



Budget Consultation – 2012/2013

September 2011

1. Introduction

As part of our annual process, we wished to review the Council Tax and Charges strategy for the development of the Council's 2012/2013 budget and ensure that funding is put into areas of highest priority. An important element of this process is to understand the views of residents, tenants, businesses, and local voluntary groups.

We conducted focus groups with residents and tenants. In addition, a questionnaire was available online for residents, businesses and the voluntary and community sector.

2. Methodology

A total of four focus groups were convened on September 2nd, September 5th and September 8th. Focus groups with residents and tenants were held at Marmion House. In total, 41 people attended the focus groups. Furthermore, 152 responses were received for the resident's survey.

Twenty responses were received for the business survey and three responses for the voluntary and community sector survey.

3. Respondent Profiles

Residents were recruited to the focus groups using lists of those who participate in the Citizens Panel. Tenants were recruited from contact the Council has with Tenants' Groups.

Those who attended were all very keen to take part and forthright in their views. Many had some involvement in local neighbourhood groups and with the council and had previously been involved in consultation exercises. Discussing the different areas in turn during the focus group gave clarification to the different services the council is responsible for and potentially enabled focus group attendees give a more informed response than those responding to the online survey. It also allowed attendees to consider how these services affect different groups within the Borough. The online surveys were promoted through various council-run social media sites and emailed to the citizens panel, the Think Local database and the Tamworth Council for Voluntary Service database.

The business survey was distributed to the 'think local' database and hand delivered to town centre businesses. It was predominantly returned by independent businesses located in the town centre.

The voluntary and community sector survey was distributed by Tamworth Council for Voluntary Service.

4. Main findings

From the focus groups and online questionnaires we have learned:

Priorities for spending

- There are two areas which are believed to warrant additional expenditure: tackling anti-social behaviour and street cleaning.
- Respondents feel the council should be doing more to educate and change attitudes towards littering.
- Respondents would like to see more events that bring communities together to tackle their own issues e.g. community litter pick days.
- Respondents feel that spending more on areas such as sport and leisure and regeneration will tackle issues of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Refuse collection and recycling is seen by residents as an area where Tamworth Borough Council performs well.
- The development of the town centre is a priority for residents and businesses. There is much support for linking Ventura Park and the town centre.
- Respondents did not believe that the cleanliness and upkeep of Tamworth was good and felt that resources were concentrated on the Castle Grounds. They expressed the need for expenditure to be more evenly distributed across the Borough so that local neighbourhoods are more attractive places to live.
- Respondents would like to see more support for businesses and job creation.

Charges

- Respondents felt that charges for leisure and public spaces could be increased.
- Respondents would not like to see any increase in parking charges or town centre rents and would actually like to see reductions in these charges. Respondents felt that car parking charges needed to be reduced to encourage the use of the town centre.

Saving costs

- Many respondents feel the Council should look at internal cost savings rather than cutting services or increasing charges.

Council Tax

- When asked which level of increase for Council Taxes respondents would like, the majority opt for 0.67% or 1%.
- Only 21.3% of respondents chose the proposed increase of 2%.

5. Surveys and focus groups

Priorities for spending

Respondents were asked whether we should spend more, the same, or less on services from our major cost areas.

For the majority of cost areas, respondents expressed the view that spending should remain the same. Residents do recognise the budget pressures that the council faces and understand that the council has to be more resourceful when delivering services.

There are two cost areas where respondents would not want to see any reduction in spending; street cleaning and tackling anti-social behaviour. Many attendees of the focus groups showed dissatisfaction with these two areas and felt that the council could improve performance with these services.

Sports and leisure

Sports and leisure			
	Spend more	Spend the same	Spend less
Residents	13.9%	76.4%	9.7%
Business	33.3%	55.6%	0%
Voluntary sector	0%	33.3%	33.3%

Use of sport and leisure facilities

Many who attended the focus groups were unsure what sports and leisure opportunities the council offered to residents and did not tend to use them. They expressed the view that the council needed to promote the sport and leisure opportunities better.

There was praise for the work that has been done at the Castle with the Staffordshire Hoard and many would like to see a permanent exhibition.

Changes to expenditure

More than three quarters of resident survey respondents felt that spending levels should remain the same; an increase of 14.8% on the previous year. Around a third of business survey respondents felt we should be spending more in this area.

Many have expressed the view that Tamworth's leisure offer could be improved by utilising the rivers, providing boat trips.

Those who used the Assembly Rooms thought that it needed to be updated.

Respondents commented that the greater provision of sports and leisure facilities for young people could help to address the priority of *tackling youth crime and anti-social behaviour* if it is targeted in the right activities and initiatives.

"Give teens more leisure facilities, youth clubs etc, they'll get in trouble less"

Respondents felt that the council should do all it could to encourage take up of sports and leisure opportunities; whether this be better promotion of what is available or by reducing charges to make it more accessible.

