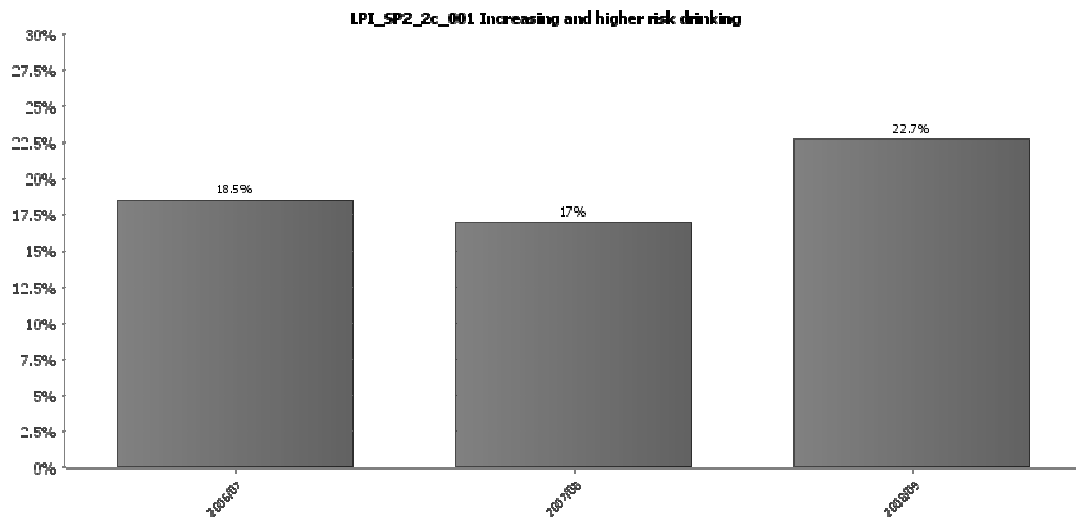
Reduce the harm and wider consequences of alcohol abuse on individuals, families and society

This objective was seen as important by 59% of responders to the 2014/15 budget consultation exercise

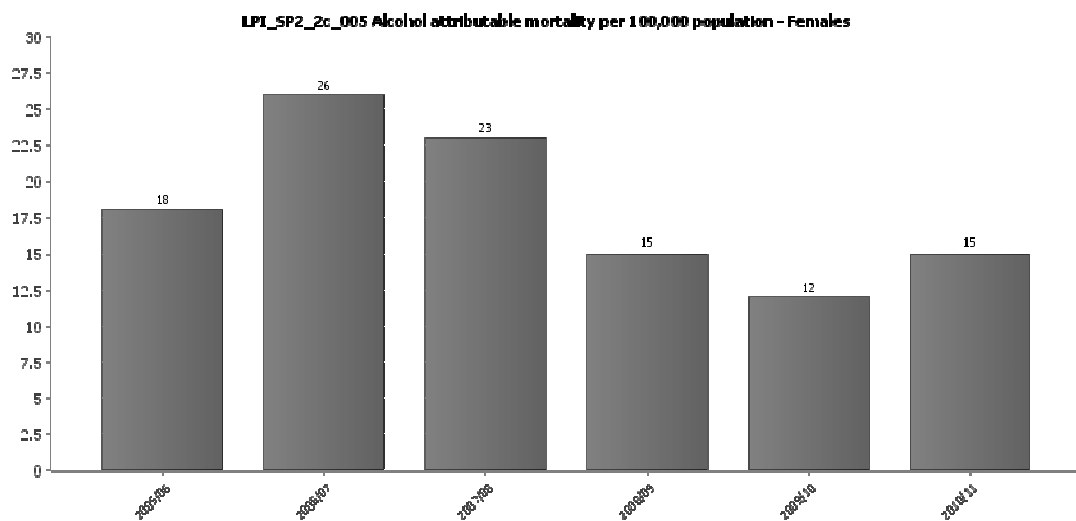
In the Health and Wellbeing strategy consultation the question was asked. "What do you think we can do that will have the biggest impact on reducing harm caused by alcohol and drugs". The most popular choice was doing more with schools and colleges to talk to young people about alcohol and drugs. The graph shows the level of support for the other choices.

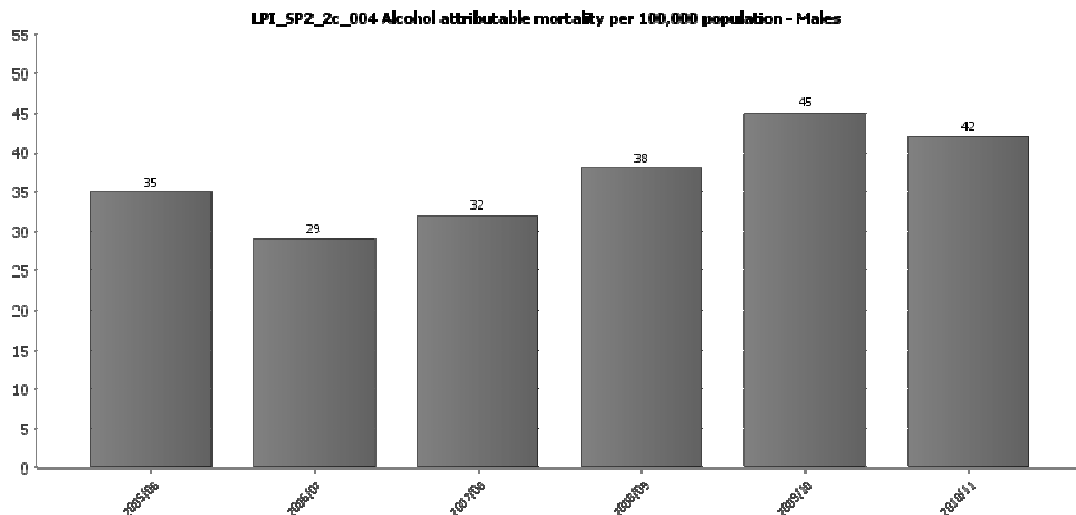


Reducing the impact to the individual, community and society caused by alcohol misuse is an important objective as it impacts not only on health but also crime and anti-social behaviour. The latest available figures show that in Tamworth 22.7% of adults are at risk from drinking (compared to 22.3% nationally)



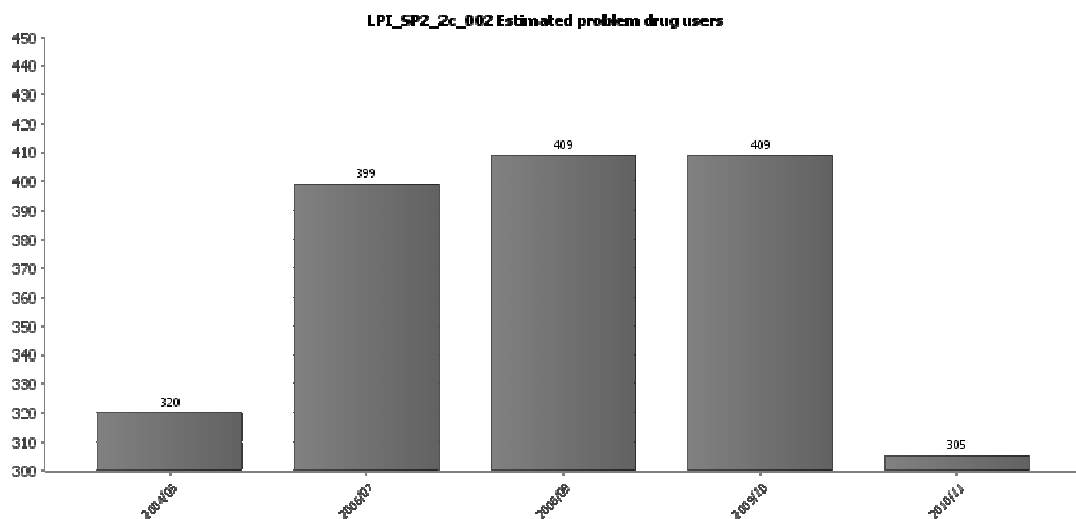
Alcohol attributable mortality is a measurement of the effects of alcohol and whilst there is improvement amongst women, it is declining for men





The past year has seen the Council and partners undertaking joint initiatives in this area, including Operation TARPA and working with curriculum leads in secondary schools which targeted youngsters, and an awareness event more tailored to adults.

The estimated numbers of problem drug users in Tamworth has shown some improvement recently with the latest figures showing a return to a level lower than that in 2004/05.

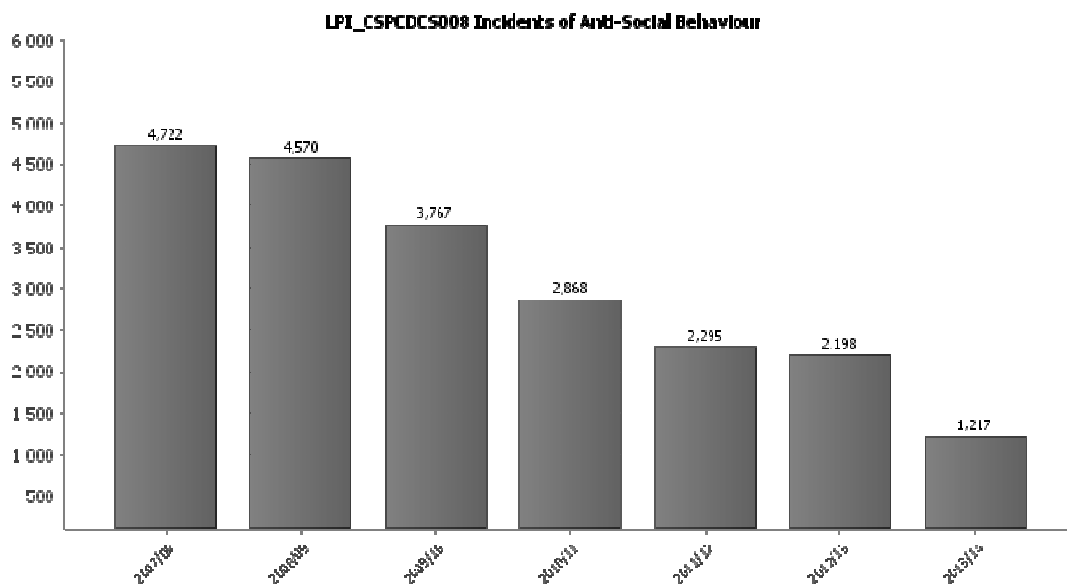


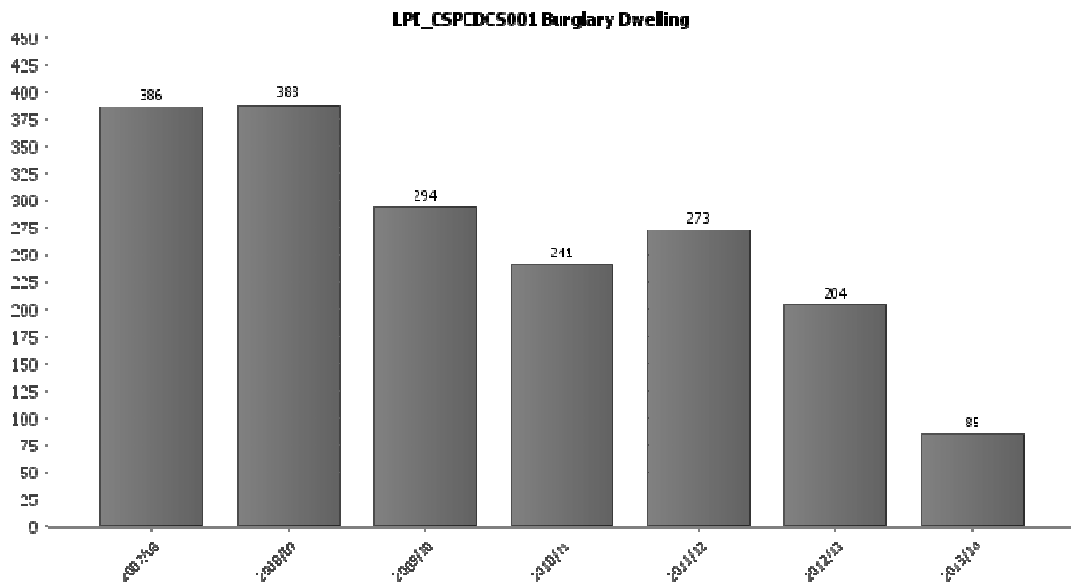
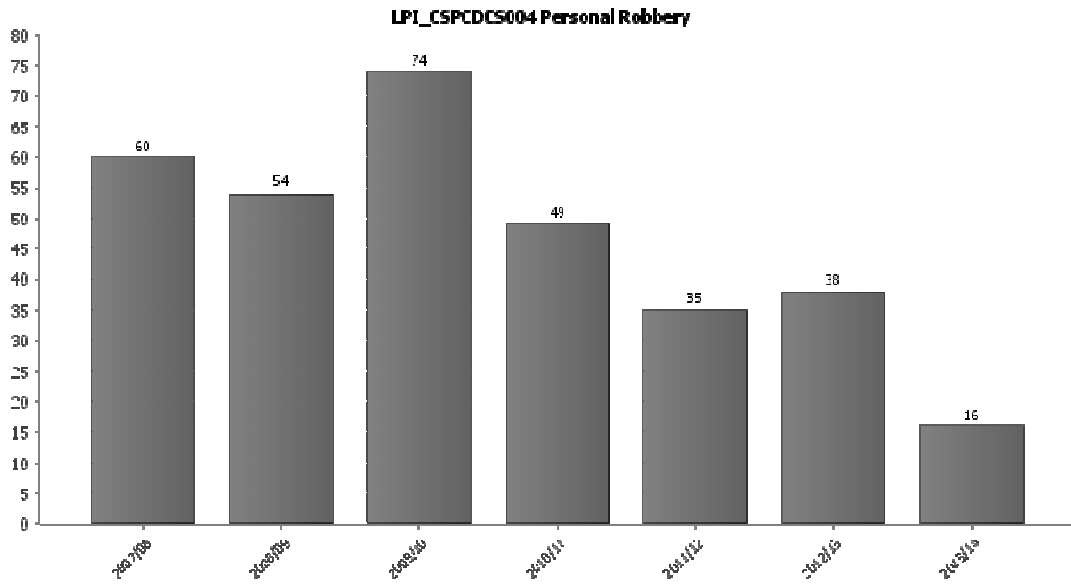
Implement 'Total Place' solutions to tackling crime and ASB in designated localities and Develop innovative early interventions to tackle youth crime and ASB

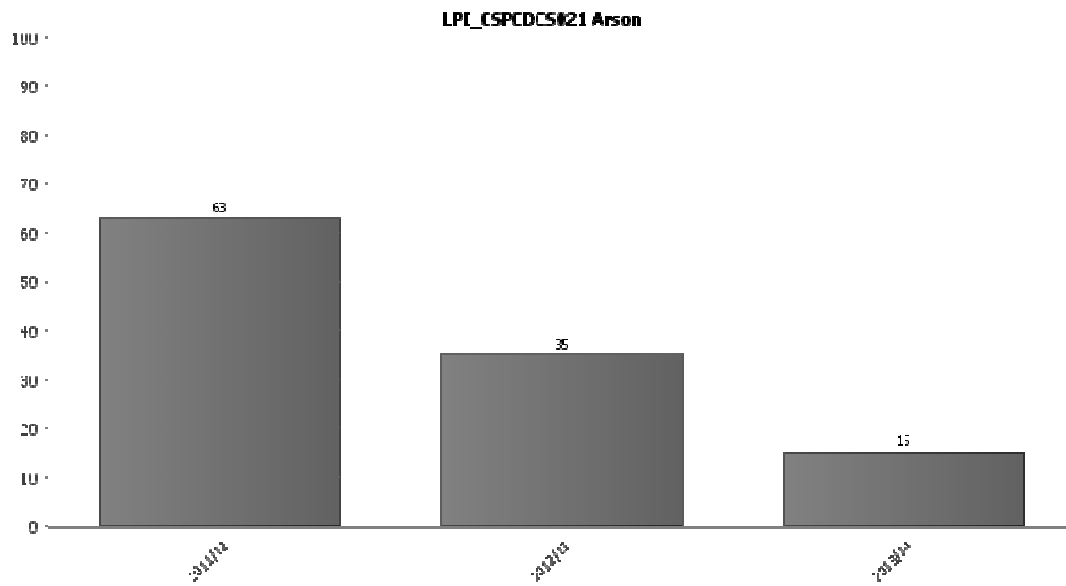
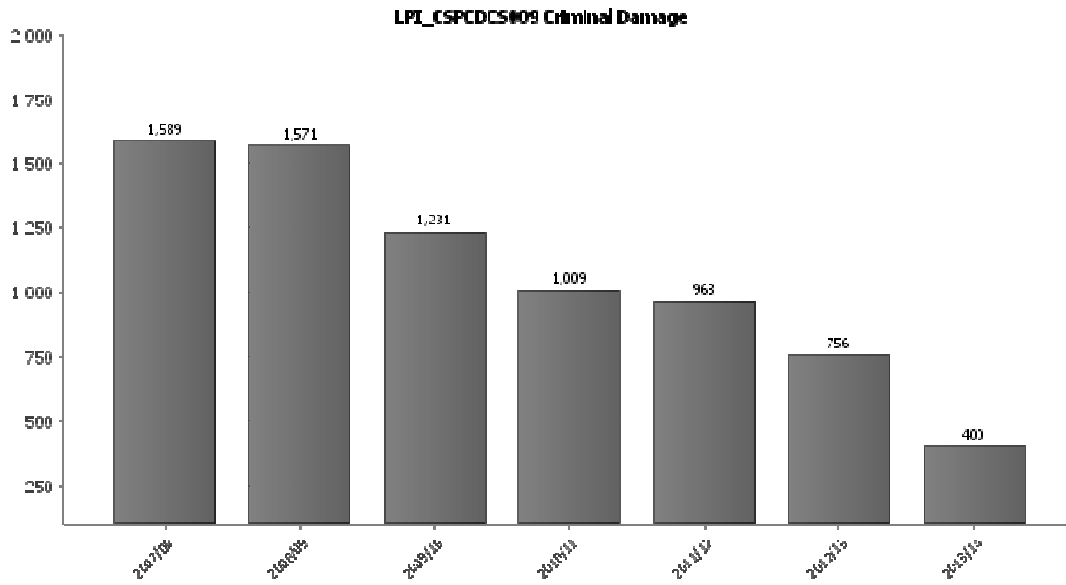
Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour objective was seen as important by 83% of responders to the 2014/15 budget consultation exercise and developing innovative early interventions to tackle youth crime and ASB was seen as important by 81% of responders to the 2014/15 budget consultation exercise.

