

Local Plan 2043 Issues and Options Document

Contents

Section 1 Introduction

Section 2 How to get involved

Section 3 Tamworth at a Glance

Section 4 Our Proposed Timeline

Section 5 Vision and Objectives

Section 6 Issues and Options

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Section 1: Introduction

What is the purpose of this document?

This document is the first consultation stage in the Local Plan process. It provides an opportunity for you to get involved in developing our future Local Plan, and offer comments on how we should seek to address some of the key issues that our Borough faces.

Section 3 contains a spatial portrait, which builds a picture of our Borough today and forecasts what it may look like in the future. The spatial portrait helps to identify some of the key **issues** our Borough may face in the period up to 2043. Section 6 sets out these key issues and suggests ways in which they can be addressed through the Local Plan. These are regarded as the **options**.

This consultation invites your views on how these issues should be addressed by proposing a series of questions throughout the document.

193

What is a Local Plan?

The Government requires all local councils to produce a long-term plan which sets out a vision for their area. It should identify where and how development should take place in the future. This document is known as a **Local Plan**.

A Local Plan sets out all the planning policies and proposals for an area. It addresses needs and opportunities in relation to housing and the economy, whilst ensuring that we have sufficient community facilities and infrastructure to support the growing population. It also contains policies to safeguard the environment, mitigate and adapt to climate change, and achieve well-designed neighbourhoods. Local Plans are an essential part of the planning system because they are the basis against which applications for planning permission are assessed.

The current Local Plan for Tamworth was adopted in 2016. It sets out the vision and framework for development up to 2031.

Why does Tamworth need a new Local Plan?

Over the last six years, our current Local Plan (2016) has helped to deliver new homes and job opportunities in sustainable locations across the Borough, whilst ensuring that we make the most efficient use of our limited land supply. In 2018, the Government introduced a requirement for all Councils to review their Local Plans every five years.

In March 2020, we carried out a review of our current Local Plan. This review process concluded that, although the Plan remained generally in accordance with national policy and was performing relatively well, a number of changes would be required to ensure continued compliance.

The extent of changes identified by the 2020 review are significant enough to warrant the production of a new Local Plan. The new Local Plan will set out where and how new development will take place in Tamworth over the period to 2043.

Section 2: How to get involved

What do we want your comments on?

This document will suggest various ways that the new Local Plan can help to address some of the Borough's key issues. We would like to hear your views on these proposals, and have posed some questions along the way to help focus the discussion.

The issues and options are arranged by topic area. You are welcome to comment on every issue, or alternatively, you can just focus on the ones that specifically interest you.

How can you submit your comments?

You can submit your comments:

- ✓ **Online**
Complete the form online using the link on our website. Alternatively, click [here](#) to access the form directly.
- ✓ **By Email**
Download and complete the Microsoft Word version of the form. Return this by email to us at developmentplan@tamworth.gov.uk.
- ✓ **By Post**
Download and complete the Microsoft Word version of the form, either electronically or by hand. Return this by post to us at:

*Development Plan Team
Tamworth Borough Council
Marmion House
Lichfield Street
Tamworth
B79 7BZ*

The closing date for responses is **Monday 31st October 2022 at 5pm**. Any responses which are received after this time may not be taken into account at this stage.

What happens next?

This Issues and Options Document is part of Stage 1 of the Local Plan Development Process. Your feedback will be collated and analysed to inform the next stage of the process, where Tamworth's new Local Plan will begin to take shape. There will be further opportunities for you to get involved at each stage. A timetable for the various stages of Local Plan development is included in our Local Development Scheme, which is available on our website at: <https://www.tamworth.gov.uk/local-development-scheme>.

Section 3:

Tamworth at a Glance

This brief spatial portrait takes a look at Tamworth in the past, present and future. It identifies some of the potential issues that our Borough faces, and sets the scene to begin considering how they could be addressed.

This section is only a quick snapshot of Tamworth. If you fancy a more detailed insight into our Borough, then the full version of our spatial portrait can be found online at www.tamworth.gov.uk/local-plan.

Our Geography

The Borough of Tamworth is situated within the south-eastern corner of Staffordshire, extending across approximately 12 square miles. Such a compact urban area establishes our Borough as one of the smallest local authority districts in England.

Our Wards

Tamworth comprises of ten wards, all of which are unique in both character and spatial features. Each ward is home to different strengths, opportunities, and challenges, against which a range of issues and options must be considered.

Our Origins

Our Borough has strong historical links with Birmingham as an overspill settlement, which has had a lasting effect on our urban form, population, and housing provision. The overspill agreement prompted the relocation of Birmingham residents into the Borough, creating significant urban growth during the 1960s. To accommodate the Borough's sudden growth in population, former rural land was transformed into a series of planned neighbourhoods. Such historic growth patterns have shaped a Borough which is almost exclusively urban, with limited instances of rural space.

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Our Population

Tamworth is home to approximately 76,454 residents (2020). There is a higher proportion of over 65s compared to the regional and national average, with the ageing population accounting for 19.6% of all residents. The ageing population has grown by 5.5% in the last decade, with differences in concentration across wards. By 2030, the ageing population is projected to account for 23% of all residents. Such growth in the ageing population means that the working population is getting smaller. Residents aged between 16 and 64 currently represent 62.3% of the total population. By 2030, this share is expected to fall to 60.2%.

Our Housing

The average house price in the Borough is £220,000 (September 2021), which is the same as the average for Staffordshire. Although the average Tamworth house price has consistently fallen below the regional (West Midlands) average over the last decade, housing affordability remains an issue in the Borough. House price inflation has led to a housing market that first time buyers find difficult to access, with the lowest quartile house price 7.61 times the lowest quartile income (2021). This is higher than housing affordability in both Staffordshire (7.12) and the wider West Midlands (7.55). This shows how challenging it is to purchase a house within the Borough, especially for first time buyers.

