

Tuesday, 17 September 2024

Report of the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Planning / Assistant Director - Partnerships

Housing Strategy Bi-Annual Update to 30 June 2024

Exempt Information

None

Purpose

To update the Committee on actions within the Tamworth Borough Council Housing Strategy to 30 June 2024 which directly impact on health and wellbeing of Tamworth communities.

Recommendations

It is recommended that:

1. The Committee consider and endorse the report as presented

Executive Summary

The Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee were given an overview of the Tamworth Borough Council Housing Strategy 2021-2025 at the meeting in 12 July 2022. The Committee requested an update on all actions and/or relevant data sets as they relate to health and wellbeing of Tamworth communities on a quarterly basis, revised to bi-annual at the meeting in January 2024..

This report highlights relevant Council and partnership actions and emerging datasets available as of 30th June 2024.

A new contractor has been appointed to undertake work on an updated strategy for 2025-2030

Information in this report is presented in line with priority areas identified in the Housing Strategy 2020-25 and as it relates to the health and wellbeing of the Tamworth communities.

PRIORITY 1 - ENABLE THE PROVISION OF SUFFICIENT NEW HOMES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF THE EXISTING POPULATION AND THOSE ATTRACTED TO THE AREA FOR WORK; ENSURING A RANGE OF PROVISION TO REFLECT BOTH NEED AND ASPIRATION

The council's Planning Policy states:

- Overall Affordable Housing (AH) Requirement on new sites – 20%
- First Homes initiative (from 2021) – 25% of the AH provision
- Additional affordable home ownership – 10% of all dwellings
- The remaining provision to be provided as rent

Further to approval at Cabinet on [14 December](#), the Tamworth Borough Council Monitoring report 2022/23 and Housing Delivery Paper 2022/23 is now published on our website <https://www.tamworth.gov.uk/monitoring>

First Homes

- Nomination to 25% of affordable Housing on all new sites. Eligible buyers receive 30% reduction on full market value.
- The percentage discount is passed on to future purchasers in perpetuity on house market value (to be recorded by the Council)
- Maximum price of a First Home on its initial sale, after discount has been applied, will be £250,000.
- Eligibility criteria is set by Government – sales to local people with a combined household income of under £80,000

The First Homes discount is secured through a planning obligation, which runs with the land. A title restriction is also placed on every First Home which prevents the transfer of title without the express permission of the Council ¹

As at 30th June 2024, the first two First Homes properties have now been sold at a site at Two Gates.

A further seven homes have also been approved and sold at the new Maplevale site on Coton Lane.

PRIORITY 2 - MAKE BEST USE OF EXISTING HOUSING AND RELATED ASSETS

The 2021 Staffordshire Joint Strategic Needs Assessment sets out current and future strategic health and care needs in Staffordshire and identified that wider determinants such as the level of fuel poverty and homelessness in Staffordshire give an indication of how quality of life for residents can be improved.

Tamworth is currently represented at the Health Inequalities Directors Group. At the July 2023 meeting of the Health Inequalities Directors' Group (HIDG), the Insight team at Staffordshire County Council (SCC) presented an overview of data analysis completed to identify 'hotspot' areas of greatest health inequalities within each district/borough. This work was completed to enable the focus of resources and effort to achieve greatest impact.

Further work will be progressed to provide more focused and in-depth analysis, with a focus on the groups' identified topic of 'housing and health'.

The Council have also been successful in receiving £250,000 grant funding from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF) for projects in Tamworth for 13 projects to promote healthier housing and address health inequalities. The projects are outlined within the relevant sections of this report.

Health and Wellbeing initiatives will now be overseen and progressed by the Health and Wellbeing Partnership.

Fuel Poverty

There are number of ways in which Tamworth Borough Council supports and assists residents who may be experiencing fuel poverty to adapt and remain in their own homes.

¹ Draft First Homes Guidance April 2022 <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/first-homes>

Community Home Solutions (CHS) are commissioned as HEAT (Home Energy Advice Tamworth)² until March 2025 through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Community Measures to reduce the cost-of-Living Scheme (£22,400).

