



Tamworth Borough Council
Growth and Regeneration Plan

**Aspire and Prosper
in Tamworth**

Summary

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Tamworth
Borough Council

Vision

Our vision is to create and sustain a thriving local economy and make Tamworth a more aspirational and competitive place to do business.

This will see our people secure new skills, aspire to new jobs and be more competitive in the labour market. Our businesses will develop new niche products and secure new markets, provide increased employment opportunities, and be globally competitive. Our town will be one which attracts investment and is seen as a great place to live and work.

The role of Tamworth Borough Council is to lead, to inspire and to build confidence.

This plan sets out what we will do to provide that leadership, inspiration and confidence. Importantly it shows how - through interventions to support business, to develop our people, and to enhance the quality of our place - we can grow our economy and make it more resilient. We are confident of our future but we know we face many challenges. The world has changed – and we can no longer work the way we did. We must be ever smarter in the way we use our resources, our powers and our influence. We have a strong evidence base to support the programme of activities outlined ahead; an evidence base built from a wealth of information across a range of partners and data sets. From our approach to locality working which builds sustainability and confidence at the neighbourhood level ... through to our active participation in the regional Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership to maximise growth opportunities and embed resilience, we are very well placed.



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Foreword

Since the international banking collapse of 2008, the past five years have been one of the most challenging periods I can recall for the UK economy; this has been felt locally just as much as nationally.

However the economic downturn has been followed by a period of ongoing economic austerity. The business support and regional planning infrastructure has been fundamentally changed and the benefits system has been overhauled with the introduction of the 2012 Welfare Reform Bill. The reductions in public spending mean we must work in a different and smarter way. Yet this is nothing new to Tamworth as we have always strived to work to improve and introduce efficiency wherever possible.

The Tamworth Growth and Regeneration Plan is our continued commitment to improve and deliver services locally as well as regionally, to both residents and the businesses that employ them.

It is continual demonstration of our work with businesses and the public sector to stimulate growth and regeneration, as well as protecting employers we already have. To get the most out of resources and assets we have, we need to use them imaginatively and in partnership - and focus on a smaller number of key priorities based on evidence.

We must also be prepared to challenge ourselves regularly to ensure we keep to the required direction of travel, while facing and removing the blockers as they arise. A key aspect of this will be our participation in the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership.

We have long worked with neighbouring councils but often this has been in response to statutory requirements. Being part of the Birmingham City region has led us to the voluntary - and strategically important - decision to focus our own resources into an effective working relationship with Birmingham City Council and others in the GBSLEP.

Key assets in and around Birmingham such as the International Airport, New Street Station, ICC, NEC and Aston University, can all play a part in the future prosperity of our borough. We need to be in the economic partnership which will influence their development.

Powerful local economies are based on city regions and Birmingham is an economic giant. If you look at other world economies, the USA, China, Australia, France, Italy and Germany, they all work on a city region basis. American cities, Paris, Berlin, Munich and Milan all have an inner city finance sector, inner city housing, road and rail networks and an international airport. As you move outwards, there are the older industrial areas.

Smaller towns and villages feed the city and vice versa; this is where Tamworth sits in regards to Birmingham. We need to grow with the city region and success will be shared.

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We also endorse the importance of working alongside Staffordshire County Council and the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent LEP. The County Council plays a key role in the skills agenda and in infrastructure investment. We also look to the County Council to secure the best for Tamworth from the LEP they established in partnership with Stoke City Council.

The economy of Tamworth is to a large extent determined by its history and location, being near the West Midlands conurbation, at the heart of England's motorway and rail network, and close to major airports and freight terminals.

While Tamworth's industrial base has developed from coal mining and heavy metalworking, over recent years there has been a sharp fall in manufacturing employment and today a more balanced but fairly static economy exists.

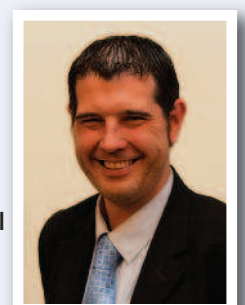
The health of Tamworth's economy is of great importance to the well-being of our residents, many of whom work in the borough and depend on services provided here. However, many residents also commute out of the borough to work, so there is an inter-relationship between economic factors at a local and sub-regional level.