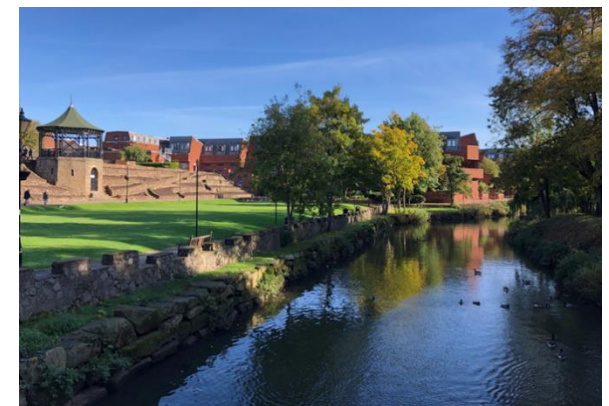
Page 196

Our Historic Environment

Tamworth has a rich legacy of historic buildings and landscapes, boasting a compact urban area concentrated with conserved history. The Borough possesses a wealth of historic assets, which have moulded a local identity defined by its unique tapestry of architectural styles. There are seven conservation areas, a large number of listed buildings and a selection of nationally-significant Scheduled Monuments. Tamworth is particularly renowned for its motte and bailey castle which sits at the heart of the town centre. The conservation of these historic sites and their settings is of significant importance as they contribute to the distinctive character of Tamworth and its vibrant tourism economy.

Our Natural Environment

The Borough boasts an extensive green and blue infrastructure network, including fourteen wildlife sites and seven local nature reserves. The south of Tamworth is home to approximately 210 hectares of the West Midlands Green Belt, covering around 6.8% of the Borough's total land area. A large proportion of the Borough is located within designated Flood Zone areas, with particular spatial concentration along the western boundary and to the northeast. As such, much of the town's essential infrastructure is prone to flood vulnerability, and large areas of both residential and industrial properties are at risk.





Our Employment

The Borough's unemployment levels have significantly improved over the last decade. Currently, approximately 4.1% of the total population currently out of work, compared to 10.8% in 2010-2011. Now, a lower proportion of our working population are unemployed compared to the West Midlands (5.0%) and Great Britain (4.4%) averages.

Just under 17% of all VAT-registered businesses in the Borough are in the construction industry, with approximately 13% of firms related to either professional, scientific or technical services.

Our Town Centre

Our town centre is home to a range of services and facilities, all which help to support both the Borough and its surrounding rural areas.

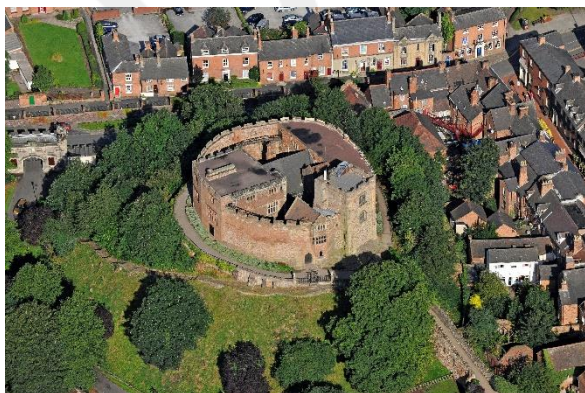
Over recent years, our town centre has experienced some changes to both its composition and use. Between 2008 and 2019, the annual comparison goods spend has fallen from £117.28 million to £37.2 million, meaning that Tamworth's ranking compared to other town centres in the UK has fallen from 219 to 782. Over the same period of time, the town centre's market share from its primary catchment area decreased from 34% to 12%, whilst Ventura Retail Park's market share has increased from 21% to 58%. Footfall has also significantly decreased in recent years. Data from Ankerside Shopping Centre shows that the annual footfall fell between 2005 and 2018 from 7.3 million to 4.1 million.

Our town centre is due to undergo extensive regeneration following the Council's award of £21.65 million from the Government's Future High Street Fund. This will be filtered into a variety of projects, including the Gungate redevelopment after the Council's purchase of the vacant site.

Our Connectivity

Tamworth's compact urban form offers an opportunity for strong transport connectivity within the Borough and with the wider West Midlands region.

The Borough is well-connected by road and rail, as well boasting infrastructure to support more sustainable travel methods, such as cycling and walking. Although Tamworth is well connected, the use of public transport and sustainable travel methods to commute to work remain low. The most recent available data (based on the 2011 census) suggests that just under 65% of residents use vehicular means to get to work, which falls short in contributing towards a sustainable lifestyle.



Section 4:

Our Proposed Timeline

Local Plans must be equipped to anticipate and respond to long-term requirements and opportunities. To ensure that this can be achieved, they should look ahead over a minimum of 15 years from their point of adoption.

In the case of Tamworth Borough, we are still in the early stages of developing our new Local Plan. As such, we need to determine an end date that not only looks 15 years ahead, but also takes into account an additional time allowance to complete and adopt the new Plan.

We are therefore proposing to set the end date of the new Plan to 2043.

Have your say...

Feedback Point 1

Do you agree that 2043 is an appropriate end point for the plan?
If not, what alternative end point would you suggest?

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Section 5

Our Vision and Objectives

In February 2022, the Council adopted a new vision. This sets out our overarching aspiration for the Borough as we look towards the future. The vision applies to all functions of the Council, and as such, it is proposed that it be used as the starting point for the new Local Plan. The proposed vision is: **“Celebrating our heritage, creating a better future.”**

To deliver this, we are proposing to set the following 11 objectives. These are intended to cover a range of issues and topics, and will form the basis for the policies in our new Local Plan.

Objective 1: **Tackle the causes and adapt to the effects of climate change.**

Objective 2: **Make the most efficient and sustainable use of the Borough’s limited supply of land.**

Objective 3: **Provide a supply of high quality and affordable homes to meet the needs of all sections of our community.**

Objective 4: **Support the existing local economy whilst being flexible enough to respond positively to new economic opportunities.**

Objective 5: **Regenerate and diversify the town centre to create a thriving destination and vibrant evening economy.**

Objective 6: **Protect and enhance the Borough’s heritage including through facilitating appropriate reuse of heritage assets.**

Objective 7: **Deliver sustainable neighbourhoods through the provision and protection of local services and facilities.**

Objective 8: **Encourage active and healthier lifestyles by providing accessible green and blue linkages and open spaces, as well as formal indoor and outdoor recreation facilities.**

Objective 9: **Promote sustainable transport modes for all journeys through improving walking, cycling, public transport, and electric vehicle facilities.**

Objective 10: **Protect and enhance ecological and biodiversity assets.**

Objective 11: **Ensure that appropriate infrastructure is in place to support new development across the Borough including digital infrastructure.**

Feedback Point 2

Do you agree that these are the right vision and objectives for the Local Plan? If not, what changes would you like to see and why?

