

**Tamworth Borough Council
Statement of Community
Involvement
September 2022**

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Part A - Introduction

This statement sets out our approach to involving the community in planning decisions in Tamworth. It aims to explain when and how you can get involved in both the development of a new local plan and decisions on individual planning applications.

The statement is split into three parts. The rest of Part A contains general principles and information; Part B covers the local plan and other planning policy work; and Part C relates to planning applications.

Our approach to engagement

Whenever we engage with you, we will try to:

- **Keep things simple**, by using plain English and explaining any technical terms that we need to use.
- **Communicate clearly**, by explaining why we're engaging with you.
- **Make it easy for you to get involved**, by explaining when and how you can get involved, and by using a variety of approaches where appropriate.
- **Make sure your involvement is effective**, by clearly explaining what we can and can't take into account and making sure you have enough time and notice of opportunities to get involved.
- **Be inclusive**, by providing information in an accessible format where possible and giving clear advice on how the planning system works when requested. We will also encourage involvement from groups that have traditionally not been involved in the planning process.
- **Be consistent** so that you know what to expect, and to ensure fairness for all applicants and residents.
- **Be reasonable and respectful** by treating everyone with respect.

Who will we look to engage with?

Government planning regulations require us to make sure that certain groups are consulted at key stages in preparing the local plan or determining planning applications. This includes, for example, the Environment Agency, Highways England, Historic England and Staffordshire County Council. The full list is updated periodically and is available online on the Government's planning system website.

As well as those groups we have to consult with, we would like anyone who is interested to have the chance to be involved in the preparation of the local plan. To help with this, we have a list of people who have expressed an interest in staying informed about planning matters in Tamworth, and we use this list to help us engage with a wider audience where appropriate. If you would like to be added to the list, please contact the Planning Policy and Delivery team at developmentplan@tamworth.gov.uk

How you can get involved

We will keep you informed through various ways including by letter or e-mail, through our website (www.tamworth.gov.uk) and social media channels, and notices in the local newspaper where appropriate. The methods we use to engage with people will vary depending on the particular document being produced or planning application being considered, and may also include public consultation events. When deciding on the best approach in any situation, we will always try to make sure that the process is proportionate and provides value for money.

The role of Planning Officers

The Council's planning officers are split into two teams:

- **The Planning Policy and Delivery Team** produces the local plan and other development plan documents and administer the Community Infrastructure Levy.
- **The Development Management Team** validates and assesses planning applications and investigate alleged breaches of planning control.

The role of Councillors

Councillors have a key role to play in the planning process:

- Councillors are responsible for approving and adopting all development plan documents such as the local plan.

- Our planning committee is made up of 13 councillors who make decisions on all major planning applications and applications that are called in by a ward councillor or there is a wider public interest.
- Councillors who aren't on the planning committee may also speak at committee meetings on behalf of residents where the development is in their ward. You can contact them to discuss applications in their wards and neighbouring wards where there may be an impact. You can find your local councillor on our website at:
<https://modgov.tamworth.gov.uk/mgMemberIndex.aspx?bcr=1>

The role of councillors in representing the views and concerns of residents is very important, but your views can only be formally taken into account when you make them in writing to planning officers.

Part B - Local Plans

The local plan sets out a vision and objectives for the future development of Tamworth and contains the policies we use to make decisions on planning applications. The current plan for Tamworth is made up of the Tamworth Borough Council Local Plan 2006 – 2031 and a number of other supplementary documents. You can find the current plan and related documents on our website at: <https://www.tamworth.gov.uk/local-plan>

We are currently working on a new local plan for Tamworth. Information on the stages of that process and the ways that you can get involved is set out below. The timetable for the development of the new plan is included in our Local Development Scheme which will be updated throughout the process and can be found on our website at: <https://www.tamworth.gov.uk/local-development-scheme>

Preparing new planning documents

When you can get involved

The new local plan

There are a number of key stages involved in producing a local plan, and there are a number of stages along the way where you can get involved.

Stage 1: Issues and Options

Where we try to identify the key issues that the local plan needs to address and what we can do about them. We'll ask for your input on what those issues and options might be.

Stage 2: Preferred Options

Where we'll use what we've learned from the issues and options stage to set out what we think are the key issues facing Tamworth and what we think is the best approach to tackling them. We don't have to consult at this stage, but we'll be asking for input anyway.

Stage 3: Pre-submission

Where we'll have a draft version of the plan with policies and site allocations based on evidence collected and feedback from the previous stages. We'll be asking for further input at this stage, before we submit the plan for examination.

