

Thursday, 25 January 2024

## Report of the Portfolio Holder for Civic Pride and Engagement

### Annual residents' survey results

#### Exempt Information

NONE

#### Purpose

To share the results of the annual survey and budget consultation, to inform the decision-making process around council budget and priorities.

#### Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. Cabinet endorse the survey report.

#### Executive Summary

737 people chose to take part in this survey, this number is on a par with the number of responses in 2022.

#### Council priorities, spending and income

There is a clear endorsement from the majority of respondents of our council priorities, agreeing that all are very or fairly important. This would suggest the corporate priorities are, and remain, the right focus for Tamworth Borough Council.

There is a clear appetite for more spending on many of our very visible services:

- Tackling anti-social behaviour
- Improving the economic, physical, social and environmental condition of Tamworth
- Parks and open spaces

These remain the same top three as in 2022.

This is wholly consistent with the other findings in this survey, views around Tamworth as a place to live, responsiveness of the council and dissatisfaction match these same areas where people would like to see increases in spending.

Beyond increases, it is more difficult to make clear conclusions.

There is however appetite to reduce spending on

- Arts, Assembly Rooms and Events
- Support to local businesses
- Tackling climate change

Like in 2022, reducing spending for Arts, Assembly Rooms and events remains the top choice of local people. This is also reflected in the question where we ask where people think we should make savings. It should however be noted the expenditure figure shown for Assembly Rooms and Castle are before any income generation.

As in 2022, respondents chose to increase charges for leisure and commercial property and opted for the lowest increase in council tax.

## **Tamworth as a place to live**

Responses match those areas which where the council is already working hard to improve. So, while overall satisfaction results (when we include those with no strong opinion) remains the same as the previous survey carried out in 2022, action is continuing to address these issues.

- 52% are satisfied with Tamworth as a place to live (rising to 68% when those with no strong opinion are included).
- 67% feel safe when out during the day, the feeling of safety decreases after dark.

In terms of 'problems in the area', the top three issues:

- Rubbish and litter
- People using or dealing drugs
- Vandalism, graffiti or deliberate damage

These were the top issues in the 2022 survey. Showing these remain the key issues for local people, and confirms the council is right to seek improvements in these areas.

While last year in research by Sunlife Insurance<sup>1</sup> Tamworth was ranked fourth in a list of safest places for over 60s to live in England and Wales. So, while this may factually be the case, there is a difference in perceptions.

## **Satisfaction with services**

Over half of respondents are satisfied/no strong opinion about how the council runs things.

From anecdotal evidence online we know that some local people feel there are issues with potholes, pavements, and traffic plus a feeling anti-social behaviour is an issue for some which is likely to contribute to a feeling that as the council we should be doing more.

- 34% satisfied with how the council runs thing (rising to 55% when those with no strong opinion are included).
- 28% agree the council acts on the concerns of residents.

In terms of service satisfaction, people are most satisfied with waste collection services and least satisfied with street cleaning. The biggest issues connected to street cleaning appears to be littering, dog poo and graffiti. Tamworth Borough Council recognises this, and while the answer would be for perpetrators to simply not do these things, seeking to keep the borough clean and tidy is a priority.

- 73% satisfied with waste collection services.
- 35% satisfied with street cleaning services.
- 56% satisfied with sport and leisure.
- 55% satisfied with parks and open spaces.

## **Information and contacting the council**

Social media is the top choice for finding out about council services.

86% would contact the council via digital means (non-digital means are via Councillor or suggest visiting the TIC in the Assembly Rooms).

Customer services data shows that in the last 12 months (Oct 2022 – Sept 2023) 95,000 contacts from customers have been digital and around 333 were face to face at the TIC in the Assembly Rooms.

Generally, people **are** aware that the Assembly Rooms and Tamworth Castle are council services.

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<sup>1</sup> See [report](#).

## **Demographics**

In total, 60,400 people were eligible to take part in this survey (adults). 737 people actually took part, which is 1.2% of the eligible population.

