



# **State of Tamworth Debate**

## **7<sup>th</sup> December 2015**

## **Introduction**

This year the report look at progress made against the themes of this year's Tamworth Listens Question Time event;

- Regeneration and Growth,
- Healthier communities,
- Safer communities.

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 B	Tamworth Listens Question Time Event 2015 Responses
Appendix C	Budget Consultation Report 2016/17
Appendix D	Tamworth Borough Locality Profile 2015
Appendix E	Tamworth District Health Profile 2015

## Regeneration and Growth

To support regeneration and growth, Tamworth Borough Council and its partners work towards the strategic priority to 'Aspire and Prosper in Tamworth' where the primary outcome is to 'create and sustain a thriving local economy and make Tamworth a more aspirational and competitive place to do business'.

This will be achieved through the following objectives:

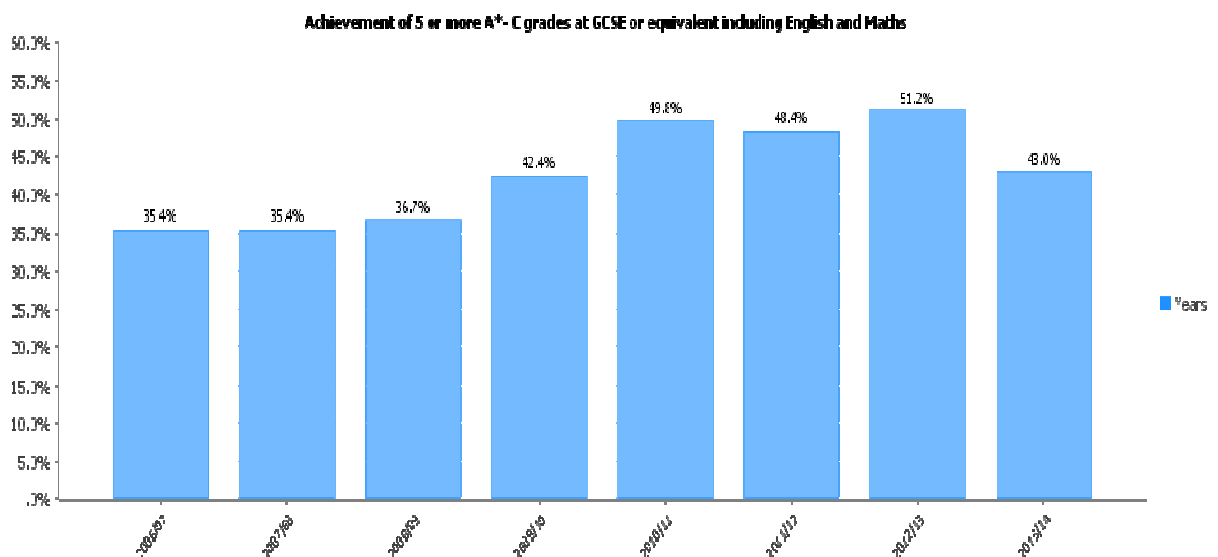
- Raising the aspiration and attainment levels of young people
- Creating opportunities for business growth through developing and using skills and talent
- Promoting private sector growth and creating quality employment locally
- Branding and marketing "Tamworth" as a great place to "live life to the full"
- Creating the physical and technological infrastructure necessary to support the achievement of this primary outcome.

### Raising the aspiration and attainment levels of young people

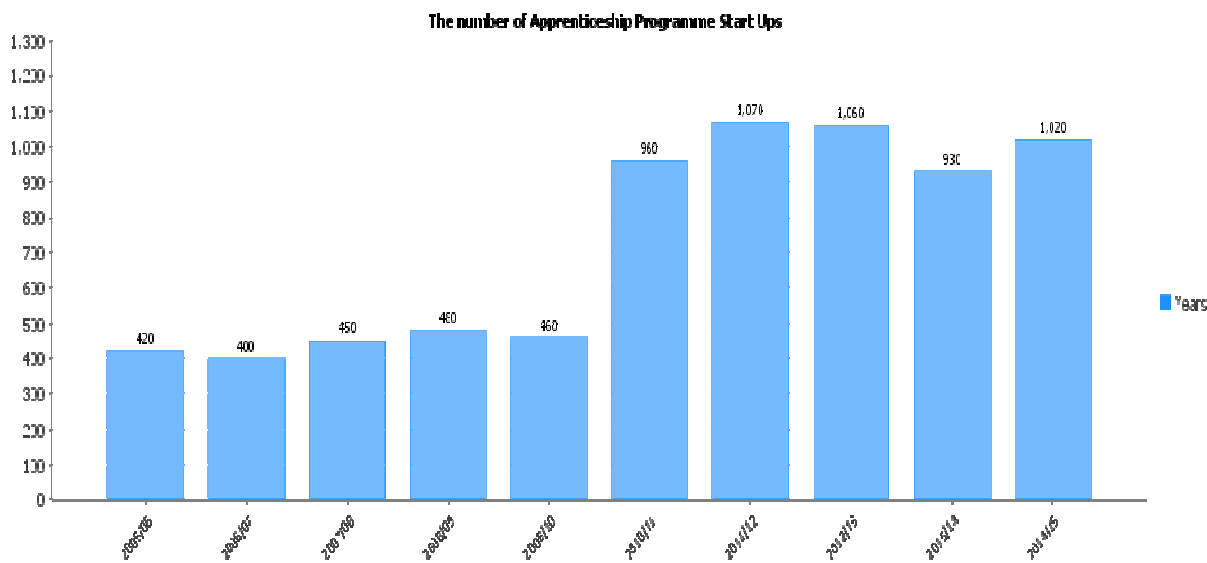
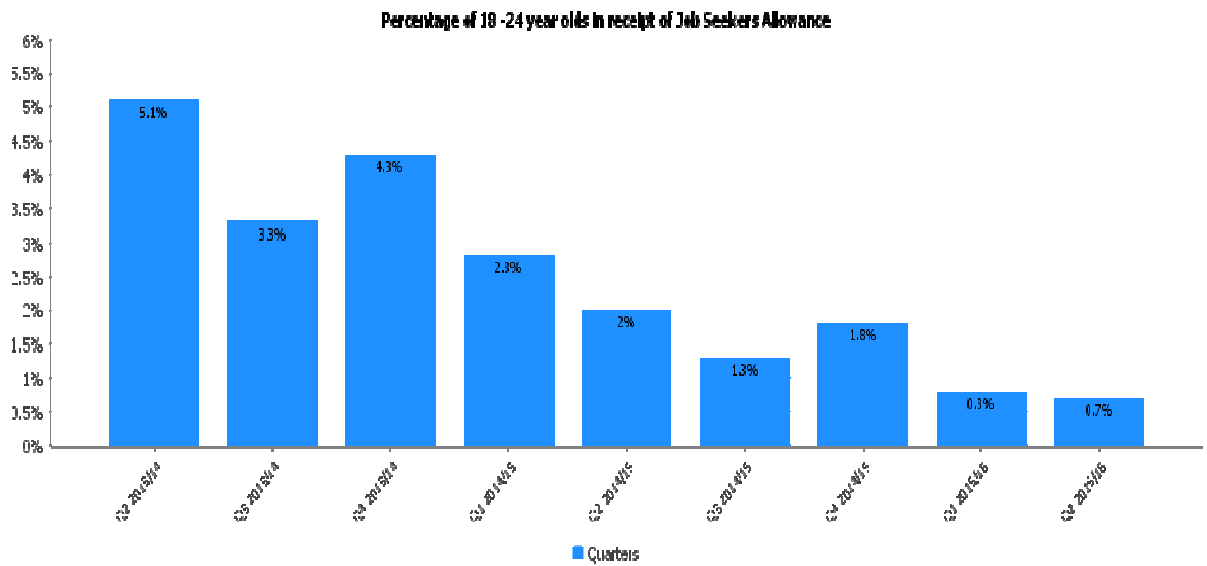
Raising the aspiration and attainment levels of young people was seen as important by 68% of respondents to the 2016/17 budget consultation exercise. Comments made reinforced this:

It was felt that young people needed help to enable them to find jobs *"Provide school leavers with a better chance of getting an apprenticeship or a way to obtain a paid job"*

After a few years of improvement the percentage of children attaining 5 or more A\* - C GCSE's fell in 2014.