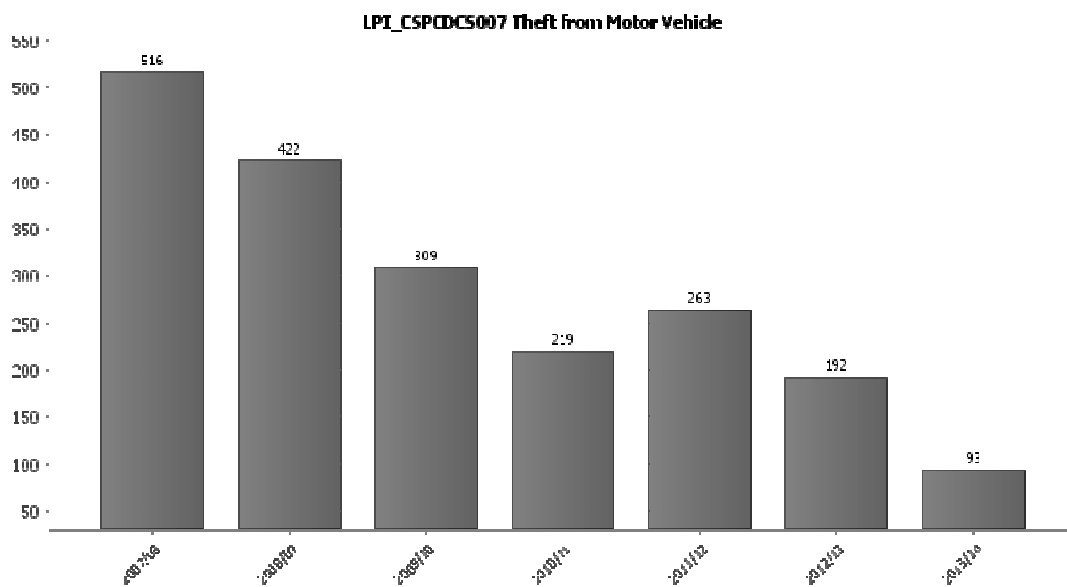
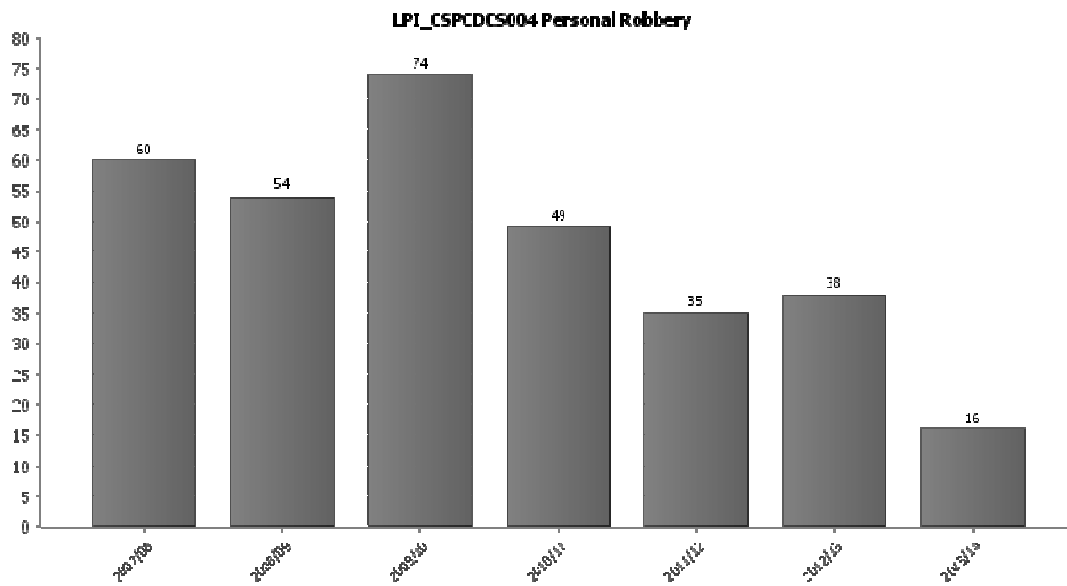
Tamworth is getting safer; recorded crime figure show this. The graphs that follow show this improving picture.

At the Question Time event, 'Safer Tamworth' was one of the themes discussed. It was pointed out that whilst the figures below show crime in Tamworth is falling, in the future, rather than rely on these statistics, the Police will seek to gain more views from the communities and are looking at extended engagement with residents to gain a more rounded view of the issues that are important to them.

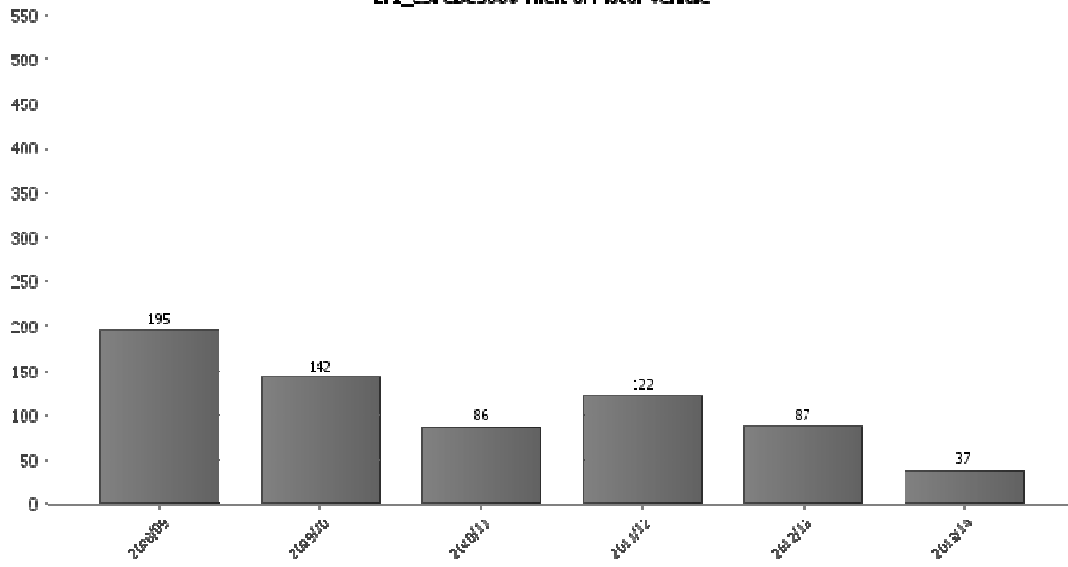




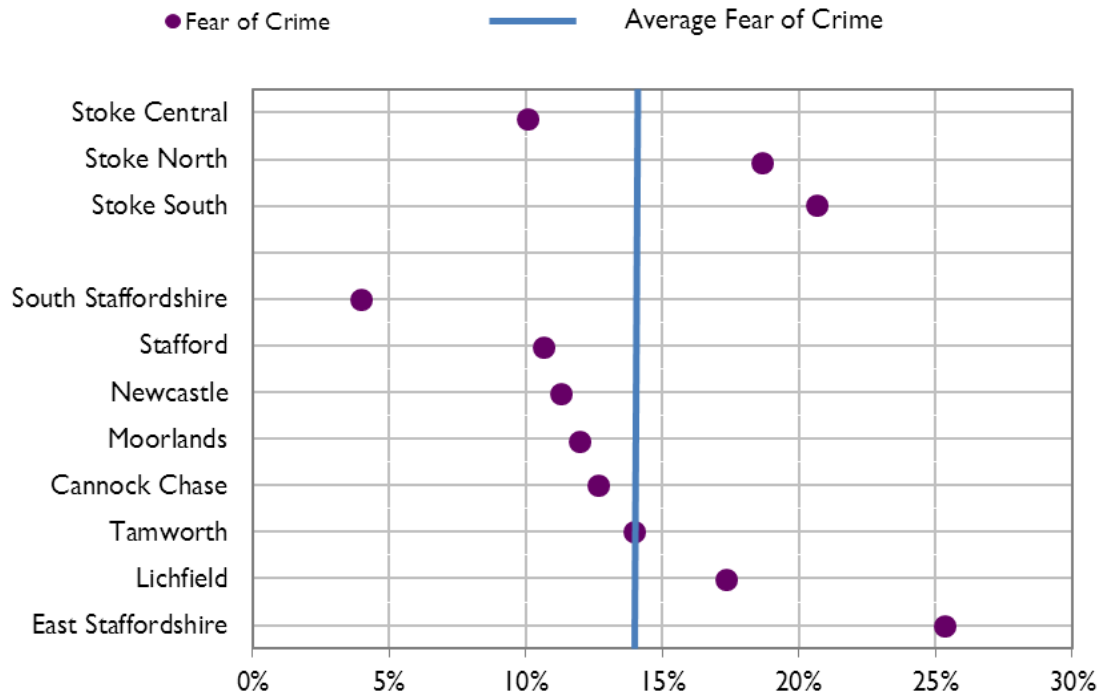




LPI_CSPDCS006 Theft of Motor Vehicle



People's perception of crime is improving too. The latest 'Feeling the Difference' survey carried out in November 2012 (see Appendix C) shows Tamworth very favourably although there is still a perception of being a victim of crime amongst those surveyed. The graph below shows how this compares to other Staffordshire authorities.



Create an integrated approach to protecting those most vulnerable in our local Communities

This objective was seen as important by 81% of responders to the 2014/15 budget consultation exercise.

Tamworth has produced the best results in the County under the Troubled Families Agenda, with 142 families identified as having certain criteria including crime, anti-social behaviour, attendance at school and worklessness, being assisted. This is a result of

- its strong partnership work through the existing Community Safety Hub and a focus on this agenda,
- The links to other services such as employment support are key and have helped get people back into work. The Chief Executive is chair of the County Leadership Board and Tamworth is effectively engaged at the project level.

The number of looked after children in the area of East Staffs and Tamworth by the through care team is 66 and the permanency team is 83.

In 2011/12, 81 adults were subject to adult protection referrals.

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Delivering the Goods

ANNUAL REPORT 2012-2013



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Introduction

It has been another very busy year for the Shared Service, particularly as Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) begin to further bed down and receive actual resources from Central Government and we continue to shape and position the Business and Economic Partnership (BEP) to provide a genuine role of adding value to the local economic development agenda.

Our theme in the previous year for the Shared Economic Development Service was very much one about 'setting the course', particularly in terms of adopting an Economic Strategy for the area and continuing to ensure that the LEPs take account of the economic needs of Tamworth and Lichfield District.

This year, both locally through the BEP and regionally through the Southern Staffordshire Partnership (SSP) and LEPs, we have begun to see much more in the way of specific delivery of projects and initiatives, and the strategic influence of resources controlled by others.

This agenda of delivery and strategic influence within the shared service has concentrated on three specific themes over the year:

- 1. Business support**, encompassing how we respond to business enquiries, the various business support schemes we have delivered or contributed to and our work through Think Local 4 Business.
- 2. Business engagement**, covering the support of the BEP, the emerging BEP communications strategy and tools, the Business Networks Forum and the business events we have staged.
- 3. Shared strategic thinking**, which includes our contributions to and influence of the SSP, LEPs, our joint work on how we market Tamworth and Lichfield as a place for business and contributions to the place agenda such as town teams and planning/development management.

This Annual Report will provide more detail around each of the above 3 themes and the associated work streams. The resources that we have at our disposal to support these themes is also outlined.

These 3 themes have continued to shape the work of the Shared Service as we have moved into 2013/14. In particular, we are seeing a more focussed role for the BEP emerging around the delivery of the revised Economic Strategy and the final section will outline the priorities and direction of travel.

1. Business Support

Business Enquiries

The service has continued to respond to business-related enquiries. There has been a greater diversity of enquiries, though the main focus has still been property and access to finance. Business support generally has seen an increased focus as has support towards subsidising National Non Domestic Rates. Although increases in enquiries have not been fully analysed, business support programmes such as Tamworth4Business and the Business Development Programme have definitely generated more interest.

Business Support Schemes

This year has seen great changes in the local provision of Business Support, on a local, regional and national basis. On the local front Tamworth Borough Council started running the Tamworth4Business service, a mini “business link” that offers start up support, workshops and strategic reviews for businesses based in Tamworth. This led to the Business and Economic Partnership influencing the Lichfield Strategic Partnership to set aside funding of circa £23,000 to run a similar service in Lichfield District but without as much emphasis on the start up support. This was tendered for, procured and then started in April 2013.

In addition to these services the shared service has taken part in two European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) programmes.

Business Development Programme, which started in Sept 2012, is a business grant and mentoring programme offered across the GBSLEP area. It offers grants of between £10,000 and £15,000 for 45% of a total eligible project to SMEs to fund relocation, building improvements and some marketing activities in order to stimulate jobs and ultimately economic growth.

The mentoring part of the fund Great 200 Leaders is subsidised coaching for 200 local SME business leaders. Both parts of this project run until March 2015. The project is managed and administered by Birmingham City Council with the shared service providing match funding in terms of staff hours. The shared service receives grant back of 50% of the total staff hours spent on the project.

Enterprise Start-up programme which started in Jan 2013 is a coaching and mentoring service across Southern Staffordshire, managed and administered by Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council. This service offers workshops, coaching and support to anyone thinking of starting a business or has recently started a business. This project runs until 2015 and is not match funded by shared service staff hours.

The shared service also supports and promotes any other business support that is offered locally.



Think Local 4 Business

Last Summer, following a review of TL4B and the adoption of a new Business Plan, it was decided to incorporate the initiative into a separate company limited by shares, with the district councils as Founder Shareholders. Tamworth Borough Council took a seat on the Board representing the interests of both districts, alongside East Staffordshire Borough Council and Stafford Borough Council and members of the private sector, one of whom took on the role of Project Director (Peter Farmer). All the assets of the initiative (the residual funds, the website, branding and business data) were transferred to the new company's ownership and it was hoped that the company would be able, through revenue raising such as advertising and sponsorship, to become financially self-sustaining within 2 years. Initially, the company was able to hugely increase the profile of TL4B through effective public relations and marketing, with company registrations rising from a base of 400 to nearly 1,200. However, it soon became apparent that there were major technical flaws with the website which would require significant investment to remedy, preferably through a site reconstruction. By the end of 2012/13, the Board was actively considering its options, with a view to a final decision on the future direction of TL4B being made by Summer 2013.