Compared to our population, more women than men chose to take part.

Around 2.5% of Tamworth's population have a non-white background, positively, 8% of respondents were from a diverse background.

## **Common theme**

As last year, there is a clear common theme that can be seen throughout the responses around how the borough looks, and other feelings and experiences associated with anti-social behaviour.

Collectively these visible issues can have impact on whether people feel safe, whether there is a feeling things are being tackled and generally whether people feel positive about where they live.

These themes can also be seen in views around spending, savings and income. With people prioritising higher spends in these areas.

The issues highlighted in the survey are already council priorities, actions achieved or in progress include:

- New Neighbourhood impact team, tackling anti-social behaviour across the borough.
- Introduced the government's maximum level fine for fly-tipping and fines for those caught littering, fly-posting or damaging property with graffiti set at £500.
- Maintained the green bin subscription fee at the same rate with the council absorbing rises in service costs.
- Fly-tipping cameras installed in hotspots to catch those responsible. Also, litter cam in high litter areas.
- Making it easier for local people to report any issue to us including street issues via the MyTamworth app any time day or night.
- Delivered free business support and over £30,000 in grants to local businesses to improve and develop their business.
- Taking all actions legally available to tackle unauthorised encampments.
- Introduced 30minutes free parking across all our town centre car parks.
- Launched a new service to support those at risk of becoming homeless. This new service further builds upon our existing in-home support services so we can reach more people in need.
- On our annual rough sleeper count we've reported 0 rough sleepers in Tamworth.
- Through early intervention, prevented 149 households from becoming homeless.
- Progressing our £20million government future high street fund project to rejuvenate Tamworth town centre that meets the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century shoppers, residents and businesses. With large parts of the project are expected to complete in 2024.
- Invested £2.5million in our high-rise tower blocks replacing all soil pipes and installing new heaters.
- Improving council social housing in Hockley in a £3.5million programme to improve thermal efficiency.
- Coordinated volunteer teams to litter pick and improve the condition of the historic castle gatehouse.
- Held a series of 'pop up' engagement sessions at the town hall, providing opportunities to meet a range of teams from across the council including repairs, regeneration housing and environmental health.
- Held knife awareness talks in schools when the Knife Angel was in nearby Lichfield.
- Community orchard planted in Wigginton park.
- Launched civic pride awards, recognising the work and value of the towns many volunteers and unsung heroes.

- With Staffordshire County Council delivered a new footpath linking the Anker Valley estate to Tamworth station.
- Completed our regular annual programme of estate inspections covering all wards in the borough.
- Well developed mechanisms for tenants to be involved in improving our housing services.
- Over 99% of our social housing repairs fixed in the first visit.
- Invested in the preservation and protection of Tamworth's historic environment.
- Delivered free community archaeology, heritage crafts and re-enactment events (funded by UKSPF) to provide opportunities to engage with local history.
- Delivered a full programme of free events such as St George's Day celebrations, Kings Coronation celebrations, fireworks, Christmas lights switch on and food markets.
- Delivered a bigger than ever before Christmas extravaganza; a month-long programme of activities and events including providing low-cost options for local families.
- And much more.

### **Options Considered**

NA

### **Resource Implications**

None specifically arising from this report; however, the findings are to inform decision making around future council budgets and priorities.

### **Legal/Risk Implications Background**

NA

### **Equalities Implications**

None specifically arising from this report, however any implications on budget decisions and council priorities may have equalities implications.

### **Environment and Sustainability Implications (including climate change)**

None from this report. The main approach to the survey was 'digital by default'.

### **Background Information**

Appendix A Tamworth Borough Council's Annual Survey Report 2023

Appendix B Tamworth Borough Council's Annual Survey 2023 verbatim comments

### **Report Author**

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### **Appendices**

Appendix A Tamworth Borough Council's Annual Survey Report 2023

Appendix B Tamworth Borough Council's Annual Survey 2023 verbatim comments