However, the situation for young people is improving as the percentage of 18-24 year olds in receipt of job seekers allowance is falling and the number of apprenticeships remains steady over the last five years.



## Creating opportunities for business growth through developing and using skills and talent and promote private sector growth and create quality employment locally

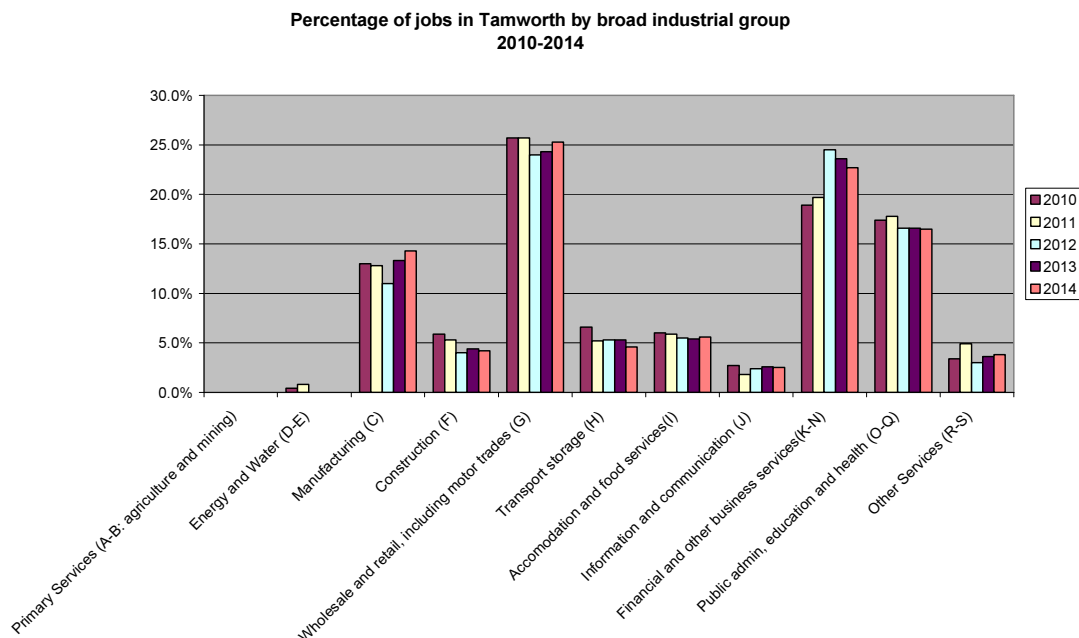
The health of the local economy is vital, as it impacts on different aspects of people's lives. A thriving economy provides a basis for improving the quality of life of the people who live in, work in and visit Tamworth.

The objective 'create opportunities for business growth through developing and using skills and talent' was seen as important by 70% of responders to the 2016/17 budget consultation exercise.

The objective to 'promote private sector growth and create quality employment locally' was seen as important by 75% of responders to the 2016/17 budget consultation exercise, the highest under this priority. With nearly 61% of respondents believing that good job prospects are an important factor in making somewhere a good place to live.

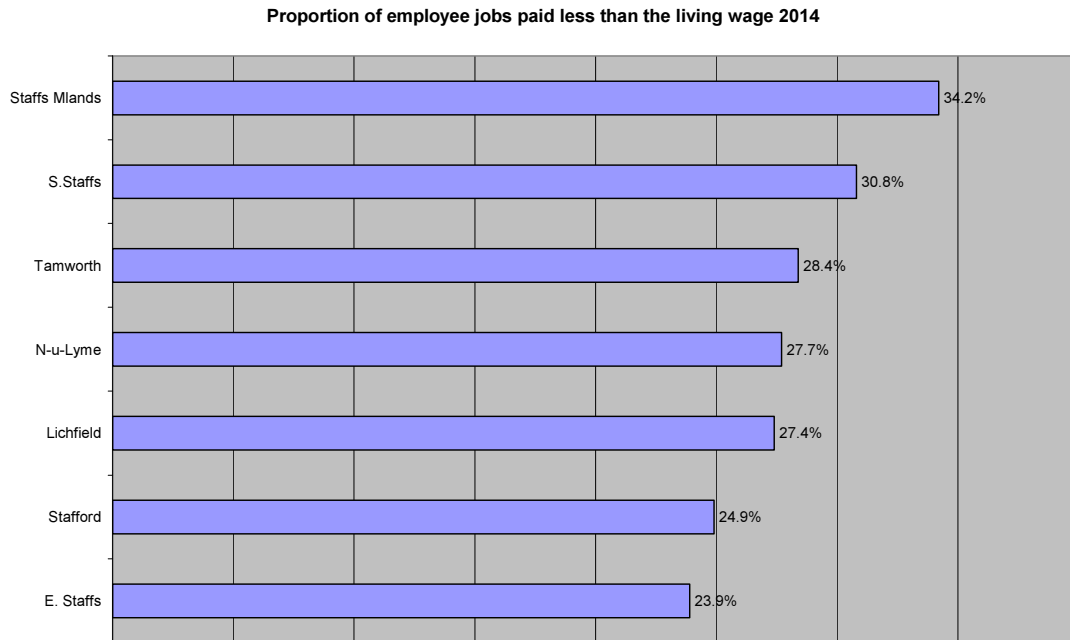
Respondents commented that the Council could find ways to improve the quality of jobs. *"Warehouse jobs have helped create more employment, we now need to grow wealth and drive quality of life."*

There are nearly 29,000 employee jobs in Tamworth with wholesale and retail and financial and other business services accounting for 48% of these. The number of manufacturing jobs has shown an increase over the last two years.

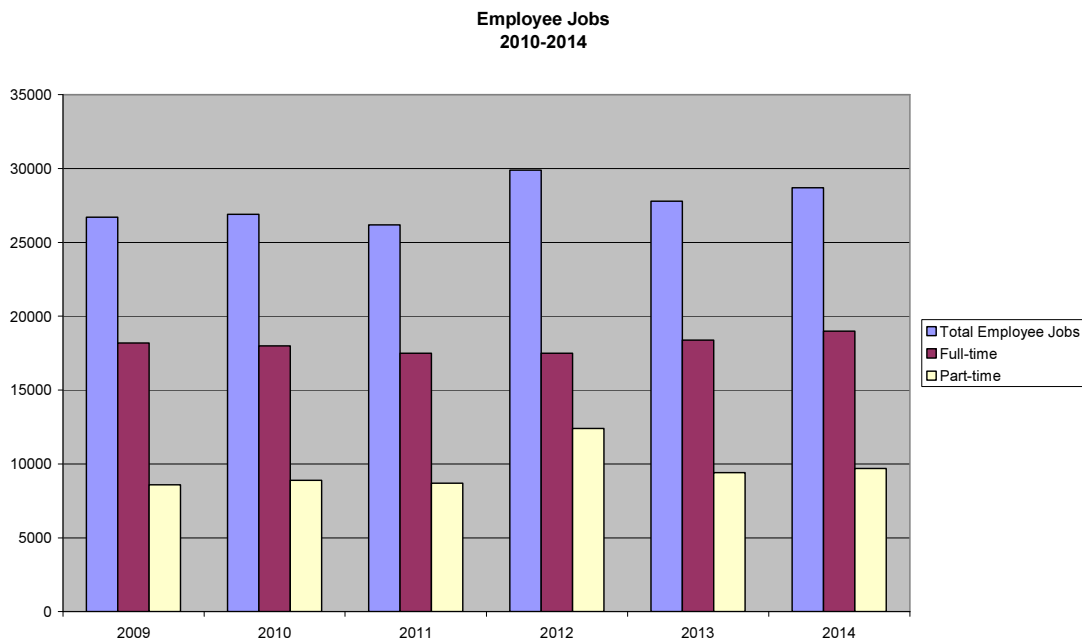


Figures from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE) show that in 2014 an estimated 5.9 million jobs were paid below the Living Wage.

The proportion of jobs paid below the Living Wage in Tamworth is 28.4% compared to 23% for the UK, excluding London. Comparison to the other Staffordshire authorities is shown below.