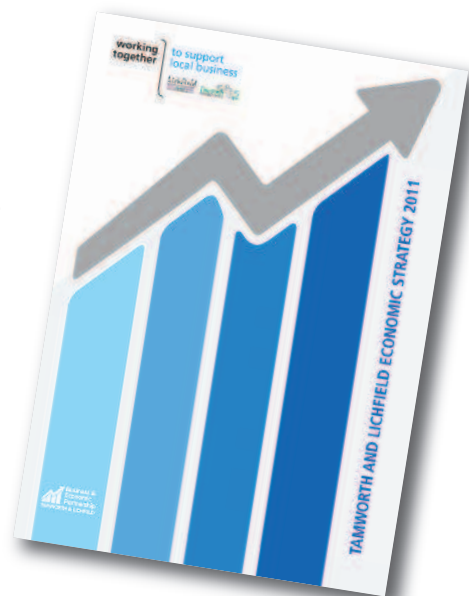


2. Business Engagement

BEP Board & Strategy

Following the revised Board structure adopted last year to reflect a LEP like balance of public-private sector representation, along with the adoption of the Economic Strategy and Board Champions for each of the themes of the strategy, the BEP this year has attempted to identify where it can add value to a complex array of partnerships and activities. The BEP has sought to identify this added value role on 3 specific fronts

1. **Direct delivery** of activities
2. **Strategic influence** of other partnerships and activities
3. A cross cutting theme of acting as a **communications conduit** for the business community to engage with and understand the often complex local economic development agenda.



The early part of the year saw the appointment of a new BEP Chair, with Peter Farmer standing down after 3 years as Chair due to his need to concentrate his efforts on his new role as TL4B Project Director. Deb Baker, who has actively contributed to the BEP and the former Lichfield Economic Forum, along with many other economic development initiatives over a period spanning more than a decade, has taken on the role and ably steered the BEP through this new phase of activity.

The need for the BEP to become more focussed on this role of 'adding value', rather than merely reflecting what is already being delivered elsewhere or adding to the complexity of the agenda, has led to a full review of the Economic Strategy with a clearer articulation of the role of the BEP. This largely reflects an acknowledgement that the initial strategy adopted last year was too broad in its scope. At the time of writing, a revised structure of the Strategy has been agreed and the content is being drafted. It is anticipated that the revised strategy will be published in early Autumn 2013.

In terms of where the BEP has added value across the 3 aspects highlighted above, the rest of the report provides specific examples. Particular highlights include the delivery of the new Tamworth 4 Business and Lichfield 4 Business support services, as well as the input into the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP's Strategy for Growth. In terms of the cross-cutting role as a communications conduit, alongside its usual role of producing the Business Brief newsletter and its engagement work through the Business Networks Forum, the BEP is also in the process of developing a new web portal and has become very active on social media.

Business Networks Forum

The Business Networks Forum has continued to develop well in the last year, still led by two local business people, Karen Nicholls from Roar Marketing and Tracy Pound from Maximity. The focus this year has been twofold: retaining Ambassadors from networking groups thus ensuring as many of the local groups as possible are represented and concentrating on specific themes and inviting people from the networking groups along who have an interest in that theme. The BNF continues to run successfully with minimal Council intervention.



Business Events

Extending the success of the first Pop-up show held in March 2012, a further show was held on September 26th at Drayton Manor. The second show had 33 exhibitors and generated a profit of £712.50, though attendance was not as strong as the previous show.

The biggest event of the year was the ThinkLocal4Business Show held at the newly opened FA Centre at St Georges Park in East Staffordshire. Over 700 people attended, with a variety of seminars and nearly 60 stands, making it one of the most successful shows of recent years.



3. Shared Strategic Thinking

Southern Staffordshire Partnership

Tamworth Borough Council and Lichfield District Council have represented themselves separately on the SSP, both at the Executive and Delivery Board groups. However, there has continued to be close collaboration between the districts on our policies and thinking through the SSP. In particular, the Shared Service has led on the development of the concept of 'Economic Gardening', which essentially means building up more sustainable local economic resilience through the active encouragement of indigenous enterprise and business growth, rather than an over reliance on inward investment. We are also collaborating closely on the development of the Enterprise Belt and its prospectus, which it is hoped will strategically influence both LEPs to encourage further investment in this important area.



Local Enterprise Partnerships

Although both councils have continued to be separately represented on the LEPs, with Lichfield members of both Greater Birmingham and Solihull (GBS) and Stoke and Staffordshire (S&S) and Tamworth members of just GBS, close collaboration on policy, approach and engagement has continued. Particular highlights include:

- Direct influence of the GBSLEP Strategy for Growth to reflect the economic priorities of Tamworth and Lichfield, with facilitation of responses by the BEP Board and Business Networks Forum. No other area of the GBSLEP provided such a comprehensive and integrated response mechanism, allowing our businesses to more fully comprehend the LEP and influence its strategy.
- Direct input into the Staffordshire Economic Consortium Growth Strategy, ensuring that Tamworth and Lichfield's economic priorities are adequately reflected within. This document is now acting as the base for the development of the S&S LEP's overall Growth Strategy.
- Delivery of the ERDF Business Development Programme, providing grants to businesses looking to grow, either creating new jobs or safeguarding existing jobs, as well as a business leadership programme.
- Delivery of the ERDF Enterprise Startup Programme.
- Input into the development of the GBSLEP Business Support Portal and S&SLEP Business Helpline to ensure that the support offer to Tamworth and Lichfield businesses is appropriately represented through both resources.
- Input into the GBSLEP Tourism Group and the development of proposals for more joint working across the LEP on the visitor economy and strategic marketing.
- Input into major strategic areas, such as the Place agenda (planning, transport, investment sites, connectivity etc) and skills (GBSLEP Employment and Skills Board).



Town Centres and Tourism

Town Centres: officers from the Shared Service have continued to provide representation to both Town Teams since the Portas Pilot applications, neither of which were successful, although Lichfield did secure High Street Innovation Fund status and both have formally adopted Town Team status. The Shared Service has provided input and support in terms of progressing how the High Street Innovation funding is spent, both through the Lichfield and Burntwood forums.

Tourism: Both councils have continued to be separately represented on both the Stoke and Staffordshire Destination Management Partnership and the GBSLEP Visitor Economy Group, but have maintained close liaison. In terms of the latter, both councils have been instrumental in progressing towards potential arrangements for closer working on the promotion of the visitor economy and strategic marketing of the GBSLEP through Marketing Birmingham.



Strategic Planning and Development Management

The shared service has continued to input into the development and submission of both councils Local Plans, assisted in late 2012 by the addition of a Planning Policy Economic Development Officer at Lichfield District Council. We have continued to support planning policy and development management activity by responding to consultations and supporting inward investment queries.

4. Resources

The Shared Service continues to be delivered through efficient management of tight resources. In terms of human resources these include:

- Economic Development and Enterprise Manager – Tamworth Borough Council)
- Senior Economic Development Officer – Tamworth Borough Council
- Planning Policy Officer (50% Economic Development) – Lichfield District Council

These resources are also managed through the more senior management at both Councils, including the Head of Planning and Regeneration at Tamworth Borough Council and the Development Executive at Lichfield District Council, along with more senior officers above as and when appropriate.

In terms of financial resources, both councils pool economic development budgets to fund activities delivered by the BEP and those activities that the councils deliver on a joint basis. In 2012/13 this amounted to £26,000.

In addition, some income generation opportunities have been pursued, these being the selling of advertising space in the Business Brief newsletter (around £1,000) and the selling of stand space at the Pop Up Shows (around £4,500). These have either fully or part-funded these particular activities and in the case of the latter, turned in a profit that the Shared Service has been able to reinvest in other activities.

In addition, as part of the ERDF Business Development Programme, officer time devoted to the project by the Shared Service has been accounted for as a match funding contribution, which will generate ERDF grant payments as claims are submitted. Our first claim is about to be submitted and for the period of September 2013 (the start of the programme) to end March 2013, this will amount to just over £4,000. These funds will also be used to contribute to additional activities through the BEP and Shared Service in 2013/14.

5. The Way Forward

The economic development agenda has always been complex and diverse, operating through an array of partnerships and organisations across a varying spectrum of spatial areas. Since the Coalition Government came into power on a ticket of localism, sweeping away most of the previous regional structures, this has arguably become even more the case. It has therefore proved a real challenge for areas like Tamworth and Lichfield to establish a clear role and remit for its limited economic development resources where it can add value, and in particular without spreading these resources too thinly and/or adding to the complexity and existing duplication. In addition, there is the backdrop of public sector funding cuts, with councils bearing the brunt of these, placing an ever tighter squeeze on resources that the councils have to invest into the economic development agenda.

That said, over the past 12 months, 3 clear themes for the Shared Service have emerged across which it is felt the service's activities can add real value, namely **business support, business engagement and shared strategic thinking**. In tandem, the BEP is currently developing a much more clearly focussed role through narrowing down its Economic Strategy to focus purely on areas where it can also genuinely make a difference, through either **direct delivery** of activities, **strategic influence** or acting as the main **communications conduit** for the business community.

With the above context in mind, the Shared Service and BEP has identified some clear early priorities across the above 3 themes, namely:

Business Support:

- Develop sustainable services to follow the Tamworth 4 Business and Lichfield 4 Business services so that we can continue to provide locally available face to face business support from 2014 onwards.
- Continue to deliver the ERDF Business Development and Enterprise programmes and influence the LEPs to provide similar EU funded services post 2014.
- Continue to support LEP wide initiatives to better coordinate information on business support and access to finance, but also provide a local coordination and access point through the BEP.
- To actively support any business enquiries received into the service around start-up, business growth and development, including enquiries for inward investment and indigenous business growth.
- To ensure that council services interfacing with businesses are more accessible, joined up and coordinated.

Business Engagement:

- To continue to support the BEP Board to finalise the revised and refocused Economic Strategy and ensure that the BEP role is more clearly defined.
- To develop a clear BEP communications and engagement strategy and develop appropriate tools and mechanisms, including building on existing resources such as Business eBrief and the Business Networks Forum, but also to develop new ones where appropriate, such as the BEP portal and social media resources.
- To continue to deliver a programme of quality business events, such as the Think Local 4 Business Show, popup shows and other themed business events.
- To continue to foster good working relationships with the main business representative organisations, such as the Chamber of Commerce and Federation of Small Businesses.
- To deliver a programme of Strategic Business Engagement to fully engage with the largest and strategically most important businesses across both districts. Opportunities for BEP Board succession planning will also be explored through this route.

Shared Strategic Thinking:

- To develop a comprehensive Business Place Marketing Strategy, setting out how to best promote Tamworth and Lichfield as places for business, how it will interface and work with other place marketing partnerships and initiatives and the resources and tools required to implement it.
- To continue to support and work with the Southern Staffordshire Partnership on the development of an Enterprise Belt prospectus.
- To continue to support and influence the LEPs in order to ensure that Tamworth and Lichfield's economic priorities are suitably reflected and that opportunities to leverage in funding and investment are pursued.

Looking ahead, the Shared Service needs to be mindful of its role playing into the local growth agenda and the direct role that this will have in terms of general income generation for the councils through localised business rates, new homes bonus and general income generation through increased economic activity. Complementing this, the Shared Service and BEP will also continue to identify and pursue direct income generation opportunities through the service's own activities (e.g. ERDF match funding, advertising, sponsorship etc.) in order to either part fund existing activities or help fund new ones.

In addition to this, the Shared Service will be looking at a range of performance measures and indicators that it can monitor and use to determine the impact of the service on the local economy. Some of these will indicate a direct impact, such as where specific funding schemes or programmes deliver measurable impacts, for example Business Development grants generating specific jobs or advice and guidance directly supporting an inward investment or business growth opportunity. However, some will remain more generic in nature indicating a direction of travel for the local economy where a range of factors, including shared service interventions, will have contributed to the result.

6. Further Information

I trust that this report will provide sufficient information to allow members and officers from both districts to be aware of the progress of the Shared Service over the previous financial year but if anyone has any further information requirements, please do get in touch.



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Tamworth

This profile gives a picture of health in this area. It is designed to help local government and health services understand their community's needs, so that they can work to improve people's health and reduce health inequalities.

Visit the Health Profiles website for:

- Profiles of all local authorities in England
- Interactive maps – see how health varies between areas
- More health indicator information
- Links to more community health profiles and tools

Health Profiles are produced by Public Health England.

www.healthprofiles.info



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Other map data © Collins Bartholomew.

Population 77,000

Mid-2011 population estimate

Source: Office for National Statistics © Crown Copyright 2013

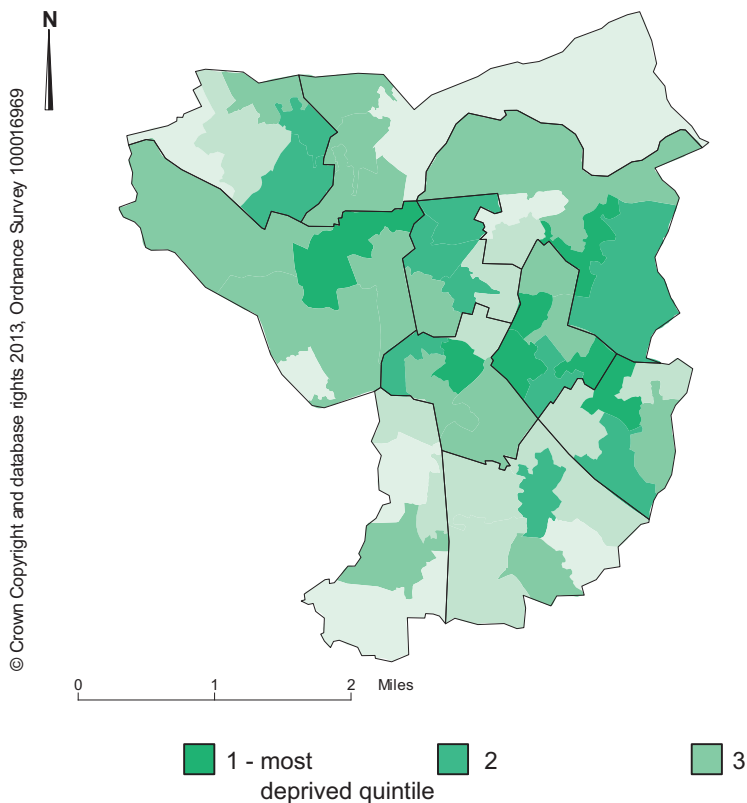
Published on 24th September 2013

Tamworth at a glance

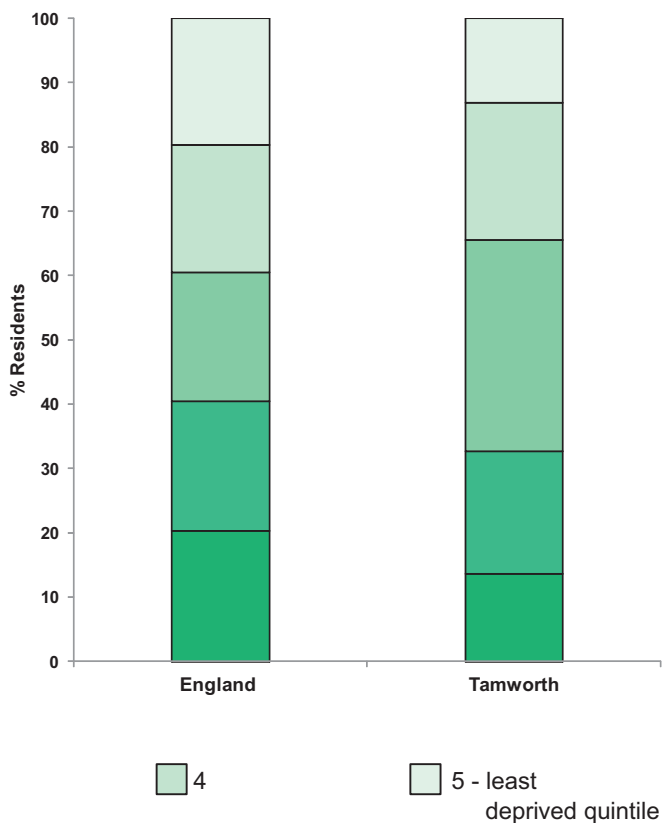
- The health of people in Tamworth is varied compared with the England average. Deprivation is lower than average, however about 3,200 children live in poverty. Life expectancy for both men and women is similar to the England average.
- Life expectancy is 9.8 years lower for men and 5.6 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Tamworth than in the least deprived areas.
- Over the last 10 years, all cause mortality rates have fallen. The early death rate from heart disease and stroke has fallen and is similar to the England average.
- In Year 6, 16.9% of children are classified as obese. Levels of teenage pregnancy, GCSE attainment and breast feeding are worse than the England average.
- Estimated levels of adult 'healthy eating' and obesity are worse than the England average. The rate of hip fractures is worse than the England average. Rates of sexually transmitted infections, road injuries and deaths and hospital stays for alcohol related harm are better than the England average.
- Priorities in Tamworth include a focus on improving all healthy lifestyles by addressing obesity, alcohol, physical activity and diet, supporting the ageing population including reducing falls and ensuring young people get a good start in life. For more information see www.tamworth.gov.uk and www.sesandspccg.nhs.uk

Deprivation: a national view

This map shows differences in deprivation levels in this area based on national quintiles (of the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010 by Lower Super Output Area). The darkest coloured areas are some of the most deprived areas in England.