We need to invest in, support and inspire local communities so they can lead and benefit from future economic growth. We do this with one eye on the needs of the key growth sectors, and one on the needs of our neighbourhoods, which face the greatest challenges.

We also recognise our key role in ensuring businesses have the right land, property and wider infrastructure to locate and grow in Tamworth. In short, we will create the environment for business growth, connect our people and businesses, and have a balanced and sustainable approach to future development. The private sector must drive growth, we must facilitate where we can to ensure their needs are met.

Our aim is to provide leadership, inspire our community, and act as the catalyst to grow our economy.

Cllr Daniel Cook
Leader of Tamworth Borough Council



Tamworth – Our Economic Story

The businesses, the people and the place

The local economy of Tamworth is relatively stable and expected to experience growth over the coming years. Key to this will be a further diversification of the economic base away from the more traditional low value manufacturing toward high tech manufacturing and higher value added service sectors such as ICT and professional and business services. The traditional manufacturing base of the town has sustained low wage jobs and there has been little incentive for many residents to gain new skills and qualifications. While unemployment remains relatively low with many residents able to access jobs in the neighbouring districts and in Birmingham, there is a recognition that future economic growth will rely on an increasingly skilled employment base as the demand for traditional and basic skills falls away. Importantly, as our population grows over the next 20 years, the town will have to encourage and support the growth of sectors which can provide the higher value added and higher paid jobs – more jobs in Tamworth and less out commuting will clearly be desirable.

Geographically and economically, the Borough is closely linked to the neighbouring districts of North Warwickshire and Lichfield. In addition, the town is historically, geographically and economically linked to Birmingham, having received population overspill in the 1960s and 1970s. This shaped the look of the Tamworth we see today, one that sees a tightly drawn urban district where economic activity flows across its borders. More than a third of our employed residents work outside of Tamworth, and almost one in five work in Birmingham. As a local authority we recognise that our boundaries are merely artificial governance arrangements and economic activity bears little relationship to them.

Tamworth is a small but enterprising town, one that has a strong work ethic and a resilient business base. We have faced a huge challenge over the past 10 years. Like many other parts of the UK we have seen a significant loss of manufacturing jobs. However this was from a relatively high base and we still have approximately one in seven of our resident workforce employed in manufacturing. While there will be further pressures on this sector, we recognise there will also be opportunities for those which can develop niche products and markets. Too many of our manufacturing workforce is employed in low tech manufacturing; less than one in three are employed in medium or high tech manufacturing. It will take time to change this but we must ensure that we use all our

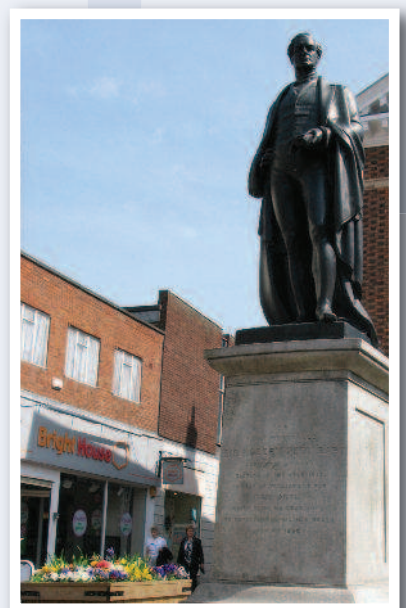
available public and private sector assets to focus support on those areas where the best opportunities lie, ensure all our businesses are plugged into the innovation and research and development expertise available, and encourage and support a more qualified workforce.

There has been quite a marked change in the structure of the Tamworth economy over recent years, with a number of sectors expanding and contracting significantly. The economic downturn could be a factor behind the significant reduction in employee job numbers in the ‘other manufacturing’ (-1,100 jobs), ‘building technologies’ (-600 jobs), and ‘transport technologies’ (-900 jobs) sectors. In comparison, Tamworth has relatively strong levels of employment and recent growth in the ‘business & professional services’, ‘financial & insurance’ and ‘retail’ sectors, accounting for 7.5%, 3.8% and 15.1% of all employee jobs in the borough.