The number of full time jobs in Tamworth has shown an increase over the last two years and the number of part time jobs has shown a corresponding decrease.

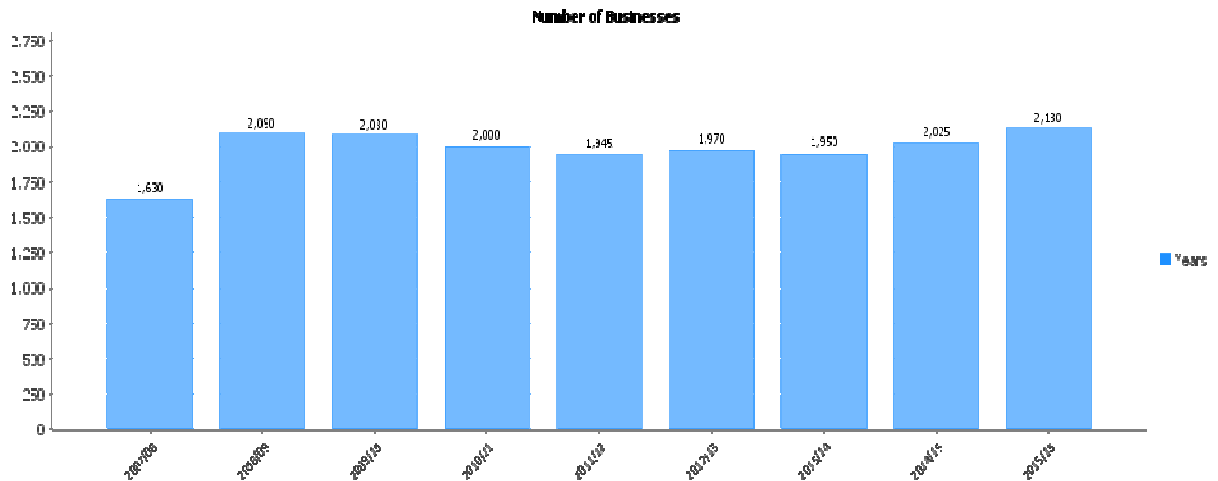


When asked to select five top priorities to assist business and the economy, those respondents to the business budget consultation exercise 2015/16 chose the following two as the top priorities above all others;

- reducing business rates and other charges (67%)
- reducing the number of empty business premises (44%).

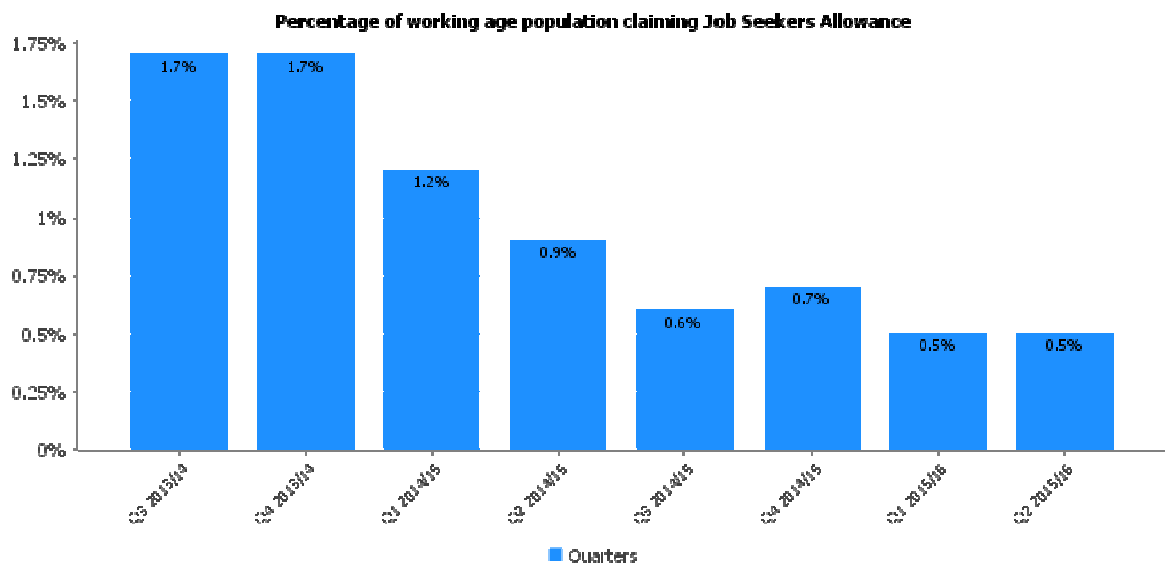
Providing opportunities for business growth and improving broadband connections also featured highly (39% each)

After remaining stable for a few years, the numbers of businesses in Tamworth increased in the last two years.



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

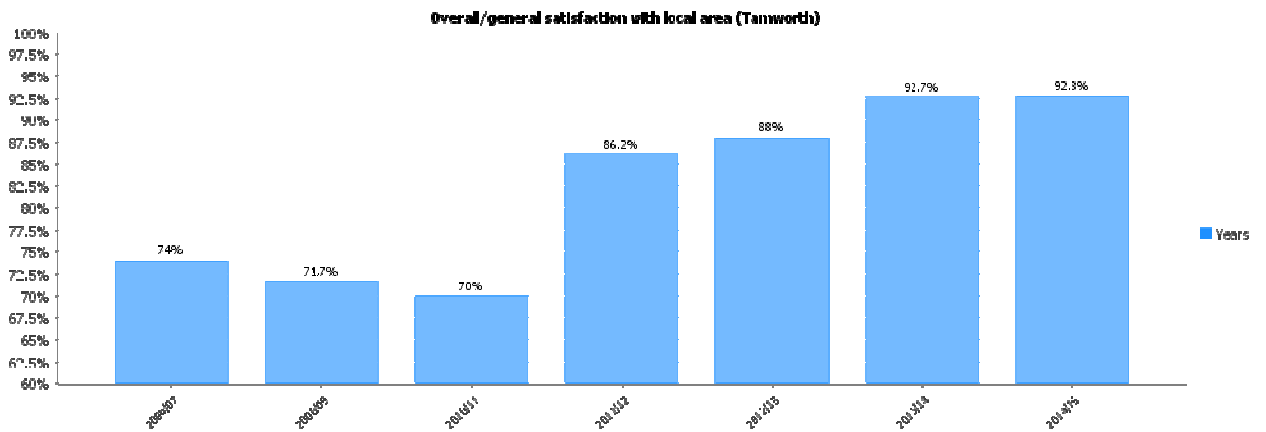
In September 2015 there were 254 people claiming JSA in Tamworth, 0.5% of the working age population. This was one of the lowest of the Staffordshire districts, lower than the county rate of 0.8% and the regional (2.0%) and national (1.6%) rates.



## Branding and marketing “Tamworth” as a great place to “live life to the full”

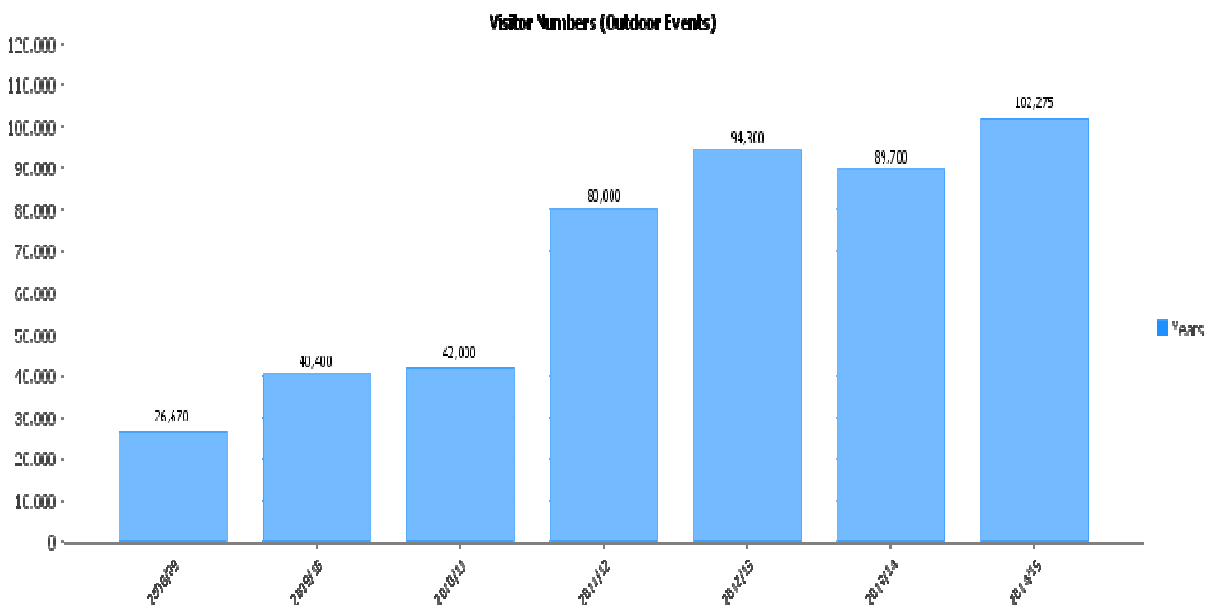
This objective was seen as important by 52% of people in the 2016/17 budget consultation exercise; the lowest under this priority.