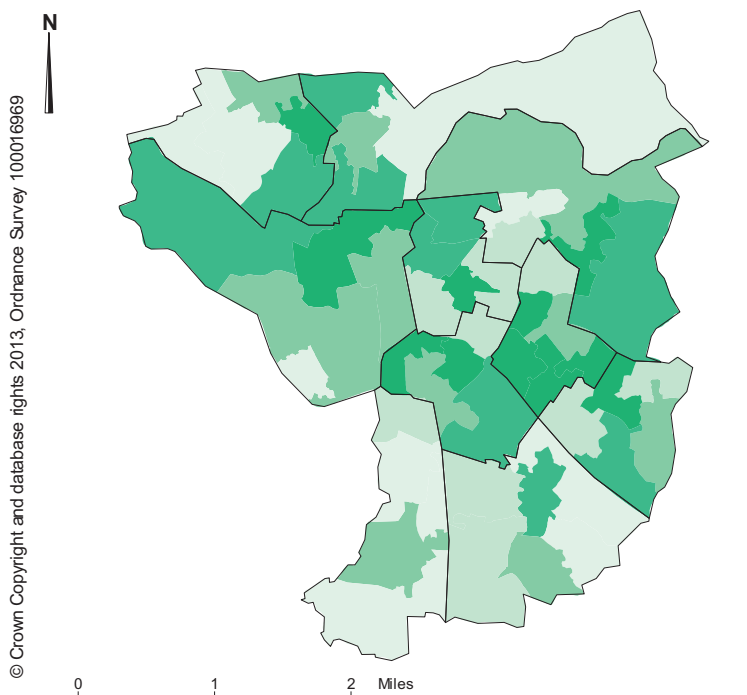


This chart shows the percentage of the population in England and this area who live in each of these quintiles.

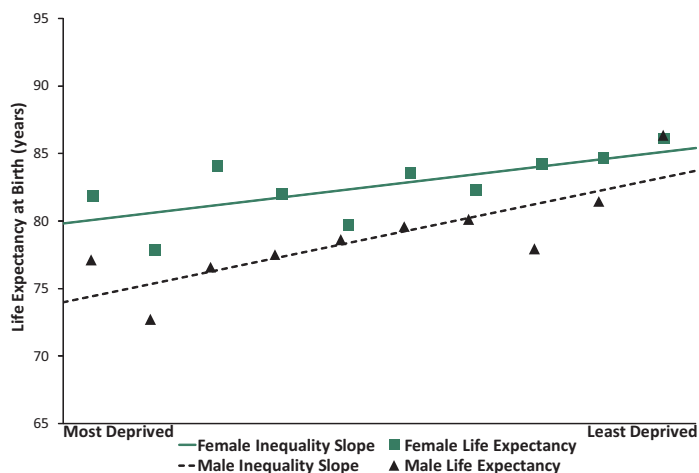


Health inequalities: a local view

This map shows differences in deprivation levels in this area based on local quintiles (of the Index of Multiple Deprivation 2010 by Lower Super Output Area). The darkest coloured areas are the most deprived in this area.



The lines on this chart represent the Slope Index of Inequality, which is a modelled estimate of the range in life expectancy at birth across the whole population of this area from most to least deprived. Based on death rates in 2006-2010, this range is 9.8 years for males and 5.6 years for females. The points on this chart show the average life expectancy in each tenth of the population of this area.



Legend as above

Health inequalities: changes over time

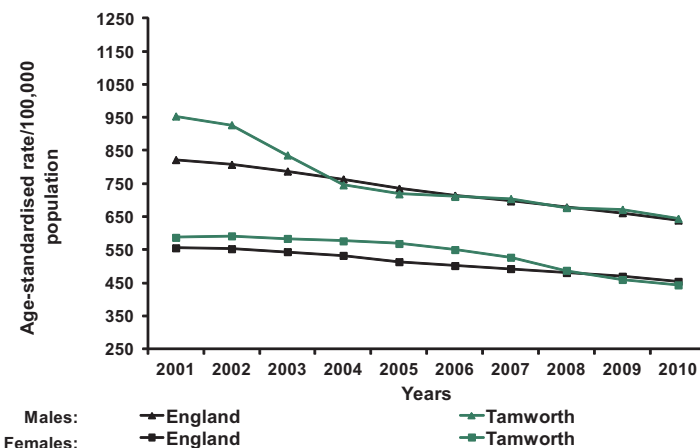
These graphs show how changes in death rates for this area compare with changes for the whole of England. Data points on the graph are mid-points of 3-year averages of yearly rates. For example the dot labelled 2003 represents the 3-year period 2002 to 2004.

Trend 1 compares rates of death, at all ages and from all causes, in this area with those for England.

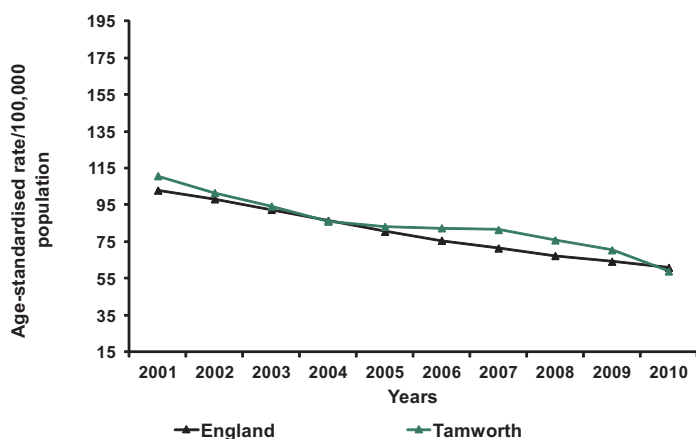
Trend 2 compares rates of early death from heart disease and stroke (in people under 75) in this area with those for England.

Trend 3 compares rates of early death from cancer (in people under 75) in this area with those for England.

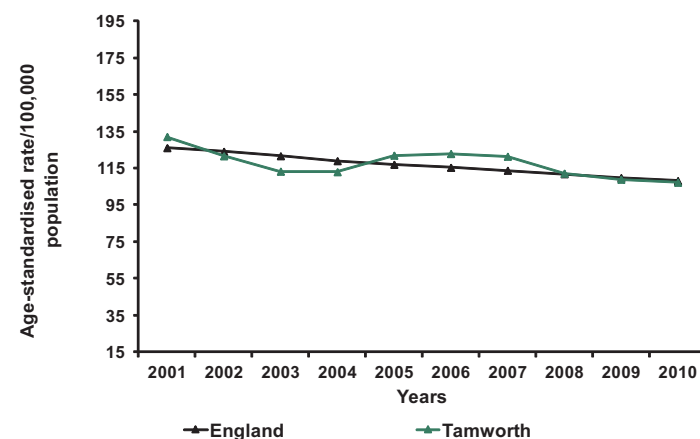
Trend 1: All age, all cause mortality



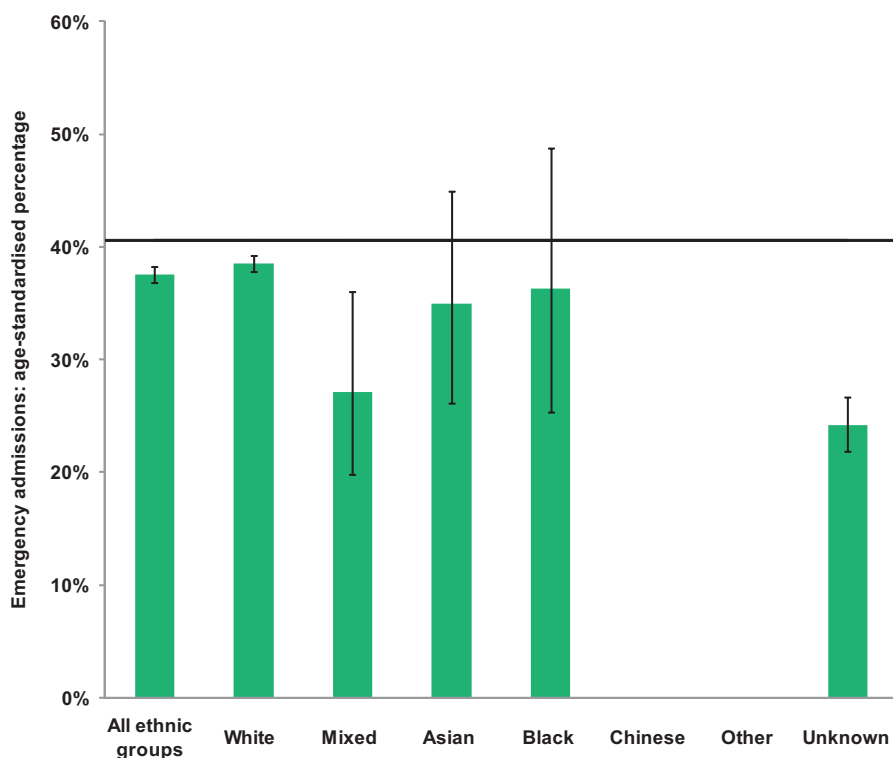
Trend 2: Early death rates from heart disease and stroke



Trend 3: Early death rates from cancer



Health inequalities: ethnicity



This chart shows the percentage of hospital admissions in 2011/12 that were emergencies for each ethnic group in this area. A high percentage of emergency admissions may reflect some patients not accessing or receiving the care most suited to managing their conditions. By comparing the percentage in each ethnic group in this area with that of the whole population of England (represented by the horizontal line) possible inequalities can be identified.

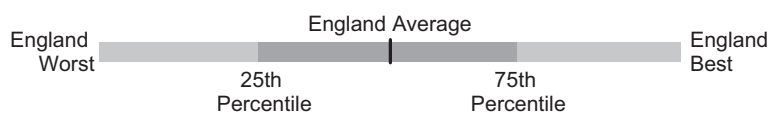
■ Tamworth
— England average (all ethnic groups)
 95% confidence intervals

Figures based on small numbers of admissions have been suppressed to avoid any potential disclosure of information about individuals.

7195	6796	34	33	21	283	Local number of emergency admissions
37.5%	38.5%	27.2%	34.9%	36.2%	24.2%	Local value
40.6%	41.1%	40.0%	45.3%	44.4%	38.0%	England value

The chart below shows how the health of people in this area compares with the rest of England. This area's result for each indicator is shown as a circle. The average rate for England is shown by the black line, which is always at the centre of the chart. The range of results for all local areas in England is shown as a grey bar. A red circle means that this area is significantly worse than England for that indicator; however, a green circle may still indicate an important public health problem.

- Significantly worse than England average
- Not significantly different from England average
- Significantly better than England average



Domain	Indicator	Local No. Per Year	Local Value	Eng Avg	Eng Worst	England Range	Eng Best
Our communities	1 Deprivation	10524	13.7	20.3	83.7	[Grey bar, red dot]	0.0
	2 Proportion of children in poverty	3155	20.8	21.1	45.9	[Grey bar, yellow dot]	6.2
	3 Statutory homelessness	107	3.5	2.3	9.7	[Grey bar, red dot]	0.0
	4 GCSE achieved (5A*-C inc. Eng & Maths)	304	44.7	59.0	31.9	[Grey bar, red dot]	81.0
	5 Violent crime	1260	16.6	13.6	32.7	[Grey bar, red dot]	4.2
	6 Long term unemployment	314	6.3	9.5	31.3	[Grey bar, green dot]	1.2
Children's and young people's health	7 Smoking in pregnancy ‡	138	14.9	13.3	30.0	[Grey bar, yellow dot]	2.9
	8 Starting breast feeding ‡	621	66.3	74.8	41.8	[Grey bar, red dot]	96.0
	9 Obese Children (Year 6) ‡	111	16.9	19.2	28.5	[Grey bar, yellow dot]	10.3
	10 Alcohol-specific hospital stays (under 18)	13	74.8	61.8	154.9	[Grey bar, yellow dot]	12.5
	11 Teenage pregnancy (under 18) ‡	79	51.9	34.0	58.5	[Grey bar, red dot]	11.7
Adults' health and lifestyle	12 Adults smoking	n/a	20.2	20.0	29.4	[Grey bar, yellow dot]	8.2
	13 Increasing and higher risk drinking	n/a	22.7	22.3	25.1	[Grey bar, yellow dot]	15.7
	14 Healthy eating adults	n/a	21.9	28.7	19.3	[Grey bar, red dot]	47.8
	15 Physically active adults	n/a	54.8	56.0	43.8	[Grey bar, yellow dot]	68.5
	16 Obese adults ‡	n/a	30.7	24.2	30.7	[Grey bar, red dot]	13.9
Disease and poor health	17 Incidence of malignant melanoma	9	11.6	14.5	28.8	[Grey bar, yellow dot]	3.2
	18 Hospital stays for self-harm	157	209.1	207.9	542.4	[Grey bar, yellow dot]	51.2
	19 Hospital stays for alcohol related harm ‡	1422	1660	1895	3276	[Grey bar, green dot]	910
	20 Drug misuse	305	5.9	8.6	26.3	[Grey bar, green dot]	0.8
	21 People diagnosed with diabetes	4215	6.1	5.8	8.4	[Grey bar, red dot]	3.4
	22 New cases of tuberculosis	3	3.9	15.4	137.0	[Grey bar, green dot]	0.0
	23 Acute sexually transmitted infections	482	627	804	3210	[Grey bar, green dot]	162
	24 Hip fracture in 65s and over	88	621	457	621	[Grey bar, red dot]	327
Life expectancy and causes of death	25 Excess winter deaths ‡		-0.4	19.1	35.3	[Grey bar, green dot]	-0.4
	26 Life expectancy – male	n/a	78.8	78.9	73.8	[Grey bar, yellow dot]	83.0
	27 Life expectancy – female	n/a	83.1	82.9	79.3	[Grey bar, yellow dot]	86.4
	28 Infant deaths	6	5.9	4.3	8.0	[Grey bar, yellow dot]	1.1
	29 Smoking related deaths	96	193	201	356	[Grey bar, yellow dot]	122
	30 Early deaths: heart disease and stroke	50	59.0	60.9	113.3	[Grey bar, yellow dot]	29.2
	31 Early deaths: cancer	90	107.3	108.1	153.2	[Grey bar, yellow dot]	77.7
	32 Road injuries and deaths	10	13.1	41.9	125.1	[Grey bar, green dot]	13.1

‡ For comparison with PHOF Indicators, please go to the following link: www.healthprofiles.info/PHOF

Indicator Notes

1 % people in this area living in 20% most deprived areas in England, 2010 2 % children (under 16) in families receiving means-tested benefits & low income, 2010 3 Crude rate per 1,000 households, 2011/12 4 % at Key Stage 4, 2011/12 5 Recorded violence against the person crimes, crude rate per 1,000 population, 2011/12 6 Crude rate per 1,000 population aged 16-64, 2012 7 % mothers smoking in pregnancy where status is known, 2011/12 8 % mothers initiating breast feeding where status is known, 2011/12 9 % school children in Year 6 (age 10-11), 2011/12 10 Persons under 18 admitted to hospital due to alcohol-specific conditions, crude rate per 100,000 population, 2007/08 to 2009/10 (pooled) 11 Under-18 conception rate per 1,000 females aged 15-17 (crude rate) 2009-2011 12 % adults aged 18 and over, 2011/12 13 % aged 16+ in the resident population, 2008-2009 14 % adults, modelled estimate using Health Survey for England 2006-2008 15 % adults achieving at least 150 mins physical activity per week, 2012 16 % adults, modelled estimate using Health Survey for England 2006-2008 17 Directly age standardised rate per 100,000 population, aged under 75, 2008-2010 18 Directly age sex standardised rate per 100,000 population, 2011/12 19 Directly age sex standardised rate per 100,000 population, 2010/11 20 Estimated users of opiate and/or crack cocaine aged 15-64, crude rate per 1,000 population, 2010/11 21 % people on GP registers with a recorded diagnosis of diabetes 2011/12 22 Crude rate per 100,000 population, 2009-2011 23 Crude rate per 100,000 population, 2012 (chlamydia screening coverage may influence rate) 24 Directly age and sex standardised rate for emergency admissions, per 100,000 population aged 65 and over, 2011/12 25 Ratio of excess winter deaths (observed winter deaths minus expected deaths based on non-winter deaths) to average non-winter deaths 1.08.08-31.07.11 26 At birth, 2009-2011 27 At birth, 2009-2011 28 Rate per 1,000 live births, 2009-2011 29 Directly age standardised rate per 100,000 population aged 35 and over, 2009-2011 30 Directly age standardised rate per 100,000 population aged under 75, 2009-2011 31 Directly age standardised rate per 100,000 population aged under 75, 2009-2011 32 Rate per 100,000 population, 2009-2011