Against a decline in manufacturing employment, the town has become home to a growing number of businesses in the building technologies, finance and insurance, education and health sectors. We also maintain a considerable jobs base in the retail, tourism and leisure sectors.

A broad business base will be a strength in providing a range of future employment opportunities and as a buffer against sectoral decline - but we want to create opportunities for our residents to aspire to. As such we will look to support growth in niche manufacturing, in the building technologies sector, in ICT, and in the environmental technologies sector. We are centrally located between Warwick, Derby, Aston, Birmingham, Coventry and Staffordshire Universities – we must reach out to these centres of support and expertise and engage them more into our local communities.

Likewise we must proactively engage with the Staffordshire Business Innovation Centre, the Sectors Skills Councils, and the Manufacturing Advisory Service if we want to make a difference in Tamworth.



If we are to attract investment from key business growth sectors, if we are to encourage product development and innovation and if we are secure more export work, then we need a better qualified, more aspirational and more entrepreneurial workforce. We have started an agenda for change in our schools, where our new Secondary Academies should lead a step change in educational achievement, helping to drive an improvement in workforce qualifications. We have a strong Further Education College which is leading the way in promoting apprenticeships, a local Employment and Skills Board to encourage dialogue

and ensure provision is business focused and outreach work in our four priority neighbourhoods.

Our vision will see us build on our work ethic strength to create a workforce which increasingly values qualifications and increasingly aspires to new skills; build on our broad economic base to capture growth in niche sectors and plug more businesses into the available support; and create a vibrant and diverse town centre that exudes confidence to residents, visitors and investors.

Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (GBSLEP)

The Greater Birmingham economy generates £35 billion of economic activity, home to 2 million residents, and more than 67,000 businesses. The GBSLEP is based on the principle of 'balanced growth, balanced benefit' which recognises the role of each partner in contributing to and benefitting from the LEPs growth ambitions. The LEP is chaired by Andy Street, Managing Director of the John Lewis Partnership and we are one of 9 Local Authority members with a seat on the Board along with a further 10 business members.

Southern Staffordshire Enterprise Belt

The belt which includes Tamworth sits on the northern part of the Birmingham conurbation and is an area of high growth potential. As well as direct access to the national transport network, other key drivers are the attraction of places in the belt as high quality residential and business environments; it is also adjacent to the major economic market, institutional capacity, cultural offer, and creative hub of the Birmingham conurbation. We are working with the Southern Staffordshire Partnership to show how we can fully realise the potential of the Belt.

Tamworth Borough Council

Growth and Regeneration Plan

Staffordshire Economic Consortium

Whilst we are not members of the Stoke and Staffordshire LEP (instead focusing our resources into the Greater Birmingham LEP for good reasons) we do recognise that the Stoke and Staffordshire LEP covers the whole of the Staffordshire, and that Staffordshire County Council is a key partner for economic development activity in Tamworth. We are therefore key players in the Consortium which was set up in 2012 to develop a Staffordshire wide economic growth strategy, and to help Staffordshire get greater influence in the SSLEP.

Stoke and Staffordshire Local Enterprise Partnership

Established by Staffordshire County Council and Stoke City Council, this LEP also covers Tamworth and can play a key role in our growth ambitions. While we elected not to be members of the SSLEP, we work closely with the County Council to ensure that they are aware of and can support our priorities both directly and through the SSLEP. The County Council and the SSLEP will both play a key strategic and investment role in the future of Tamworth

Programmes and Priority Actions

This plan acts as the connector – connecting our people to local opportunities, support and jobs; connecting our businesses to local and sector intelligence, markets and labour force; and connecting our Tamworth locally, regionally and globally.

To do this we deliver a range of activities across ten programmes within the three building blocks which underpin growth and regeneration - namely business, people and place. Importantly these programmes are not mutually exclusive, in fact every effort is made to continually understand the linkages and to explore ways in which they can support each other. Each programme is sponsored by an Executive Officer and Cabinet Member, and progress is monitored quarterly at the Council's Corporate Management Team and Cabinet.