Have your say...

Section 6

Issues and Options

This section sets out what we consider to be the key issues for our Local Plan. Each key issue is related to an objective, and focuses on the matters where we need your input to help us agree a way forward.

Each sub-section will be generally set out in this format:

6.1. Topic

6.1.1. Issue

An **Option** box that relates to that issue and supporting questions. We want to hear from you about which of the options you prefer. This will help us decide the policy that will go in the Local Plan.

Page 200

Have your say...

Feedback Point

These boxes indicate an opportunity for you to provide your views on either an issue or set of options. You can respond with your feedback through our online or paper form, as explained in Section 2.

A list of **additional policy approaches** relating back to the Objective. These are policy approaches that we intend to include in the Local Plan. We ask a question about whether you agree with these.

Before you continue to the next section...

Feedback Point

At the end of each subsection, you will be given the opportunity to provide any further comments before you move on.

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6.1. Climate Change and Biodiversity

Objective: Tackle the causes and adapt to the effects of climate change.

Objective: Protect and enhance ecological and biodiversity assets.

Staffordshire is exposed to a number of climate-related risks, in particular flooding. Climate change is expected to exacerbate these risks, and is expected to result in warmer, wetter winters and hotter, drier summers, with an increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events (Aecom baseline report 2020). In November 2019 the Council declared a climate emergency and set a target of making our own activities net-zero carbon by 2050 with an aspiration to achieve it by 2030 if possible. Through the local plan, we will also look to reduce the impact of new development on climate change.

6.1.1. Issue: Achieving carbon reduction from new development.

National Government introduced new Building Regulations which came into effect in June 2022 requiring a 30% reduction on carbon emissions from new homes and a 27% cut in carbon emissions from non-residential buildings. The Government also intends to publish Future Homes and Buildings Standards by 2025 with the intention of reducing carbon emissions further, to 75-80% below the levels allowed by current standards.

As the current 27% and 30% reduction are set by other regulations outside of the planning system, those requirements don't need to be reproduced in the local plan. We could look to include requirements that go beyond that level of reduction, but it's likely that the Future Homes and Buildings Standards will be introduced before the new local plan is adopted, and those standards would then be the new minimum standards.

Option 6.1 (a): Achieving carbon reduction from new development.

Rely on national standards and building regulations to set the carbon reduction levels for new buildings;

Look to set our own reduction standards that are stricter than the national requirements (acknowledging that the introduction of any Future Homes and Buildings Standards will set a new minimum standard).

Have your say...

Feedback Point 3

Which of the above do you feel is the most appropriate option? If we were to set our own standards, what levels should they be, or what evidence should we be using to do this?

6.1.2 Issue: Mitigating impacts of flooding

An increase in the frequency and intensity of extreme weather events as a result of the climate emergency gives rise to a greater risk of flooding. This poses an increasing threat to new and existing development close to the areas which are at risk from river flooding. As part of the plan making process, we will be updating our Strategic Flood Risk Assessment to ensure we avoid siting new development in areas of greatest flood risk.

Have your say...

Feedback Point 4

Are there any specific measures that you would like to see that could help to mitigate the impact of flooding?

6.1.3 Issue: Protection and enhancement of existing biodiversity

Biodiversity refers to the variety of living species on Earth, including plants, animals, bacteria, and fungi. Biodiversity is essential for the processes that support all life on Earth, including humans. Without a wide range of animals, plants and microorganisms, we cannot have the healthy ecosystems that we rely on to provide us with the air we breathe and the food we eat.

National planning policy requires local planning authorities to protect and enhance biodiversity, especially where there are sites of national or international biodiversity importance. Tamworth has one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and a number of other designated sites of regional and local significance that we propose to continue to protect.

Smaller scale areas of vegetation can also be important to biodiversity as well as being important for other reasons. Trees, hedges and grassed areas naturally slow down water and help soil to absorb rainfall. When they are removed it can increase flooding. Trees, hedges and other plants clean the air we breathe and help us tackle the global challenge of climate change by absorbing carbon dioxide. We propose to include policies to require existing vegetation to be retained unless there are very good reasons why they should be removed.

Have your say...

Feedback Point 5

- Do you agree with our approach towards biodiversity protection and enhancement? If not, what alternative approach(es) would you suggest and why?
- Are there any specific local biodiversity issues that you would like to see addressed through the Local Plan?

6.1.4 Issue: Achieve 10% biodiversity net gain on all developments

Our natural environment is of huge value to local people in terms of health, well-being and recreation but is at risk due to a number of reasons, including the cumulative effects of development. National planning policy also now requires net gains in biodiversity from new development, and so our new local plan will need to make sure that new developments can achieve that either on-site, or through off-site contributions. We will also look to work with other relevant bodies, such as Staffordshire Wildlife Trust, to identify any opportunities to improve biodiversity in the area.

Have your say...

Feedback Point 6

Are there any specific measures that you would like to see new developments deliver to improve biodiversity locally?

6.1.5 Issue: Delivering low carbon and renewable energy infrastructure

Although Tamworth has the lowest greenhouse gas emissions per person in Staffordshire, around 68% of those emissions come from fuel use within buildings. The introduction of stricter standards for new buildings should help to reduce this in future, but there are also opportunities to improve existing buildings and to generate more renewable energy.

Given the limited amount of land available in the borough and the competition from other uses, large scale renewable energy developments (like solar farms and wind farms) not considered to be feasible. Instead, we intend to focus on encouraging small scale energy generation as well as other opportunities to reduce fossil fuel consumption in buildings.