More information is available at www.healthprofiles.info Please send any enquiries to healthprofiles@phe.gov.uk

Wave 14 Headline Results - November 2012

	Cannock Chase	East Staffordshire	Lichfield	Newcastle	Stafford	Staffordshire Moorlands	South Staffordshire	Tamworth
% who are satisfied with their local area as a place to live (Q2)	94%	93%	89%	90%	92%	93%	97%	93%
Top three things that are most important in making somewhere a good place to live (Q3a)	Health Services 10% Crime levels	15% Crime levels	14% Crime levels	13% Crime levels	12% Good schools	12% Crime level	14% Crime levels	15% Crime levels
	Crime level 9% Good schools	13% Health services	12% Health services	11% Crime levels	12% Health services	12% Health services	10% Health services	10% Health services
	Shopping Facilities 9% Clean streets	11% Clean streets	11% Activities for young people	11% Clean Streets	10% Clean streets	10% Good schools	12% Good schools	9% Activities for young people
Top three things that most need improving (Q3b)	Activities for young people 8% Road and pavements	11% Traffic congestion Activities for young people	15% Activities for young people Clean streets	13% Activities for young people Roads and pavements	13% Public transport	17% Roads and pavements Activities for young people	17% Activities for young people Public transport	18% Activities for young people Sport / leisure facilities
	Employment opportunities 6% Drugs	10% Crime level Smoking	9% Parks and open spaces Alcohol	8% Shopping facilities Smoking	8% Roads and pavements Overweight	10% Employment opportunities Alcohol	10% None Drugs	11% Employment opportunities Alcohol
	Alcohol 32% ASB	25% Alcohol ASB	18% Drugs ASB/Smoking	21% Overweight Overweight	14% Smoking Drugs	19% Drugs Overweight	19% Alcohol ASB	8% ASB Drugs
Top three things that are a big problem in the local area (Q4)	10%	18%	15%	13%	21%	11%	15%	13%
% who have given unpaid help to groups / clubs / organisations at least once a month (Q5a)	28%	47%	30%	34%	39%	45%	7%	20%
% who have given unpaid help to friends or neighbours at least once a month (Q5b)								
% who are satisfied with the overall level of service provided by: (Q7)								
	79%	75%	66%	60%	73%	67%	75%	87%
a) police	70%	58%	60%	53%	59%	49%	72%	75%
b) county/city council	69%	55%	62%	53%	58%	51%	70%	71%
c) district/borough council	91%	77%	82%	74%	80%	80%	85%	90%
d) fire & rescue service	92%	87%	79%	73%	84%	79%	92%	90%
e) GP	74%	83%	81%	81%	57%	79%	78%	86%
f) local hospital	41%	51%	54%	42%	53%	41%	61%	53%
a) police	52%	57%	47%	45%	53%	43%	70%	58%
b) county/city council	55%	55%	49%	44%	53%	45%	63%	58%
c) district/borough council	46%	44%	54%	39%	47%	44%	53%	55%
d) fire & rescue service	72%	64%	60%	57%	59%	66%	72%	70%
e) GP	50%	53%	56%	52%	39%	57%	51%	57%
f) local hospital	72%	67%	65%	55%	61%	62%	66%	80%
a) police	60%	50%	45%	35%	48%	37%	60%	60%
b) county/city council	59%	46%	47%	37%	47%	38%	57%	61%
c) district/borough council	87%	81%	79%	78%	76%	85%	82%	87%
d) fire & rescue service	87%	83%	77%	77%	77%	80%	83%	81%
e) GP	74%	81%	75%	79%	54%	82%	73%	85%
f) local hospital	39%	36%	55%	20%	24%	19%	41%	51%
% who agree that Staffordshire has a thriving economy (Q11a)	78%	80%	76%	71%	83%	75%	86%	91%
% who agree that Staffordshire is a safe and healthy place to live (Q11b)								

% who agree that Staffordshire provides opportunities to help them succeed in what they want to do (Q11c)	54%	55%	56%	47%	47%	48%	48%	61%
% who feel safe when outside in their local area during the day (Q12)	98%	99%	100%	99%	97%	100%	98%	99%
% who feel safe when outside in their local area after dark (Q13)	77%	77%	80%	78%	85%	75%	87%	72%
% who have felt fearful of being a victim of crime in their local area over the last 12 months (Q14)	13%	25%	17%	11%	11%	12%	4%	14%



Wave 14 Headline Results - November 2012

	Cannock Chase	East Staffordshire	Lichfield	Newcastle	Stafford	Staffordshire Moorlands	South Staffordshire	Tamworth
% who have been a victim or witness of crime in the last 12 months (Q15)	9%	16%	16%	13%	15%	15%	8%	9%
% who are satisfied with the level of visible police presence in their local area (Q17)	50%	48%	41%	41%	48%	41%	62%	66%
% who agree that the police in this area can be relied on to be there when you need them (Q18a)	72%	63%	64%	58%	62%	65%	67%	75%
% who agree that the police in this area would treat you with respect (Q18b)	94%	86%	76%	75%	83%	76%	83%	86%
% who agree that the police in this area treat everyone fairly (Q18c)	87%	73%	70%	58%	64%	59%	77%	79%
% who agree that the police in this area can be relied on to deal with minor crimes (Q18d)	62%	58%	47%	47%	56%	47%	59%	68%
% who agree that the police in this area understand the issues that affect this community (Q18e)	75%	72%	61%	65%	66%	68%	69%	67%
% who agree that the police in this area deal with things that matter to this community (Q18f)	70%	57%	66%	66%	61%	62%	68%	72%
% who have confidence in the police in their area (Q18g)	81%	73%	74%	71%	75%	72%	81%	83%
% who are confident that the CJS as a whole is effective (Q19a)	45%	52%	33%	35%	47%	35%	42%	51%
% who are confident that the CJS as a whole is fair (Q19b)	49%	55%	39%	42%	57%	44%	45%	63%
% who would rate their usual health as excellent, good or very good (Q23)	77%	87%	81%	78%	83%	80%	86%	85%

24th October 2013

**REPORT OF THE LEADER
BUDGET CONSULTATION 2014/15**

EXEMPT INFORMATION

There is no exempt information.

PURPOSE

To inform Cabinet of the outcomes arising from consultation undertaken with residents, businesses and the voluntary sector in accordance with the corporate budget setting process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

That Cabinet endorse the report and take account of the findings along with other sources of information when setting the 2014/15 Budget.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tamworth's focus on working with partners to 'Aspire and Prosper' is visibly supported in the 2014/15 budget consultation responses. Working with businesses to create employment opportunities and providing the conditions to enable businesses to grow and develop were viewed as important by all. Businesses further recognised the need to raise the aspirations of young people and highlighted the importance of creating the technology and infrastructure required to encourage and support growth.

Clear support for a 'Healthier and Safer' Tamworth is also apparent. Most noticeably so from residents, with the below priorities being particularly important for Tamworth residents:

- Tackling crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Tackling youth crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Protecting the vulnerable.

Support for the vision and priorities is further evidenced in people's commentaries with low crime, job prospects and health services being viewed as key indicators of what makes somewhere a good place to live. Residents felt two of these indicators (job prospects and crime levels) needed improving in Tamworth and the implementation of the vision and priorities for Tamworth will be key in realising these improvements.

In terms of spending on services, respondents were broadly supportive of keeping the level of spending the same. There were however four cost areas where increased spending was supported and these are outlined below:

- Tackling anti-social behaviour.
- Improving the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of Tamworth.
- Street cleaning.

- Housing.

It is notable that the top three priority areas for increased spending have remained largely unchanged over the last year. However, housing has now replaced parks and open spaces as the fourth most important cost area for increased spend.

Clear messages were also apparent on service charges and decreased charges would be supported for parking fees and town centre market and shop rentals. This was further evidenced through respondents' comments and through these, respondents recognised the positive effects that these decreased charges would have on the regeneration of the town centre economy. Whilst increasing fees is rarely a popular option, increasing fees for leisure and public open spaces would be most tolerable and would receive the least resistance from respondents.

In a similar vein, residents would be most receptive to minimal increases in the level of council tax with the overriding message being that the smaller the increase in council tax, the greater the level of resident support. Whilst this is a view commonly expressed by residents, in times of austerity, the message is even more pertinent with smaller increases and finding more efficient ways to deliver services receiving clear support.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no resource implications arising from this report.

LEGAL/RISK IMPLICATIONS BACKGROUND

It is a statutory duty to consult before the development of the budget. Budget consultation ensures our compliance with this.

SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

There are no sustainability implications arising from this report.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

As part of an annual process Tamworth Borough Council reviews its Council Tax and Charges strategy for the development of the budget. This process ensures that funding is put into areas of highest priority. An important element of this process is to understand the views of residents, businesses, and local voluntary groups on what these priorities are.

REPORT AUTHOR

John Day

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

None

APPENDICES

Budget consultation 2014/15 – Full report

Introduction and methodology

Tamworth Borough Council reviews its council tax and charges on an annual basis and this helps to develop the Council's budget and ensures funding is put into areas which are of priority. Residents, businesses and the voluntary sector are an important part of this process and all are invited to share their views on priorities for the year ahead. The consultation for the 2014-2015 budget ran throughout August and September 2013 and residents, businesses and the voluntary sector were encouraged to share their views through tailored online surveys.

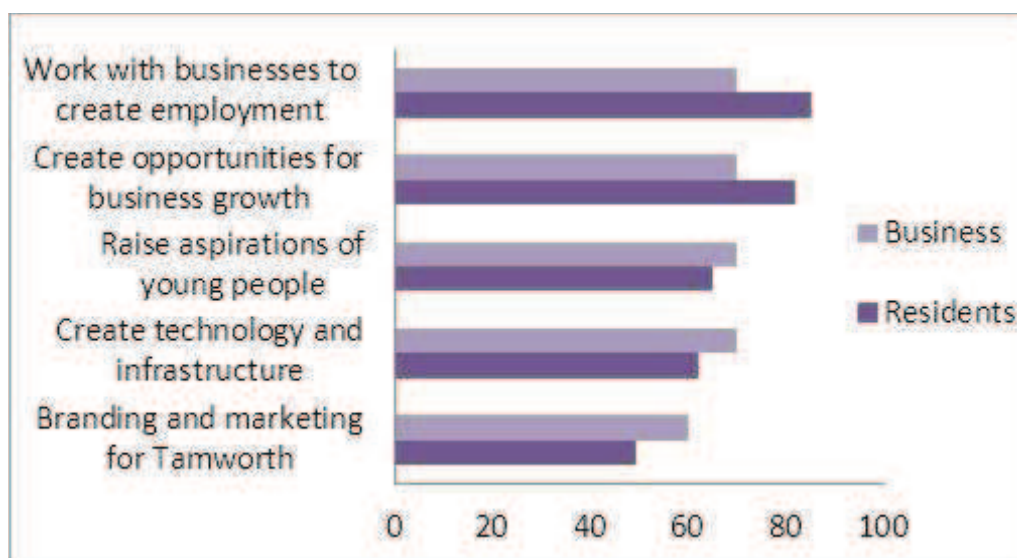
A total of 261 responses were received to the consultation and the majority of these were from Tamworth residents (251 responses). Ten businesses also shared their views and the majority of these were independent businesses sited on business estates, local neighbourhoods or in the town centre.

Views on the corporate priorities for Tamworth

Aspire and prosper

Residents expressed clear priorities under the vision to 'aspire and prosper' believing that the Council should work with businesses to create employment and to create opportunities for business growth. Businesses held different views feeling that four of the five priorities were equally important with just branding and marketing being viewed as less significant.

Priorities for Tamworth for Tamworth to 'Aspire and Prosper' (%)



Respondents were clearly supportive of the overall aim for Tamworth to 'aspire and prosper' and in their comments they identified clear steps which Tamworth should follow to ensure success:

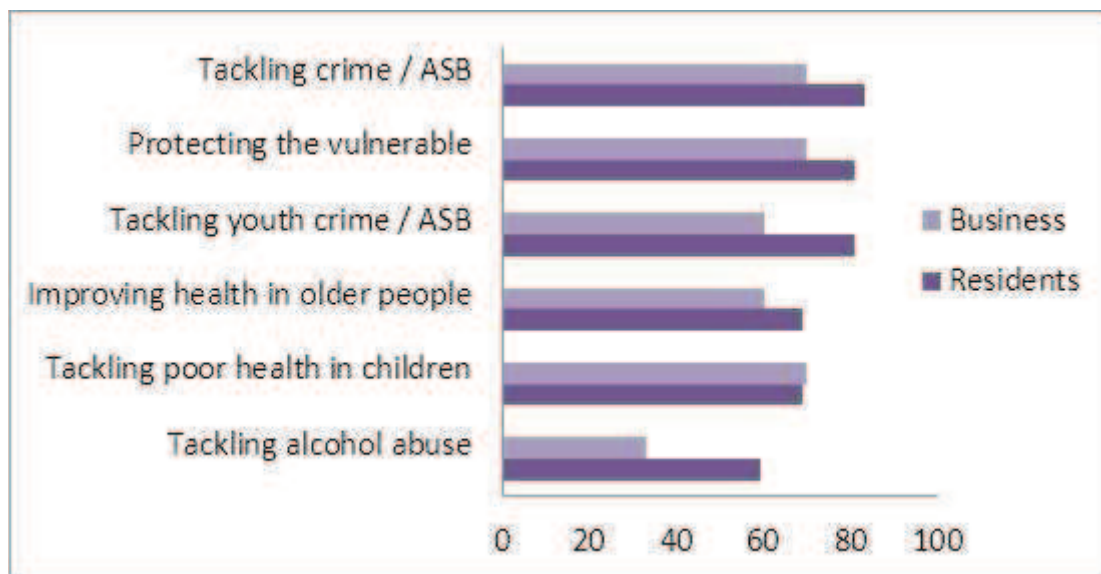
- Provide a positive, welcoming environment to attract new businesses.
- Focus on creating more business opportunities and stronger communities.

- Encourage regeneration in the town centre and stop charging for parking.
- Ensure good transport links.
- Develop a skilled workforce to meet the needs of the economy.
- Create an environment in which people can live independently and be self sufficient.
- Support smaller businesses by providing help with lower rent and rates.

Healthier and Safer

Residents held broadly positive views on the ‘healthier and safer’ priorities and tackling crime / anti-social behaviour (ASB) generally and for the young as well as protecting the most vulnerable people were clear priorities. Whilst businesses also prioritised tackling crime / ASB and protecting vulnerable people, their third priority was to tackle poor health in children.

Priorities for Tamworth for Tamworth to be ‘Healthier & Safer’ (%)



Resident’s comments also showed clear support for the vision and priorities for a ‘healthier and safer’ Tamworth and these are summarised below:

- Encourage a “*healthier community*” and “*tackle obesity*”. There are currently “*far too many takeaway food outlets*” which “*encourage unhealthy lifestyles*”,
- Tackle alcohol and youth crime issues because it will “*lessen the effects of anti-social behaviour*”,
- Ensure there are activities for “*the young and the old*” which provide “*nurture*”, encourage “*good health*” and “*reduce isolation for the elderly*”,
- Provide more support for “*people with mental illnesses and for victims of drug abuse*”,
- Support those with “*invisible needs*” (such as autism and dyslexia) in their educational achievements to “*increase their chances of finding work*”,

- Provide “*closer Accident & Emergency services*”, also additional services including “*maternity*” services.