1 Business

Our diverse economic base is no longer too reliant on one sector but we do need to encourage business investment and growth in some of those niche sectors which are responding to or leading consumer demand.

There has been much restructuring in the economy in Tamworth in recent years, and these changes were, in part, a consequence of the economic downturn. The number of employee jobs reduced by a little over 15%, or 5,000 jobs, between 2006 and 2010. This was the greatest reduction in Staffordshire, and considerably larger than both the regional (4%) and County (5%) average. A significant part of this fall was as a result of business closures and contractions in the manufacturing sector. This was largely due to the nature of manufacturing employment in the borough which has relatively few businesses classed as medium to high tech manufacturers. In fact, of the 3,500 people employed in the manufacturing sector in Tamworth, only 200 are in businesses regarded as high tech. That aside, manufacturing is the second most important sector in the borough just behind retail in numbers though higher in terms of GVA. While other sectors also saw a loss of jobs in line with a national trend, some experienced a growth. These were most notably professional and business services, tourism and leisure, ICT, finance and insurance, and health. The key sectors today, in employment terms, are retail, which accounts for over 4,000 jobs, closely followed by manufacturing, building technologies, education, professional and business services, and transport and storage. We will develop a strong focus on developing the high growth and greater value added parts of our manufacturing sector. While Tamworth itself accounts for 3,500 manufacturing jobs, a further 1750 of our residents are employed in manufacturing firms outside of the borough. In this context our ability to support and shape the restructuring of the manufacturing sector is even more important

Our business base, like every other in the UK, has witnessed the dismantling of what was a comprehensive, and well resourced, business support infrastructure delivered primarily through the Business Link service and brand. Evidence has shown that those businesses that access business support are the ones more likely to grow, innovate and create jobs. We have been ahead of the game in recognising the changes that were taking place early on, working with both LEPs in developing a new business support offer, and establishing a local access point and engagement programme for our businesses – a service unique to Tamworth. We will continue to develop



our response ensuring that the gap in provision is plugged, that all local businesses can access new and relevant support programmes, and that we regularly engage with them to understand their issues. We need to make sense of a wholly fragmented and weak business support infrastructure to ensure as many of our businesses are aware of and can access the support available; and we must develop a local infrastructure that can attract and support growth in key niche sectors.

Our key business sectors include retail, business and professional services, leisure and tourism, and building technologies, and manufacturing. We must look at our economy in the round and recognise that there must be opportunities for entry jobs and progression for all. While we will work to further restructure the economy, we must ensure that those sectors that do provide a significant proportion of our employment, namely traditional manufacturing, retail, education, professional and business services and transport, continue to have access to the support, sites and labour market that they need today. In doing this we will be mindful of how these sectors are changing, in terms of employment numbers and also in terms of product and service production and delivery.

Tamworth has a relatively low level of entrepreneurship. Over the past 3 years Tamworth has seen a steady decline in the number of business startups with just over 400 new enterprises starting in 2012. The borough has the second lowest number of business startups relative to population of all the districts in Staffordshire, and a startup ratio significantly below the national and regional average. The number of startups that still survive in Tamworth after 5 years is also the lowest in the County at less than 40%. We are determined to significantly improve our business startup and survival rate. To do this, we will aim to provide the right premises, market intelligence, and initial business support. We will then engage those new businesses into a wider network of support and market development opportunities, and finally we will facilitate some longer term mentoring support.

“ We are determined to significantly improve our business start up and survival rate. ”

1.1 Sectors programme

We need to properly understand our local economy in terms of the key growth sectors, and those sectors which will continue to provide significant employment opportunities now and in the near future.

While we are focused on growth, we do realise that a substantial level of employment sits within sectors such as retail and hospitality which, while not necessarily high value added or high wage sectors, are nevertheless high employment sectors.



This programme will be delivered through four projects:

- Research, support and network building to maximise the potential of our growth sectors
- Growing a niche manufacturing cluster
- A collaborative project to develop the local institutional capacity to support innovation
- Bespoke activity to attract investment from key sectors

Business Support and Engagement programme

1.2

The closure of Business Link West Midlands, the increasing confusion and fragmentation of the business support market and the lack of a well resourced market making role by the public sector is a market failure which requires an immediate and local response.