It was mentioned that visitors to the Castle have often found it closed. There was the feeling that as the Castle is one of Tamworth's major assets, it should be open all year round.

Outdoor events received a warm reception and respondents were happy with the range of events on offer. They felt this was an important area as events help to create a sense of community and pride.

"The Ultra Sound festival puts Tamworth on the map. Kids must see that and feel pride that it's taking place in their hometown"

Refuse collection and recycling

Refuse collection and recycling			
	Spend more	Spend the same	Spend less
Residents	27%	71.6%	1.4%
Business	47.4%	31.6%	0%
Voluntary sector	0%	66.7%	0%

Views of service

Residents and tenants who attended the focus groups were extremely happy with the waste collection and recycling service and felt that it was something Tamworth could be proud of.

They felt it had improved since the introduction of the joint service with Lichfield.

Changes to Expenditure

It was mentioned that, now the service has been improved, Tamworth Borough Council should be looking at how we encourage residents to reduce the amount of waste they produce.

There were concerns over charges for bulky item collection and it was felt that these charges had caused an increase in fly-tipping. It was also felt that, with other charges increasing, residents were being 'hit in the pocket' again.

27% of resident survey respondents felt that more should be spent on refuse collection and recycling; a decrease of 8.2% on the previous year. Nearly half of business survey respondents expressed the view that more should be spent in this area. The voluntary and community sector respondents indicated that spending should remain the same.

Parks and open spaces

Parks and open spaces			
	Spend more	Spend the same	Spend less
Residents	26.2%	68.3%	5.5%
Business	31.6%	52.6%	0%
Voluntary sector	33.3%	33.3%	0%

Use of parks and open spaces

Many respondents use the parks and open spaces in Tamworth and expressed the view that the Castle Grounds was very good but that outside of this area, standards are more variable and it is these areas that require greater focus.

Changes to expenditure

More than a quarter of respondents indicated that more needed to be spent on parks and open spaces. It was felt that open spaces needed to be better maintained and equipment in the local parks could be of a better standard.

Around a third of business and voluntary sector respondents felt more should be spent in this area.

The majority view was that spending should remain the same.

Street Cleaning

Street cleaning			
	Spend more	Spend the same	Spend less
Residents	55.5%	44.5%	0%
Business	30%	50%	5%
Voluntary sector	0%	66.7%	0%

Views of service

Many who attended the focus groups felt that the cleanliness of Tamworth could be improved and some perceived Tamworth as a whole to be very unclean.

"Disgraceful litter – why plant flowers when the streets aren't clean"

"Litter in and around Tamworth is exceptionally bad. In order to improve our chances of drawing more people to Tamworth both socially and for business we need to clean up"

Many expressed the view that street cleaning is an area where the council do not perform well and, again, an area where resources are focused in the town centre. However, there is also praise for the service with a few respondents stating that they did not see litter and street cleaning as an issue in Tamworth.

"My impression is that our streets seem to have improved over the last 12-18 months. There seems to be less litter about. I don't suppose we have suddenly become tidy so, well done!"

Changes to expenditure

Although respondents accept that residents themselves have a responsibility to not drop litter, there is a belief that the Council should do more to improve the appearance of the local environment, particularly in local neighbourhoods. It is felt that more could be done to change people's attitudes to not dropping litter. Respondents would also like to see more organised community litter pick days.

"Spend more on prevention = by encouraging more of us keep our town tidy by not dropping litter"

*“More path cleaning and areas around shops. Stricter rules on litter.
Better education on litter”*

More than half of the residents responding to the survey would like to see more spent on street cleaning.

The majority of the business and voluntary sector survey respondents expressed the view that spending should remain the same.

5.6 Tackling anti-social behaviour

Tackling anti-social behaviour			
	Spend more	Spend the same	Spend less
Residents	80.4%	19.6%	0%
Business	75%	15%	0%
Voluntary sector	33.3%	33.3%	0%

Views of service

All respondent groups felt that tackling anti-social behaviour is a key area for both the Council and the Police. However, respondents, for the most part, had not had direct experience of anti-social behaviour while in their home and concerns are mainly due to large numbers of young people hanging around the town centre and the nature of the night time economy in Tamworth.

Older residents expressed the view that they are afraid to visit the town centre at night. This may indicate that the fear of anti-social behaviour and crime which needs to be tackled.

Changes to expenditure

Respondents from the focus group felt the Council should provide more facilities and activities, particularly sports and leisure facilities for young people to engage them positively – especially in the evening. They expressed the view that by doing this the Council would deal with other priorities, such as tackling anti-social behaviour.