Comments on Tamworth’s vision and priorities

Whilst most were supportive of Tamworth’s priorities and agreed that concentrating on “*two things*” would “*ensure success*”, some of the comments received were more negative in their nature. Some expressed the view that the priorities were “*national problems*” and should be dealt with nationally because they are “*beyond the local remit*”. Other respondents were not convinced that the priorities contained “*the necessary depth required to succeed*” whilst others still were concerned that “*council tax would need to rise for the Council to be able to achieve the performance that they were looking for*”.

Those who were supportive of the vision described it as “*excellent*” and commended the partnership approach commenting that it is “*essential for the police and local authority to work together to tackle issues including rising anti-social behaviour*”.

A view expressed by some respondents was that it is difficult to visualise success because of the “*current level of decline in Tamworth town centre*” whilst others were opposed to the vision feeling that the Council should concentrate on “*running Tamworth in a rational and competent fashion*” feeling that health and safety issues should be left to “*the NHS and police*”. Others were supportive of having a vision but felt that it should challenge how services can be delivered more efficiently and effectively, for example through “*private initiatives and enterprises*”. The vision should also highlight “*the historical infrastructure which sets Tamworth apart from other towns*” and this heritage should be part of Tamworth’s future.

Making Tamworth a good place to live

What makes somewhere a good place to live?

Whilst it is clear that it is a variety of factors that combine to make somewhere a good place to live, there are three factors that stand out as being most important to Tamworth residents in making somewhere a good place to live. These are a low level of crime, good job prospects and good health services.



What needs improving in Tamworth?

Two of the three most important indicators which make somewhere a good place to live need improving in Tamworth. These are job prospects and the level of crime and both need improving according to Tamworth residents. The provision of affordable, decent housing is also considered to be important and in need of improvement.

Residents also commented that Tamworth would be a better place to live if:

- *“Healthcare is improved”.*
- *The “town centre is regenerated”.*
- *“Cleanliness is improved”* and residents *“take pride in their local area”.*

Service and spending priorities for Tamworth

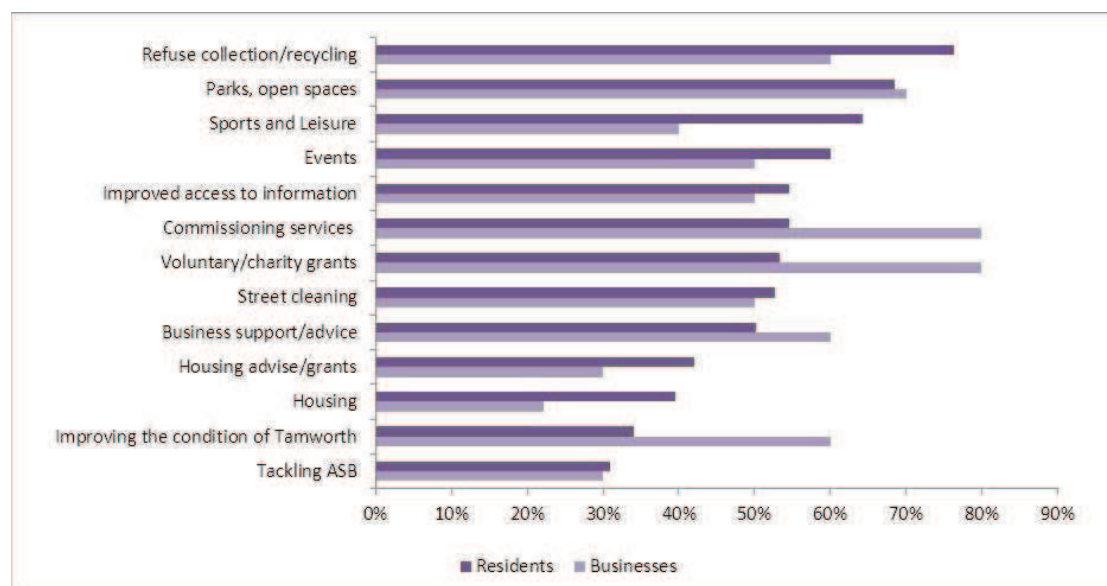
Respondents were asked whether the Council should increase, decrease or keep spending on major cost areas the same.

The majority supported keeping spending the same

For the majority of cost areas, both residents and businesses felt that the level of spending should stay the same and this remains consistent with responses received last year.

Residents agreed that keeping spending the same was particularly important in relation to refuse collection / recycling, parks and open spaces and leisure services. Businesses, however had a different view and were most likely to agree that grants and commissioning of services to the voluntary and community sector should remain unchanged.

Support for keeping spending the same (%)



There is a high level of support for increased spending in four cost areas

There are four cost areas where a high proportion of residents would support increased spending; tackling anti-social behaviour, improving the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of Tamworth, street cleaning and housing. Residents prioritised spending on safety and improving the condition of Tamworth and whilst businesses were broadly supportive of these same priorities, they gave a higher priority to housing and housing advice and grants than residents did. Residents' priority areas for spending have remained largely unchanged over the last year with the first three priorities remaining the same. During the last 12 months however, housing has replaced parks and open space as the fourth cost centre where increased spending is supported.

Cost areas where increased spending is supported (%)	Residents	Businesses
1. Tackling Anti-social behaviour	67	50
2. Improving the condition of Tamworth	54	40
3. Street cleaning	47	40
4. Housing	46	67

There is some support for decreased spending in three cost areas

Broadly speaking, decreased spending was the least popular of the three options with both residents and businesses. There was however some support for decreased spending and these related to the cost areas outlined below:

Cost areas where decreased spending is supported (%)	Residents	Businesses
1. Housing advice and grants	25	20
2. Grants for voluntary organisations	18	20
3. Improved access to information	17	30

If the Council needs to make savings or reduce costs, residents would also be less resistant to cuts in events services, commissioning services from voluntary organisation and charities and improved access to information / customer services. Businesses were least resistant to making savings in access to information / customer services, voluntary sector grants and business advice and support.

Views on changing charges for services

Respondents were asked to indicate where they would most like to see increased or decreased charges. There was broad support for encouraging town centre revival by decreasing car parking fees and market and shop rentals. Residents were also supportive of increasing charges to leisure activities and residents and businesses both supported increased charges for public open spaces.

Car parking:

Reducing fees for car parking was a clear priority for residents and businesses of Tamworth. Businesses that supported increasing charges tended to be located out of town or on neighbourhood sites and were unlikely to be negatively affected by higher car parking fees, in town centres.

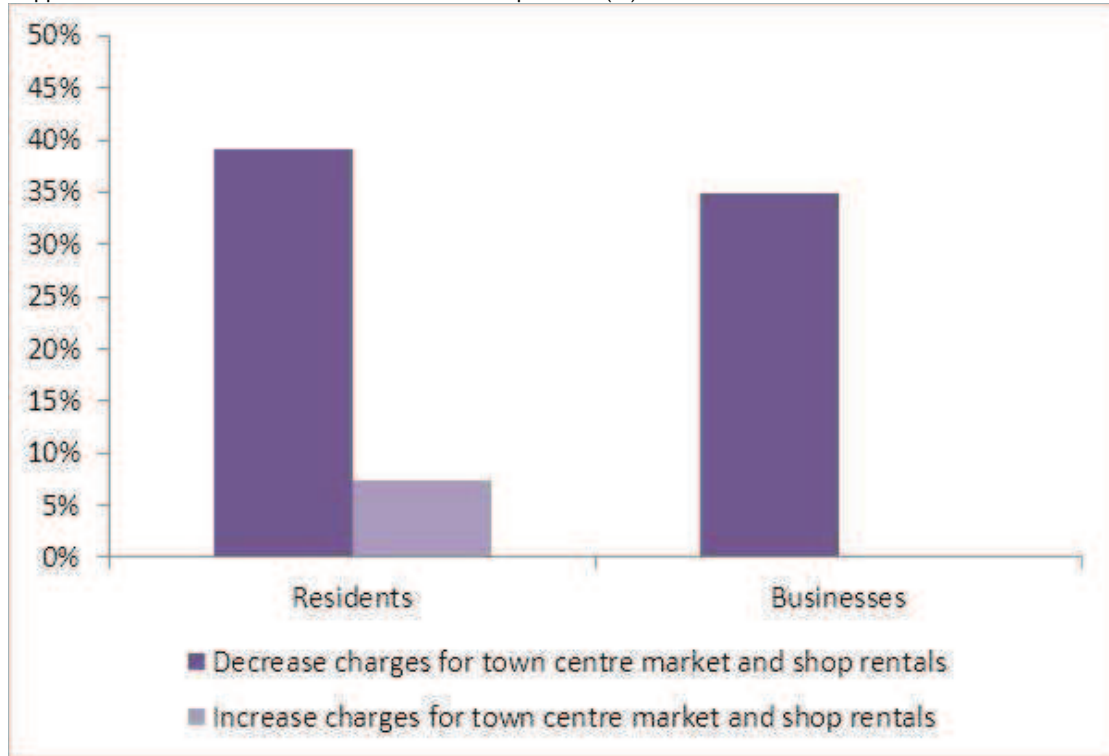
Support for increases or decreases to car parking fees (%)



Town centre market and shop rentals:

Clear support was evident from both residents and businesses for decreasing town centre charges for market and shop rentals and comments included that something needs to be done to “improve Tamworth’s town centre” instead of always concentrating on “new developments”.

Support for increases or decreases to market and shop rentals (%)



Public charges for leisure activities:

Views from residents and businesses were similar with both mainly in favour of increasing public charges for leisure activities.

Support for increases or decreases for leisure activities (%)



Waste management:

Waste management was not a top priority for residents or businesses, but both would prefer to see increases rather than decreases in charges.

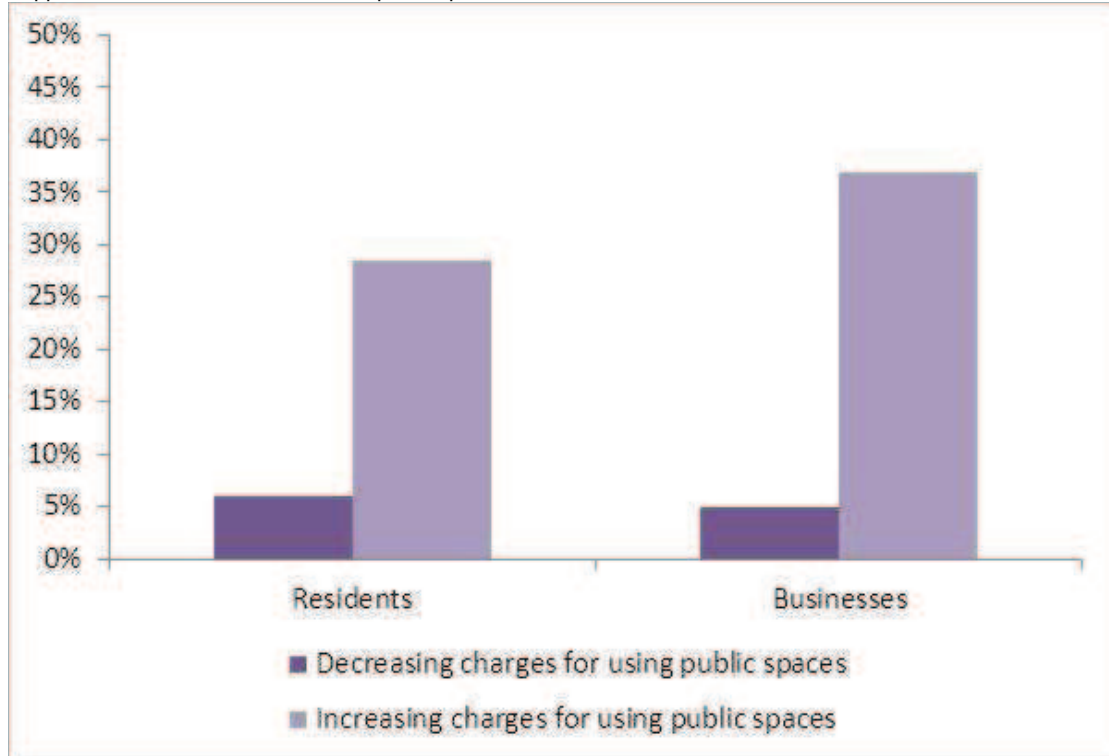
Support for increases or decreases in waste management



Public spaces:

Both residents and businesses were supportive of increasing charges for using public open spaces.

Support for increases or decreases for public spaces



Setting the level of council tax

Residents were asked for their views on what the acceptable increase in council tax should be for the year 2014 / 2015. Four options for increases were outlined and generally speaking, the lower the level of increase, the more supportive residents would be of the increase.

Support for increasing council tax (based on a Band D property)



Tables of Results (Residents)

Please tell us how important our priorities under 'aspire and prosper in Tamworth' are to you, with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important.

	1	2	3	4	5
Work with businesses to create more employment locally	66.7%	18.3%	7.7%	4.1%	3.3%
Create opportunities for business growth	57.8%	23.8%	10.7%	4.9%	2.9%
Raise aspiration and attainment levels of young people	39.4%	25.2%	16.7%	11.4%	7.3%
Create the technology and physical infrastructure necessary	37.6%	24.5%	20.8%	9.4%	7.8%
Brand and market "Tamworth" as a great place to "live life to the full"	28.5%	20.7%	19.5%	14.2%	17.1%

Please tell us how important our priorities under 'be healthier and safer in Tamworth' are to you, with 1 being the most important and 6 being the least important.

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Tackle crime and anti-social behaviour	64.3%	18.4%	6.1%	4.5%	4.1%	2.5%
Protect those most vulnerable in our local communities	56.7%	24.3%	7.3%	4.9%	3.6%	3.2%
Tackle youth crime and anti-social behaviour	56.3%	24.9%	6.9%	3.7%	4.5%	3.7%
Tackle poor health in children	44.9%	24.1%	15.1%	5.3%	5.7%	4.9%
Improve the health of older people	44.5%	24.7%	13.4%	6.9%	6.5%	4.0%
Tackle alcohol abuse	37.8%	21.5%	17.1%	9.3%	3.7%	10.6%

Please select FIVE things from the list below that you believe are the most important for making somewhere a good place to live

What makes a good place to live?	% and no's	What makes a good place to live?	% and no's
Low levels of crime	17.2% (216)	Clean streets	9.5% (119)
Good job prospects	15.0% (188)	Good parks and open spaces	8.4% (105)
Good health services	14.0% (176)	Good shopping facilities	8.2% (103)
Good education provision	10.6% (133)	Good sports and leisure facilities	4.0% (50)
Affordable decent housing	10.4% (130)	Community events	2.8% (35)

Please tick FIVE things you feel need to improve most to make Tamworth a better place to live

What needs improving?	% and no's	What needs improving?	% and no's
Job prospects	17.0% (205)	Health service	11.0% (132)
Level of crime	14.6% (176)	Education provision	7.2% (87)
Affordable decent housing	12.0% (144)	Parks and open spaces	7.0% (84)
Shopping facilities	11.5% (138)	Community events	4.4% (53)
Cleanliness of streets	11.1% (134)	Sports and leisure facilities	4.2% (51)

For the following services, do you think we should spend more, the same or less?

	More	Same	Less	No opinion
Tackling anti-social behaviour	67.5%	30.9%	1.2%	0.4%
Improving the condition of Tamworth	54.3%	34.1%	7.8%	3.9%
Street cleaning	46.5%	52.7%	0.8%	0.0%
Housing	46.3%	39.6%	9.2%	5.0%
Business support and advice	30.2%	50.2%	11.8%	7.8%
Parks, open spaces	26.8%	68.5%	3.8%	0.9%
Housing advice and grants	25.4%	42.1%	25.0%	7.5%
Grants for voluntary organisations and charities	23.5%	53.4%	17.6%	5.5%
Improved access to information/customer services	22.5%	54.5%	16.8%	6.1%
Refuse collection and recycling	20.4%	76.3%	2.4%	0.8%
Commissioning services from voluntary organisations and charities	20.2%	54.5%	16.7%	8.6%

From the services listed below, if the Council had to make savings or reduce costs, which services do you think we should look at?

Events	15.0%	Improving the condition of Tamworth	4.7%
Commissioning services	14.5%	Housing	3.3%
Improved access to information	13.6%	Parks, open spaces	3.1%
Grants for voluntary orgs / charities	13.2%	Refuse collection and recycling	1.5%
Business support and advice	10.7%	Street cleaning	0.4%
Housing advice and grants	10.4%	Tackling anti-social behaviour	0.4%
Sports and leisure	8.9%		

Which TWO of the below income areas do you think the Council could/should increase charges for?

