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**Locality Working
Community Research**

**Tamworth Borough
Council**

August 2011

**Executive Summary
Report**

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1) Project details and acknowledgements

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The research team would like to thank residents in the Locality Working areas for their feedback during this research project.

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2) Introduction and Methodology

Tamworth Borough Council plays an important role as a partner in the Strategic Partnership helping to build strong communities across the borough. As part of this multi agency partnership, work has been focused at a community level through a Locality Working model, and there are currently four Locality Working areas in Tamworth.

The Locality Working model was established in Tamworth in 2008, and a baseline community survey was undertaken in 2009 with residents living in the Locality Working areas to understand quality of life, what people like and dislike about the areas and priorities for the future. In order to assist partners in evaluating whether local activities or interventions have been having the desired effect, a further community survey was commissioned in 2011 to track perceptions over time.

The aim of this research was to replicate the original collection of robust quality of life data at a community level and to measure any directional change in attitudes and behaviours since the 2009 survey. A total of 1,000 face to face household interviews were completed in April and May 2011. A minimum of 200 surveys were undertaken in each of the Locality Working areas. To provide a yardstick so that results from the Locality Working areas could be compared, an additional 200 surveys were completed elsewhere in Tamworth (thereby acting as a 'control' group). A short questionnaire was administered with residents via a face to face doorstep interview. Each interview lasted around 10-15 minutes. Fieldwork took place during the daytime, evenings (up until 8pm) and weekends, and was undertaken by trained MEL interviewers.

Following the completion of the community survey in May 2011, results revealed significant changes in people's perceptions towards their ability to influence decisions affecting the local area. To explore these findings in more detail, a series of in depth telephone interviews were undertaken between 26th July 2011 and August 15th 2011. Respondents who had expressed an interest in taking part in further consultation in the community survey were contacted and asked to participate in the research. In depth telephone interviews were carried out by MEL Research from their offices in Birmingham, using a team of three qualitative researchers.

The number of community surveys and in-depth interviews completed are shown in the table below.

Table 1: Number of interviews

Area	Community Survey interviews	Qualitative follow up - Contacts available	Qualitative follow up - Completed interviews
Amington	200	35	5
Belgrave	200	32	5
Glascote	200	85	5
Stonydelph	200	5	3
Rest of Tamworth (Control)	201	N/A	N/A
Total	1001	157	18

3) Results

The results from the research have been grouped into four themes in this section of the report.

The local area

Satisfaction with the local area as a place to live remains lower in the Locality Working areas compared to the Rest of Tamworth. Since 2009, satisfaction has remained stable in most areas and thus the gap in satisfaction between the Locality Working areas and the Rest of Tamworth remains unchanged. Satisfaction in the Rest of Tamworth now stands at 92% (higher than the national average of 83%¹), and in comparison ranges between 74% (Stonydelph) and 82% (Belgrave) in the Locality Working areas.

When asked what they like most about their local area, a quiet and peaceful area comes out on top, as does a convenient location – close to motorways, shops and schools. The tag cloud below shows the most common words used to describe what people liked about their local area.

Figure 1: What do you like most about the area where you live?



Respondents were also asked a series of questions about community cohesion in their local area, ranging from how many people they know in the local area, feeling of belonging and whether people get on well together and respect each other.

When asked how many people they know in the local area, with the exception of Glascoate, respondents in the Rest of Tamworth were more likely to know people in their local area compared to those living in the

¹ Citizenship Survey 2009/10

Locality Working areas, although the proportion has fallen since 2009 as it has in the Locality Working areas. It is surprising that Glascote has actually seen an increase in the proportion of respondents who know most/quite a lot of people in their neighbourhood (from 46% in 2009 to 52% in 2011) given the relatively large proportion of newcomers in this area (32% have lived there 5 years or less).

Across the four Locality Working areas, respondents in Belgrave are most likely to agree they belong to their local area (77%), following a similar pattern to the 2009 baseline community survey. However, across the Rest of Tamworth the feeling of belonging is stronger than it is in any of the Locality Working areas (82%) and is increasing at a faster rate, thus widening the gap between the Locality Working areas. Age is an important factor influencing how much someone feels like they belong to their local area, with older people tending to have a greater sense of belonging.