“we feel slightly more should be spent on regeneration and parks and open spaces. This would affect the required spend on anti-social behaviour”

80.4% of residents responding to the survey expressed the view that more should be spent on tackling anti-social behaviour and wanted to see an increase in street wardens and CCTV.

Three quarters of business survey respondents indicated that more should be spent in this area.

Regeneration

Regeneration			
	Spend more	Spend the same	Spend less
Residents	44.3%	53.6%	2.1%
Business	63.2%	26.3%	5.3%
Voluntary sector	66.7%	0%	0%

Experience of the Benefits of Regeneration Projects

Respondents' main concern is about the regeneration of the town centre and they feel that this will have a positive impact for residents and visitors. There are still concerns over delays to the plans to build a new shopping centre at Gungate. Respondents expressed the view that the town centre is in decline and only offers low end shopping. There is a feeling that the Council needs to encourage the development of the town centre to balance the attractions of Ventura Park.

Changes to expenditure

Respondents supported a number of regeneration projects in Tamworth.

1. The development of the town centre shopping centre
2. The encouragement of other retail businesses to the town centre to provide more balance to the range of stores on offer
3. Provide a shuttle bus between Ventura Park and the town centre

44.3% of respondents to the residents survey indicated that more should be spent on regeneration projects in Tamworth; an increase of 24.6% on the previous year.

Some respondents expressed the view that by spending more on regeneration projects, less would need to be spent in other areas, such as tackling anti-social behaviour.

This area was also important to business respondents, with 63.2% indicating that more should be spent in this area.

Support for voluntary organisations and charities

Support for voluntary organisations			
	Spend more	Spend the same	Spend less
Residents - Grants	15.6%	66%	18.4
Residents - Commissioning	17.4%	66%	16.7%
Voluntary – Grants	100%	0%	0%
Voluntary – Commissioning	100%	0%	0%

Involvement in Activities

Many attendees of the focus groups had not used the services offered by the voluntary sector. Those who were involved with the voluntary sector felt the services were beneficial to the residents of Tamworth.

From the voluntary and community sector respondents, all had seen their 2011/2012 income affected by public sector cuts and were anticipating the cuts would also affect their income for 2012/2012.

“The funding environment is becoming increasingly challenging for the VCS. Charitable trusts generally have smaller amounts of funding available to distribute due to low interest rates/return on investment □ National Lottery– lottery ticket sales are down, £millions have been diverted to support London 2012, funding programmes have closed and not been replaced. The formation of the JCU and restructuring at the County Council has meant that many existing contracts have been rolled on in the short term, some on more than one occasion, while waiting for new contracts to be formally tendered. While this situation has provided for short term continuity of delivery under existing contracts, it creates difficulties in service and financial planning for the organisations affected, along with uncertainty and a lack of security”

Views of Expenditure

Although residents feel that local charities and voluntary groups have a valuable role to play in the Borough, there is an overall sense that the Council spends sufficient money in this area and that these groups should rely on their own fundraising activities.

“Charities are capable of financing themselves and it should be left to volunteers to raise funds not Councils”

Some residents expressed the view that the council should work closely with the voluntary sector to see where services can be commissioned as the voluntary sector tend to offer better value for money than the private sector.

More than half of respondents felt that spending should remain the same in this area.

100% of voluntary sector respondents expressed the view that more should be spent in this area. All had seen an increase in demand for their services and were delivering the same amount of services but with reduced budgets.

“Significant increase in footfall in the Volunteer Centre, which is stretched beyond capacity”

“More demands for our services, higher administration costs with less income and significantly higher workloads”

Housing advice, grants and homelessness

Housing advice, grants and homelessness			
	Spend more	Spend the same	Spend less
Residents	19.7%	56.3%	23.9%
Businesses	10.5%	42.1%	26.3%
Voluntary sector	0%	66.7%	0%

Use of Service

Many respondents have not had any experience of the services provided by the Council in this area.

Changes to expenditure

Although hardly any of the focus group attendees had directly experienced these services, they felt that they were beneficial to Tamworth residents.

Attendees wanted to see more affordable housing to benefit the residents of Tamworth.

"A whole generation is locked out of the housing market and with growing unemployment the young generation need more council housing"

More than half of resident survey respondents felt that spending should remain the same in this area. Around a quarter of business and resident survey respondents indicated that spending should be reduced. Voluntary and community sector respondents expressed the view that spending should remain the same.

Improved access to information and customer services.

Customer services			
	Spend more	Spend the same	Spend less
Residents	20%	65.5%	14.5%
Businesses	21.1%	47.4%	10.5%
Voluntary sector	0%	66.7%	0%

Use of Services

Many respondents make use of customer services and information provided by the Council. Residents were happy with the customer service that they received but felt that access to information could be improved with better promotion of services and events.

Changes to Expenditure

Respondents expressed the view that the website could be improved and be simpler to use. They felt that council information should be better promoted.