People would appear to be increasingly satisfied with Tamworth as an area to live.



Respondents to the 2016/17 budget consultation commented, “Do something to increase tourist spend”.

The varied outdoor events programme attracts large number of visitors to Tamworth which, in turn, generates that spend.





## **Creating the physical and technological infrastructure necessary to support the achievement of this primary outcome**

This objective was seen as important by 63% of people in the 2016/17 budget consultation exercise; one of the lowest under this priority. Here it was recognised that *'broadband access needs to be improved'*; 39% of business respondents.

Investing in the town centre was suggested by Tamworth residents. This theme was exemplified by comments made

*"We need better shops in Tamworth town centre - no more charity, card or cafes please! How about some up-market shops to encourage people*

*"Invest in the town but not in one off events which left no lasting legacy".*

Whilst parking was not considered one of the key criteria of what makes somewhere a good place to live it was clearly of importance to residents of Tamworth. Regarding car parking charges in the town centre, residents generally agreed that these should be *"free"* or at least *"more affordable, this would help!"*

Encouraging people to take pride in their local area was viewed as a key mechanism to encourage future improvements. For example, *"litter, cans, bottles and fast food wrappers litter our streets. More needs to be done with keeping Tamworth clean and litter free, schools should be encouraged to take pride in where they live"*.

Cleanliness and tidiness was also considered to be an issue in parks and open spaces and that encouraging people to *"take pride"* in these locations would also encourage improvements to their appearance.

At the Tamworth Listens Question Time Event in November 2015, a number of questions were asked on the theme of regeneration and growth. These are listed below and the responses are contained at Appendix B.

- *Tamworth should become unique in what it can offer and not be the same as every other town in the country. We also need to push the town into becoming known as a great weekend break destination.*
- *As a company we feel very disappointed that no grants are available to local companies who are trying to grow and put something back into the local community. Is this something which could be addressed?*
- *Regeneration of the town centre will no doubt bring an increase in visitors, yet Tamworth lacks basic public toilet facilities. Ankerside is only open during shopping hours and many of the pubs, cafes and restaurants now display signs indicating facilities are for customers only. At last year's meeting Danny Cook stated that the public were able to use the toilet facilities at the Tourist Information Centre as well*

*as the Assembly Rooms; which is going to close for a significant period of time. Both these have restricted opening times. Visitors will not appear in Tamworth in large numbers if the town is unable to offer basic facilities.*

- *Given the lottery funded improvements / alterations to the Tamworth Assembly Rooms and the Carnegie Centre, what assistance will be offered to the many voluntary groups who use the Carnegie Centre to find suitable and affordable alternative town centre venues with access to public transport and car parking?*
- *Following the creation of the planned piazza area between the Assembly Rooms and the Carnegie Centre, what alternative arrangements will be made to replace the eight Blue Badge parking spaces that currently exist and where will these be?*
- *Are there going to be anymore spaces created for Permit holders at the Riverside Estate? Permit holders are being forced to park elsewhere because of non permit holders using the spaces. Residents are being ticketed for parking over lines because of non permit holders parking inconsiderately.*
- *We would like to know when work will be started on the high rise flats balconies. Whenever we telephone the Council we are told it will be in two weeks.*
- *Does the Council intend to ask the public about joining a "Greater West Midlands?" From what I have read in the Tamworth Herald, it appears that the decision has already been made. What benefit will it be to the people of Tamworth? I thought that Tamworth was in Staffordshire, and Staffordshire County Council kicked the idea into touch.*
- *The pavement on each side of the Wigginton Road entry to the cemetery is collapsing and a couple of disabled people with mobility scooters have had some near misses. I noticed that some markers were painted on the kerbstones, presumably indicating a possible dropping of the kerbs to make it easier for disabled people and others. This was about three months ago and nothing has been done. Please look into it for the sake of disabled people*

## Healthier Communities

To support healthier communities, Tamworth Borough Council and its partners work towards the strategic priority to be healthier and safer in Tamworth.

The primary outcome is to create a safe environment in which local people can reach their full potential and live longer, healthier lives.

This will be achieved through the following objectives:

- Addressing the causes of poor health in children and young people;
- Improving the health and well being of older people by supporting them to live active, independent lives;
- Reducing the harm and wider consequences of alcohol abuse on individuals, families and society;

When asked to select five things that make somewhere a good place to live, good health services was seen as important by nearly 75% of respondents in the 2016/17 budget consultation exercise; the second highest. With 65% of respondents believing the health service needed to improve to make Tamworth a better place to live.

Provision of health services was recognised to be *“a national problem and not just a local one.”* However, despite this recognition, some respondents were unhappy that they had to travel out of the town to access a hospital and accident and emergency services: *“An A & E Department would be a first, we used to have two proper hospitals, we now have a minor injuries unit.”* Others also felt that there was a need for *“more doctor’s surgeries.”* This town is *“growing and we need to grow with it!”*

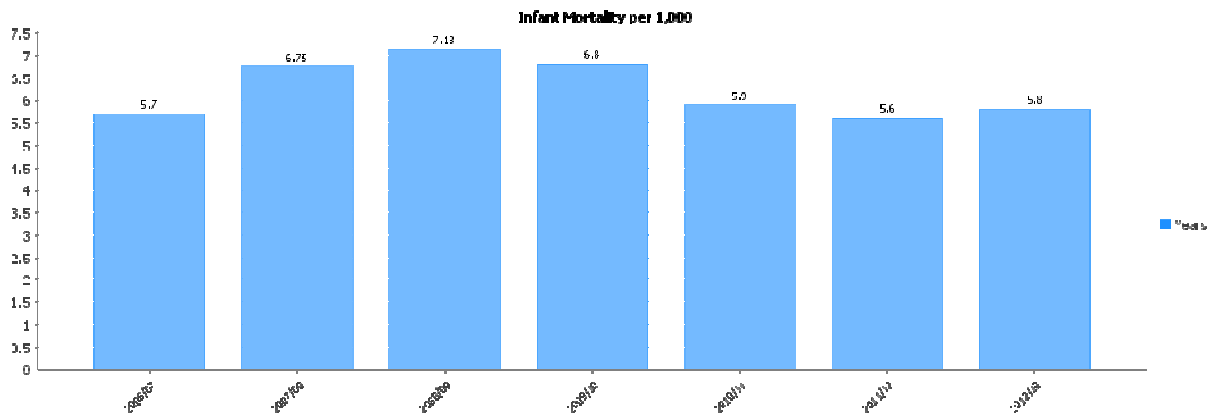
### **Addressing the causes of poor health in children and young people**

Addressing the causes of poor health in children and young people was seen as important by 65% of respondents in the 2016/17 budget consultation exercise. Comments made were:

*“Too many overweight parents and kids, more could be done to tackle obesity”.*

*“Cooking lessons at school, could also provide the opportunity to teach young people, how to make food from scratch”*

The rate of infant mortality has continued to improve over the past three years but is still higher than the England average of 4.0 per 1,000.