Generally, the level of agreement that people get on well together and respect one another in the local area is similar across the Locality Working areas and the Rest of Tamworth.

Problems with crime and anti social behaviour have improved in the Locality Working areas since 2009 which is an encouraging sign for all partners contributing to locality working. There have been particular improvements in the amount of rubbish and litter across all areas, people bring drunk and rowdy and teenagers hanging around in Glascote and drug dealing and abandoned cars in Stonydelph, perhaps as a result of specific campaigns led by the CSP. However, improvements have also been made in the Rest of Tamworth and the proportion of respondents who report problems with crime and anti social behaviour in the Rest of Tamworth has fallen more rapidly, thus increasing the gap in perceptions between the Rest of Tamworth and the Locality Working areas. Further targeted campaigns may be required to reduce the extent to which crime and anti social behaviour is a problem in the Locality Working areas.

Influencing decisions

In this section we explore the quantitative and qualitative findings regarding people's perceptions about their ability to influence decisions affecting their local area. Nationally there had been a downturn in agreement with this statement ²and so a similar pattern was perhaps to be expected in Tamworth. When the results were analysed they showed a significant decrease in agreement that decisions in the local area could be influenced in three out of the four locality working areas, whilst agreement held steady in the Rest of Tamworth at 30%. The exception to the rule was Glascote, where agreement with the ability to influence decisions rose by 26% pts to 44%, thus exceeding the Rest of Tamworth average. In the other locality working areas however agreement hovers now around 25%, falling most significantly in Amington by 53%pts since 2009.

Qualitative work in the form of in-depth interviews was commissioned to try and explain the reason behind the fall in agreement in three out of four of the Locality Working areas. The qualitative research showed that most respondents would like to be able to have a say about what goes on in their local area, and many felt it was their right to decide on things that happen in their neighbourhood. The sorts of decisions people would like to get involved are localised and the kind of things which affect their everyday lives – rather than bigger and more strategic decisions which may be more difficult for them to influence. The sorts of decisions people would like to get involved in fell into three strands, which were;

- ◆ Activities for children and young people
- ◆ Tackling crime and anti social behaviour, and
- ◆ Making sure the area is clean and tidy.

Whilst the research did not find anything significant which has suddenly changed people's perceptions about whether they can influence decisions or not, it did identify five key barriers which seem to prevent people from getting involved, these barriers can be grouped into personal and organizational barriers as shown in the table below.