The majority of respondents indicated that spending should remain the same in this area.

6. Making savings and reducing costs

Respondents were asked to select three service areas that they felt the council could look at to make savings and reducing costs.

	Residents survey	Business survey	Voluntary sector survey
Sport and leisure	29.1%	11.1%	33.3%
Events	45.7%	44.4%	66.7%
Refuse collection and recycling	2.6%	0%	33.3%
Parks and open spaces	11.9%	11.1%	33.3%
Street cleaning	3.3%	0%	0%
Tackling anti-social behaviour	2.6%	5.6%	0%
Regeneration	14.6%	38.9%	33.3%
Voluntary sector support	40.4%	44.4%	0%
Housing advice, grants and homelessness	30.5%	61.1%	0%
Improved access to information/customer services	49%	61.1%	66.7%

Resident survey respondents expressed the view that, if the council did have to make savings and reduce costs, the areas to look at are:

1. Voluntary sector commissioning
2. Improved access to information/customer services
3. Events

Business survey respondents expressed the view that, if the council did have to make savings and reduce costs, the areas to look at are:

1. Housing advice, grants and homelessness/Improved access to information/customer services
2. Events/Voluntary sector support

Voluntary sector survey respondents expressed the view that, if the council did have to make savings and reduce costs, the areas to look at are:

1. Events/Improved access to information/customer services

7. Charges

Respondents were asked to select two of the income areas where they think charges should be increased and to select two of the income areas where they think charges should be reduced.

Residents survey: charges for income areas		
	Increase Charges	Reduce Charge
Car parking	25.8%	62.2%
Public charges for leisure and other activities	65.3%	25.9%
Waste Management	31.5%	27.3%
Public spaces	47.6%	9.1%
Town Centre	25%	72%

Business survey: charges for income areas		
	Increase Charges	Reduce Charge
Car parking	20%	84.2%
Public charges for leisure and other activities	66.7%	21.1%
Waste Management	20%	21.1%
Public spaces	80%	5.3%
Town Centre	6.7%	63.2%

Voluntary sector survey: charges for income areas		
	Increase Charges	Reduce Charge
Car parking	0%	33.3%
Public charges for leisure and other activities	0%	33.3%
Waste Management	33.3%	0%
Public spaces	66.7%	0%
Town Centre	33.3%	0%
No opinion	33.3%	66.7%

Many respondents felt that no increase in charges should be made given the current economic climate.

“Most people have lost more than their expendable income for the economic time. This should be remembered on every decision”

The majority from those that did answer this question expressed the view that, if the council did increase charges, the areas to look at are:

1. Public charges for leisure and other activities
2. Public spaces

Respondents would least want to see an increase in charges for car parking and town centre charges; these were the two areas where respondents would want to see a reduction in charges. Many felt that car parking charges were too expensive and, as a result, they were choosing to shop at Ventura Park where car parking is free. It was thought that a reduction in town centre rents would encourage more businesses into the town centre, helping to regenerate it.

8. Council Tax Levels

Respondents were shown a series of scenarios describing options for increase in Council Tax, as shown below:

Band B		Band D			Increase in Council Tax Income per Year	4 Year Cumulative Income
Increase	Charge	Increase		Charge		
£	£	£	%	£	£'000	£'000
0.77	117.09	1.00	0.67	150.55	23	92
1.17	117.48	1.50	1.00	151.05	35	138
2.91	119.23	3.74	2.50	153.29	86	344
4.65	120.97	5.98	4.00	155.53	138	550

They were also given the option of selecting a 2% increase as outlined in the four-year budget proposal.

Respondents were asked to consider the financial pressures the Council is under, and then asked to make a choice on their preferred level of increase.

Analysis % Respondents	
Base	100.0%
What would you consider to be an acceptable Council Tax i...	
Option A (2.00%)	21.3%
Option B (0.67%)	32.3%
Option C (1.00%)	33.1%
Option D (2.50%)	11.0%
Option E (4.00%)	2.4%

Many respondents felt that there should be no council tax increase. The majority of respondents selected either a 0.67% or a 1% increase.

21.3% of respondents chose the proposed increase of 2%.