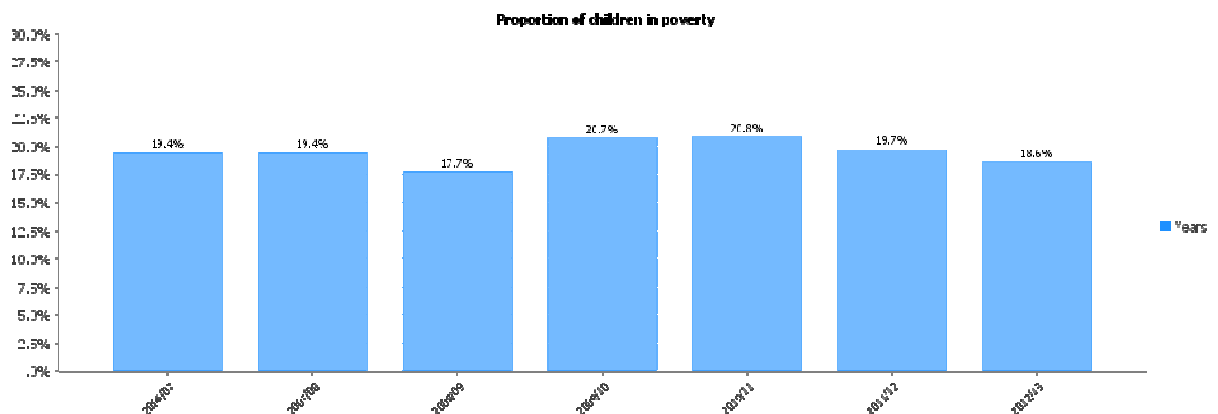


Other indicators under this objective show;

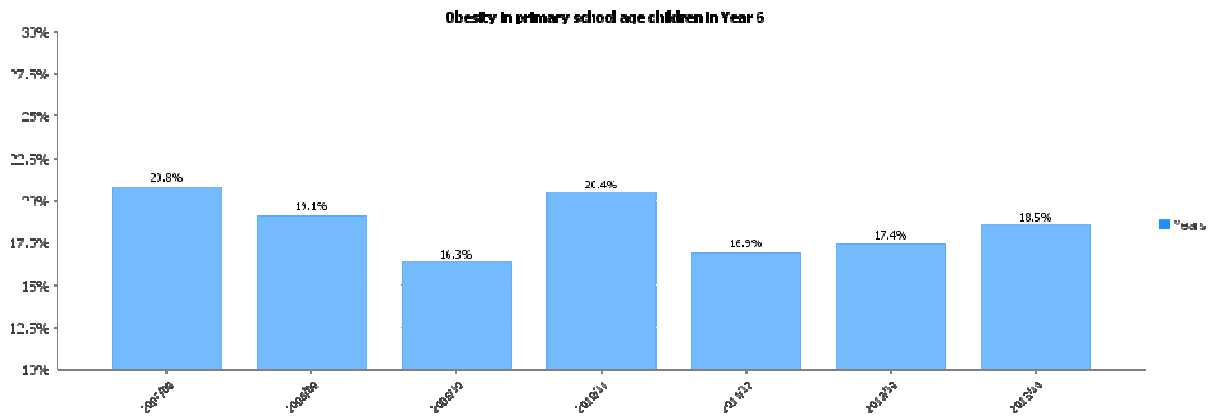
Smoking in pregnancy: 13.1% (101 cases) against the England average of 12.0%,

Teenage pregnancy: 4.4% (64 cases) against the England average of 2.43%,

The number of children in poverty has also continued to improve (18.6%, 2,830 cases) and is lower than the England average of 19.2%



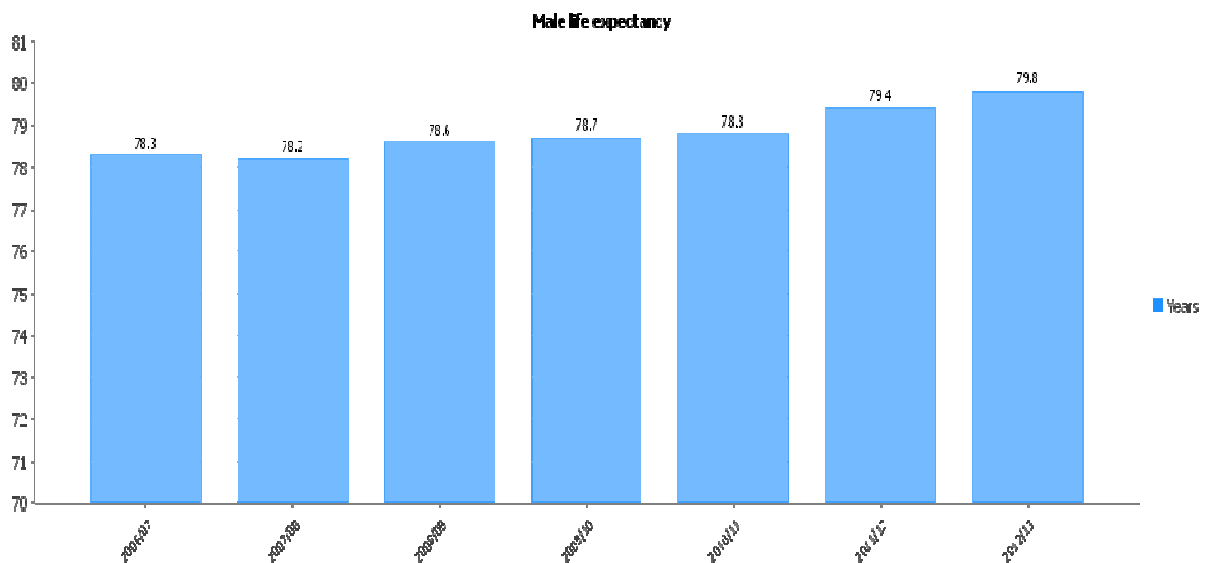
Obesity is a significant health issue as it impacts on a person's quality of life. Whilst there has been a slight increase in the percentage figure of obesity in primary school children in year six, it is still lower than the England average of 19.1% and England worst figure of 27.1%.

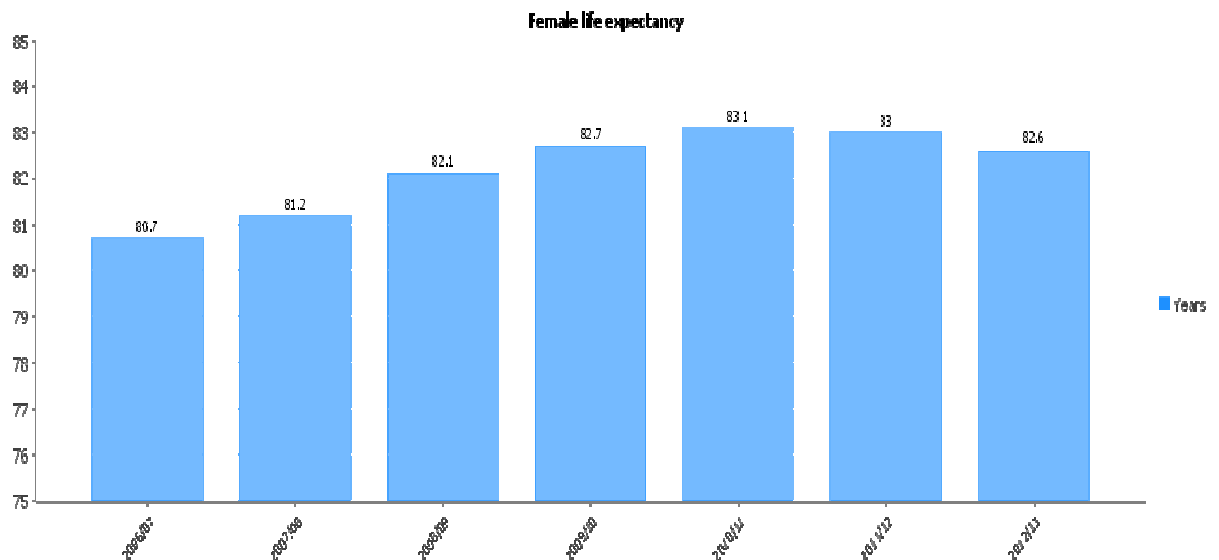


**Improving the health and well being of older people by supporting them to live active, independent lives**

Improving the health and well being of older people by supporting them to live active, independent lives was seen as important by 68% of respondents in the 2016/17 budget consultation exercise.