In Tamworth we recognised that there would be a problem before it emerged and have been involved in a number of initiatives to address this. Importantly, we have sought to work with representatives of the private sector to develop robust and sustainable solutions.

This programme will be delivered through five projects.

- Developing our local Business Economic Partnership (BEP)
- Promoting, co-ordinating and delivering business support through Tamworth4Business
- Supporting the Business Network Forum
- Maximising the value and benefit of economic assets through an innovative ‘Economic gardening’ project
- Strengthening our business base through an Enterprise Support programme

2 People

Tamworth has an ageing population and the overall population will rise from 78,700 to 81,200 by 2033. There will also be a significant change to the workforce/resident ratio with an additional 5000 residents aged 80 or over by 2033. Tamworth's workforce has grown as a result of the town's role in accommodating the Birmingham overspill through the 70s.

While there is a reputation for a strong work ethic, there remains a poor level of formal qualifications and a lack of aspiration. It is recognised that it will be through developing the skills and aspirations for work in current growth sectors that we will underpin the potential for increased economic prosperity in Tamworth. While the attainment rates for key NVQ indicators are growing year on year they remain relatively low, below the regional and national average. Almost 2 in 5 of the adult population lacks an NVQ 2 and a little over 1 in 5 has an NVQ4 (degree equivalent). It is also important that skills development and training provides the transferrable skills which tend to be well valued by employers

The need to promote improvements in basic skills, particularly in terms of numeracy and literacy will be important for the local economy, both in terms of helping individuals to progress through the different levels of skills and qualification attainment but also in providing for the skills base to support the needs of more elementary occupations to meet the demand for replacements to existing staff. The UK Workforce survey revealed that in Staffordshire employers considered that more than one in four school leavers were poorly or very poorly equipped for work. Interestingly poor attitude and lack of motivation were cited ahead of core skill competencies as reasons why. Educational attainment is however improving in Tamworth. The percentage of pupils achieving five or more GCSE A* to C grades including English and Maths has increased from 35.4% in 2007 to 42.4% in 2010, although this remains the lowest attainment rate in the County. The proportion of pupils who continued with structured learning after completing compulsory education increased from 87.6% in 2007 to 92.7% in 2010. Whilst our Academies will act as a catalyst to driving up performance we will play a key role in ensuring schools are aware of the future employment opportunities and what qualifications are needed; and we will help to raise aspirations of young people to encourage more to access higher education.

The group suffering disproportionately from unemployment locally has been the 16-24 year old age group; this is often referred to as 'youth unemployment'. This has arguably more serious implications than adult unemployment

“ We will maintain a strong focus on supporting our young people, providing the support they need to access jobs, and giving additional resource to the priority neighbourhoods. ”

because of two key reasons; scarring (the long term damage to individual's economic situations and the economy more broadly) and inactivity, which is more likely to lead to long-term worklessness. The proportion of 16 to 24 year olds claiming Jobseeker's Allowance increased by over 50% between February 2008 and July 2011 but has since fallen and was standing at 3.4% at the middle of 2013– above the regional but below the national average, with Tamworth having the largest annual fall in the number of claimants in any of the Staffordshire Districts. The rate of youth unemployment is consistently higher than the rate of adult unemployment and stood at 5.8% at the start of 2013. We will maintain a strong focus on supporting our young people, providing the support they need to access jobs, and giving additional resource to the priority neighbourhoods.

The average earnings of our residents are on par with the national average and above the regional average, standing at approximately £26,500. This doesn't necessarily reflect the wages in the local economy as we need to recognise that a third of residents commute outside the district for work where most of the jobs are higher paid. We are determined to drive the average wage levels higher through encouraging and supporting more residents to access relevant qualifications, alongside work to attract higher value added and therefore higher waged businesses in to the borough

We will continue to focus resource onto the more deprived parts of the borough to reduce the differential with the wider community, and we will do this by building local capacity and through encouraging participation in shaping service delivery.