Table 2. Barriers preventing people from getting involved in decision making

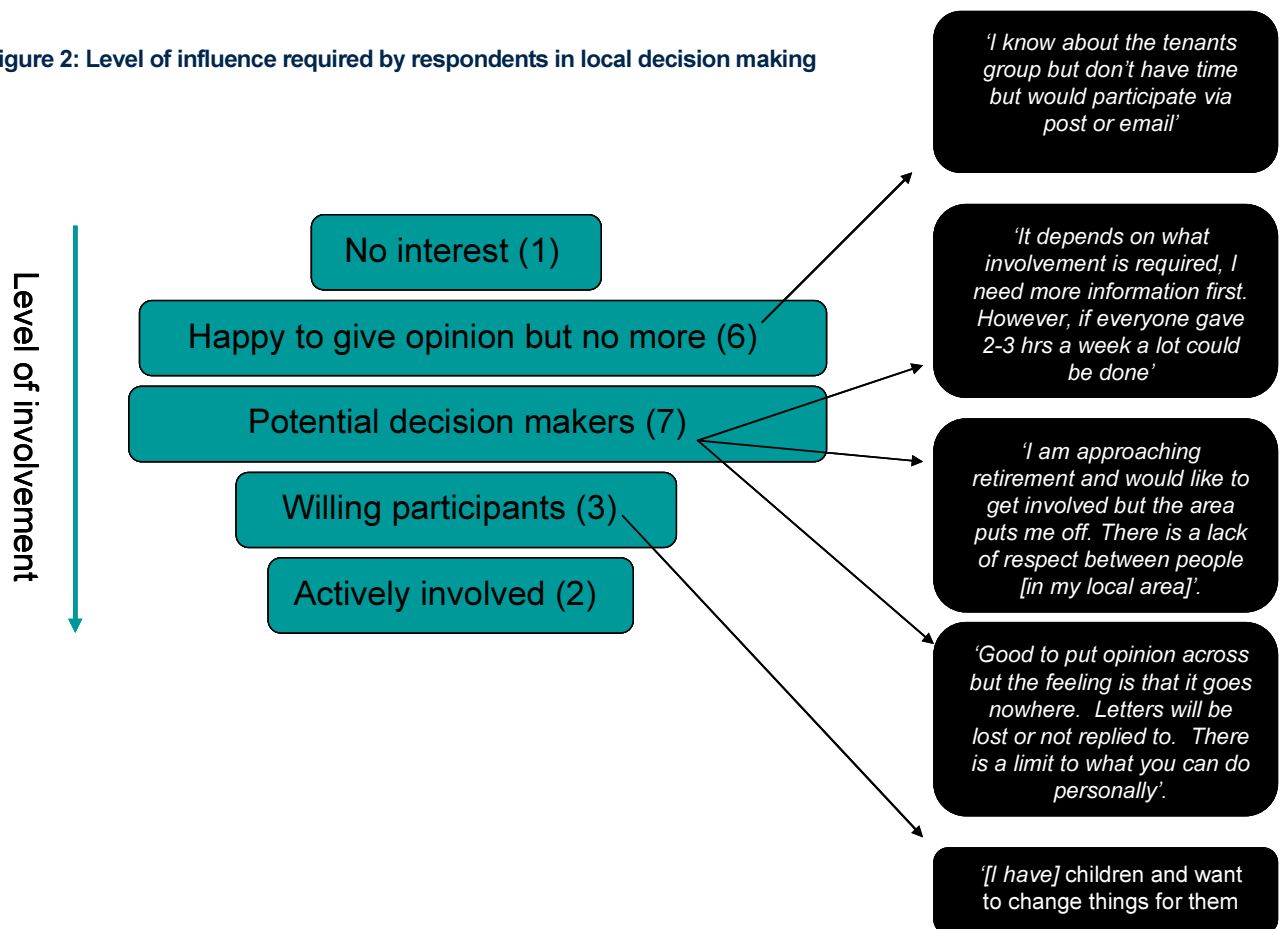
Personal Barriers	A lack of time
	A lack of interest
	Fear of reprisals
Organisational Barriers	Lack of information
	Lack of faith in the council and its partners
	<i>'Nothing stops you from getting involved, but it is a continual process as nothing gets done.'</i> Stonydelph respondent

² Citizenship Survey 39% 2008/9 to 37% 2009/10

Of course, past experience of contacting public sector organisations also influenced people’s opinions about whether or not they could influence decisions in their local area. At least 6 respondents out of 18 had tried to contact the council in the past to no avail and one respondent in Amington quoted it felt *‘like banging my head against a brick wall.’*

The qualitative research also explored the extent to which respondents were willing to get involved in their community, and the level of influence/involvement they wanted in decision making. Figure 2 below illustrates the findings. There were a range of views from having no interest in being involved at all to those who are already actively involved in their local community. However what is interesting is the larger number of respondents who fall in the middle – those who are happy to give their opinion, and those who have been categorised as ‘potential decision makers’ – i.e. they are willing to get involved but they want some more information first, or they need some reassurance that their views will be listened to. Nurturing these ‘potential decision makers’ must be a priority for the council by providing information about how, where and when to get involved and also if they get involved what will it mean for them – what will they be expected to do/how much time will they be expected to commit etc? These are very practical concerns which could be easily overcome. Finally these potential decision makers need some reassurance that giving up their limited time to take part in decision making is going to be a worthwhile exercise, and that their views will be listened to.