The overall health of people has improved over the past decade; people are living longer. Life expectancy for a female is 82.6 (compared to 83.1 nationally) and a male is 79.8 (compared to 79.4 nationally).



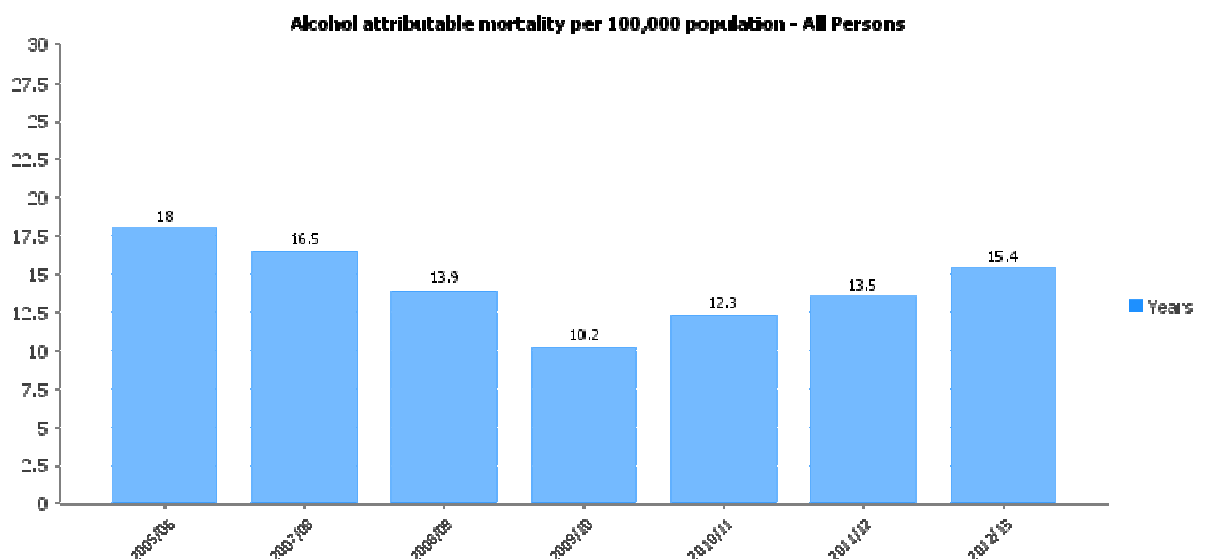


The percentage of older people living alone is an important indicator under this objective. At 10.9 % Tamworth has the best rate in Staffordshire and is better than the England average of 12.4%.

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

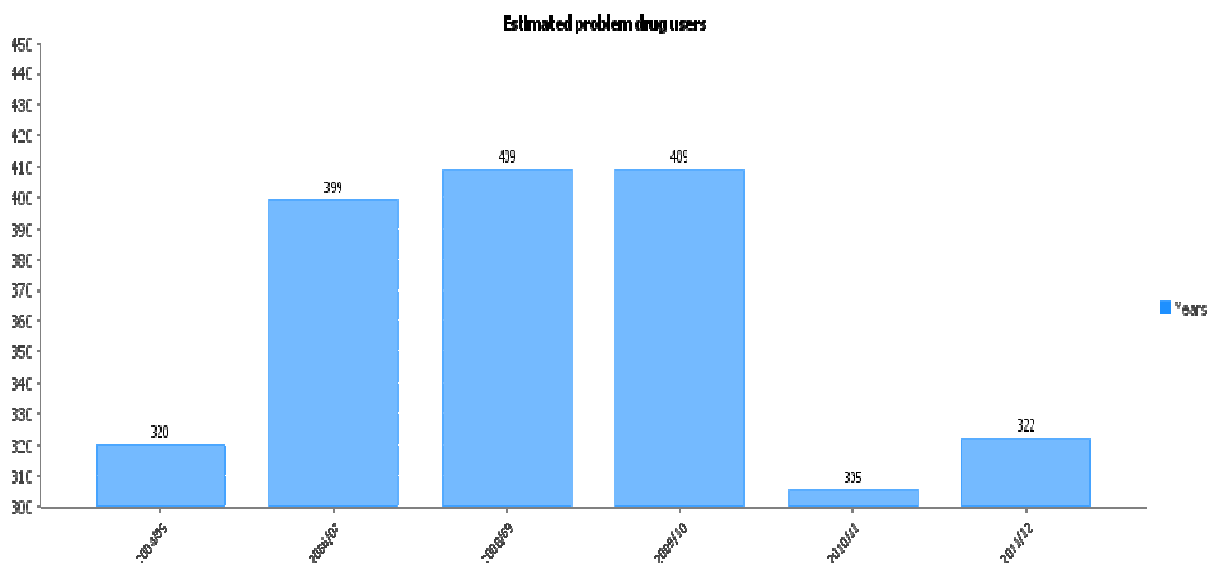
This objective was seen as important by 48% of respondents in the 2016/17 budget consultation exercise; the lowest under this priority.

Alcohol attributable mortality is one indicator used to measure the effects of alcohol. Tamworth’s figure of 15.4 per 100, 000 compares to 14.3 West Midlands and 11.9 England.



Alcohol related admissions to hospital in Tamworth are 596 per 100,000 population which is better than the England average of 645.

The latest available estimated number of problem drug users shows a slight increase but it is lower than earlier years.



At the Tamworth Listens Question Time Event in November 2015, a number of questions were asked on the theme of healthier communities. These are listed below and the responses are contained at Appendix B

- *Mental Health Discrimination is a problem in all areas of life. What action does the Council plan to take in order to address Mental Health Discrimination within its own working environments and across the Borough as a whole?*
- *Can we be assured that the facilities that currently exist at the Sir Robert Peel Hospital will not be reduced?*
- *Our organisation offers and delivers a funded counselling service within the Tamworth area and has done so since being set up in November 2006, we receive referrals from many organisations and agencies in the area. Funding is a big issue for us, as for a large number of organisations. We have been made aware in the past that GP practices have a budget for providing counselling. We are getting an ever increasing number of referrals from GP practices which are happy to refer to us but never offer any funding. We believe that the Tamworth Wellbeing Centre receives funding for providing emotional support to those referred to them. Could you explain how this how the allocation of funding is decided?*
- *What effect is the decision to close the Minor Injuries Unit at the S.R.P.H. going to have on the Ambulance service? Someone suffering from a stroke or heart attack will have to be taken by ambulance to Good Hope, or even further to Burton. This is going to put a heck of a strain on an already stretched service and please don't say get in the*

*car and drive there. Tamworth has a population approaching 100,000 and Burton around 84,000 - surely a Hospital should be in a larger populated place. Throw your axe away and give us the Hospital we were promised 25 years ago.*

- *If a war pension Exemption Certificate only covers the prescription costs relating to an accepted disability then why does a Medical Exemption Certificate issued to a patient having a thyroid problem (as an example being their singular medical condition) be entitled to ALL of their NHS prescriptions free of charge regardless of age or financial status?*
- *In the booklet entitled: 'A proposal for Minor Injuries Units in Lichfield and Tamworth', the case is set out for reducing the operating hours of the Minor Injuries Units at the Sir Robert Peel Community and Samuel Johnson Hospitals from 24 hours 7 days a week, to 8am to 9pm 7 days a week to go towards reducing a £16m deficit of the CCG. Could I ask if any other efficiency savings have been put in place by the CCG, if so, what are they, and what are the estimated savings?*



## Safer Communities

To support safer communities, Tamworth Borough Council and its partners work towards the strategic priority to be healthier and safer in Tamworth.