Performance statistics included below for Beat the Cold contract which ended April 2024

	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Cumulative
	(01 Apr - 30 Jun 2023)	(01 Jul - 30 Sep 2023)	(01 Oct - 31 Dec 2023)	(01 Jan - 31 Mar 2024)	
Enquiry count totals					
Total No. of enquiries	100	109	130	78	417
No. of individual Households supported	76	80	112	63	331
Enquiry count breakdown					
Disadvantaged households - health related	55	54	72	45	226
Disadvantaged households - benefits & low income	61	59	79	40	239
No. of Hospital/MPFT* referrals	5	3	6	3	17
Home visits LA funded	1	2	0	0	3
Home visits BTC funded	1	0	1	0	2
Community events	0	0	0	5	5
Engagement with referral agencies/stakeholders/partners**	6	6	6	6	N/A
Support provided - figure may exceed no. of enquiries					
General energy/Behavioural advice	97	104	122	65	388
Advice given for tariff switching/billing/problem supplier	18	11	14	12	55
Estimated savings from tariff advice	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	£0
Self reported improvement wellbeing	32	33	41	13	119
No. of PSR sign-ups	16	26	20	8	70
Potential Value of PSR £234.00 per household	£3,744	£6,084	£4,680	£1,872	£16,380
Other Savings from BTC intervention/Gesture of Goodwill	£5,541	£0	£0	£0	£5,541
No. of ECO 4 Referrals	0	5	12	4	21
SCF referrals for heat grant (£450.00 per household)	39	45	30	2	116
Potential value of SCF referrals	£17,550	£15,750	£10,500	£900	£44,700
Food Vouchers Issued	16	9	7	11	43
Potential value of Food vouchers issued (£58.00)	£1,600	£522	£406	£638	£3,166
No of households referred for water tariff support	20	28	33	14	95
Estimated savings from water tariff support (avg. £350 per household)	£7,000	£7,000	£8,250	£3,500	£25,750
Signposted for additional Fuel Voucher Support	N/A	N/A	£10	£19	29
No. of referrals for debt advice/consolidation support	2	4	7	1	14
No of referrals for benefits checks	0	1	6	1	8
*Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust					
**SFRS, ST/SS Water, DWP, SCF, Trussell Trust, CAB					

CHS Q1 Report:

In Q1 CHS had sent 252 letters promoting available schemes and the use of social media has generated 45 applications of support. A further update is expected from CHS in October on Q2.

Intervention Stream	Q1 Forecast	Q1 Actual
HUG	0	0
ECO4	3	2
GBIS	18	0
Income Maximisation	6	10

Intervention volumes are lower than forecast because of a prolonged mobilisation period. Marketing has been created and delivered in the form of social media post and letter drops. There was a significant impact on marketing because of the general election announcement and the period of Purdah where dual branded marketing could not be released. Marketing has resumed at the start of Q2 including a cavity wall campaign targeting over 1000 uninsulated cavity wall constructed homes.

Number of households receiving support 2 homes have received energy efficiency measures with an additional 12 residents in the pipeline of receiving work. In addition to this, 6 other homes have received interventions

Staffordshire Warmer Homes³

² <https://www.tamworth.gov.uk/save-money-your-fuel-bills>

³ [Staffordshire Warmer Homes Partnership](#)

Staffordshire Warmer Homes is a scheme run by Staffordshire County Council, in partnership with district and borough councils. The goal is to combat fuel poverty across the county and help residents to heat their homes for less using greener and more energy efficient solutions.

Home Upgrade Grants (HUG) Fund

HUG 2 is a government scheme awarding grants to Local Authorities (LAs) for energy efficiency and clean heating upgrades in owner occupied and private rented sector fuel-poor homes off the gas grid. The funding is administered through application to Staffordshire Warmer Homes and Community Home Solutions (CHS) have been contracted to deliver Customer Journey Support (CJS),

The private housing Team are currently running a dual branded marketing campaign with CHS to promote this scheme within the Borough for home improvement that has produced

Tackling Empty Homes

This is a Corporate Priority with a strategy in development to be completed by March 2025. Staff are currently undergoing training and working with the Empty Homes Network.

COMF grant funding has been successful until September 2024 for an empty homes officer to to inform the Council approach around bringing empty homes back to use (TBC)

As at 31 August 2024 the team have confirmed 388 empty homes in Tamworth.

Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) Licencing

Houses of Multiple Occupation are properties rented out by at least three people who are not from the one 'household', eg a family, but share facilities like the bathroom and kitchen. It is a statutory requirement to ensure that all HMOs meet a licensable standard regardless of whether the property requires a mandatory licence.

126 HMOs have been identified in Tamworth (with a further two at planning stage).

At this time the Council have 59 currently active licences which must be retained on a public register⁴.