Figure 2: Level of influence required by respondents in local decision making



Respondents were however much more positive about their ability to influence decisions if they worked together with other people in their community. Agreement is highest in the Rest of Tamworth, due to a

significant increase in agreement since the baseline survey (to 82%). However, agreement with this statement is also high in Amington and Belgrave (76% and 79% respectively). There is a gap in agreement between the Rest of Tamworth and Stonydelph and Glascote, although this is narrowing thanks to a significant boost in agreement in both Locality Working areas between 2009 and 2011. The signs here are positive and the community development workers should focus on encouraging people to work together in the local area to get their voices heard and to make a difference.

In the qualitative research respondents confirmed that working together would give them strength in numbers and a 'louder voice.' When asked what could be done to encourage people to work together, leaflets, family fun days and resident groups were all mentioned. Finally, building trust in the local community is a must. Starting with small projects and building this trust up gradually is the key to success, the community walkabout was mentioned as a success by one respondent so more projects like this may be a good place to start. The theme of the walkabouts should be linked to the three things people most want to influence which were; activities for young people, crime and anti social behaviour and keeping the area clean and tidy.

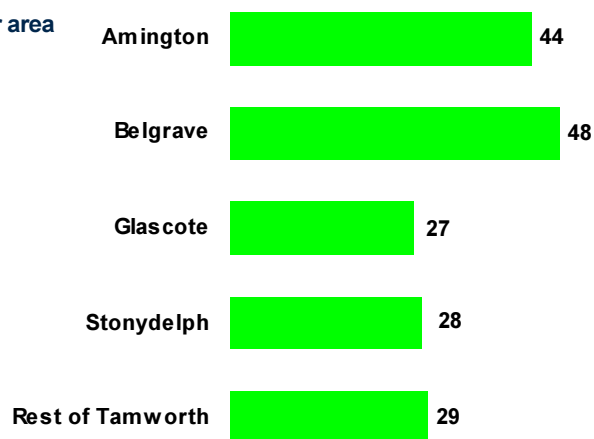
Participation in the local community

In the next section, respondents were asked about the number of times they participate in sport or active recreation per week. Encouragingly, there has been an increase in participation in all areas since 2009 when the baseline survey was undertaken, although this may partly be due to a more detailed explanation of active recreation in the 2011 survey.

The proportion of respondents participating in sport or active recreation at least 3 times per week for 30 minutes or more each time is very similar in Belgrave, Glascote and Amington (around 55%) which is just slightly lower than the Rest of Tamworth benchmark of 61%. However, improvements are still required in Stonydelph where participation stands at 32% in the latest survey. The graph below shows the change in percentage points in participation since 2009, illustrating the significant increase in all areas - particularly Amington and Belgrave.

Figure 3. Change in those participating in sport or active recreation, at a moderate intensity, for at least 30 minutes, three times in the last week since the previous survey

Base: 200-206 respondents per area



When asked what their main sport or recreational activity was, walking formed the basis of the majority of recreational activities undertaken by respondents, in Belgrave and the Rest of Tamworth around two thirds (66% and 65% respectively) of respondents identified walking as their main recreational activity. This demonstrates the increased recognition of 'active recreation' amongst respondents when answering the question about how much sport or active recreation they do per week.

Participation in volunteering³ remained relatively unchanged between the baseline community survey and the survey undertaken in 2011. Results also indicated similar levels of volunteering in Rest of Tamworth and the Locality Working areas, with the exception of Amington where 18% of respondents had given some sort of unpaid help in the last 12 months compared to 12% in the Rest of Tamworth.