Stage 4: Examination in Public

Where an independent planning inspector will examine the plan to check if it is 'sound' and able to be adopted by the Council. Comments received at the previous stages will be considered by the inspector and people who have commented may be invited to take part in the examination.

Other related documents

Sometimes we produce other planning policy documents, like Supplementary Planning Documents, which give extra information about the policies in the plan. We'll often ask for your views on these documents too, but how we engage with you will depend on what the document is about.

How we'll engage with you

- **Website** – our website is the main point of access for all planning information. We will use it to keep you informed about the plan making process and to provide opportunities for you to review information and tell us what you think;
- **Press and social media** – we'll use our social media channels, and sometimes press releases too, to put out information about progress on preparing planning documents and to let you know about opportunities to get involved;
- **Letters and emails** – where appropriate, we may write out directly to interested parties to seek their views. This will usually involve contacting individuals whose details are included on the list of interested parties referred to in Part A above;
- **Exhibitions and workshops** – when it's appropriate, we might put on exhibitions and workshops to give you the chance to look at plans and proposals and to speak to planning officers and other members of the community in an informal setting. These sessions may be online or in person depending on topic and who we're trying to engage with.
- **Statutory notices** – where we're required to do so, we'll publish notices in a local newspaper to notify you of certain key events and milestones;
- **Other methods** – there may be times when there are opportunities to use an approach that we haven't listed above. As part of our commitment to make it easy for you to get involved,

we'll try to take these opportunities where they are appropriate and cost-effective.

How we'll make documents available

We'll use our website as the main place for sharing documents and other information that we want your input on because it is accessible and allows you to look at the information in your own time. Because we know not everybody has access to the internet, we'll also try to make paper copies available to look at. These will usually be available at the places listed below during their normal opening hours, but those places may not always be available, and we may have to make alternative arrangements sometimes.

Tamworth Information Centre Tamworth Assembly Rooms Corporation Street Tamworth B79 7DN.	Tamworth Library Corporation Street Tamworth B79 7DN
Glascote Library Caledonian Glascote Tamworth B77 2ED	Wilnecote Library Wilnecote High School Tinkers Green Road Wilnecote Tamworth B77 5LF

Neighbourhood Plans

Neighbourhood planning is another way for communities to have a say in the planning of their area. The process is usually led by parish or town councils, but in places where there are none (as in Tamworth) local residents can form a neighbourhood forum to produce a plan for their area.

Although the Council doesn't prepare neighbourhood plans, we do have a duty to provide advice and assistance to forums wishing to produce one and to take plans through the legal publication, examination, referendum and adoption processes

You can find out more about what's involved in neighbourhood planning online at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2> or <https://neighbourhoodplanning.org/>

There are currently no neighbourhood plans being prepared in Tamworth. In the event that any come forward, we will update this document to include information on how you can get involved.

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Part C - Planning Applications

All applications for planning permission and related consents (such as works to listed buildings and display of advertisements) are assessed by our Development Management team. They are responsible for determining most applications in line with the Council's Constitution, but some applications are determined by the Council's Planning Committee. The types of application that are determined by Planning Committee are Major applications, applications raising issues of considerable public interest, or where a Ward member has requested that the application is 'called in'.

All decisions on planning applications will be made in accordance with the adopted development plan, unless material considerations, including national planning policies and guidance or site specific matters, indicate otherwise.

Whether the decision is made by planning officers or the Planning Committee, your views are important and will be taken into consideration where appropriate. Information on how you can get involved in planning decisions is set out below.

How you can find out about planning applications

You can view the details of planning applications, including supporting documents, plans, and drawings on our website at <http://www.tamworth.gov.uk/planning.aspx>. In exceptional circumstances, we may be able to make paper copies of documents available for viewing. If you are having difficulty viewing the information online, please contact us on 01827 709709 or by email at planningadmin@tamworth.gov.uk to ask about alternative ways to view the documents or to arrange a time to discuss the details with a planning officer.

Government regulations and guidance set out how we're required to publicise different types of application. Those requirements are set out in the table below.

	Letters	Press Advert	Site Notice
Application Type			
Major	x	x	x
Listed Building	x	x	x
Minor application in conservation area	x	x	x
Other Minor application	x		x (where neighbours unknown)
Householder developments in a Conservation Area	x	x	x
Other Householder developments	x		x (where neighbours unknown)
Prior approval	x		x (where neighbours unknown)
Works to TPO trees			x

How you can comment on an application

Once we've sent a letter, or posted a press and/or site notice, you'll have 23 days to send us any comments you'd like to make on the application. If a press and site notice are published on different days, the 23 days starts from the date of whichever is posted later.

