



Tamworth Town Centre Cumulative Impact Assessment

Inspector 5316 Stuart Coleman
20th September 2022

Introduction

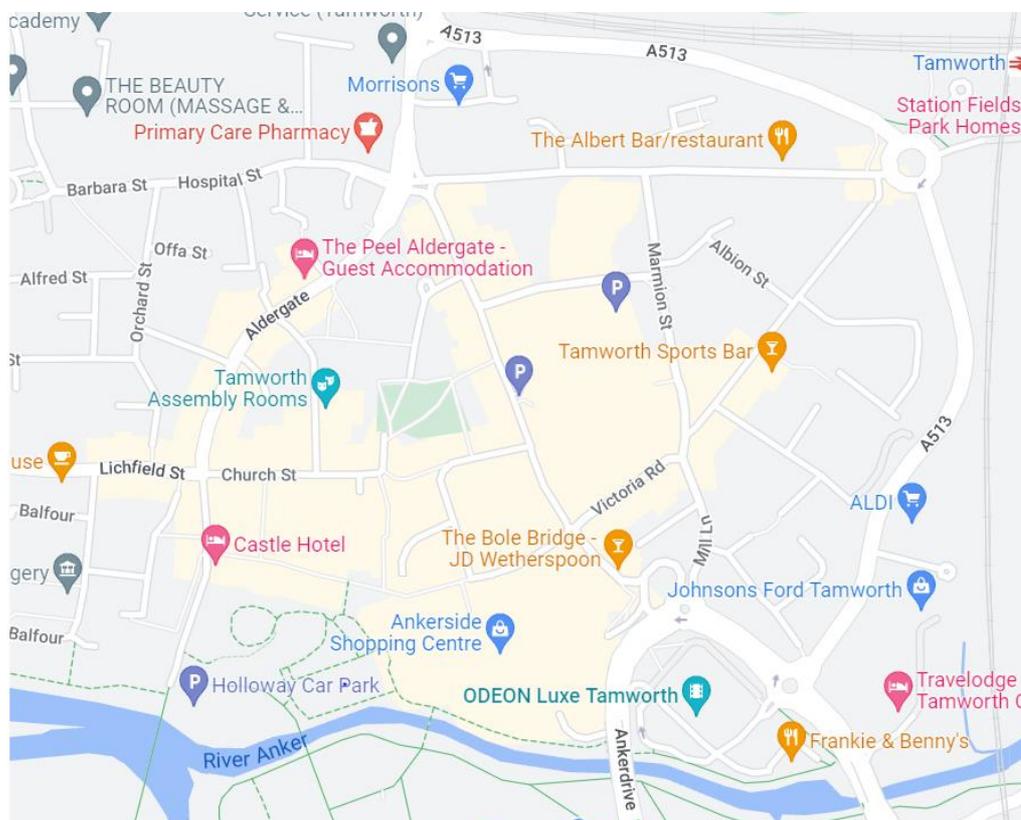
Tamworth town Centre is the focal hub for come daytime (retail) and most night-time economy within the wider borough. Tamworth is made up of several different ward areas within the borough which encircle the town centre, these being Mercian and Spital, Coton Green, Kettlebrook, Belgrave, Glascote and Glascote Heath, Stonydelph, Amington, Bolehall, Wilnecote, and Dosthill. The night time economy in the Town Centre attracts visitors, not only from within the borough, but also from outside of Tamworth. There are several good transport links to other towns and cities nearby, including Birmingham, Lichfield, Nuneaton, Atherstone, Burton on Trent, and Sutton Coldfield, all of which contribute to the night time economy.

Whilst there are licenced premises elsewhere in the Tamworth Borough, it is the Town Centre which is by far the busiest area and contributes significantly more to the associated crime and disorder than anywhere else.

The coronavirus pandemic had a significant impact on the trading of licenced premises where government lock-downs were imposed and members of the public remained apprehensive due to the potential risks around infection. The report will therefore consider post-pandemic data as being representative of normal business relating to the night-time economy in Tamworth Town Centre.

For the most part crime and disorder attributed to the night time economy takes place as bordered by the River Anker to the South and the East, Aldergate and Tamedrive to

the West, and Offadriverailway line to the North. The below map shows the Tamworth Town Centre area:



Licensed Premises

There are currently 27 licensed premises in Tamworth Town Centre giving a varied mix of businesses involved within both the daytime and night time economy. The vast majority of venues close between 2300 – 0200hrs with 4 regular premises making use of an extended 0300hrs license on a Friday and Saturday evening.

It is observed through discussion with premise managers that licensed premises will employ discretion and close earlier than their normal licensing hours where it is financially advantageous for them to do so.

Friday and Saturday nights traditionally see the most patrons attending the town with average numbers beginning to increase steadily from 6pm and peaking around 2230 - 2300hrs.

Venues that close between 0200 – 0300hrs will see exiting patrons often gathered in number on Gungate, Spinning School Lane, Colehill, Bolebridge Street, Corporation Street, and Church Street.