9. Additional comments

- Give teens more leisure facilities, youth clubs etc, they get in trouble less. How about an American idea, summer camp, 6 weeks away, rock climbing, canoeing, some never ever seen a cow!!
- There needs to be a lot less 'red tape' and interactions between the Council and the public need to be streamlined.
- More jobs will mean less crime, they go together.
- A need to create better training for older unemployed people to learn alternative experience.
- Easy to rate everything high, until we're asked to consider use of limited resources.
- The vision for ordinary folk should be to be able to live peacefully and comfortably in the town free from crime and anti-social behaviour, all forms of pollution and waste.
- Making the town safer must be a priority. Many of us are afraid to go out in the evening and certainly wouldn't go into Tamworth town centre due to the anti social behaviour
- Most of these come within local police control.
- Public health and local employment as priorities. Encouraging re-generation of town centre also.
- Get kids off the streets, give them more opportunity. Create a nicer town centre. Take the traffic from Ventura. For adults in the evening
- In Q1 - we have tried to build infrastructure before but are just left with empty warehouses or big shops employing very few, low income opportunities
- All of your priorities should be high on the agenda for all towns because we need to nurture our young people.
- Make the shops selling alcohol more observant. Children stopping adults outside of shops to buy them cigarettes and alcohol should be fined heavily when caught. That will stop a lot of it.
- If we have the infrastructure to facilitate growth then we will grow. No infrastructure will mean when people or business wants to grow they will look elsewhere
- trouble is nothing gets done about anything
- Provide something for youngsters to do. Visit local schools etc about healthy eating, drug abuse etc.
- Make Tamworth the best it could be
- To have a vision is fine, it's whether or not you keep your promise to make Tamworth a better place to live. I have lived in Tamworth all my life and have seen some changes that have been wrong.

- I have put 2 for the health of older people because health care is expensive so choices have to be made as to who has what and in my opinion the health of young far surpasses the elderly
- Vision should be about lower business rates, cheaper rents to create jobs. Then government - to be attacked by local councils on not tackling greed from oil and utility companies, so people have money in their pockets.
- I would like to have a clean and safe place to live with activities available for all ages
- On the whole it seems like a good idea to improve the opportunities of the people living in Tamworth but there is always an element of society that wants no change so convincing them will be the hardest job. Not all change is a good thing either
- If crime was dealt with satisfactorily then we should all feel safer
- It is important to provide improved services for the forgotten generation. We owe them so much (war, paid into our services) but in return they are treated worse than criminals in prison.
- Youth crime and unsocial behaviour must be stomped out. Also underage drinking
- not sure how you will raise attainment and aspiration in young people
- Tamworth is only about one and a half hours from London by train, this needs to be promoted.
- The cycle paths around Tamworth are an excellent way to encourage people to cycle to improve health and reduce car use. Keep maintaining them please
- I think all your suggestions are really good if you can do it!!
- Forget the vision and get down to the basics
- The One Tamworth, Perfectly placed vision or concept is only as good as the backing it gets so it needs advertising and projection to the public and businesses i.e circulars, news paper ads and perhaps banners in market places and adds on buses
- In a perfect world it would be full employment for everyone. As this is not possible it would be good to see more employment for school leavers who have lower academic qualifications, more apprenticeships would be good.
- Alcohol abuse is self inflicted. People could do something about it but they don't want to until they become ill
- Bring more discipline into everyday life
- It's ok to say tackle crime but the true figures are not shown. I know this first hand as my son was beaten up in Tamworth. That night they had gone on a spree beating people up, smashing things. They were only done for 1 crime the worst being the beating up of my son and the theft of the mobile could not be counted. It's a joke.
- Litter in and around Tamworth is exceptionally bad. In order to improve our chances of drawing more people to Tamworth both

socially and for business we need to clean up, very poor our streets, parks are for litter.

- Start at the roots - more efforts needed from them to understand their children's needs. How about teaching classes for cooking decent meals instead of relying on expensive, unhealthy takeaway
- The low-level crime needs to be tackled as a priority.
- Get the problem youth off our streets.
- Move Tamworth's Tourist information office back into the main shopping area making it accessible to all rather than only those capable of walking so far from the main shopping area.
- Charities are capable of financing themselves and it should be left to volunteers to raise funds not Councils. If there is money to be given to Charities then it should be spent on organising volunteers and able people who are out of work so that many of the more mundane clearing up work is carried out. Let the people show that they have pride in our town and are not being mollycoddled by some Councillor or official.
- The use of pay back to the community from offenders on improving the open spaces has improved the area
- Regeneration is essential to growth and prosperity
- Spend more on doing council homes up like replacing windows, doors, bathrooms and kitchens
- All of the above are very important to people living in Tamworth
- With changing policy of central government TBC will have an up-hill struggle, The Big Community!!!
- My impression is that our streets seem to have improved over the last 12-18 months. There seems to be less litter about. I don't suppose we have suddenly become tidy so, well done!
- more outdoor events to encourage healthier lifestyle, community awareness of what's around, make them use facilities more,
- My husband and I have never received grants as we are not on benefits. Worked and saved for retirements therefore we loose out. Too much money given to grants. People should pay a proportion.
- This year's outdoor events have once again been outstanding and we have also have appreciated the opportunity to see the Staffordshire Hoard
- Access to all customer services
- this is a difficult question because there is only a limited amount of money to spend and everybody thinks that their needs come first
- More spent in Dosthill as it all seems to be given to Glascote and Amington area with better services and more visible police and council people in other areas than in Dosthill.
- There should be wheelchair access to communal buildings

