

Tamworth Town Centre



Introduction

Tamworth Borough Council is actively seeking to redevelop a key part of Tamworth town centre; this is your chance to help inform how this major change is brought forward. For too long, the Gungate Regeneration Quarter has remained undeveloped, failing to contribute to the vitality and viability of the town centre.

Tamworth Borough Council is keen to understand your views and ideas as the process of change begins.

The Gungate Regeneration Quarter lies on either side of Spinning School Lane in Tamworth town centre. The area previously contained a Retail Precinct, Police Station, Magistrates Court, Social Services offices and Bingo Hall. The majority of these buildings are now vacant (or soon to be vacated) and therefore no longer make a positive contribution to the vitality of the town centre or its economy.

Against this backdrop, Tamworth Borough Council, in partnership with the various landowners, has been investigating the opportunities this provides to positively regenerate the area. To this end, partnerships have been formed, land has been acquired and initial ideas have been developed to determine the best future uses for the Gungate site.

Specific actions that the Borough Council has carried out include:

- Acquiring the land to the south of Spinning School Lane from the private sector
- Taking back ownership of the Bingo Hall to the north of spinning School Lane
- Researching housing need and demand
- Investigating market demand for town centre uses
- Carrying out financial viability appraisals for town centre uses
- Identifying design principles to be considered for future development
- Reviewing the constraints to development for the site

As is the case for many town centres, the Covid-19 pandemic has accelerated the rate of decline within Tamworth Town Centre and as a consequence, its role is likely to change. In response to this, the Borough Council believes that a flexible approach should be taken towards town centre regeneration, an approach which is both adaptable and responsive to changes in market conditions.

While we recognise that flexibility is key in delivering this ambitious project, we also understand that to create well-designed and welcoming places, common design themes and principles need to be set out and agreed at an early stage. These principles will, in turn, act as a guide for developers, while also ensuring a degree of consistency, and a good relationship between the different areas across the site and proposed new buildings.

Any new uses proposed in the Gungate Regeneration Quarter must work alongside each other, complement the rest of the town centre and also take into account the neighbouring proposals associated with the Tamworth

Future High Streets regeneration program that include the relocation of South Staffordshire College to the site of the Tamworth Cooperative Society Department Store, the creation of a new Enterprise Centre at the Cooperative offices and the public realm improvements proposed at St Edithas Square.

We are therefore seeking your views and opinions on these key design themes and principles which will in turn inform the future development of the Gungate Quarter.

The document is divided into a number of sections, each posing questions and we welcome your responses to these questions and any other comments you wish to make. A [link](#) is provided at the end of this document for your questions and comments. The Council will respond to questions and comments received during this consultation which, by necessity, has to be a virtual consultation due to the current pandemic.

Potential Uses

As part of the masterplanning exercise, detailed market analysis was undertaken to determine what demand existed for different types of uses/development. This indicated that there could be opportunities to deliver the following uses at the Gungate Site:

1. Residential (apartments and town/mews houses)
2. Retirement Living
3. Leisure Centre
4. Workspace
5. Hotel
6. Multi-Storey Car Parking
7. Night time Leisure Economy (restaurants / bars)
8. Local retail, medical, professional services