2.1 Growing a skilled workforce programme

With increasing autonomy within our education system, a large number of private sector training providers, and still too few businesses accessing the training support and funding available, we recognise that we have a key role.

Our role is in leading local partnership working, engaging with those bodies which deliver training support, raising awareness within the business community, and articulating the benefits of a well educated, well trained workforce.

This Programme will be delivered through one project, an Educational and Skills Board for Tamworth, which focuses on eight outcomes

- Promoting education excellence for all children and young people
- Ensuring appropriate choice and capacity in the local education system
- Improving educational attainment and closing the gaps for the most disadvantaged
- Breaking down barriers to learning and progression
- Encouraging provision of effective consistent information, advice and guidance
- Achieving a positive dialogue between the education and business sector
- Raising aspirations of young people so more go into higher education
- Developing a local culture of collaboration and co-operation

2.2 Community Hubs programme

In each of our four most deprived neighbourhoods (Amington, Belgrave, Glascote, Stoneydelph), we have established an Advice, Resource and Community Hub (ARCH). Each ARCH provides residents with access to a range of Council and partner services and each plays a key role in helping individuals access information, advice and training to help them become job ready and/or access local jobs.

The role of the hubs in providing space for the community to explore issues and develop their own activity has had a significant impact, with strong examples of local people participating, not only as volunteers but also leading on the development of projects. The availability of appropriate space for these activities in the future will continue to be a challenge for partners, but also for the residents as they become more empowered and independent within their own communities. They play an important role in building



confidence and are supported by a team of Borough Council Community Development Officers. We regard this as a way of working and not a discrete project, and to support the community focus each ARCH is now based in a functioning community facility, namely a local fire station, a library, a church and a Community Café. The concept of the Community Hub is driving forward several key activities.

This programme will be delivered through four projects

- Partner engagement and access to public services
- Developing a range of service provision informed by the community
- Link to members and community leaders
- Community capacity building

Improving Employability programme 2.3

In response to an increasingly competitive jobs market, we are taking a lead role in ensuring all of our community can access the necessary support, information, advice and guidance that will make them job ready and help them access employment.

We are committed to further reducing our number of unemployed, particularly among the younger age group where the problem is more significant. We are working with the community and voluntary sector, promoting the use of the Community Hubs and sourcing funding to help engage more people into the labour market and make them more job ready. While worklessness rates in Tamworth are below the regional average, they remain one of the highest for the County.

This will be delivered through two projects

- Employment Action Group to develop the strategic thinking required to address employability as the economy develops
- Work Clubs to provide hands on information, advice, and support, to help individuals access jobs.

3 Place

Tamworth is incredibly well placed on the UK transport network with direct access to the A5, M42, and M6 toll. It is at the crossroads of two strategic rail lines giving rail access to Scotland, the south-west, north and south, with just 20 minutes drive time from Birmingham International Airport. Around 76,800 people live in Tamworth of which just under 70% are economically active; and it is home to approximately 2,500 businesses, providing 26,200 jobs.

There is a job density of 0.6 meaning that for every 10 residents there are just 6 jobs in the borough. It is no surprise then that more than 1 in 3 of the population commute outside of Tamworth for work, though it should also be noted that many of the businesses in Tamworth also employ staff from neighbouring areas. The inter relationships with neighbouring areas cannot be overstated. While the town is a net importer of jobs, it equally acts as the retail and leisure base for many villages in neighbouring Districts with influence stretching across to southern Derbyshire.

The role as a retail centre in fact goes beyond a traditional catchment area as Tamworth has a major retail park (Ventura Park) just 1 mile from the town centre. Strategically located adjacent to the A5 with quick access to the M42, the site has grown exponentially and has, alongside other pressures such as on line retailing, impacted on the role of our traditional town centre. Ventura Park's rapid growth, our tight borough boundaries, and the built heritage of our town centre, has limited the amount of retail provision within the town centre such that it has not kept pace with our recent population growth. As a result, new and larger retailers have sought to locate in the out of town retail park which benefits from land availability, free parking and excellent links to the national highway network. The scale and nature of retail provision, while attracting spend from well outside the town's catchment area, is now acting as a deterrent to further retail investment in the town centre. We will use the local development plan and work with town centre businesses to reshape our town centre. Showcasing our historic built heritage, we will develop a cultural quarter and create gateways and scenic links to neighbouring sites, and we will create a more family focused evening economy and secure more independent retailers as well as some non retail businesses as new tenants.