Popular bars which attract greater number of patrons during evening hours are commonly:

ATIK, SPINNING SCHOOL LANE/GUNGATE
JYNX, BOLEBRIDGE STREET
THE PENNY BLACK, COLEHILL
BONDS, CHURCH STREET

Representations have been made via the support of Staffordshire Police Licensing in recent years to a number of premise owners, and Designated Premise Supervisors (DPS) relating to poor license observations, drunkenness of patrons, drug possession / supply, violence and related criminality.

It is anticipated, in the wake of a POST-COVID19 environment that an increase for later trading hours for alcohol licensing will be applied for by both existing and new businesses. Such applications would be subject to very close scrutiny and liaison with Staffordshire Police Licensing and Local Authority Licensing teams.

Public / Private Transport

With the support of the local authority, both private hire and hackney carriage services are pooled at agreed locations on Church Street, Corporation Street, and Upper Gungate. Daytime provisions operate within agreed bus routes, taxi ranks and railway station.

Policing

Night time economy is policed by a small team of officers, complemented by a number of Special Constables based at Tamworth Fire and Police Station, Belgrave, Tamworth. This offers solely high visibility foot and mobile patrol of the town centre area from 2000 – 0300hrs. Officers operate a meet and greet theme to ensure patrons and premises staff are reassured by an early policing presence when visiting, with this presence continuing into the night. Police make frequent use of relevant legislation to prevent, detect and deter crime with the focus of promoting a safer environment for businesses and visitors of the town centre. The resilience of the local policing team is significantly reduced after 03.00 hours and relies on a night shift which assumes responsibility for the policing of the Town Centre alongside the rest of Tamworth Borough.

CCTV

The majority of local businesses offer their own private and independent CCTV systems in addition to a system of newly upgraded CCTV cameras owned by Tamworth Borough Council. The provision of a monitoring terminal for Tamworth Local Policing team within the Fire and Police Station is used daily for both live and evidential reviewing for investigative purposes.

Crime and antisocial behaviour

The data in the following tables have been sourced from the official reported incidents and do not indicate whether there has been sufficient evidence to confirm an offence has occurred. That being said, the data contained within is a useful indicator of the frequency and volume of incidents and the impact that the night time economy has on the local community.

The data used has been selected to compare the period of 'normal business' in the two years prior to the coronavirus pandemic, with the latest figures, most closely matching the current situation. This has been done to ensure that we are able to compare based on constant variables, and so the figures are not distorted by Government Lockdowns and consumer apprehensiveness. The incident types have been selected as those associated most with the night time economy.

CRIME	12 months to Sept 2019	12 months to Sept 2020	12 months to Sept 2022	+ / -	+ / - %
VIOLENCE	130	117	174	+ 57	+ 49%
ROBBERY	13	7	20	+ 13	+ 186%
SEXUAL OFFENCES	19	20	30	+ 10	+ 50%
PUBLIC ORDER	40	31	65	+ 34	+ 109%
CRIMINAL DAMAGE	28	32	60	+ 28	+ 88%
DRUGS POSSESSION	22	14	17	+ 3	+ 21%

ASB type	12 months	12 months	12 months	+ / -	+ / - %
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	to Sept 2019	to Sept 2020	to Sept 2022		
PERSONAL	No Data	24	46	+ 22	+ 92%
COMMUNITY	No Data	52	117	+ 65	+ 125%
ENVIRONMENTAL	No Data	3	1	- 2	- 66%

Across the broad spectrum of crime and antisocial behaviour incident types, there has been a general reduction in reported incidents leading to the coronavirus pandemic. In the most recent 12 months period the Town Centre has experienced a sharp increase of all crime types and antisocial behaviour, which exceeds the levels in both years before the pandemic.

The following table provides data relating to total incident level increases in the past 2 years. It demonstrates that the percentage increase in Tamworth is greater than all parts of Staffordshire, only with the exception of Hanley, Stoke on Trent.

Town Centres	Last 12 months - Last Year	Last 12 months - This Year	% change
Hanley Town Centre SCB1 & SCB6	930	1,435	54%
Tamworth Town Centre EW00	392	561	43%
Stafford Town Centre WM05	844	1,185	40%
Leek Town Centre NA02	198	276	39%
Newcastle Town Centre NB61	688	841	22%
Hednesford Town Centre WV02	141	172	22%
Cannock Town Centre WV41 & WV43	534	648	21%
Lichfield Town Centre ER00 & ER03	521	627	20%
Burslem Town Centre SC73	448	514	15%
Burton Town Centre EP15 & EP30	1,453	1,666	15%
Longton Town Centre SG61	379	423	12%
Uttoxeter Town Centre EP51	274	286	4%
Stone Town Centre WM73	202	207	2%

CONCERNS

There is a consistent theme of crime and antisocial behavior impacting on both daytime and night time economy.

Figures show an increase in all crime types associated with the night time economy, including violence, public order and sexual offences.