- Check out empty houses and possibly build more bungalow housing so that larger flats and houses could be used for deserving larger families who have lived in Tamworth for years
- As recycling collections have been stopped in the high rise flats more refuse collections will be needed as everything will have to be put down the chute
- I think some of the things money is spent on is not down to the money but not using it properly
- Council have lost the plot!
- A whole generation is locked out of the housing market and with growing unemployment the young generation need more council housing. Higher points for children and single mothers encourages unwanted pregnancies
- More path cleaning and areas around shops. Stricter rules on litter. Better education on litter
- Spend more wisely on housing
- The street cleaning leaves much to be desired. The culprits of course are dirty people who will drop litter on the pavement next to a litter bin. However, these people will always be with us unless better educated. This does not mean the council abdicates their responsibilities to ensure clean streets. More effort needed to ensure business premises responsibility to ensure they keep their buildings and environments clean.
- Personally I find that the high volume of low-level crime and general minor infringements to be most frustrating.
- remove the people who make living in there own homes a nightmare.
- The Peel Hospital needs to provide A&E facilities. Good Hope is to far away. Attract more businesses, especially Logistics Companies to utilise the amount of empty warehousing in the area. Reduce in town parking fees to attract shoppers back into the town and attract a better selection of shops. Utilise what we have to the full extent ,i.e the 2 rivers by making them an attraction as they have in Stratford.
- Regeneration of the Town Centre
- Litter seems to be getting worse (or I'm just noticing it more!) Problem I guess is some people not bothered about making a mess, having no pride in the town, feeling no ownership of their town / locality, unconscious bad habits.
- Improve the Town Centre shopping facilities. Increase the efficiency of the Council and cut out waste.
- Unfortunately the councils of the 60s and 70s turned Tamworth into a hole. Look at Lichfield and other places which have retained their history in buildings etc. Anti social behaviour must be improved and the town centre must be radically changed to bring people back in

- More dog waste bins and more severe fines for those found not using them.
- Tamworth town centre has few local shops run by local business - most of the shops (if open) are about betting, shoes, travel. These will not encourage visitors to return. A visit to the town centre has left me feeling stressed and that it was a waste of time again.
- More street cleaning and dog owners who let their dogs foul streets fined
- Better cross city links
- Clean graffiti off bridges ie 66A. Reduce traffic through Amington village. Stop proposed reduction in local bus service to Amington.
- The approaches into the town centre, especially Bolebridge Street, need to be cleaned up. There are filthy pavements and shop fronts. This is not helped by a long line of taxis; however, the flower displays are excellent.
- More control to ban garden fires
- More local employment opportunities. Local hospital able to offer more than the basic health care as at present.
- Shopping - Ventura Park excellent but possibly at the expense of the town centre. Town centre needs to be looked at i.e. improve parking and access. Reduce car parking charges.
- Nicer pubs and restaurants. Cleaner streets and open spaces. Better swimming facilities. More events for adults.
- Keep the kids from playing football on shop car parks near to houses. Also keep an eye on council tenants who leave their dust bins outside the back of their houses that are the main bus route every week. Sometimes they are left there for a whole week until the day for another pick up and they pull last weeks in and push out the bin for that day only for that to be there for another week.
- Transport services and information about services. Have you ever tried to get a bus to an industrial estate.
- a better range of shops, a link to Ventura, cheaper parking to encourage town centre shopping
- We need more houses, a few more public toilets, and better variety of shops.
- To ensure regular checks on open fields at Ladybridge. I am disgusted every time I walk over there. Youths urinating, young girls pilling over there and couples having sex.
- We, as a family are concerned over school league tables and whether to move to Lichfield before our children get to secondary school.
- Clean Tamworth streets of dog mess and litter. Reintroduce dog waste bags. Use offenders to clear streets.
- Community and neighbourhood cohesion is needed in all parts of Tamworth.