Birmingham has a significant impact on the borough – both historically and for the future. With a significant part of the population previously resident or with family connections in the city strong social and economic links remain. Almost one in five of working residents commute into Birmingham, less than 20 minutes by train; as a regional city Birmingham has developed a strong cultural, retail and leisure offer; and the critical mass of the Birmingham economy presents significant supply chain opportunities for local business. Some may see the

“ **As our population grows we have the opportunity to put sustainable development into practice.** ”

growth of Birmingham as a threat - we see it as an opportunity and will do all we can foster a strong working relationship with others in what is evidently a 'Greater Birmingham' economy. We will develop strategic relationships with neighbouring authorities and the wider Greater Birmingham area to ensure our growth aspirations can be met using assets within and outside the borough.

The Council's priorities for regeneration will focus on neighbourhoods with high levels of deprivation, those employment sites in need of modernisation, and discrete areas where there is a need to redevelop some housing stock that is coming to the end of its useful life. In addition, the Wilnecote Corridor along Watling Street has been identified as an area that would benefit from a comprehensive approach to regenerating its local housing and employment offer and improving the immediate environment to enhance its function as a key transport corridor.

There are 4 key priority neighbourhoods identified for 'locality working' and these are Amington, Belgrave, Glascoate, and Stonydelph. Locality working is aimed at addressing disadvantage and involves neighbourhood level multi-agency activity to focus resources to address issues of local needs. Tamworth has a number of strategically well placed business parks adjacent to junction 10 of the M42. It also benefits from a number of employment sites across the borough although most of these are in need of site enhancements if they are to attract more high value service and manufacturing companies. We will work with partners and local businesses to improve the appearance, functionality and accessibility of our priority neighbourhoods, and our key employment sites

As our population grows we have the opportunity to put sustainable development into practice. We have identified a series of sites around the town that will accommodate moderate housing numbers reducing the need to travel, ensuring access to services, and strengthen our town centre economy. However we recognise that the scale of projected population growth and the nature of the demand for more single occupancy or 2 bed properties means we must be ambitious in our plans

We aim to accommodate a significant part of the projected growth in population through a large urban extension of the town in the north east part of the borough – the Anker Valley Sustainable Urban Extension – which will be home to just under 2000 new houses. The size of the development will help to support the viability of additional infrastructure required to ensure the site is sustainable

Town centre programme

We recognise that changes in retailing and the recession have led to a reduction in the number of high street brands in our town centre and that it needs to diversify and change.

We have identified a number of development opportunities in our town centre; opportunities that will help us create a broader and stronger town centre offer. We will build a town centre that will be responsive to the needs of the 21st century, one that has a strong cultural offer at its heart. The town centre will provide a distinctive environment and offer that complements rather than competes with the out of town parks and online retailing. This refreshed town centre will not turn its back on, nor seek to distance itself from the edge of town retail and leisure parks. It will stretch out and embrace these, encouraging visitors and residents to move between them. We should avoid seeing our local geography as one that presents barriers to movement rather than one that create opportunities to work with and embrace a unique environment.

This programme will be delivered through six projects

- Destination Tamworth
- A new Cultural Quarter to make the town centre more vibrant and distinct
- Encourage pedestrian flow between our town centre, retail park and leisure hub via a comprehensive package of measures to improve town centre and out of town centre linkages
- Investment in public realm improvements to promote Gateway development sites
- Realise key development sites including the old Gungate precinct
- Provide a basis for enterprise development and a hub for the creative industries in the town through the provision of business start up units



3.2 Visitor economy programme

We acknowledge that Tamworth suffers from a relatively poor image within the region, which partly reflects its recent history as a post-war expanded town and the resulting urban form, but we also know that visitors are regularly pleasantly surprised by what they find in and can access from Tamworth.