Have your say...

Feedback Point 7

Page
203

- Do you agree that we should focus on small scale energy generation, rather than looking for opportunities for larger developments like solar farms?
- Do you agree that we should look to encourage alternative ways of heating buildings to reduce carbon emissions?
- Are there any other ways that we could look to reduce carbon emissions and tackle climate change?

Before you continue to the next section...

Feedback Point 8

Do you have any further comments that you wish to make on any aspect relating to climate change and/or biodiversity?

6.2. New and Affordable Homes

Objective: Provide a supply of high quality and affordable homes to meet the needs of all sections of our community.

Housing is one of the key elements of any local plan, and we will need to include policies that provide for the right amount of new housing, in the right locations, and of the right type to meet the needs of residents both now and in the future.

6.2.1. Issue: Setting the right level of housing need.

Government policy requires local authorities to use the Standard Method to calculate how much new housing they will need. The Standard Method uses the expected change in the number of households over time as the starting point and adjusts that figure to take account of how affordable homes are in the Borough. The Standard Method calculates that we would need to deliver 141 new homes per year. This would mean a total of 2,961 homes would be required by 2043.

However, Government policy also permits local authorities to set an alternative target if they want to plan for growth. This may include instances where new employment developments would lead to a need for more housing, for instance.

The current adopted plan identified a need that was not able to be met within Tamworth, and that unmet need is being delivered through the local plans of Lichfield and North Warwickshire. On that basis, we propose to use the standard method figure of 2,961 as the starting point for this plan. However, to make sure the number is considered up to date when the plan reaches examination, it will need to be updated later in the process.

Option 6.2 (a): Setting the right level of housing need.

These are the options that we propose to ensure that we set the right level of housing need for our Borough:

- i) Use the Standard Method figure as a starting point and aim to provide at least 2,961 new homes by 2043. This option acknowledges that this figure may change at a later date.
- ii) Use a higher figure than Option i). This figure would be determined following further work informed by:
 - Economic growth strategies;
 - The need to support strategic infrastructure improvements;
 - Existing delivery rates.

Have your say...

Feedback Point 9

Do you agree that the standard method figure of 2,961 should be used as the starting point for setting our housing need? If not, what alternative figure do you think should be used, and why?

6.2.2 Issue: Delivering the housing need

We are currently carrying out a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) to establish where there is land available for new housing to be built and we will publish the results of that assessment once it's completed.

However, our borough covers a small geographic area of only 12 square miles, and development in recent years has seen many of the larger, more easily developable sites come forward for development. This means our options for accommodating an extra 2,961 homes are likely to be limited.

Option 6.2 (b): Delivering the housing need

These are the options that we propose to ensure that we deliver the housing need for our Borough:

- i) Look to make the best use of previously developed land before allocating any greenfield land for housing.
- ii) Increase housing density for new developments, especially in more sustainable locations such as the town centre and close to existing local and neighbourhood centres.
- iii) Look for support from neighbouring councils to deliver any need that is unable to be met within the Borough.
- iv) Look to release land from the Green Belt to meet housing need. This option acknowledges that national planning policy views this as a last resort.

Have your say...

Feedback Point 10

Which approach, or combination of approaches, detailed above do you think would be most appropriate?

6.2.3 Issue: Providing enough affordable homes

Despite the number of new homes currently being built in the Borough, housing in Tamworth remains relatively unaffordable for local people. The current local plan seeks a minimum of 20% affordable housing on qualifying developments, and 25% on some sites where it was considered viable. This approach aimed to strike a balance between providing affordable homes and contributions towards other types of infrastructure, such as schools, open spaces, and leisure facilities.

We will need to consider what amount of affordable housing will be appropriate to deliver through the new plan. Providing affordable housing affects the viability of a development and can impact what other types of infrastructure can be delivered. Therefore, if we wanted to maximise the amount of affordable housing we deliver, then it may have to come at the expense of other infrastructure funding or provision.

Option 6.2 (c): Providing affordable homes

These are the options that we propose for the delivery of affordable homes in the Borough:

- i) Maximise the amount of affordable housing delivered at the expense of collecting some of the contributions towards other infrastructure.
- ii) Continue to try and strike a balance between providing affordable housing and contributions towards other infrastructure.
- iii) Allocate appropriately sized sites specifically for the development of affordable housing.

Have your say...

Feedback Point 11

- Should we look to maximise affordable housing over other forms of infrastructure, or take a more balanced approach?
- Do you think we should look to allocate certain sites specifically to provide affordable housing?

6.2.4 Issue: Providing the right type of homes

The population of Tamworth is ageing, and older people have different needs when it comes to housing. Not only that, but the Covid-19 pandemic has changed the way that people use their homes with many people now working from home significantly more than in the past. We will be collecting some evidence to help us identify the types of housing that we need to be delivering in the Borough to reflect these changing needs. We'll also be exploring ways in which people's homes can be more flexible, to suit their changing needs over time.

Have your say...

Feedback Point 12

- Are there any particular housing needs that you think can or should be addressed through the plan?
- Do you agree that we should explore ways in which housing can be more flexible to meet people's needs?

6.2.5 Issue: Providing custom and self-build opportunities

The Government expects us to give suitable permission to deliver enough plots of land to meet the demand for custom and self-build identified through the register. Up to now, all of the custom and self-build plots in Tamworth have been delivered by individuals looking to build their own home without any intervention from the Borough Council. This has led to the number of plots delivered being lower than the demand identified through the register.

Option 6.2 (d): Providing custom and self-build opportunities

These are the options that we propose to ensure that we are able to provide custom and self-build opportunities:

- i) Continue to leave the housing market to deliver plots as and when demand arises, but include policies that encourage the delivery of self-build opportunities.
- ii) Allocate sites exclusively for custom and self-build development.
- iii) Require a proportion of plots on larger sites to be reserved for custom and self-build development.

Have your say...

Feedback Point 13

Should we look to allocate sites and/or make sure a percentage of housing developments are for self-build plots for people wanting to build their own homes?