HMOs which do not meet the criteria for mandatory licencing but **must** comply with legislation. A proactive inspection regime is now in place to ensure standards are maintained in these properties and it is likely more will be identified:

HMOs Identified to 31 December 2023	HMOs Identified to 30 August 2024	Increase/Decrease because of proactive inspections
28	67	+ 31

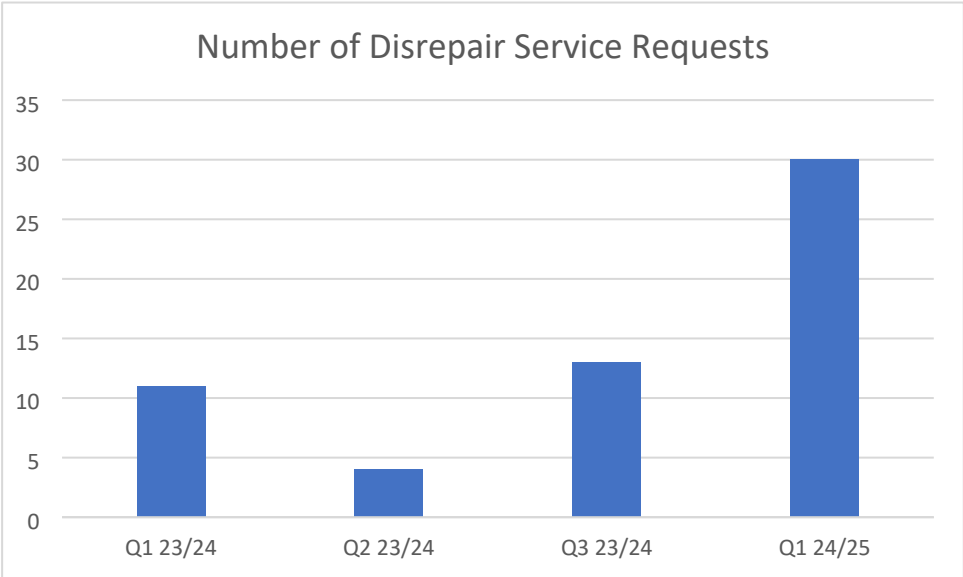
⁴ [Tamworth Council HMO Public Register](#)

Damp and Mould

Key performance indicators have been updated for Private Sector Housing to include any reports or disrepair which may be attributed to damp and mould.

Updated KPIs are as follows:-

Number of disrepair service requests:



The Private Sector Team have also secured COMF funding to purchase some dehumidifiers to assist private tenants who have reported mould issues during investigation.

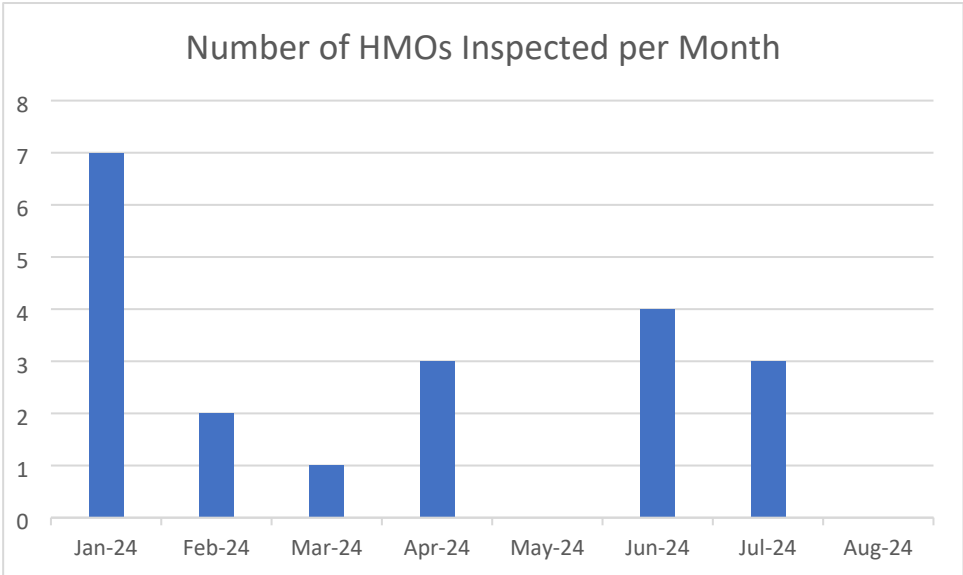
CASE STUDY

A gentleman who came to us after numerous reports of damp in his property, the source of the damp he was reporting on the outside wall of his bedroom could not be identified. We visited and inspected the property where we found the ground floor maisonette to have humidity levels over 70%. High humidity (above 60%) creates ideal conditions for mould and mildew growth, which can damage walls, furniture, and even the structural integrity of the building, thus causing health issues potentially causing respiratory problems like asthma. The gentleman was reporting that he couldn't sleep at night as the air felt heavy and was struggling to breathe. Within 2 weeks of him being part of the dehumidifier scheme he reported back that he had slept over 6 hours a night something he hadn't done in a long time, felt as though he could breathe again. This improvement has continued, and he now has a regular 6 plus hours of sleep a night.