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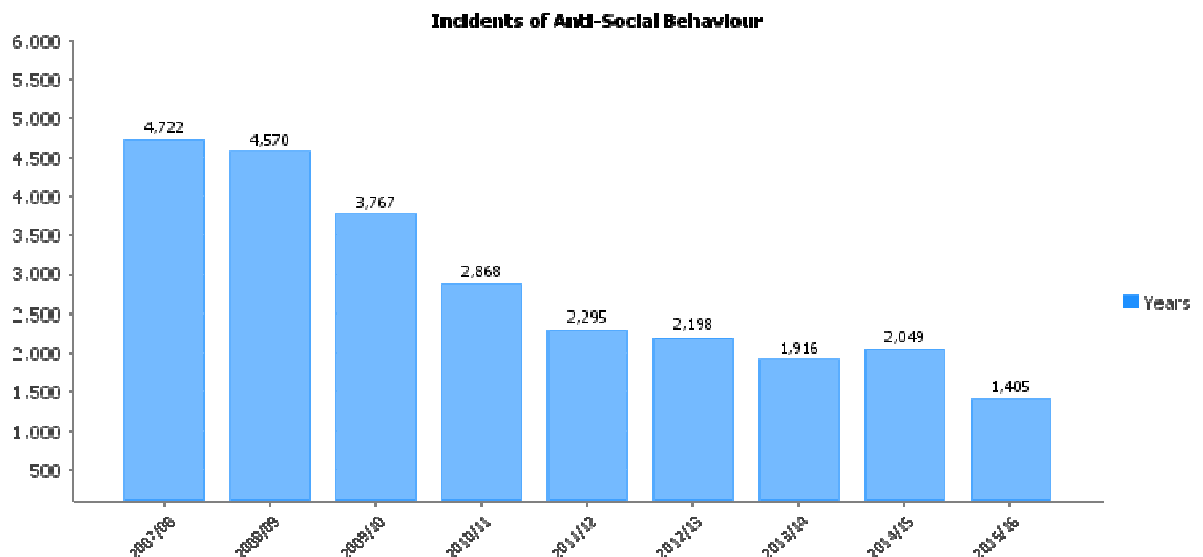
This will be achieved through the following objectives:

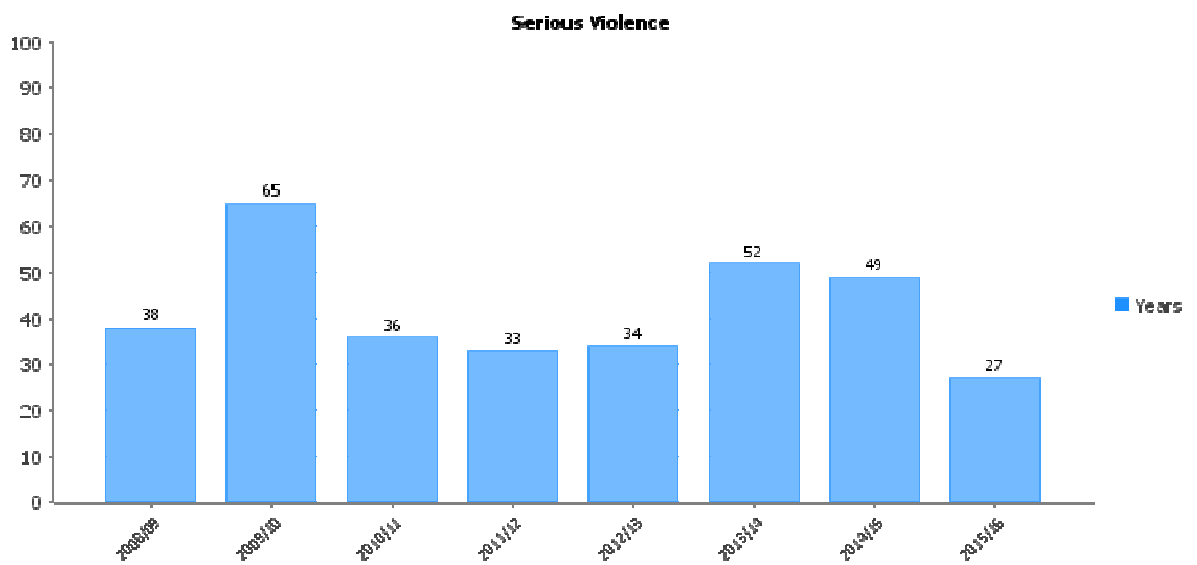
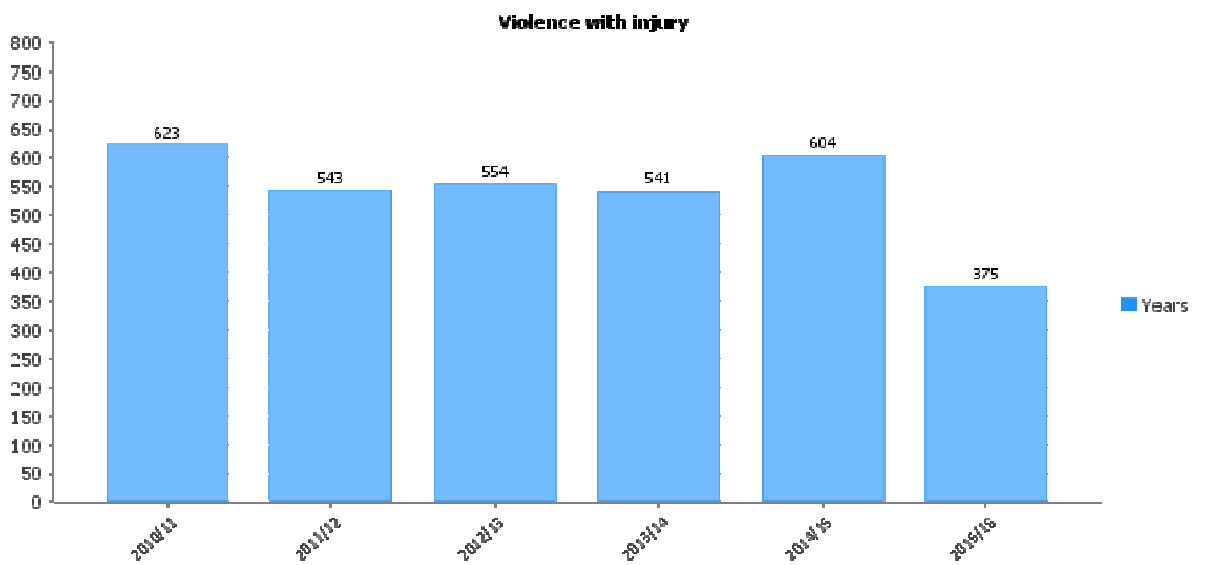
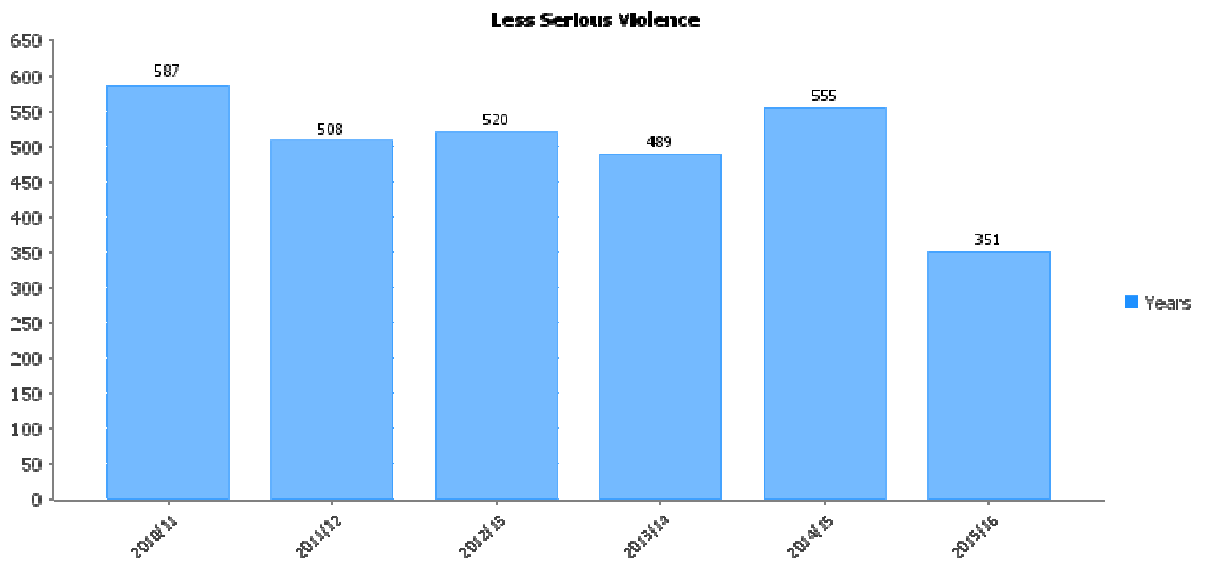
- Implement 'Total Place' solutions to tackling crime and ASB in designated localities;
- Develop innovative early interventions to tackle youth crime and ASB; and
- Create an integrated approach to protecting those most vulnerable in our local Communities