6.2.6. Additional Policy Approaches

We propose these additional policy approaches to meet our objectives relating to new and affordable homes.

- i) No specific provision for permanent residential* Gypsy and Traveller sites to be included because the most recent needs assessment identified no need; but include policies to deal with any applications that are received.
- ii) Require a mix of dwelling sizes to reflect need.
- iii) Set an appropriate tenure mix for affordable dwellings including First Homes.
- iv) Include internal space standards within policy.
- v) Policies on design to guide development.
- vi) Policies related to running a business from home

Page 207

Permanent residential Gypsy and Traveller sites refer to sites for individuals who are seeking a permanent residential base in Tamworth. This does not include those in transit who stop temporarily the Borough before moving on.

Have your say...

Feedback Point 14

Do you agree with the additional policy approaches proposed? If not, why not? Are there any additional policy approaches that you think we should include?

Before you continue to the next section...

Feedback Point 15

Do you have any further comments that you wish to make on any aspect relating to our housing?

6.3. Economy

Objective: Support the existing local economy whilst being flexible enough to respond positively to new economic opportunities.

Planning policies should help create the conditions in which existing businesses can adapt and grow, as well as providing opportunities for new and innovative businesses to develop.

6.3.1 Issue: Ensuring the right amount of land is available for growth.

The Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessment (HEDNA) assesses the amount of employment land that Tamworth will need in the future. In 2019, this study projected that we would require 8.8ha of new employment land between 2018 and 2036. This is shown in the table below. This figure is significantly less than the requirement included in the current local plan.

Acknowledging that this information is pre-pandemic and only covers the period up to 2036, it is still the most up to date information that we currently have available. We therefore propose to use this target as the starting point with an updated assessment to be carried out in the future.

Use	Floorspace (sqm)	Land requirement (ha)
B1a/b (now class E)	8,000	2.0
B1c/B2	12,400	3.1
B8	13,500	2.7
Total	33,900	8.8

Table 1: HEDNA Employment Land Need

Have your say...

Feedback Point 16

Do you agree with the proposal to use HEDNA employment land requirements as a starting point? If not, what other information should we use, and why?

6.3.2 Issue: Existing employment allocations

Our current local plan allocated approximately 18 hectares of land for employment development across the Borough. A number of these sites have since been developed, but there still remains enough undeveloped employment land to meet the needs identified in the 2019 HEDNA.

As the Borough's employment needs continues to evolve, it is important that we make sure we have an up-to-date picture a of the amount and type of land needed. We will do this by undertaking a new assessment of Tamworth's employment need. Once complete, we may find that the existing allocations provide us with more land than we need. If this is the case, we will need to decide what to do with any surplus land. We could retain the additional land for future employment use, or we could look to allocate the land for a different use (where appropriate and subject to landowner intentions).

Option 6.3 (a): Allocating land to meet employment need

These are the options that we propose to ensure that we are allocating the right amount and type of land to meet our employment needs:

- i) Retain all currently allocated employment sites.
- ii) Allow the loss of specific sites for alternative uses, but retain a buffer of land above the identified need to allow flexibility.
- iii) Allow the loss of specific sites for alternative uses, but remove any buffer. This would mean that we would not retain as many allocated employment sites.
- iv) Retain our existing allocations, but develop a flexible policy which permits the loss of any proposed employment site to an alternative use, subject to specific criteria.

Before you continue to the next section...

Feedback Point 18

Do you have any further comments that you wish to make on any aspect relating to the economy?

Have your say...

Feedback Point 17

Which approach do you think we should use? Are there any alternative approaches that you think should be considered?

6.4. Retail, Town Centre, Local and Neighbourhood Centres

Objective: Regenerate and diversify the town centre to create a thriving destination and vibrant evening economy.

Objective: Promote sustainable transport modes for all journeys through improving walking, cycling, public transport, and electric vehicle facilities.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning policies should support the role that centres play at the heart of local communities, by taking a positive approach to their growth, management, and adaptation. The retail landscape has changed significantly since the current local plan was adopted, and the new local plan will need to reflect those changes.

6.4.1 Issue: Defining the town centre boundary and primary shopping area

The NPPF requires us to define the extent of the town centre and primary shopping area, and make clear the range of uses permitted in such locations, as part of a positive strategy for the future of each centre.

The primary shopping area is the area where retail development is concentrated, and the town centre is defined as the primary shopping area and areas predominantly occupied by 'main town centre uses' within or adjacent to the primary shopping area. 'Main town centre uses' are the types of use that would attract visiting members of the public, such as retail, leisure, offices, food and drink, and arts, culture and tourism uses.