Tamworth Borough Council Housing Repair Services report the following damp and mould requests January 2024- August 2024.

Jobs Awaiting Authorisation for Works	0
Jobs Awaiting Post work inspections	5
Jobs Awaiting payment to contractor	27
Jobs Awaiting payment approval	11
Calls Awaiting job card to be issued	3
Jobs In progress	67
Jobs ready for invoicing	147

The number of HMO’s Inspected to September 2024



- Number of category 1 Hazards identified as result of inspection 3.
- Number of category 2 Hazards identified as a result of inspection 3.
- Number of formal interventions around notice and harassment issues/landlord behaviour 1
- Number of Improvement Notices served 0.
- Number of Prohibition Notices served 0.
- Number of Civil Penalties issued other than HMO 0
- Number of Hazard Awareness Notices served 0.

The approach to enforcement in private rented properties is outline in the Council’s Private Sector Housing Enforcement Policy .⁵

⁵ [Housing Policies](#)

**PRIORITY 3
ENSURE HOUSING PLAYS A KEY ROLE IN DELIVERING TAMWORTH’S RESPONSE
TO CLIMATE CHANGE**

The Council’s Climate change officer is currently working with consultants on this aspect of ongoing work to include health, community and housing.

Alongside our climate action plan, we are working to develop a climate adaptation plan. This will set out measures for Tamworth to take to prepare our local community for and adjust to, the current and expected impacts of climate change. This will also form part of our roadmap to net zero and help us to reduce emissions and prepare now for climate impacts in future.

The climate adaptation plan will provide actions we can take to reduce vulnerability to the impacts of climate change, such as extreme weather (e.g. increased temperatures or flooding) and food and water insecurity.

Examples of adaptations could include installation of water efficiency measures, shading options, better ventilation to reduce the overheating risk and to improve indoor air quality, etc.

To develop the plan and ensure the actions are focused, achievable and align with our local plan focus groups have been created, the outcomes of which will be reported later in the year.

ECO4 – Statement of Intent

ECO4 is an obligation placed on the largest energy suppliers in Great Britain and is focused on the least energy efficient homes occupied by low income and vulnerable households

In quarter 3 we have had 4 applications and 4 were approved.

Applications to 31 Dec 24		Applications to 31 August 24		Totals	
Received	Approved	Received	Approved	Received	Approved
4	4	17	17	21	21

Additionally, the COMF funding has provided top up funding for the ECO flex scheme to ensure vulnerable applicants can be assisted where the grant provided does not quite meet the full cost of home upgrade energy efficiency measures.

Great British Insulation Scheme (GBIS)

Community Home Solutions are working in conjunction with Tamworth Borough Council to assist homeowners (and private/social tenants with permission from landlord) in Council Tax Band A to D with less than 100mm of loft insulation to obtain FREE loft insulation. Letters were sent over before Christmas and will be continuing.

To date there have been 64 enquiries.

More information regarding the Great British Insulation Scheme (GBIS) is here: <https://www.gov.uk/apply-great-british-insulation-scheme>

Community Home Solutions report that 2 installations have been completed this quarter – lower than predicted as a result of a prolonged mobilisation period.

Marketing has been created and delivered in the form of social media post and letter drops. There was a significant impact on marketing as a result of the general election announcement and the pre-election period where dual branded marketing could not be released.

Marketing has resumed at the start of Q2 including a cavity wall campaign targeting over 1000 uninsulated cavity wall constructed homes.

PRIORITY 4

ENSURE EVERYONE WHO LIVES OR WORKS IN TAMWORTH HAS ACCESS TO APPROPRIATE HOUSING THAT PROMOTES WELLBEING

Tamworth Advice Centre (TAC):

Citizens Advice Mid Mercia (CAMM) operating as [Tamworth Advice Centre](#), are working together with Tamworth Borough Council (TBC) to assist with the council priorities and vision:

- Living in Tamworth

Clients can self-refer for generalist advice or be referred through the housing solutions team or via Tenancy support teams.

Quarter 4 (2023/24) reports and Quarter1 2024 reports are included as Appendices 1 to 8.

The outreach service provided at Heart of Tamworth, due to cease on 30th September as it related directly to Homelessness has now been re-considered and will continue for generalist advice until at least September 2025 with consideration as to whether this can be included into the main Tamworth Advice Centre contract from April 2025.