Public charges for leisure and other activity	36.8%
Public spaces	28.5%
Waste management	19.0%
Car parking	8.2%
Town centre market and shop rentals	7.5%

Which TWO of the below income areas do you think the Council could/should decrease charges for?

Car parking	39.5%
Town centre market and shop rentals	39.1%
Public charges for leisure and other activity	8.6%
Waste management	6.7%
Public spaces	6.1%

What would you consider to be an acceptable Council Tax increase for the 2014/2015 budget?

	% support
Option A—£1 weekly increase on band D property	46.7%
Option B—£1.53 weekly increase on band D property	29.7%

	% support
Option C- £3.05 weekly increase on band D property	16.6%
Option D—£3.81 weekly increase on band D property	7.0%

Tables of Results (Businesses)

Please tell us how important our priorities under 'aspire and prosper in Tamworth' are to you, with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important.

	1	2	3	4	5
Raise aspiration and attainment levels of young people	50.0%	20.0%	10.0%	10.0%	10.0%
Create opportunities for business growth	50.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%	10.0%
Create the technology and physical infrastructure necessary	40.0%	30.0%	10.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Work with businesses to create more employment locally	30.0%	40.0%	0.0%	10.0%	20.0%
Brand and market "Tamworth" as a great place to "live life to the full"	30.0%	30.0%	10.0%	20.0%	10.0%

Please tell us how important our priorities under 'be healthier and safer in Tamworth' are to you, with 1 being the most important and 6 being the least important

	1	2	3	4	5	6
Protect those most vulnerable in our local communities	60.0%	10.0%	0.0%	20.0%	0.0%	10.0%
Tackle crime and anti-social behaviour	40.0%	30.0%	10.0%	0.0%	10.0%	10.0%
Tackle youth crime and anti-social behaviour	40.0%	20.0%	20.0%	0.0%	10.0%	10.0%
Tackle poor health in children	30.0%	40.0%	10.0%	0.0%	10.0%	10.0%
Improve the health of older people	20.0%	40.0%	10.0%	30.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Tackle alcohol abuse	22.2%	11.1%	33.3%	11.1%	11.1%	11.1%

For the following services, do you think we should spend more, the same or less?

	More	Same	Less	No opinion
Housing	66.7%	22.2%	11.1%	0.0%
Housing advice and grants	50.0%	30.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Tackling anti-social behaviour	50.0%	30.0%	20.0%	0.0%
Improving the condition of Tamworth	40.0%	60.0%	0.0%	0.0%
Street cleaning	40.0%	50.0%	10.0%	0.0%
Business advice and support	30.0%	60.0%	10.0%	0.0%
Refuse collection and recycling	30.0%	60.0%	10.0%	0.0%
Parks, open spaces	20.0%	70.0%	10.0%	0.0%
Improved access to information/customer services	20.0%	50.0%	30.0%	0.0%
Events	20.0%	50.0%	20.0%	10.0%
Sports and leisure	20.0%	40.0%	20.0%	20.0%

Commissioning services from voluntary orgs & charities	10.0%	80.0%	10.0%	0.0%
Grants for voluntary organisations and charities	0.0%	80.0%	20.0%	0.0%

From the services listed below, if the Council had to make savings or reduce costs, which services do you think we should look at?

Improved access to information	200%		Sports and leisure	6.7%
Voluntary sector grants	16.7%		Housing	3.3%
Business advice and support	16.7%		Parks, open spaces	0.0%
Housing advice and grants	13.3%		Refuse collection and recycling	0.0%
Voluntary sector commissioning	10.0%		Street cleaning	0.0%
Events	6.7%		Tackling anti-social behaviour	0.0%
Improving the condition of Tamworth	6.7%			

Which TWO of the below income areas do you think the Council could/should increase charges for?

Public spaces	37.5%
Public charges for leisure activities	31.3%
Waste management	18.8%
Car parking	12.5%
Town centre market and shop rentals	0.0%

Which TWO of the below income areas do you think the Council could/should decrease charges for?

Car parking	35.0%
Town centre market and shop rentals	35.0%
Public charges for leisure activities	20.0%
Public spaces	5.0%
Waste management	5.0%

Tamworth Listens Question Time Event

This year's Tamworth Listens initiative was a question time event held at the Assembly Rooms on the evening of 16th October 2013. This gave residents of Tamworth the opportunity to ask a panel of public sector representatives questions about Tamworth.

The event was chaired by Gary Phelps, the editor of The Tamworth Herald and the panel was made up of
Donna Gibbs, Chief Inspector, Tamworth Police,
Tony Goodwin, Chief Executive, Tamworth Borough Council,
Cllr Daniel Cook, Leader, Tamworth Borough Council,
Cllr Robert Pritchard, Deputy Leader, Tamworth Borough Council,
Cllr John Faulkner, Leader of the Opposition, Tamworth Borough Council,
Cllr Richard McDermid, Deputy Leader of the Opposition, Tamworth Borough Council,
Tim Leese, District Commissioning Lead – Tamworth, Staffordshire County Council.

The event was split into 2 themes; Future plans for the town centre, and Safer Tamworth, with a section for general questions.

The event was attended by 170 residents and a number of questions were posed by them. Due to time constraints, not all questions were able to be answered; those questions were given a written response following the meeting. Copies of both verbal and written responses are shown below in order of the appropriate theme.

Outcomes from the event were;

- There was consensus that there needs to be a different look and mix to the town centre, and the housing needs of both an ageing population and young people, who need smaller houses, have to be a part of that,
- There is a passion about heritage but it has to be accepted that the Council cannot do it all on its own,
- Parking in and around Marmion House is an issue and the limited actions the Council can take will be put into effect,
- That this type of event will happen again.

FUTURE PLANS FOR THE TOWN CENTRE

QUESTION

Does the Council have a Plan B regarding the proposed redevelopment of the former Lower Gungate Precinct if the original proposals based around a major shopping unit prove unsuitable?

RESPONSE

It is not our land to have an alternative plan on as it belongs to a private developer, Henry Boot.

Tamworth Borough Council has acknowledged that the site can no longer be a pure retail offer and we can seek to influence the developers to look at real sustainable, workable options that meet the needs of the local people. One of these options is around a mix of specialist residential housing, niche retail and soft leisure.

Potentially, the footprint of the Lower Gungate site could be much bigger as there is no longer a Magistrates Court, consequently; the footprint could be extended to encompass that area. Options that have been looked at include a new leisure centre.

The issue is that the developer, having bought the site, will want to make a profit. They will want to look at a plan that gives them a return on their investment. Providing this mix of specialist residential housing, niche retail and soft leisure will provide them with this and ensure Tamworth gets what it needs.

QUESTION	
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<i>When is a proper coffee bar/snacks/bistro going into Tamworth mainline station instead of a mobile van parked outside?</i>
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RESPONSE

Staffordshire County Council and Tamworth Borough Council are exploring the Gateways into Tamworth as sites that create a positive impression to the Borough and Town. This includes areas not in either Council's ownership or control, like the station. A part of this is to consider the appearance of such areas and to consider how their appearance can be improved. As always such developments are dependant upon resources being available. We are keen to involve partners and in this area the Rail providers would need to be approached.
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QUESTION	
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<i>Why does the Council provide a 30 minutes parking option on only certain short term car parks, while providing a 60 minute option on none? Either all short term car parks should provide 30 minute, 60 minute then 2 hour options or the 30 minute option should be discarded in favour of a 60 minute option priced at 70p, the current 30 minute price?</i>
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RESPONSE

The 30 minutes tariff was originally set in response to requests from businesses and residents wishing to make very quick visits to town e.g. to the bank. This enables a quick turn around in the short stay car parks that are closest to the town centre.
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The provision of an up to a 2 hour tariff (i.e.70p per hour) provides a flexible choice for motorists to try and encourage longer stays in the town centre and does not restrict them only 1 hour.
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The two hour is the most popular flexible tariff and there are currently no plans to amend at present.
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QUESTION	
<i>The council owned shops in Market Street (old TIC) need restoration and re-opening. When will you do this to prevent them eventually having to be demolished?</i>	

RESPONSE
<p>The old TIC shop at 29 Market Street is being launched in November 2013 as “Created In Tamworth” a creative industries incubation hub which will see up to five local creative businesses open in the building and share the shop floor. The scheme is supported by our Arts and Events team and also by our Economic Development team. The incubation centre offers low rent and discounted business rates for the first 3 years on a reducing scale. So far five prospective tenants are lined up with a larger number of potential tenants having expressed an interest.</p> <p>The remaining void Market Street Unit within the Council’s ownership requires significant capital funding to bring it back into use which is currently beyond the Council’s budget without external funding. Currently only works to protect the fabric of the building have been undertaken.</p>

QUESTION	
<i>It was stated in the Herald that we should have more living accommodation in the town centre. Do you think we should encourage this and other uses rather than shopping there?</i>	

RESPONSE
<p>The old precinct site is in the ownership of a private property developer. Their initial plans were to attract a flagship store onto the site and then build around that. However, the economy has changed since then and this is no longer viable.</p> <p>There needs to be a mix of residential property for those people commuting to Birmingham, sheltered and flex care schemes for our ageing population and suitable accommodation for young people trying to get on the housing ladder. This needs to be mixed with a niche retail offer, a ‘soft’ leisure offer of restaurants and cafes to sit alongside our current heritage offer.</p> <p>The developers have been asked to consider all of these things when drawing up their future plans for this site.</p>

QUESTION	
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<i>Can we have a central bus station in Albert Road/Marmion Street/Spinning School Lane and possibly the bus garage?</i>	
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RESPONSE

There is not adequate space in the area suggested. However, if the plans for the old precinct site come to fruition then the mix of retail, accommodation and soft leisure will create a demand for buses to converge on the area in question as that is where the demand for them will be.

QUESTION	
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<i>While the council makes up its mind as to what to do about our decaying town centre, why not lease (at a peppercorn rent) empty shop windows to other more successful retailers? That way, all the shop fronts will be full and everyone benefits. I think this is being tried out in Lichfield.</i>	
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RESPONSE

There is a misconception that the Council owns all property in the town centre when it only owns 11 shops. One is currently empty but there are plans for its future use as a 'Created in Tamworth' incubation hub for creative industries and other carries posters promoting the Mercian Trail and Staffordshire Hoard.

The hoardings at the new flats in Two Gates contain information about tourism in the town and we are pushing other developers to do the same.

On the issue of parking, it is not the issue of the cost of parking that is the issue; it is what is on offer in the town centre. If the town centre plans come to fruition and the offer improves as a result then the cost of parking becomes less of a factor.

Car parking provides the Council with an income stream of £600k to £1m and to remove this amount from a budget of £8.9 million is not financially viable.

QUESTION	
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<i>How are you going to regenerate George Street with more shops closing down? Bistros and quality food might attract people.</i>
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RESPONSE

There are a team of officers dedicated to economic prosperity in Tamworth; one of the focuses is the Town Centre. This team sells Tamworth to future developers. As George Street is predominantly owned by Ankerside we would need to be in dialogue with them over any development there.

With regard to having a Saxon Village. At this moment, we don't have the money to do this. The council has a deficit in its budget of £1.4m in 2016/17.

If a trust wanted to submit a National lottery bid for a Saxon Village, Tamworth Borough Council could support that with officer time and expertise but with having a major bid in for the Assembly Rooms and managing a bid for Tamworth Castle our ability to proceed and approve another lottery bid, at this time, is highly unlikely.

However, when the opportunity arises in the future, as the financial situation improves, we need to be in a position to capitalise on it and be ready to secure external funding by understanding what is needed.

We have not tried to secure outside sponsorship for this at the moment as it is not one of our top priorities, housing and the delivery of services are. However, there is nothing to stop someone other than the Council doing this.

The Council is committed to its heritage. The fact that Tamworth Castle loses £600k per annum and the Assembly Rooms lost £250k last year, with the Council underwriting this, demonstrates this commitment. However, the Council cannot afford to take any more financial commitments like this at the present time.

QUESTION	
<i>Regarding the Assembly Rooms refurbishment, is the second stage lottery grant application approved and do you have match funding??</i>	

RESPONSE
<p>At this moment the second lottery grant application has not been approved. There is a raft of work that needs to be undertaken such as architects drafting what it will look like and surveyors costing the work out.</p> <p>We are aiming to define a time when the Assembly Rooms can be closed so that this work can be carried but a lot of issues are affecting our ability to do this.</p> <p>The Council is committed to investing in its infrastructure and has set aside £400k to match fund any lottery investment.</p>

SAFER TAMWORTH

QUESTION

One of the biggest gripes that ward councillors receive from residents is the fear of crime. What are the Police going to do about this?

What happens to Police resources on a Friday and Saturday night as we are aware of issues that a resident does not get to see a Police officer until the next morning or later?

RESPONSE

Fear of crime is a nationally recognised issue that people often fear they are more likely to be a victim of crime. Part of that is the way in which we communicate with the community, how we tell them about current crime and successes in the justice system and how we tell them how they can prevent being a victim of crime.

That communication needs to improve and this is part of an emerging strategy; how can the Police be more visible so that people can directly ask them questions and how do we communicate with them.

As for resources on a Friday or Saturday night. Many resources are called for and they are not deployed to other areas. The town centre is a very vibrant one and the Police need to manage the risks and threats that can pose.

Appointments are offered to the public whose calls are of a non urgent nature. These appointments are usually for later on Saturday, Sunday or during the week.

QUESTION	
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There is a general requirement that there has to be a history of injury accidents at a location before improvements to roads and crossings can be justified. Do the councils agree with this policy or do they accept that changes can be made to prevent accidents happening in the first place?

Comment: I wrote over a year ago to the Highways Department of Staffordshire County Council suggesting that the southbound bus stop on Ninian Way near the junction with Brent be moved to the south side of the pedestrian crossing. This would encourage people walking between the bus stop and the co-operative supermarket to use the crossing rather than dodging the traffic. Despite a number of follow-up letters and e-mails, no meaningful response either in favour or against the suggestion

RESPONSE

Personal injury accidents throughout the County are constantly monitored and remedial measures are introduced where cluster sites with common factors that can be treated are identified.

Improvements to roads and crossings are also introduced for various other reasons, including the following:

- To prevent accidents happening where a potential problem has been identified
- To improve the quality of life for local residents. For example, by providing traffic calming and pedestrian crossings
- To encourage cycling and walking by providing cyclist and pedestrian facilities
- To encourage the use of public transport. For example, by improving bus stops and improving access to train stations
- To provide facilities for the disabled. For example by providing dropped crossings, tactile paving and pedestrian crossings
- To encourage businesses. For example, by providing better access to development sites and improving town centres.

As resources are limited, improvements are prioritised in conjunction with local communities and the benefits assessed before being included in a programme of works.

As regards to the Bus stop location referred to. The site would need to be investigated to understand any need for re-location. Further discussions would also be required with the bus providers.

QUESTION	
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<i>When will some thing be done about the Illegal car packing on The Leys, as it causes traffic problems?</i>

RESPONSE

The Local Parking Board is discussing which areas should next be considered to be included in a Residential Parking Scheme. Once the scheme in Victoria Road is concluded, The Leys is one of the areas that hopefully will be considered.

On the issue of Tamworth Borough Council employees parking in the streets around The Leys during the working day the following things will be done;

- Tamworth Borough Council will promote a car sharing scheme,
- Tamworth Borough Council is prepared to look at charging for staff parking but this would be a change to employees' terms and conditions and subject to consultation,
- The Chief Executive to send an e-mail to staff regarding their attitude towards residents when parking.

Regarding reporting car crime, it is acknowledged that some crimes are not reported and therefore not included in the official crime figures. The Police acknowledge this and their change in focus towards greater community engagement will encourage people to report those issues important to them.

The Neighbourhood Watch Scheme is an under utilised resource that the Police will seek to have a service level agreement with and this group can be used as a useful consultative group.

QUESTION	
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<i>Tamworth's excellent Community Safety Partnership became the template for the whole of Staffordshire. What impact will the plans of the Police and Crime Commissioner have on the Partnership and on Neighbourhood Policing in Tamworth?</i>
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RESPONSE

The Police and Crime Commissioners Plan is clear in that he feels the statutory agencies and voluntary sector should be working together to promote community safety and the priorities we have currently align to those of the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Tamworth has one of the best community safety partnership relationships with the local Police, this is not under threat and we will be looking to improve it in the future.

Several meetings are planned with the Police and Crime Commissioner to ensure that Tamworth gets its fair share of funding and will support the community to ensure that they can bid for other funds that he holds.