- More properties for the young Tamworthians so they have somewhere to live so that they could be proud of their own homes instead of living with parents.
- A low crime level is important to everybody. Clean streets are important to local people and visitors. Good shops bring people into the town centre and keep locals from spending elsewhere
- Dog fouling everywhere (disgusting)
- Proper police services (not going to Burton). Less mobile phone shops with a local feel rather than big store names (good mix). Cheaper and better community events. Properly advertised and cheaper to locals.
- Good police activity and keep an eye on our older residents to stop bullying by teenagers and parents and grandparents who live nearby and play ballgames with the ball smashing into our fences and gardens missing by inches
- All of the above, crossed or uncrossed, are important to make a good place to live but unless there is a formula that is adhered to then things will slide back and shops and businesses will look for other places and opportunities
- Affordable sports and leisure facilities including low cost parking!
- More police presence on the streets
- Less housing projects creating rabbit hutches for people to live in, better quality houses. Better local hospital facilities. Parks and open spaces. Affordable life styles. Clean environment. Jobs for all.
- Stamp out underage drinking at night, and if reported, Police must attend immediately to stamp it out
- Health service is an issue because of distance needed to travel to nearest hospital Litter is a problem in many places in the UK. The big fast food providers should pay a levy to cover the costs, and there needs to be a nationwide campaign to stop people throwing litter out of their cars and vans: there is a great deal of commercial waste that finds its way onto the streets. Better job prospects would solve most issues
- To cut out the drug abuse and alcohol abuse that leads to crime
- The parks and open spaces in the castle grounds are excellent, however, apart from these any other open space near to where I live is either a school playing field, a football pitch, a grass verge near a road or a grassed island with some tired looking rose bushes on it; grim, boring, nothing to look at. Open spaces, sport and leisure facilities need to be improved to give teenager somewhere to go and where other age groups can sit or walk their dogs.
- The Library facility needs updating. I feel that the book selection is poor and looks shabby. The computer access is restricted

- Tamworth town centre needs more shops rather than all the big shops being at Ventura. Not everyone has a car so the bus service to some out-lying villages needs improving
- Encourage businesses within the town centre
- More litter bins provided. There is too much rubbish lying around the streets which spoils an excellent flower display.
- We have been in need of a 'proper' all facilities hospital. Good as Sir Robert Peel is, the population here need a fully operational hospital with most facilities.
- Keep paths and areas away from roads cleaner
- Traffic on Ventura is as bad as ever. More entry/exit places urgently needed
- Side street gutters (town centre) choked up. Never swept. Pavement in Victoria Rd needs relaying - a court case in waiting
- Litter is a major issue
- More job opportunities
- Proper hospital - crown magistrates and county courts - improve parks and river areas totally underutilised. Town centre - demolish middle entry and create proper square with shops, bars and restaurants. Improve roads and signage. If Tamworth has no access to extra land build properties higher. University.
- Education, education, education
- Make vandals accountable for their actions. Offenders who are identified should clean up their handiwork.
- Cleanliness and tidiness not just in the town centre. On all estates.
- We could do with some good shops in the town centre. If we do not get better shops the town will become a ghost town
- Reducing costs should come out of bankers pay, not everyone elses!!
- I do not agree with increasing any of the above. Reports have shown that Tamworth is the fattest town so increasing leisure facilities would not be a great idea. Traders should feel encouraged to have shops within Ankerside and also High Street stores.
- Prioritise health and employment
- Personally I think some council tenants abuse the housing system
- As TBC will be taking over full responsibility of the rents they will need to be very careful where they cut as the general public are being crushed from all sides. Destroying the good will of their tenants.
- All others are essential; there is plenty of access to information via internet which is free at libraries and tourist info, age concern, homestart etc.
- Use cheaper sports like golf, cricket, rounders etc.

- Why is there no savings from Councillors added to the sheet. Why is the more Police visible when the council is planning to increase council tax.
- Cut councillors expenses by 50% stop the mayor's banquets it's only a Jolly for other mayors and councillor.
- Take a little from all so share the costs
- The more people there are the more revenue should be available to invest into services but the more use it gets the more money it takes to keep the service the same level so gradual decay is going to happen unless more money is found.
- Communities should be encouraged to deal with anti-social behaviour at a minor level themselves. They may need help to start the process going. Things for young people to do may help with the issue.
- Maintenance of parks and open spaces could be done by voluntary sector, or residents or people on community services or even low risk prisoners
- Politicians and some council staff pay should be reduced e.g. C.E.O £102,000 PA
- More help for the elderly
- Very difficult to select 3 as all have there merits. However, most people have internet access so can find information for themselves. Grants for housing are often given to those who should be helping themselves.
- Less fact finding trips abroad!!
- Britain in Bloom
- Tackle the abuse of the benefit system.
- Get rid of the Talkback magazine and the team. How much is that costing us?
- Fine the litter louts more or give them community service to clean up the mess they make (including dropping cigarette butts)
- Encouraging us the public to save unnecessary council expense, to make more money available for where it's needed.
- I am sure we could reduce the number of Councillors per ward and the Borough Councillors should take the places of the County Councillors. By reducing the number of Councillors it should follow that the number of Council Officers supporting the Councillors could be reduced.
- Reduce the number of councillors per ward
- reducing utility bills and increasing recycling in offices and council owned buildings
- Christmas lights on later e.g. December
- All councillors should declare their attendance levels and only be paid the minimum wage band declare their expenses publically.
- Cut your own cloth accordingly
- Would need to see accounts