Key headlines for Quarter 4 2023/4 and Quarter 1 April- June 24 are included in the Narrative Reports at Appendix 9 and 10.

COMF Funding – A cost of living adviser service within the Tamworth Advice Centre has been recruited to support vulnerable residents.

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2020-2025

The Council has current strategy the outcomes of which are reported to Scrutiny.

The contract for the operation of the Homelessness Hub was awarded to Citizens Advice Mid Mercia in September 2023 in partnership CT CIC, Homestart and Betterway Recovery and is now operating successfully.

COMF funding will also provided a move on support budget for rough sleeper re-start to assist with obtaining support and accommodation.

PRIORITY 5

ENSURE APPROPRIATE ADVICE AND FUNDING IS AVAILABLE TO SUPPORT OLDER PEOPLE TO LIVE INDEPENDENTLY IN APPROPRIATE ACCOMMODATION.

Health ageing promotes well-being and enabling independence for older people. Outcomes on this priority includes warm efficient homes, independence, the prevention of falls and more choice around end of life choices.

A Disabled Adaptations Policy to outline the Council's policy for Disabled Facilities Grants and Disabled Facilities Adaptations was approved at Cabinet on [8th August 2024](#) and will be reported on separately.

The Partnership Team will also be working with the County Council on an emerging Housing with Care Strategy to prevent, reduce and delay the need for care as well as maximising independence and quality of life.

The new Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Housing Strategt and Health Inequalities Strategy will inform work in this area.

Hospital to Home

CT CIC continue to work with health partners and have been commissioned to provide a or – hospital discharge service.

COMF funding has also secured the following until Sept 2024:

- Care Connect volunteers in GP practices to enhance social prescribing and promote social projects (CT CIC)
- Enhancement to hospital discharge scheme – funding for house clearances, deep cleans, minor repairs as necessary (CT CIC)
- Twelve month additional funding for the Wheel Connections social isolation project (CT CIC)

Sheltered Housing

Tamworth Borough Council Sheltered housing provides people aged 55 and over with another housing choice in Tamworth. There are 11 schemes and 365 units of mixed housing

COMF funding will also support:

- Cooking lessons within Supported housing for vulnerable tenants (TBC)
- Compostable toilet for Belgrave Allotment and Gardens to provide more access for visitors and vulnerable users who use the space to promote health eating and growing own vegetables (Belgrave Allotment)

Dementia Friendly Community Status

Tamworth has an established and extremely well attended Memory Café at the Heart of Tamworth and has recently taken part in Dementia Awareness Week.

Communities Together CIC continues to offer singing for the mind, arts and craft activities, seated exercise sessions. They also offer a befriending telephone line and Meals on Wheels service.

A new memory café has also been given grant funding through a recent community grant.

Additional COMF funded projects until September 2024

- Mobile unit for the Active Tamworth project (Tamworth Council) to be based at Anker Valley but will be able to go to other areas – healthy eating, signpost to activities for young people, adults and families
- Contribution to expand current free holiday activities managed by TBC
- Provision of Year 6 healthy eating programme across all primary schools undertaken and well received (external provider through SCVYS)

Options Considered

Detailed in report

Resource Implications

Work is undertaken within the team

Legal/Risk Implications Background

There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. Actions and statistics reported as for the mitigation of risk to the most vulnerable within our communities and to ensure health and affordable housing is available

Equalities Implications

A completed CIA was circulated with the Housing Strategy 2020-25.

The ongoing work detailed continues to have a positive impact on the identified groups, providing support for health and wellbeing and in line with the Council's Equality and Diversity policy Making Equality Real in Tamworth.

Environment and Sustainability Implications (including climate change)

Included within the Housing strategy, report and in wider considerations for the Council's Climate Change policies.

Background Information

Included within the report

Report Author

Lisa Hall, Joanne Sands – Safer Communities and Homes Manager, Assistant Director Partnerships

Appendices

1. Tamworth Debt and Generalist advice Q4
2. Tamworth Debt and Generalist advice Q1 - 2024
3. Tamworth Tenancy Sustainment Q4
4. Tamworth Tenancy Sustainment Q1 - 2024
5. Tamworth Homelessness Q4
6. Tamworth Homelessness Q1 - 2024
7. Tamworth Heart of Tamworth (Sacred Heart) project Q4
8. Tamworth Heart of Tamworth (Sacred Heart) project Q1 – 2024
9. Tamworth Advice Centre Narrative report Q4
10. Tamworth Advice Centre Narrative report Q1 - 2024