23 days is a longer period than we're required to do by the regulations, but we do this to make sure that any public holidays that might fall within the publicity period are taken into account.

It's important that you submit any comments within the 23 day period because we might not be able to take them into account if they are received after that.

If an applicant submits additional information, or significantly changes their proposal, we may carry out an extra period of publicity and consultation to make sure that the full extent of the proposal is known and to allow you time to submit additional comments.

Who we notify about any additional or amended information will depend on the scale of the changes and how significant they are, and that decision will be made by the planning officers on a case by case basis. Any additional or amended information will be made available on our website though, so if you are interested in any particular application you

should check the website occasionally in case any new information has been added.

If you want to make a comment on any planning application, you can send us an email or write to us using the information below. We would recommend using email where you can. If you do choose to send your comments by post, please allow enough time for the letter to arrive within the consultation period.

- **E-mail** – planningadmin@tamworth.gov.uk
- **Post** – Tamworth Borough Council
Marmion House
Lichfield Street
Tamworth
B79 7BZ

What we'll do with your comments

All comments received on applications are considered by a planning officer and, where they are relevant to the application being considered, they will be taken into account when we make a decision. Your comments are only one of the considerations however, and they will be weighed against other considerations (such as local and national planning policies and guidance).

All planning application documents are available online and only information exempt under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 and the Data Protection Act 1998 is withheld from public view. Comments received on planning applications will be summarised in the officer's report and will be published in their entirety on our website with the exception of telephone numbers, email addresses and signatures, which will be redacted.

Consultation by applicants

We encourage applicants to engage with neighbouring landowners and the community before submitting any application for planning permission or other forms of consent. This engagement should be proportionate to the scale of the proposed development and for larger scale developments, these consultations should be carried out at an early stage in the process, to make sure feedback can be incorporated into the submitted proposal. Our local list of validation requirements sets out the types of application which should be accompanied by a statement of community involvement.

Our planning officers would not normally participate in these public meetings or exhibitions.

Decision making and Planning Committee

Most planning applications are determined by planning officers under delegated powers (as set out in the Council's Constitution and Scheme of Delegation). Where decisions are made by the Planning Committee, people who have commented on the application have the opportunity to speak at the committee meeting.

Planning Committee is a public meeting, and anyone can attend, but you (or a representative speaking on your behalf) will only be allowed to speak at the committee meeting if you have commented on the application, in writing, within the appropriate time period mentioned above.

When you submit comments on any application, please make it **very clear** that you may wish to speak at the meeting if the application is determined by committee. We will then let you know the meeting date by email and provide guidance on speaking at the meeting if you would still like to do so.

The Assistant Director - Growth and Regeneration has the discretion to refuse a request to address the Planning Committee but, if this happens, they will write to you letting you know the reason for their decision.

A maximum of two objectors to a planning application are allowed to speak and are allowed a maximum of 3 minutes each.

A maximum of two supporters (one slot reserved for the agent/applicant) of a proposal will also be allowed to speak for a maximum of 3 minutes each.

Councillors for the wards affected by the proposal will, subject to giving prior notification to the Assistant Director - Growth and Regeneration, be allowed to speak either in favour or against planning applications for a total of 3 minutes each.

There may be exceptional cases where the time allowed for public speaking may be extended at the discretion of the committee chair. If this happens every speaker's slot will be extended by the same amount of time.

There may be cases where there are more people who wish to speak than slots available. If this happens, we will encourage you to nominate a spokesperson to speak on behalf of everyone.

If, after the speakers have had chance to address the committee, a decision on the application is deferred to a later meeting, public speaking will not usually be allowed at the later meeting, unless significant changes are made to the planning application. Then a further opportunity may be given to people who spoke at the original meeting and, if there are any free slots available, new speakers may also be allowed.

Planning Committee agendas are usually published five days before the meeting on our website at:
<https://democracy.tamworth.gov.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx?GL=1&bcr=1>

Notification after Planning Committee

We will not usually write out to people who have submitted representations to let them of a decision. Decisions on all planning applications, including those made by the Planning Committee, are published on our website as soon as possible following the decision.

Planning appeals

If a planning application is refused, or conditions are put on a permission that an applicant is unhappy with, the applicant can appeal to the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) against the decision. If this happens, we'll let those people who were notified on the original application, and anyone else who commented on it, know that the appeal has been lodged. Any comments received on the application will be forwarded to PINS and, in some cases, you may have the opportunity to make further comments directly to them.

If the appeal will include a public inquiry, we'll also post a site notice to let the public know.