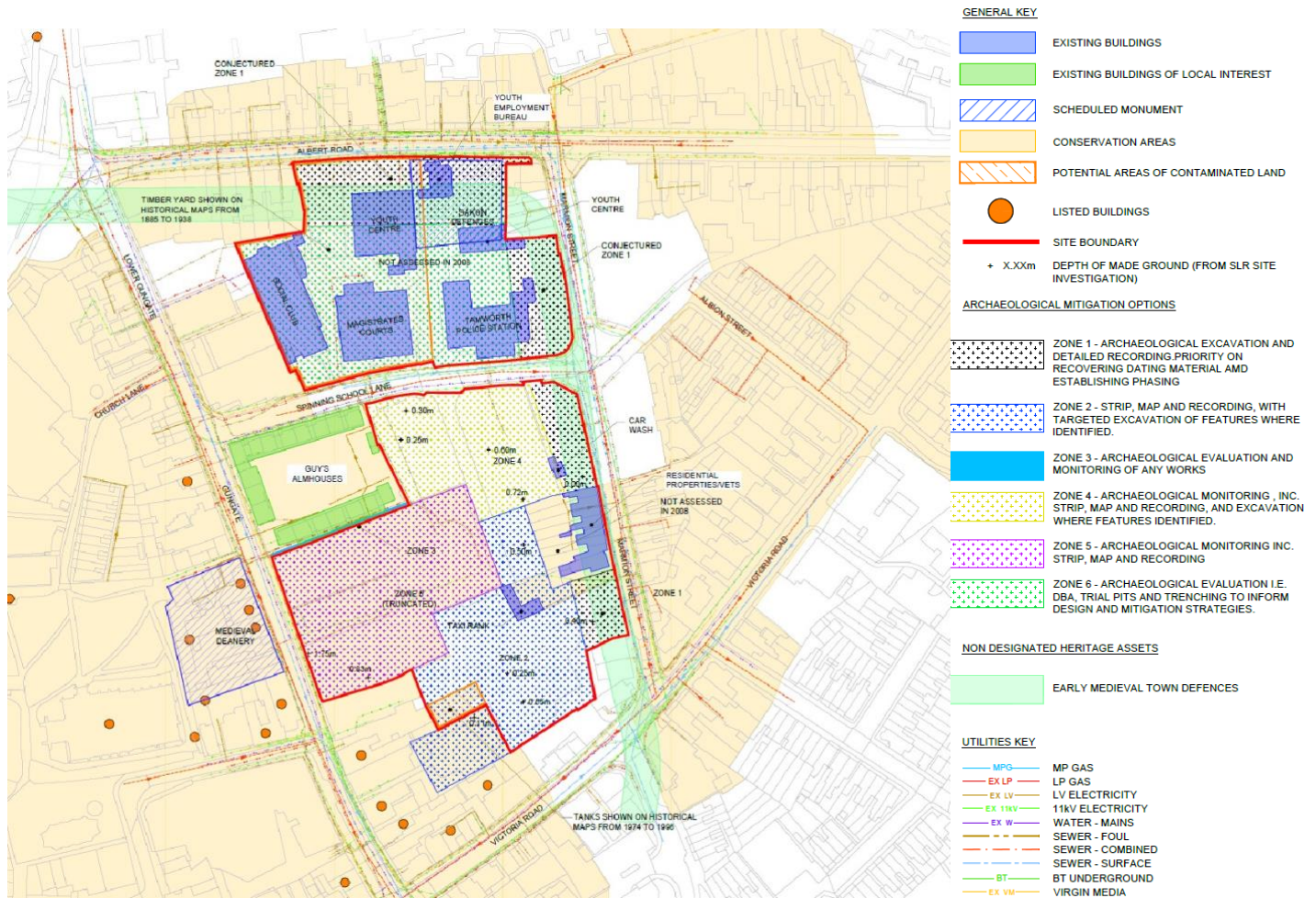
Other uses, such as a new cinema, were investigated but have been discounted due to local competition or lack of market demand.

Question 1 - Do you think a mix of uses is appropriate for the site?

Question 2 - Can you think of other uses that might work?

Question 3 - What would you like to see in a new Leisure Centre?

Site Constraints



This image shows the results of a number of studies undertaken by the Borough Council into utilities, depth of disturbed ground, level of archaeological interest and heritage designations.

This information creates a number of constraints (obstacles) that may present challenges for the development of the site and these issues may restrict what types of development can occur or where new buildings could be located.

This plan shows such information as, the proximity to areas of possible archaeological interest, surrounding conservation areas and neighbouring listed buildings and this information will be taken into account when considering development proposals.

Question 4 – Are you aware of any other constraints (obstacles) that may present challenges for the development of the site?

Site Analysis

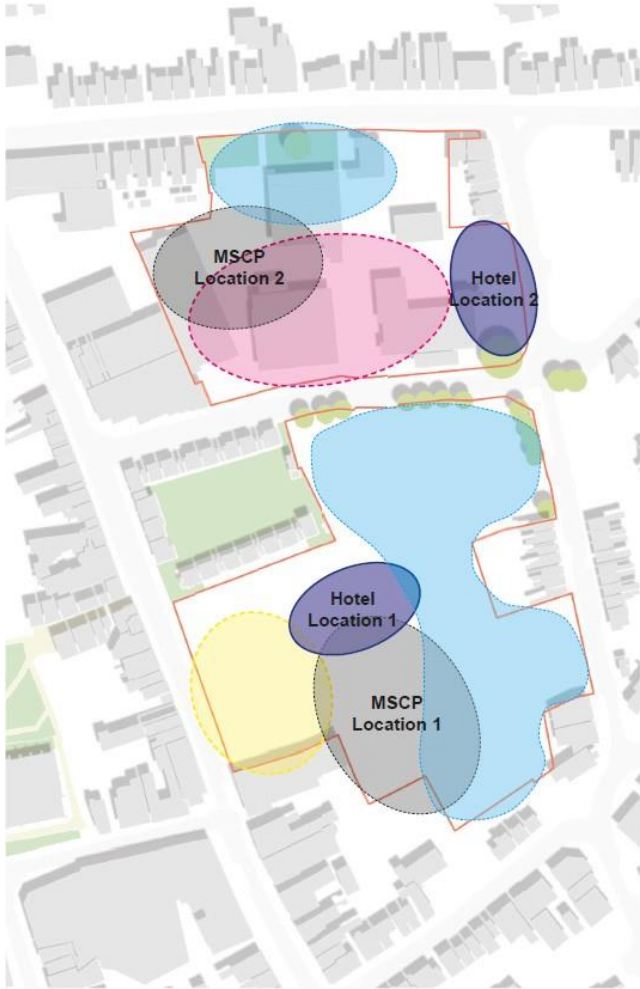







This image shows the Gungate Regeneration area (inside the red line boundaries) and starts to identify key characteristics and requirements that need to be considered when developing the site.