³ Giving unpaid help to clubs, groups or organisations

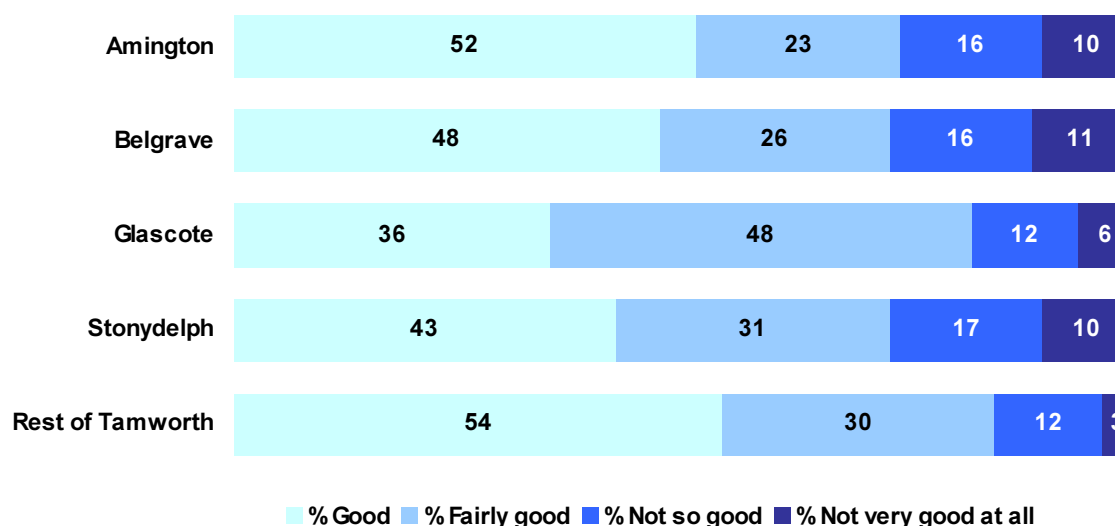
Health

In this section, respondents were asked a series of questions about their health, including an assessment of their health and how health could be improved. These questions were asked for the first time in 2011 so comparisons with the baseline survey cannot be made.

The majority of respondents in all areas rated their health as good or fairly good, although self reported health across all Locality Working areas was slightly lower than it was in the Rest of Tamworth (85%). Of the Locality Working areas, Glascoate had the best level of health, 83% of respondents said their health was good or fairly good. Around three quarters of respondents in Amington, Belgrave and Stonydelph rated their health as good (combined good and fairly good) as shown in the graph below.

Figure 4 Over the past 12 months has your health on the whole been...?

Base: 200 respondents each Locality Working area



Thinking about how health could be improved, generally respondents didn't want any help or support with improving their health, particularly those in the Rest of Tamworth. However, of those who did want help or support the most popular topics were around giving up smoking and losing weight. Around one in ten respondents in three Locality Working areas (Amington, Belgrave and Glascoate) were keen to get some information about giving up smoking and a similar proportion were interested in getting information about losing weight.

4) Key Findings and Recommendations

The local area

- ◆ Whilst the inequality gap between the Locality Working areas and the Rest of Tamworth with regards to satisfaction with the local area has not widened, neither has it narrowed and therefore it is evident that locality working has not yet had a big enough impact to influence and improve satisfaction with the local area. **Improving satisfaction with Stonydelph as a place to live should be a priority**, as this area continues to have the lowest levels of satisfaction.
- ◆ The proportion of people who know other people in their local area is falling in the Rest of Tamworth, as it is across the Locality Working areas and thus generally the gap has broadly remained the same. Glascote is the exception to the rule, as there has been an increase in the proportion of people who know each other so much so, that this Locality Working area now outperforms the Rest of Tamworth, an encouraging finding for this Locality Working area.
- ◆ Residents in the Rest of Tamworth are more likely to feel like they belong to their area, and performance on this measure has improved since the baseline survey whereas in the Locality Working areas, performance has remained relatively steady. These results mean the performance gap between the Rest of Tamworth and the Locality Working areas has widened since the baseline survey.
- ◆ When asked if people get on well together in the local area, there has been an improvement since the baseline survey in the Rest of Tamworth and in two Locality Working areas (Amington and Glascote). However performance has worsened in Belgrave and Stonydelph resulting in a widening gap between these two areas and the Rest of Tamworth. The shorter involvement with Locality Working in these two areas may have raised expectations of what can be achieved, and therefore **work to improve community relations in these areas should be the focus for community development officers**.
- ◆ Whilst the proportion of people saying things are a problem in their local area has generally fallen in the Locality Working areas indicating signs of positive change, problems have eased even further in the Rest of Tamworth thus actually resulting in a widening of the gap between the areas. Whilst Locality Working areas have seen a decline in problems associated with rubbish/litter and teenagers hanging around, the decline in the problem in the Rest of Tamworth has been greater. Although, those who do say teenagers are a problem are more likely in the Rest of Tamworth to say they are a 'big problem' compared to the Locality Working areas. Specific work to tackle drugs and drug dealing in Stonydelph has also had a positive impact in this area since the baseline survey. **More targeted campaigns led by the CSP may be required to tackle specific issues in each Locality Working area**.
- ◆ Therefore despite improvements, perceptions of problems associated with crime and anti social behaviour continue to be greater in the Locality Working areas than in the Rest of Tamworth, particularly in Amington, **and need further work**.