In the post-pandemic town centre, Tamworth has experienced an increase in crime and disorder to above pre-pandemic levels. The factors causing this increase are not known.

The local policing team is engaged in weekly collaborative Safer Nights policing operations which involves, as well as public and business engagement, high visibility patrolling and positive action approach to arresting perpetrators. This is a labor-intensive approach to reducing crime and disorder and could not feasibly be scaled-up in a meaningful or impactful way, due to the pressure on police resources.

After 03.00 hours on the weekends, the police resources are reduced dramatically, particularly in the town centre, and any later opening of licenced premises represents an additional threat to order in the locality.

As part of a wider approach to tackling the causes of the crime and disorder, it is recommended that the cumulative impact policy is maintained in Tamworth

New businesses are warmly welcomed by the local policing team and will be afforded equal levels of support and intervention where needed to tackle crime and disorder.



Consultation Response for Cumulative Impact Assessment

The provision of the Cumulative Impact Policy for the relevant area (subsequently changing to Cumulative Impact Assessments (CIA) if retained) has been relied upon to prevent a further rise in alcohol related crime and disorder in relation to licensed premises.

This has only been used when relevant and has not been utilised to prevent economic growth within the town. When the Police use, or reference to the policy has been challenged by the legal profession representing the licensing trade, the Police have been able to demonstrate that it has been proportionate in the circumstances to cite it.

The Police continue to assess all applications on their own merits and recognise that the CIA policy should not be applied to all applications. Due to this approach and through engagement with the representatives of the licensing trade, numerous applications have been granted without the need for a hearing before the licensing subcommittee.

Businesses with an earlier terminal hour can flourish, largely with no calls for service to the Police, which shows not only the economic prosperity they can bring but also an operational demonstration that the licensing objectives are not being undermined. It is premises in the Night Time Economy which focus on vertical drinking activities that require the majority of focus from both the Local Policing Teams and the Police Licensing Unit.

There are a variety of licensed premises situated within the town centre, that due to a number of factors around them bring the need for a policing response, whether that be from those operationally policing the locality or the Police Licensing Unit. It is premises of this nature where this policy is recognised as being relevant whether it be a new application or a variation to an existing one.

The Police are also aware that some local authorities removed their respective CIA zones during the Covid pandemic, however at the same time other authorities renewed and retained theirs. In addition, some policies that were removed during the pandemic have been reinstated. It is contended that Tamworth CIA should remain. With correct usage which is detailed above, and also with the scrutiny of the licensing subcommittee should a matter be brought before them, each application can still continue to be viewed on its own merits with the authorities retaining the ability, where appropriate, to utilise the CIA to keep communities safe from an increase in violence and disorder.

Due to the balanced approach shown by the Police it allows for businesses to come to the town centre and prosper without impacting on the already existing issue of violence and disorder. Those which can be shown to have a detrimental impact are prevented from negatively contributing further.

There are other mechanisms under the Licensing Act 2003 to deal with premises that are contributing to crime and disorder such as the Review process, however that is a reactive element whereas the provision

of a Cumulative Impact Assessment as part of the Local Authority Statement of Licensing Policy truly allows for the prevention of further premises contributing to existing problems and puts the onus more firmly on the applicant to evidence that they will not do this.

With reference to the Revised Guidance issued under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003, specifically Chapter 9, paragraph 12 provided the following reference as shown in italics, particularly the highlighted element: -

Each responsible authority will be an expert in their respective field, and in some cases it is likely that a particular responsible authority will be the licensing authority's main source of advice in relation to a particular licensing objective. For example, the police have a key role in managing the night-time economy and should have good working relationships with those operating in their local area. The police should usually therefore be the licensing authority's main source of advice on matters relating to the promotion of the crime and disorder licensing objective. However, any responsible authority under the 2003 Act may make representations with regard to any of the licensing objectives if they have evidence to support such representations. Licensing authorities must therefore consider all relevant representations from responsible authorities carefully, even where the reason for a particular responsible authority's interest or expertise in the promotion of a particular objective may not be immediately apparent. However, it remains incumbent on all responsible authorities to ensure that their representations can withstand the scrutiny to which they would be subject at a hearing.

Therefore, should the CIA not be renewed the position of Staffordshire Police is that there is likely to be a rise in alcohol fuelled crime and disorder. Premises who operate in the Night Time Economy have previously made enquiries in relation to extending their terminal hours with one venue wishing to operate until 0530hrs.

Previous experience within other town centres has shown that this often does not extend the operating times of premises but actually moves their start time later into the night. In effect they operate for the same length of time but are actually closed early evening. This can give rise to preloading by those members of the public visiting town centres who have been drinking elsewhere and then arriving in the town centre already heavily under the influence of alcohol.

Due to the circumstances outlined it is requested that the Cumulative Impact Assessment be adopted for the relevant area of Tamworth as it is an appropriate element to be contained within the wider Statement of Licensing Policy.

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