Key requirements identified include the need to retain and highlight the views of St Editha's Church, create sites for new public open space and create new pedestrian links through the site, such as a route from the town centre towards Tamworth Railway Station. There are also opportunities to encourage interesting street scenes across the site - this means buildings with windows and doors opening onto the street to generate interest and activity rather than blank walls.

Question 5 - On the basis of your local knowledge, can you think of any other key characteristics, requirements and opportunities that should be taken into consideration in developing the site that haven't been identified?

Good Neighbours



- | | |
|---|--|
|  Residential |  Cinema / Leisure |
|  MSCP |  Hotel |
|  Leisure | |

This image starts to consider how different types of buildings (uses) could be accommodated at the site and how they would relate to one another.

It shows that a Multi Storey Car Park (MSCP) could be located north or south of Spinning School Lane. It also shows how a hotel could be accommodated in different locations. This type of plan highlights the positives and negatives associated with the location of different buildings.

For example, creating access to a Multi Storey Car Park (MSCP) in Location 1 could be challenging as there is no immediate access/egress close to existing roads. Hotel Location 1 would also mean a tall building close to neighbouring heritage buildings.

The challenge for the Council will be to ensure that individual developments are good neighbours to each other whilst taking into account the surrounding context i.e. buildings to be retained, existing road networks and the wider town centre.

Question 6 - What uses do you think should not be next to each other?

Indicative Heights and Sizes



This plan starts to consider the scale of development across the area. In particular, it considers what heights and sizes of buildings could be appropriate for new development.

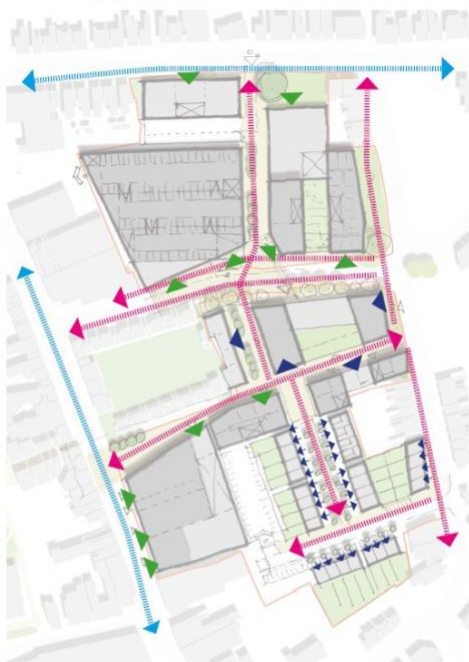
This plan suggests that taller buildings would be more appropriate to the north of Spinning School Lane where there is already the 4-storey police station building. The area north of Spinning School Lane may also be more appropriate for larger buildings, taking into account the fact that this area already accommodates the former Bingo Hall and is adjacent to Atik Nightclub; both of which are large buildings.

The analysis suggests that lower and smaller buildings would be more appropriate to the south of Spinning School Lane as this would have less impact on the heritage of Sir Thomas Guy's Almshouses and would be more suited to the scale of the existing town centre.

Question 7 – What do you think about the idea of having taller and larger buildings to the north: lower and smaller buildings to the south?

New Routes

Pedestrian and cycle routes



Key

- Existing route
- New route
- Public entrance
- Residential entrances

This plan shows an indicative layout of the site. It shows how buildings could be arranged to allow for new pedestrian and cycle routes through the site, to make it easier to both move around and through the area

Question 8 - Would the routes shown make it easier to get around the area and, in your experience, do they provide the most direct route? If not, please explain why?

New Parking and Access

Parking and access



Key

- Primary route
- Secondary route
- Access to parking
- Limited through traffic
- MSCP
- Workplace parking
- Resident parking

This plan shows how vehicles could access the site and how cars could be accommodated if a Multi Storey Car Park (MSCP) is provided north of Spinning School Lane. This could be accessed using a one-way system from Albert Road with an exit to Lower Gungate.

Providing the car park north of Spinning School Lane frees up the area to the south of the site for development. It also places the large car park building to the north of the site, where it will have less visual impact on the heritage of Thomas Guy's Almshouses and the town centre Conservation Area.