Influencing Decisions

- ◆ Agreement that respondents have the ability to influence decisions in the Locality Working areas has fallen significantly. With the exception of Glascote, agreement in the Locality Working areas is falling rapidly whilst the agreement in the Rest of Tamworth holds steady and is now above that seen in the Locality Working areas. The inequality gap seen between the Locality Working areas and the Rest of Tamworth has therefore increased in 2011.
- ◆ The Glascote Locality Working area is an exception to the rule and bucks the downward trend in agreement. Agreement that decisions can be influenced here has increased and now outperforms agreement levels seen across the Rest of Tamworth, a positive finding for locality working.
- ◆ Generally speaking though respondents are becoming more positive about being able to influence decisions if they work together with other people in their local area. Agreement with this indicator is increasing in the Locality Working areas and in the Rest of Tamworth and the gap between the two is steadily narrowing. Agreement with this indicator is rising most rapidly in Stonydelph. **Encouraging people to work together to influence decisions must be a future priority for all strategic partners**, especially given the positive feedback in the qualitative research about 'strength in numbers'
- ◆ The qualitative research identified five main barriers to getting involved with decision making which were; a lack of time, a lack of interest, fear of reprisals, a lack of information about how to influence

decisions and a lack of faith in organisations to act on concerns. **Work to overcome these barriers must now become the focus for partners involved in face to face contact with local residents.**

Participation in the local community

- ◆ Participation in sport and active recreation has increased in all Locality Working areas and the rest of Tamworth since the baseline survey, possibly influenced by further explanation about the term 'active recreation' in the 2011 survey. Results indicate a narrowing of the gap in participation levels in Belgrave, Glascote and Amington which all now have similar levels of participation to the Rest of Tamworth. **Further work however is needed in Stonydelph to improve participation in active recreation and sport and thus to close the gap.**
- ◆ The baseline survey asked respondents if they currently gave any unpaid help (volunteering) to clubs, societies or groups in the local area. Results indicated a similar level of volunteering in the Locality Working areas as in the Rest of Tamworth, and the latest survey shows that this remains unchanged. The exception to this is Amington, where the level of unpaid help exceeds that in the Rest of Tamworth.
- ◆ Participation in the local community through sport, active recreation and volunteering is important in helping to build strong communities. **Further opportunities to participate in activities may help to strengthen community cohesion, the extent to which people like living in their local area and overall satisfaction.**

Health

- ◆ Self reported health was good overall, although the survey has highlighted a gap in levels of self reported health in the Locality Working areas compared to the Rest of Tamworth, with the exception of Glascote where self reported health was similar.
- ◆ Whilst most respondents did not want help and support to improve their health, there was some interest in getting help with giving up smoking and losing weight, particularly in Glascote which is interesting given the higher level of self reported health here. It may be that a campaign to show people in the other locality working areas how poor diet, smoking or a lack of exercise for example impact on health, to **raise their awareness of health issues** and how health can be improved.
- ◆ To improve the health of the community as a whole, respondents were interested in having more access to leisure and play facilities and more structured sport sessions. **Partners should explore exactly what this will involve and consider providing these facilities in the Locality Working areas.**

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