

Aspire and prosper scrutiny report 2014/15

“To aspire & prosper in Tamworth” is the first strategic priority of this council and a priority that not only members present here tonight will hold very dear to them but so will all of Tamworth’s residents. We want Tamworth to be a place where everyone maximises their potential and is supported to do so not just by this council and its partners but by other residents, businesses and community groups. To do this, members of the Aspire & Prosper scrutiny committee have over the past year tried their very best to ask questions and monitor the performance of this council and other significant contributors to the aspire & prosper agenda.

At the start of our year our first scrutiny item was connectivity to the rail station in Tamworth and what bus services could be improved to connect people on their way. A sub committee was formed and a survey online produced some amazing results as well as other issues with bus timetables and services across the town. Although not what we were scrutinising they will be passed over to arriva and perhaps next year’s committee can ask for an update.

Our next major piece of work was to scrutinise the night time economy and the issues around crime, employment, what is on offer is it what the residents of Tamworth want. Surprisingly although only a very basic questionnaire the results came out very positive around the night time offer and people were genuinely happy with the town. We found out that people wanted lively streets for all the right reasons, cleanliness and to feel safe. A subcommittee of myself joy and tony Madge went out onto the town and spoke with some of our revellers to find out if anything we could do differently. Some of the suggestions around late night openings and themed shopping nights have already been passed to our town centre team. I think we all have to accept that our town centres need to change to keep up with online shopping, the choices we make as to where we eat and where do our families go on a night out. People want to feel safe in a clean and friendly environment. We also know with the introduction of the culture quarter this will bring in those things that people want.

We have been able to have a regeneration presentation on the two areas of Tamworth tinkers green and the kerria where members were asking questions about the decant process and any lessons learnt from this huge project.

The creative quarter update again allowed members to really see how this will look ask questions and have a better understanding of how this will bring so much more to our town.

In the autumn we discussed darwell park and industrial lease holds and how we could better advise our business tenants in the future.

At the start of this year we scrutinised the local plan and the housing needs for our town which was quite an intense meeting to say the least. The committee were given the opportunity to ask how the numbers were reached and the formula used which is used country wide. A number of questions were raised regarding the housing numbers and I thank the officers present on this occasion for all their hard work in getting extra paperwork to us and involving members in individual meetings to discuss further.

Education aspirations still remain a major part of our discussions in order for us to raise the aspirations of the next generation to do well to work hard and to make school the best days

possible. Education isn't a one size fits all and we feel that this needs to be continued throughout the coming months to ensure that all our children can achieve.

Finally agile working within Marmion house was on the agenda and figures about savings and how it has affected working within the council.

We had a final regeneration update as to where we are now so that all members are better informed of the process and how the two developments will move forward.

I want to thank all of the officers who have attended our committees this municipal year and a special thanks to Cllr Steve claymore and to rob Mitchell who have attended 7 of our 8 meetings. To the committee who have undertaken some major workloads on some very important issues and have managed to keep our meetings political friendly I thank you also. A special thankyou to Cllr couchman and to Cllr kingstone who although not on the committee came and gave us a verbal update on education. To my vice chair Cllr joy Goodall who after only being elected in June last year has really helped us make great strides in a number of the projects worked on this year. So thank you joy.

I hope that next years committee whoever they are will continue the hard work done so far in some very interesting subject matter.

Thank you mr mayor