- don't give people money to leave council houses clean, they should anyway out of respect, instead charge them for the clean up
- Stop the £75 giveaway for returning this. Surely this is not necessary!!
- Ensuring that those claiming benefits are really entitled to the privilege
- Get rid of management who are not performing. Cutting council expenses.
- Increase charges for local restaurants as they must be producing high waste as there are too many Chinese, Indian, and food outlets. Look at proper tendering process for council jobs.
- Make sure that repairs are completed first time
- Charge bus pass holders 10p for every trip instead of free trip. I am a holder and would not mind paying 10p per journey.
- Cutting housing benefits to large families that have no source of income and rely solely on handouts. No such thing as free rent. We all should pay for the home we live in.
- Perhaps put any community people on a charge to do more supervised work. Do not know what! Idle hands cause trouble.
- Tamworth in bloom - why?
- Can't think of any
- Cut high earners wages! Cut politicians and their money!
- Expenses for local government meetings
- By doing some time and motion studies on some of the council workers perhaps?
- Give up smoking (if they can afford cigarettes) they can afford to stop by paying for advice and treatment. They are more likely to stop if it hits them in the pocket not us footing the bill for these clinics
- We must focus on town centre shops
- Housing better control of morrissions and PH Jones with their fixing
- Don't know what you spend on these items. But the area around the Amington Business Park is dirty, unkempt and embarrassing when we have visitors to our company, which we do on many occasions. They leave us with a very poor impression of Tamworth Please, please come out here to see what I mean by this.
- Tamworth should have a Museum. I suggest where the Snow dome is. That way the view to and from our great castle would be much improved. Move the Snowdome somewhere where it's not so out of place. Take a look at Lichfield they have built houses that are in keeping with the surroundings. Not a big tin factory shed. Maybe get rid of whoever agreed the plans.
- Although working in Tamworth I don't live here so I don't have a particular opinion on several of the above areas.
- To increase spending, who is going to pay the bill?

- I think the town is badly run, it just seems like you're trying to move everything out of Tamworth town centre to Ventura, what I ask is where will the town be in 10 years if there is one
- Tamworth town centre is in danger of 'closing' the range of shops is poor; the condition of shops is poor. We seem obsessed with Ventura Park - why?
- Political correctness blights all decision making and at times council appear hand tied - not enough local people in top council positions
- The caveat here being the utopian view to reduce spending on undeserving cases of housing assistance.
- May be the Chief exec of the council should take a pay cut and his predecessor take a cut in pension.
- As previously - not living here it is difficult to comment.
- No cuts should be made however we are in difficult times
- None of the above because if you increase charges Tamworth will become a desert.
- Most people have lost more than their expendable income for the economic time. This should be remembered on every decision.
- Even though I have ticked the above options I do not agree with my choice but I can not proceed without choosing. They are all equally as important and feel there could be significant impact on the companies or individuals increased charges would have.
- this would be detrimental
- None the town can't afford to see anymore increases
- We need to keep charges on an even keel till things pick up or the recession ends
- Reduce the number of staff employed by the Council - too many staff not engaged on direct services Reduce the administration costs within the Council Reduce absenteeism within the Council, which is relatively high compared to the private sector
- I would imagine that there are costs incurred regarding compliance. Some compliance could probably be reduced or curtailed e.g. consultations, health & safety items, reporting to central government, laborious tendering etc.
- Upper Level management at the Council.
- Most understand that the Government would like a zero pay cheque when looking at employees. But each individual task that is done by contractors should be costed against an in house employee. The cheapest option within safety and reason should be the one selected. Even if this means the council taking on short term contract employees.
- That's the big question which isn't easy to answer! First target I would have thought would be ensuring all benefits are only paid to those truly in need to close down any fraudulent ones (I don't

know the scale of this but assume it is costly albeit difficult to police) and whether any tiers of bureaucracy can be cut.

- Too much is spent on making decisions; too much officer and councillor time.
- Insist on zero tolerance & give maximum sentences for unsocial behaviour, criminal damage, drunkenness, littering, general crime & drug abuse, it might dissuade one or two of them from re-offending & save the town money
- Stop wasting money on big canopy that hasn't been used for anything, would have been better invested in getting new businesses into the town to justify the rent and rate charged for this location
- Cut bureaucracy
- Before the council make cuts I suggest they do housekeeping in their own departments and save money in house - council far too easy and cushy jobs. Usually 2 people doing the job of 1 - as the saying goes, want an easy life with good money - work in the council
- Get some private sector firms into the Council to advise on cost reduction measures above.
- Cutting to the bone leaves no flesh to take up any new impact.
- I love Tamworth, fantastic motorway connections to the rest of the country; brilliant heritage
- Start putting money into the town not Ventura before there isn't a town
- Help small businesses, please!