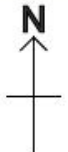
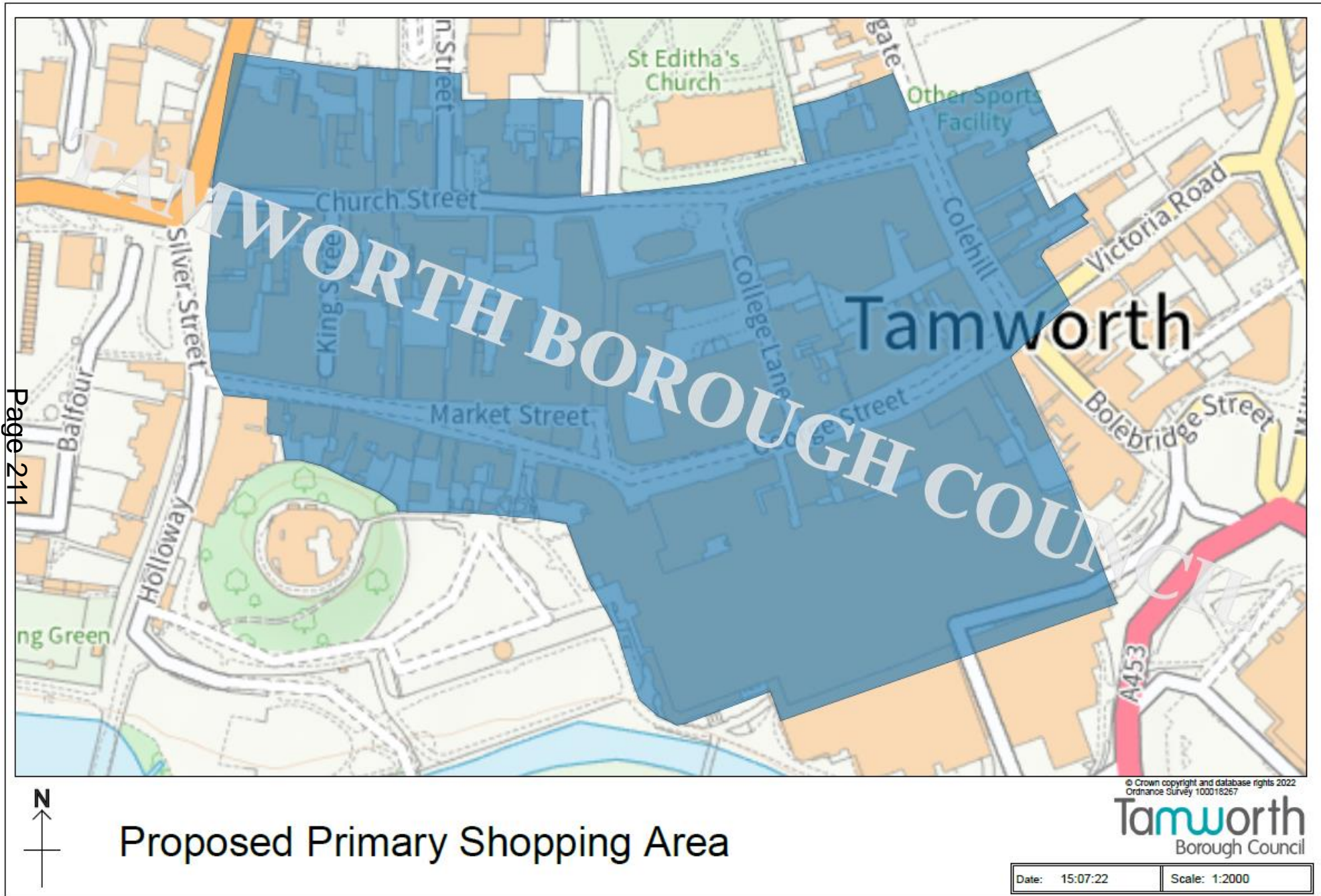
Based on these definitions, we propose to define the primary shopping area as the area of Church Street, Colehill, George Street and Market Street, as identified on the map in Figure 1. We also propose to define the town centre as the area shown on the map in Figure 2.

Have your say...

Feedback Point 19

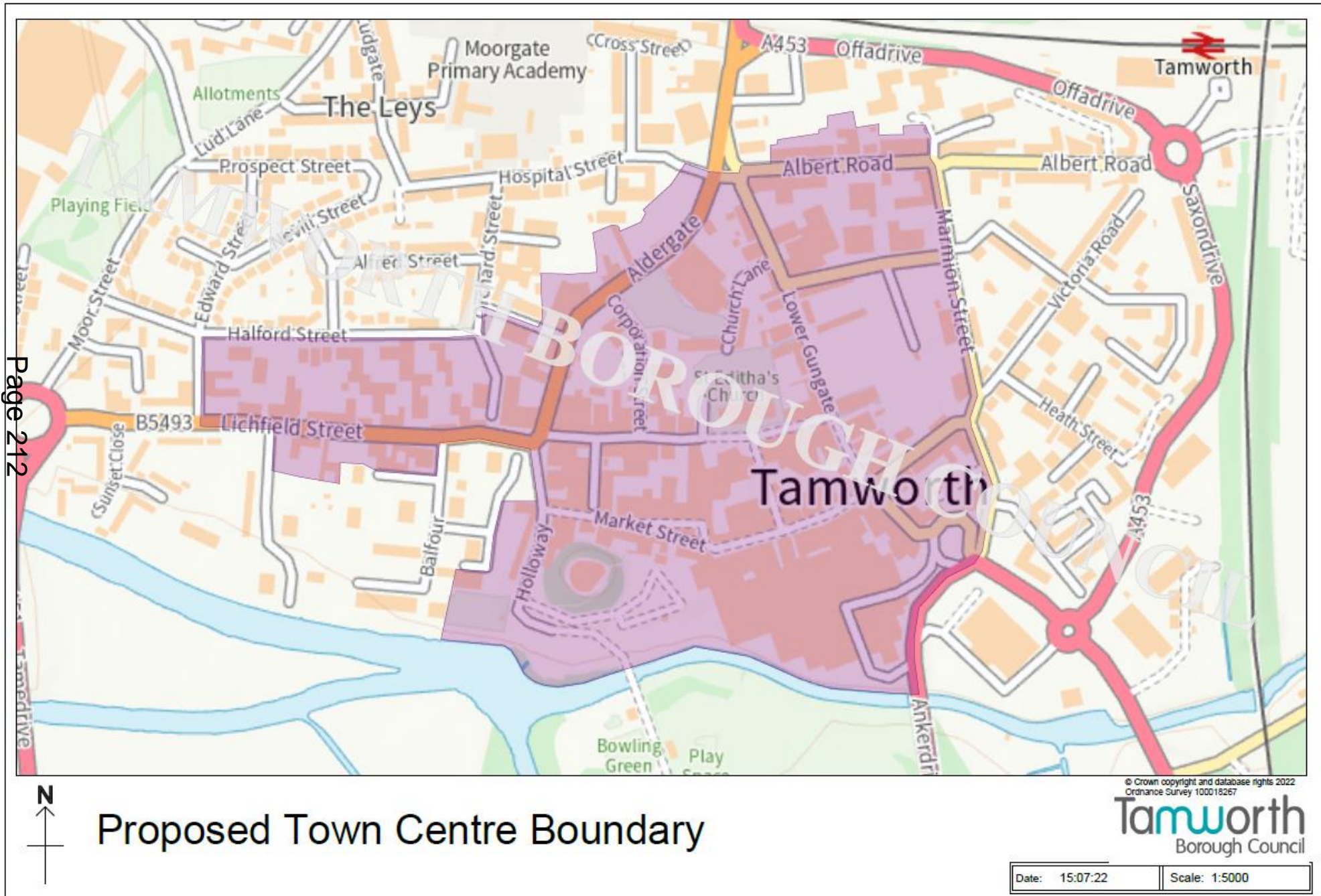
Do you agree with the proposed boundaries for the primary shopping area and town centre? If not, what streets do you think should and/or should not be included in either of the areas?