This funding is in place for the next two years and in the future if a move to payment by results, as has been seen in other areas, is established this would bode well for Tamworth.

QUESTION	
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<p><i>The Community Safety Partnership is actively encouraging residents to protect their homes with Smartwater. But the product is only being offered in selected areas of the borough and can only be purchased by cheque from the Tamworth Neighbourhood Watch Association. Can you find ways to support the TNHWA offer all residents the opportunity to buy Smartwater sooner and with more payment options?</i></p>	
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RESPONSE	
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<p>Smartwater is a very successful product in reducing burglary. However, its distribution can be very bureaucratic and we need to look at ways to make this more efficient.</p>	
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<p>It has been distributed into the priority areas first but we need to look at different ways to make it available either through the neighbourhood watch scheme or volunteers.</p>	
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<p>The payment for it is an issue and better ways of procuring it also need to be explored.</p>	
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<p>On the subject of the closure of Tamworth Magistrates Court, Tamworth Police has just commenced a pilot for virtual court attendance and is the first in Staffordshire to do so. This means that officers can be on duty right up until their time to give their evidence and then resume duties once this is done, thereby ensuring that they still maintain as visible a presence as possible.</p>	
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GENERAL QUESTIONS

QUESTION	
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<i>Can we sit down together and make a plan to make Glascote High Street a more attractive place especially as it is a main route into Tamworth?</i>	
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RESPONSE

There is widespread support from the panel for a meeting to be held to discuss how the Council can be more proactive in this area.

The Council alone spends £890k per annum on picking up litter dropped by other people. If, what is spent by the County Council is added to this it exceeds £1m.

QUESTION	
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<i>Can we please look at using other venues to host the polling stations? Many churches or community centres would welcome some extra footfall, they could promote their services. If the venue is near the school you would get the parents of the children, voting on their way to or from the school run. Having the schools close for yet another day, every year is difficult for working parents, and as polling day is a Thursday, it can't even be tied into a long weekend.</i>	
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RESPONSE

Many schools in the area arrange an inset day for staff to coincide with election days, thus causing the least inconvenience for pupils.

There is nothing to prevent schools remaining open for pupils on polling day provided that it meets their own health and safety requirements in respect of the children and ensures that there is no interference with the polling process.

The Local Authority along with the Returning Officer has a statutory duty to promote democracy and to provide appropriate facilities for the voting population. Schools the length and breadth of the country are used to support the election process and their suitability as a polling place have been recognised by the government and are enshrined in the law. Rule 20 of the Local Elections (Principal Areas) (England and Wales) Rules 2006 provides

Review of polling station ensures we ask people where they want to see polling stations

QUESTION

In view of the increasing number of people starting to cycle as a result of the success of the British teams in recent years, what plans do the councils have to improve conditions for cyclists?

The “Cycling in Tamworth Borough” map issued by the County Council shows a number of places where cyclists are advised to walk their bike rather than ride it. Are there are plans to improve these locations so that cyclists can ride their bikes?

Comment: As the reasons for people cycling are as varied as those for people driving cars, a simple provision of more cycle paths will not be sufficient. The cycle paths in Tamworth cannot be called a network. The provision is piecemeal and fragmented. Many of the existing off-road routes peter out and dump cyclists back on to roads, often at rather dangerous spots

RESPONSE

In comparison to other districts, Tamworth has a good network of cycle routes. It helps that Tamworth is an urban area.

On some routes, pushing of the bike is advised. This occurs where the route is in a pedestrianised area such as the town centre or where there maybe safety concerns due to the surface of the track.

As part of the ongoing improvements to all routes, Staffordshire County Council is exploring how the cycle routes can be best maintained and improved. As always the challenge is to make best use of existing resources and securing future investments from other sources (Government external grants, Developer contributions).

The future considerations of the cycle routes is also included in Tamworth’s Integrated Transport Strategy, (ITS) which sets out the key areas for intended improvement, dependant upon resources being available. The ITS was consulted on in July 2012 and is viewable on Staffordshire County Councils web site. As mentioned this does not guarantee that such improvements will be made. We are however finding that as Government Grant Schemes become available often at short notice we have to be ready with costed up schemes that we can present at short notice.

It should also be pointed out that the authority has a good track record of promoting a safe environment for cyclists and other vulnerable road users. Data from the Dept of Transport shows that over the last 3 years Staffordshire performed better than other county councils in relation to the number of cycling injuries and accidents on the roads.

QUESTION	
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The Council has recently published some projected population figures using the 2011 census figures. This was compiled before the 2012 population estimates which gave an increase of 200 up from 76,900 to 77,100. The Council's projected figures states that by 2021 the population of Tamworth will increase by 5,000 – a figure of 500 per year increase. Analysis of the figures shows this projection to be unrealistically high. It does not appear to take any account of net outward migration from Tamworth. Nor does it seem to consider a rising death rate. Could I ask that the Council investigate this and arrange for the figures to be corrected?

RESPONSE

The population projections published by the Council are **nationally derived sub national population projections produced by the Office for National Statistics**. Further information on their methodology can be found on the ONS website. ONS use the internationally accepted cohort component methodology, assuming the continuation of estimated local trends in fertility, mortality and migration.

Sub national population projections are published every two years by ONS. Sub national population projections are used as a common framework for local area resource allocation, planning and policy making in a number of fields such as health and education. The projections are not forecasts and do not take any account of future government policies, changing economic circumstances or the capacity of an area to accommodate the change in population. They provide an indication of the future size and age structure of the population if recent demographic trends continued.

In terms of our Local Plan production we will endeavor to use the most up to date and robust data to inform our evidence base, such as assessments on future housing need, and policy making. We must recall that when the Council decided to withdraw the Local Plan for inspection earlier this year we decided to do so because of comments by the inspector on achieving our 5-year land supply and how we fetch this forward, certainly around infrastructure / deliverability issues surrounding Anker Valley. At no point has the inspector questioned our evidence base on housing / population growth.

You also miss keys points about these projections do not just take into account population growth, but also the shortage of housing we currently have locally to house the current population. As the council we are aware and have struggled to house residents to their needs today, never mind in 5 years time. I personally am aware of young children sleeping on sofas and floors of friends and relations due to our struggle to use the current stocks effectively because of shortages of housing in Tamworth compared to demand. I am sure you too have met those adults in town who sofa surf awaiting a solution. Our housing waiting list is still massive.

The housing targets we currently project were historically supported by County Structure plans, the RSS phrase 2 and even now national projections. The inspector has no issue with them, thus we feel as the Council the numbers are correct and unless significant / factual evidence can be provided to challenge these, they will not change.

QUESTION	
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<i>Why is the council not prepared to take any action against residents turning housing estates into caravan parks? E.G. Caravans on driveways?</i>
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RESPONSE

From a legal perspective a single caravan parked within the curtilage of a dwelling, and used ancillary/incidental to the use of the property, would not constitute development and as a consequence would not fall under the control of the local planning authority i.e. Tamworth Borough Council.

If the caravan was used as an independent dwelling i.e. by a person not related to the occupier of the dwelling, and in a permanent manner (not a friend visiting for a couple of days), then it may be argued that there has been a material change of use in the land.

The only control that sometimes exists is on the deeds to individual properties. These restrictions will have been imposed by a private party, not the council (unless it is a property sold under the right to buy) and it is for that private party to enforce their covenants.

In conclusion, unless there are very unusual circumstances appertaining to a particular caravan, we would not get involved from a planning perspective.

QUESTION	
<i>When will the pot holes in Tamworth's roads be filled in?</i>	

RESPONSE
<p>Staffordshire County Council inspects urban roads once per month. Any repairs needed are scheduled based on a prioritisation of risk ranging from 1 day for emergency repairs to 28 days for non priority repairs. In reality some repairs take over the 28 days period. This is essentially due to the high demand on the service.</p> <p>It is important to realise that Potholes are not just an issue in Tamworth or in Staffordshire but that they are a nationwide issue across all UK Local Authority areas.</p> <p>When considering the reasons for the pot holes we should consider that apart from this last summer we have had some extremely wet summers over the past few years. Generally the water table in Staffordshire has been high. This along with cold winter conditions has a devastating impact on roads.</p> <p>We also have to consider the financial reality that we receive £16m/year from the Dept of Transport for this type of road maintenance. This does not cover the total cost of such repairs. Despite additional funding from Staffordshire County Council there continues to be a funding gap in respect of repairing pot holes.</p> <p>There are over 4000 miles of roads across Staffordshire. We aim to manage the road repairs programme through ensuring that we carry out an ongoing scheduled maintenance programme to maintain the quality of the road network to prevent pot holes from developing and also running a managed response to all reports of such repairs.</p> <p>The most effective Highways Inspectors are the general public. It helps us if you report potholes so that we are able to manage our response most effectively. Please use the Staffordshire County Council Corporate Contact Centre number of 0300 111 8000.</p>

QUESTION	
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<p><i>The Council makes excellent use of its website and various social media to keep residents informed about its activities. When will residents be able to literally see local democracy in action by watching web casts of council meetings and the work of committees such as Planning and Licensing?</i></p>

RESPONSE

<p>We will be launching a new website this autumn and continue to use social media both on a day to day basis, and to cover events such as elections and tonight.</p>

<p>With regard to live streaming, we can look into it but it is currently very expensive to do, recent estimates show £15 - £19k.</p>

<p>Some authorities have introduced it with varying degrees of success; we would need to know there was a need for it and people would view it. We would also need a much cheaper alternative at this stage.</p>
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QUESTION	
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<p><i>Why is smoking allowed in public spaces? I am referring to Middle Entry?</i></p>

RESPONSE

<p>Smoking is permitted in public places because the health risk is limited, given that any smoke emitted is diluted and dispersed. The legislation that protects health relates to premises where the same degree of protection is not available.</p>
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<p>Middle Entry is not regarded as premises for the purposes of the smokefree legislation under the Health Act 2006; it is defined as a walkway rather than premises.</p>

QUESTION

I would like to know about the Upper Gungate “widening” project announced by our MP this week.

I am currently trying to glean information via Borough and County on how this will affect home owners along the street (I am one), but to little avail, so I can only ask the general questions as follows:

“What do you know and how soon will we know exactly what is proposed?”

More specifically, if possible, what land is to be used, how long will the project take and what restrictions are expected to be needed during the project?”

RESPONSE

The Government recently announced that it had made available an additional £80m into the Local Pinchpoint Fund.

The aim of the scheme is to ease congestion and to support economic growth.

Staffordshire County Council led on 3 bids which were successful in receiving funding. The relevant one for Tamworth was for the improvements at Upper Gungate. These improvements are intended to help the Gungate Corridor route cope with increased traffic, supporting new development.

The work intended involves;
Widening of the carriage way
Modifying the Fountains Junction
New Toucan crossings close to the High School
Improvements to junctions close to the schools
Modifying of traffic signals

This work is due to start in April 2014. There will be further communication from Staffordshire County Council prior to any works being carried out. Elected Members from the authority will also be fully informed of the intended works.

To ease any concerns there will be very little land grab around the development area. There will be localised widening of the carriage way around Fountains Junction and there will be very little disruption to pavements with little impact to immediate householders. The work will also see the retention of significant trees in the vicinity.

QUESTION	
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How would the panel suggest we can restore local pride in the town centre to help raise Tamworth's profile nationally?

I am asking from the perspective of having run a business from Tamworth where I was guilty of denying where I was based, in favour of Birmingham. Many others like me continue to do so and have turned down the opportunity to have premises here because of Tamworth's poor image.

RESPONSE

Everyone has a role to play in this; it is not the sole responsibility of the local authority.

'Destination Tamworth' is Tamworth's Town Team, a body brought together to get people working together and bringing a sense of place, a community, a pride and passion from people willing to step up to the plate, outside of their normal working day and put something in, with the belief that if everyone gave a little, then the total sum could be huge. A sharing and learning of information, knowledge of the place, in order to promote and serve as ambassadors.

It is time for the community to take some responsibility, i.e. local retailers in the town getting their shop windows cleaned, maybe a lick of paint on the window sills, landlords/property owners looking to utilise empty window space; lots of small actions making a large impact.

Destination Tamworth's mission statement is:

'Destination Tamworth, working together, supporting each other, influencing change and taking Tamworth into the future.'

Destination Tamworth is currently working on their new business plan and community engagement should certainly feature in this. This is a journey to change culture.

The new website gives access to everyone to promote themselves, whether an event, a business, an offer, a news item. Paid for advertisements will generate income which can then support larger marketing and PR campaigns. The use of the 'T' brand promotes advocacy and buy in to the bigger picture and pride in using it.

QUESTION	
<i>TBC has improved the waste collection and recycling services by collaborating with Lichfield but can you do anything to allow Tamworth residents to dispose of bulky items without incurring the considerable expenses under the present system, bearing in mind residents' financial hardships, the increase in fly tipping and damage to the environment</i>	

RESPONSE
<p>The Local Authority under the current economic climate has no alternative but to make a charge in order to offset some of the substantial cost it incurs in providing a bulky waste collection service from residents door steps.</p> <p>Whilst the authority fully understands that residents are not immune from financial difficulties, they do have the option of taking their items free of charge to the Household Waste Recycling Centres at Lichfield or to Lower House where there is also a reuse facility/store. There are also several local charities that will collect some bulky items for reuse/resale.</p> <p>In addition if the bulky items are still usable, residents could consider selling them on national or local sale websites or using websites such as Freecycle where people advertise items that can be taken free of charge.</p>

QUESTION	
<i>If there is a new swimming pool, can it be built on the lines of Corby's i.e. 50 metre pool with moveable boom for a diving end with a retractable floor for depth?</i>	

RESPONSE
<p>The Council is conscious that longer term there could be a shortage of swimming pools in the town as the existing facilities age. We are working with schools and private providers to support access to the existing pools and to promote investment in them. Wilnecote Leisure Centre has recently (with support from the Council) been awarded a Sport England grant to update some of its facilities. The Council also subsidises SnowDome Swim and Wilnecote Leisure centre to provide public access to swimming at affordable rates and at Wilnecote free of charge.</p> <p>If a new pool was to be provided it is likely to be a 25m pool with movable floor. This would be adequate to meet our local needs and more affordable in terms of revenue and capital. The Midlands has a number of 50m pools so it is unlikely that we could evidence a need for that size pool or generate support from Sport England for one. The Council is currently considering how a new 25m pool and other leisure facilities could be part of a regeneration</p>

scheme for the town centre and contribute to improvements in wider health issues.

QUESTION

I've been making enquiries to the council about building Tamworth's first zero-carbon home. I'm concerned about local planning policy as the council won't support a small-scale zero-carbon housing project on low quality open-space land but is advocating large-scale projects like the Anker Valley Sustainable Urban Neighbourhood. If I were a large private housing developer with deep pockets and plans to concrete over vast areas of greenbelt land to build thousands of conventional houses, would the council then want to listen and engage with me?

RESPONSE

The proposal put forward was for an eco house in a piece of land described by the questioner as of low value. The advice we have is that it isn't of low value.

If the questioner were a large scale property developer then would Tamworth Borough Council listen to him anymore favourably then if, he were going to do something that meets our local housing needs, then yes we probably would.

There is a key issue about where the proposal is to be situated and what exactly wants to be done which could only be further resolved by making an appointment with our Planning Department.

QUESTION	
<i>Why is the grass allowed to grow on our footways and roads? This breaks up the surface, allows water in and holes and loose slabs appear</i>	

RESPONSE
<p>The County Council has a number of maintenance teams who routinely spray weedkiller on paths, roads and verges. The product that can be used is governed by environmental regulations and is of limited use, can only be sprayed onto the weed when it has grown and has no long term preventative effect.</p> <p>In the localities, the County Council Neighbourhood Highway teams liaise with Borough and County Councillors, the voluntary sector and locality hubs to find out where the problem areas are and are very much reliant on the public supplying local intelligence to assist in this.</p>

QUESTION	
<i>What does the Council do about tackling untidy gardens in Council House as a number have been spotted on walkabouts this year?</i>	

RESPONSE
<p>Firstly, it is difficult to tell from walking past a property if it is council owned as, with the right to buy many, are now privately owned and some are let out by private landlords.</p> <p>Enforcement is a slow process and individuals have to the right to rectify problems. If it is not rectified then it is escalated to another level. We do not want to evict people in the current economic climate as this not only adds to the scale and problem of homelessness in Tamworth but also places a burden on Council Tax payers too.</p> <p>If someone has evidence that a Council tenant is failing then a complaint should be made to the Environmental Health or Housing Teams or an approach to a ward councillor can be made.</p>

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