These new access proposals to the Multi Storey Car Park (MSCP) would mean less cars through Spinning School Lane and less cars coming into the town centre, creating a more pedestrian-friendly environment.

Question 9 - Do you think that this new road layout would be an improvement?

Question 10 – How do you think public transport could fit into the site?

Indicative Open Space

Open space



Key



This plan shows how buildings could be positioned to allow for public open spaces (coloured yellow). These spaces allow movement through the site and would provide space to stop and enjoy the new environment, while helping to reconnect the site with the rest of the town centre.

New housing would also bring with it gardens for new residents (coloured green) with their associated trees, lawns and ponds.

Question 11 – What would you like to see in any new public open space? (For example, types of surfacing, types of trees, public art, small amenity areas with seating)

Indicative Layouts



These two images show different ways that buildings could be accommodated within the site. There are a number of ways that the site could be developed taking into account the identified uses, site characteristics, constraints and opportunities. As private sector investment will be required for the development of the majority of the site, the final layout will depend significantly on future market demand but in accordance with the key principles of the masterplan (e.g. heights, public realm/spaces, access).



Indicative Aerial Views



Using one of the Indicative Layouts shown on the previous page, these images show 3D views of how the site could look in terms of the distribution of buildings and open space if the site is fully developed.

The images are of the site looking north-east and south west across Colehill.



Spinning School Lane Visualisation



The image looks north-west from Colehill across Spinning School Lane.

This indicative visualisation shows the type of environment which could be delivered in the Gungate area. The image highlights the principles of providing improved open space, encouraging an interesting street scene and delivering a high-quality environment.

Marmion St. Visualisation



The image looks south-east from Marmion Street across Spinning School Lane.

This indicative visualisation shows a type of residential accommodation which could be accommodated within the Gungate Regeneration Quarter. Housing could vary from the flatted accommodation of up to 4 storeys as shown in the illustration to mews houses or terraced housing.

Question 12 – What do you think about having residential development in the Gungate Regeneration area?

Question 13 - Do you prefer a contemporary or more traditional design approach for housing in this area?

Question 14 – What sort(s) of housing would you like to see within the Gungate site?

Questions, Answers and Comments

The timetable for this public engagement is:

1st February 2021	Start of consultation
15th of February 2021	Initial responses by the Council to questions and comments
26th of February 2021	Final responses by the Council to questions and comments
1st of March 2021	End of consultation

Please respond with all questions, answers and comments using the following link:

<https://wh1.snapsurveys.com/s.asp?k=161183334833>

Questions received to date (1 Feb 2021) with responses are provided in the table below. An up-dated table will be published on the website on 15/01/2021 and 26/01/2021. A final summary of the consultation exercise with the Council's conclusions and any proposed actions will be published on the website. The date of publication will depend on the level of interest and responses received from the public.

No	QUESTION /COMMENT	ANSWER
1	I have only one concern with this development and that is the reallocating of the car park capacity.	<p>The capacity of the Multi Storey Car Park (MSCP) is a major issue but, firstly, it can be stated that new capacity will be provided before the current car parking is developed. There will be no period where car parking is removed before new capacity is provided.</p> <p>The simplest approach to the number of car parking spaces is to provide like-for-like but there are a number of points that should also be considered:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Increased capacity for leisure centre users 2. Increased capacity for all-day parking for Tamworth rail commuters 3. Increased capacity for an increase in visitors to Tamworth 4. Reduced capacity due to global warming policies (-though this may be affected over time by the shift to electric vehicles) 5. Reduced capacity to encourage greater use of public transport 6. Increased capacity by incorporating the car parking at nearby TBC surface car parks so freeing up these car parks for suitable town centre development <p>As can be seen the capacity of the proposed Multi Storey Car Park (MSCP) is a crucial design issue for the present and, in order to future-proof the MSCP, there will be detailed discussion of this issue when this element of the regeneration programme moves forward.</p>
2	Is hotel use feasible given the likely effect of Covid 19 on the hotel industry?	Despite initial interest from a hotel operator, this use is not now being currently pursued as the market demand for new hotel accommodation is seen as very weak due to the Coronavirus pandemic. However the Council intends to re-visit the hotel market once the pandemic is over.
3	What are the advantages of a Multi-storey Car Park in the north of the site?	The advantages of a northern Multi Storey Car Park (MSCP) location are that the site is currently occupied by large-scale buildings, is next to a main road into the town and is near to the train station. The location also allows a one-way system into and out of the MSCP which will reduce traffic going through the town centre. Any new residential development will also be some distance away from the MSCP.
4	Is a cinema an option?	The financial viability of a cinema was investigated and found to be high risk. Since the financial viability of a new cinema was investigated the Tamworth Odeon cinema has made a significant investment into up-grading into an Odeon Plus Cinema and the Covid 19 pandemic has happened. For these reasons the cinema option is not currently being pursued.

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