Figure 1: Map of Proposed Primary Shopping Area



Proposed Primary Shopping Area

Figure 2: Map of Proposed Town Centre Boundary



6.4.2 Issue: Providing local shops and services

Access to local shops and services is an important part of creating and maintaining sustainable neighbourhoods. The effects of the Covid-19 pandemic have further demonstrated the need to have an effective provision of shops and services available to our local communities. It is therefore important that we provide the right types of shops and services in the right locations, to make sure that everyone has access to the things that they need.

Tamworth town centre is supported by a network of local and neighbourhood centres which deliver shops and services within an accessible distance of our neighbourhoods and which can meet residents' day-to-day needs.

There are 9 local centres and 16 neighbourhood centres allocated in the current local plan:

Local centres typically provide a convenience food store plus a range of other services such as a post office, hot food takeaway, newsagents, library, pharmacy, community centre or doctor's surgery. A local centre is larger in size than a neighbourhood centre, and as such typically serve more residents.

Tamworth's Local Centres

LC1	Fontenaye Road, Coton Green
LC2	Masefield Drive, Leyfields
LC3	Amington Road, Bolehall
LC4	Caledonian Centre, Glascote
LC5	High Street, Dosthill
LC6	Ellerbeck, Stonydelph
LC7	Glascote Road
LC8	Tamworth Road, Amington
LC9	Exley, Field Farm Road

Neighbourhood centres are typically a small cluster of shops, one which is a convenience food store, with a limited range of associated shops or services.

Tamworth's Neighbourhood Centres

NC1	Chartwell	NC9	Scott Road
NC2	Cedar Drive	NC10	Glascote Road
NC3	Lakenheath	NC11	Tinkers Green
NC4	Kerria	NC12a	Hockley Road
NC5	Fazeley Road	NC12b	Beauchamp Road
NC6	Tamworth Road, Two Gates	NC13	Wilnecote Lane
NC7	Park Farm Road	NC14	Watling Street, Wilnecote
NC8	Penny Moor Road	NC15	Bowling Green Avenue

As part of the local plan process, we will be undertaking a review of all of our allocated local and neighbourhood centres. Each centre will be assessed individually, with an evaluation of viability and vitality made through looking at their composition and performance. Our priority is to continue to protect and promote these centres, to the best of our ability. However, once this review is complete, it may be appropriate to remove a centres status. We will also be assessing the rest of the Borough to see if there are any other areas which could be allocated as a new centre.

Have your say...

Feedback Point 20

- Do you agree with our approach to protecting and enhancing, as far as possible, our current local and neighbourhood centres?
- Are there any areas of the Borough that you feel should be considered a local or neighbourhood centre that isn't already allocated?

6.4.3 Issue: The impact of existing retail parks

Ventura Park and the adjacent Jolly Sailor Retail Park contain a significant amount of retail floorspace outside the town centre and is also a destination in its own right, drawing visitors in from the wider region. There are also a number of smaller out of centre retail areas in the borough that have the potential to negatively impact on the viability of the town centre.

Option 6.4 (a): The impact of existing retail parks

These are the options that we propose to ensure that we take the correct approach to managing our existing retail parks:

- i) Give the existing out of centre retail areas their own designation and policies within the plan to mitigate their impact on the town centres.
- ii) Rely on national policy and other, more broad, local policies when determining planning applications in the out-of-town retail areas.

Page
214

Have your say...

Feedback Point 21

Do you think that we should have a specific designation and set of policies for the out-of-town retail areas?

Before you continue to the next section...

Feedback Point 22

Do you have any further comments that you wish to make on any aspect relating to retail, our town centre, local centres and/or neighbourhood centres?

6.5. Heritage

Objective: Protect and enhance the Borough's heritage, including through facilitating appropriate reuse of heritage assets.

Tamworth is home to a wealth of historic buildings and landscapes, with our heritage offering an invaluable contribution to the Borough's distinct identity and sense of place. Our historic environment includes individual buildings, groups of buildings and areas of interest, some of which have been designated as conservation areas.

Our heritage assets are a significant economic driver and contribute towards a healthy tourism economy, with the town centre a particular focal point for historic character. Collectively, our built heritage plays a crucial role in attracting people into the Borough, with Tamworth Castle a notable destination for major tourism.

5.1. Issue: Protecting the vitality of our historic environment without restricting its use unnecessarily.

The conservation and enhancement of our heritage assets is critical in sustaining Tamworth's cultural, economic and social vitality. As such, our historic environment is highly valued, and should be protected from unauthorised demolition, alteration or extension.

The current Local Plan, in conjunction with National Policy, actively supports the conservation of heritage assets, seeking to enhance the value that they bring to our wider society. As we look towards the future, we need to consider how our heritage can continue to be conserved, but also adapt to, and thrive within, modern society.

Heritage-led regeneration will play a significant role in this approach. The new Local Plan will promote greater flexibility in how heritage assets can be used, ensuring that any appropriate use is not restricted unnecessarily. Our priority is for heritage assets to be actively integrated within the urban environment, and serving the most effective purpose for society whilst retaining their historic character. Any proposed use must be in line with both local and

national policy, and sympathetically enhance the vitality of both the individual asset and the wider historic environment.

The Government is quite prescriptive in how local authorities must manage their built heritage, as detailed in Section 16 of the NPPF (2021). Whilst we should not be reproducing these requirements in our new Local Plan, we can consider whether there are any further measures that we wish to implement in Tamworth, that go above and beyond those outlined by the Government.