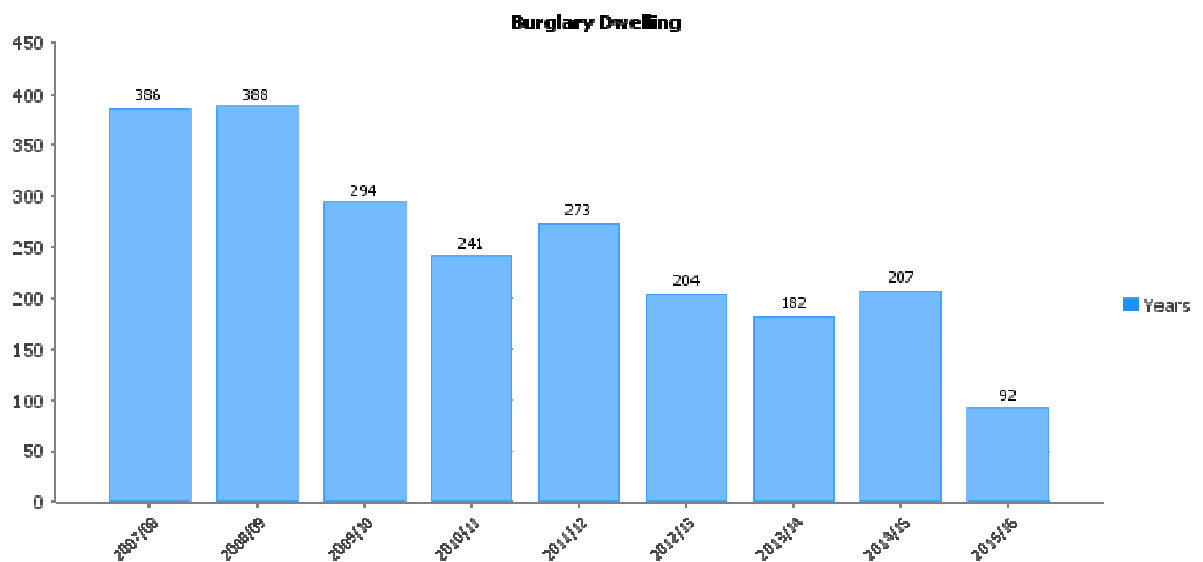
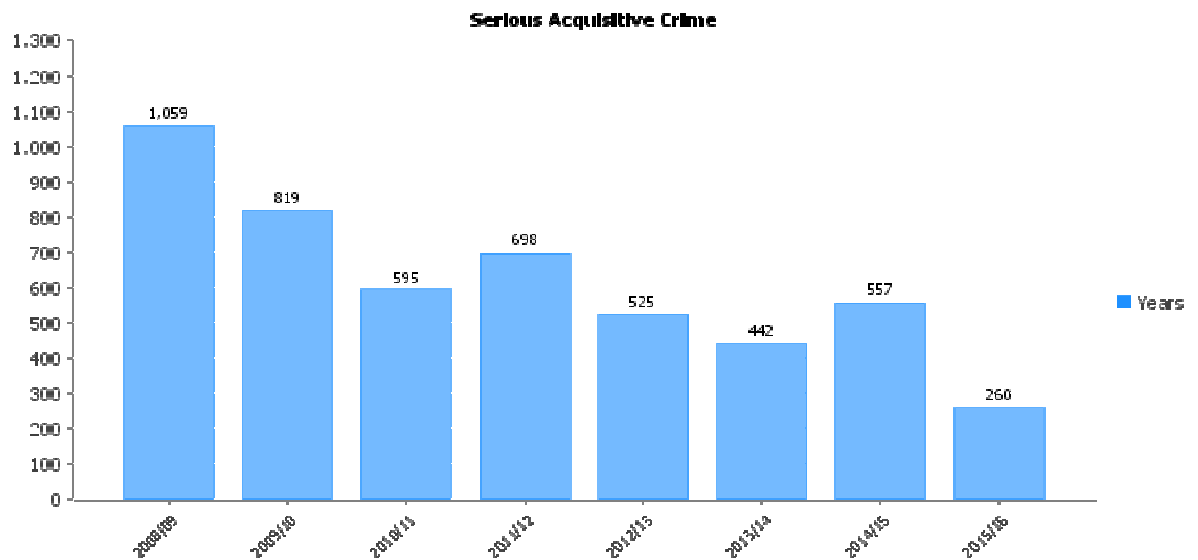
### **Implementing 'Total Place' solutions to tackling crime and Anti-Social Behaviour in designated localities and developing innovative early interventions to tackle youth crime and Anti-Social Behaviour;**

When asked to select five things that make somewhere a good place to live, low levels of crime was seen as important by 82% of respondents in the 2016/17 budget consultation exercise, 46% of respondents felt that more money should be spent on tackling anti-social behaviour and 77% of people rated tackling anti-social behaviour as an important priority

Crime statistics in Tamworth had fallen over the years up to 2013/14 which the performance indicators show. However, figures in 2014/15 and the first six months of 2015/16 are beginning to show an increase.







Tackling the fear of crime still remains an issue. The latest Feeling the Difference survey in March 2015 revealed that 18% of respondents were fearful of being a victim of crime; the highest in Staffordshire was 21% and the lowest 6%. This survey also revealed that 99% felt safe outside during the day, falling to 78% feeling safe outside after dark. 8% of respondents had actually been a victim of crime in the preceding twelve months; this figure is in keeping with the other districts in Staffordshire.

## **Creating an integrated approach to protecting those most vulnerable in our local Communities**

This objective was regarded as important by 75% of people in the 2016/17 budget consultation exercise.

When considering issues of safety and wellbeing, it is important to give consideration to the extra support and care that vulnerable people and communities may need.

The number of Looked After Children is 4.1 per 1,000; this is lower than the Staffordshire rate of 5.6 and national rate of 6.0.

The number of children made subject to a Child Protection Plan is 7.1 per 1,000; this compares to 3.9 for Staffordshire and a national rate of 6.0.

The number of Children in Need is 85.9 per 1,000, the highest in Staffordshire. This compares to the Staffordshire and national figure of 68.5

At the Tamworth Listens Question Time Event in November 2014, the following questions were asked on the theme of safer communities. These are listed below and the responses are contained at Appendix B.

- *At the meeting last year, I asked Matthew Ellis a question in regard to police officers being on patrol on foot, both in the town centre and on the housing estates. He assured me that by April 2015 Tamworth would see far more officers on foot patrol in all areas. My observations indicate that this has not happened. Would he care to comment?*
- *It is rumoured that Tamworth Police Station is to close? Whenever there is a problem, ringing 101 is useless. By the time the police arrive, if they do come at all, the criminals are long gone. All the policing seems to be done from Burton. We have already lost a courthouse to Burton and it would appear that the police station is going there too. Our Neighbourhood Watch Official Don Palmer has left, who has replaced him? No one has emailed me to let us know. Please find out for us. Can you confirm or deny that Tamworth Police Station is to close?*
- *Council tenants should have a six-monthly inspection to make sure they are looking after the property as most landlords do. This would also stop issues such as tenants claiming to be living alone when they have a partner or friend living there, sub-letting, anti-social behaviour or rent arrears. Is this something you would consider doing?*
- *We have recently seen some interesting responses to the fact that refugees will be housed in Tamworth, which I personally have no problem with, however, it's quite obvious there are people within the town who are unhappy with this. This we saw when the pro and anti groups held their 'protests' in the Castle Grounds.*

*What are your plans for integration and how are these families to be welcomed to the town? How will they be protected from the faction of people within the town who are unhappy with them arriving?*

*In light of recent events, I think it is extremely important that this is something that is planned to avoid them being vilified for their beliefs. I believe that the council should take some responsibility for this to avoid a town full of people who hate each other, which is where we're heading if we can't learn some acceptance, which will only come with integration*