The current framework that we have in place to protect and enhance our heritage assets has proven successful. It implements national policy, but looks to identify any local issues which may fall outside of this remit. On account of this, we would welcome your thoughts on any additional measures which you feel would specifically benefit our local heritage.

Have your say...

Feedback Point 23

- Considering the prescriptiveness of national policy, do you agree with our current approach? If not, what alternative approach would you like to see?
- Do you feel that there are any specific local heritage matters that you would like to see addressed through the new Local Plan?

Before you continue to the next section...

Feedback Point 24

Do you have any further comments that you wish to make on any aspect relating to our heritage?

6.6. Open Spaces and Green Infrastructure

Objective: Encourage active and healthier lifestyles by providing accessible green and blue linkages and open spaces, as well as formal indoor and outdoor recreation facilities.

Our Borough has an expansive network of green infrastructure, including parks, open spaces and natural habitats. Collectively, these spaces are a crucial resource for our residents and wildlife. They offer attractive environments for outdoor recreation and exercise, encouraging healthier lifestyles and improved wellbeing. They equip the Borough with pleasant areas for residents to relax and socialise, which helps to strengthen our community relationships and sense of place.

Our network of open spaces also support the existence and protection of a range of species and wider biodiversity. They offer invaluable habitat enhancement opportunities, whilst assisting in improving our air quality, mitigating climate change and reducing the likelihood of flooding.

6.6.1. Issue: Managing, protecting and enhancing our green infrastructure network.

Our key aim is to manage and protect our existing network of green spaces, to ensure that they all remain functional, of high quality, and both socially and environmentally beneficial.

We are currently in the process of undertaking a review of all of our open spaces located within the Borough. This will assess how many green spaces we currently have allocated, how well they are performing and how significantly they contribute to our social and environmental vitality.

This review will inform the next steps that we take with our open space. If the review finds that any individual pieces of open space are under performing, or of particularly low quality, then they may be subject to further consideration. We may look at whether the quality of the open space can be enhanced through intervention, or

alternatively, whether it may need to be released and reallocated for a more appropriate purpose.

Have your say...

Feedback Point 25

- Are there any particular types of open space that you feel should be specifically reevaluated?
- If particular examples of open space are found to be under performing or of low quality, would you prefer to see them enhanced and retained as open space, or released and reallocated for a new purpose.
- If quality enhancement works were either unfeasible or ineffective, and the open space was reallocated for another purpose, what would you wish to see that land used for instead?

Before you continue to the next section...

Feedback Point 26

Do you have any further comments that you wish to make on any aspect relating to open spaces and/or other green infrastructure?

6.7. Infrastructure

Objective: Ensure that appropriate infrastructure is in place to support new development across the Borough including digital infrastructure.

The term 'infrastructure' encompasses a broad range of examples. It relates to things like transport, health, education, leisure, community facilities and the digital network. They are the services and facilities that are required to meet the day to day needs of our residents.

6.7.1 Issue: Ensuring the timely delivery of the right infrastructure to meet community needs.

A key role of the new Local Plan is to ensure that the correct types of infrastructure are provided at the right time. Our aim is to create healthy and sustainable neighbourhoods which offer an accessible range of services and facilities to its residents. It is essential that these services are planned in a coordinated manner, in partnership with the relevant infrastructure providers and other local authorities.

When development occurs, developers are expected to deliver the necessary infrastructure that will be required by future occupiers. This commitment can be met in two ways: either the provision of infrastructure on-site, or the payment of an equitable contribution to the Council. These contributions are collected either through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) or Section 106 Legal Agreements:

- a. CIL is a fixed charge which is collected when a development commences. This money is then pooled by the Council and put into funding the infrastructure which is needed to support new homes and businesses in the Borough. This may involve either the funding of new infrastructure, or the maintenance and improvement of our existing provision.

- b. Section 106 payments are made to fund specific types of infrastructure that are required to make individual developments acceptable. Examples of this include affordable housing, access improvements and the provision of children's play spaces. They are secured through a legal agreement and must be paid at the time specified within that agreement.

Our current Local Plan only permits development where it can be demonstrated that there is either a sufficient amount of existing infrastructure to meet arising needs, or that any new or improved facilities will be provided at the time they are needed. Our new Local Plan will continue this approach, looking at providing the right type of new infrastructure and improving our existing provision.

Have your say...

Feedback Point 27

Are there any current deficits that you feel exist in our current infrastructure provision?

6.7.2 Issue: Ensuring that our policy requirements do not impact the financial viability of developments.

When development takes place, housebuilders are expected to deliver the necessary services and infrastructure that will be required by future occupiers. These can be provided on-site by the developer, or alternatively, an appropriate cash contribution will be calculated and paid to the Council.

There are many types of infrastructure that the Council could require developers to provide. There may be some types of infrastructure that are required across the Borough, and some that are only needed in specific neighbourhoods. It is important that we achieve the right balance between what we would like to see in our Borough, and what developers can feasibly afford to deliver.

A key factor which influences the amount of infrastructure which the Council can require is financial viability. In this context, this is how much infrastructure a developer can afford to deliver. If we require too much, then we risk making a development financially unviable.

In the new Local Plan, we must continue to be transparent about what we expect from new development, both in terms of on-site infrastructure and financial contributions. This will prevent developers from paying too much for a piece of land and then calculating that they cannot afford to meet our policy requirements. We will be commissioning viability assessments to help us set any new policy requirements at a level that is viable for development to go ahead.

All of the Council's planning policy requirements are important, but no requirement should be so high that it makes a development unviable. Consequently, if one policy requirement is raised, another may need to be reduced. The Council wants to understand what type of infrastructure you feel is most important to our Borough, and which you would like to see prioritised. Over time, our priorities may change as the Borough evolves, and the new Local Plan must be flexible enough to allow any future changes to requirements.

Have your say...

Feedback Point 28

- Looking to the future, which type(s) of infrastructure would you like to see given the highest priority, and why?
- Which type(s) of infrastructure do you think we should give the lowest priority, and why?

Before you finish...

Feedback Point 29

Do you have any further comments that you wish to make on any aspect relating to infrastructure?