Our vision is to raise the profile of Tamworth within the Heart of England, promoting it as 'A Market Town for the 21st Century'. A key component of this is partnership working through Destination Tamworth and with other tourism organisations and neighbouring local authorities to promote Tamworth as a visitor destination, and to build on some of the real opportunities we have locally.

This programme will be delivered through seven projects

- An enhanced role for the Castle Pleasure Grounds as a base for leisure, recreation, sport and entertainment and events
- The restoration, revitalisation and sustainable use of land alongside the river network
- Developing a bespoke offer around the royal and military aspects of the Staffordshire Hoard and our Mercian heritage
- Develop an evening economy offer based around on a mix of family dining, improved public realm and performance space
- Improve transport connections to key neighbouring visitor attractions
- Hotel with conferencing facilities to attract more business visitors
- A place marketing study to better understand our key strengths particularly in respect of attracting private sector investment

3.3 Sustainable development programme

We need to build 5,500 new homes between 2006 and 2031. While the majority will be located around the town and within existing sites, our limited availability of developable land means a significant proportion will be delivered within the neighbouring districts of Lichfield and North Warwickshire.

More than 46% of new forming households are looking to occupy one or two bedroomed units but such units represent only just over 25% of the housing stock at present – so our new housing stock must respond to these changing demographics. We will work proactively with



We will reshape our town centre showcasing our historic built heritage, we will develop a cultural quarter and create gateways and scenic links to neighbouring sites, and we will create a family focused evening economy...

landowners and developers to identify and overcome constraints to bring forward viable residential schemes and, where appropriate, we will consider using our Compulsory Purchase powers to unlock sites and/or securing external funding sources to secure delivery.

A critical challenge for the Council is to make best use of existing stock and the Council will therefore consider the opportunities provided by the Localism Act 2011 for the introduction of fixed term tenancies and affordable rent models. These opportunities will be balanced against the potential impact on communities and individual wellbeing. The major stock survey carried out in 2009 revealed that £99m was needed to maintain the basic decent homes standard required for the Council stock over 30 years – and to support this the Council is developing a dedicated Regeneration Fund utilising available assets, powers and forecast rental income streams.

This Programme will be delivered through nine projects

- New urban sustainable neighbourhoods that maximise the development potential of the borough
- The provision of a balanced housing stock across a range of sites to support our growth ambitions



- Regeneration of the Wilnecote Regeneration Corridor to provide discrete employment, housing and transport hubs
- Delivering new office space within and on the edge of the town centre
- A £20m investment in Tinkers Green/Kerria Housing Regeneration area to provide quality affordable housing
- Investment in environmental improvements and new housing at the majority of the Council residential garage sites
- Potential longer term redevelopment of the six high rise flats to provide wider town centre development and for investment in new housing stock
- Enhancing the urban green and blue infrastructure of rivers, parks and open land which runs east/west and north/south across the borough
- Delivering a quality built environment through participation in the Southern Staffordshire Design Review Panel

3.4 Tamworth Business Parks programme

The availability of a broad range of quality employment sites and premises is key to our future economic prosperity. Our recent Employment Land Review identified that most of our existing employment areas were considered to be performing reasonably well, although some parts of the employment estates did have

vacancy levels that could be considered a little too high.

The market view confirmed that there was demand for units at the majority of our employment areas and that they had relative strengths for businesses of different types looking to locate there, which supported a diverse Tamworth economy. Consequently, the Review confirmed that the network of strategic employment areas should be retained in employment use, although some parts may need modernisation and environmental enhancements; and it also identified locations for new employment land if needed. The key development opportunities in Tamworth include approximately 30 hectares of land.

This programme will be delivered through five projects

- Bitterscote development with capacity of more than 25 hectares and a number of modern premises already available
- Working with owners and agents to improve existing stock and establish new units on Amington Industrial Estate
- Maintaining Lichfield Road Industrial Estate as a key employment site and work toward a series of environmental enhancements
- Work with land owners to support the further expansion of Relay Park
- Work with North Warwickshire Borough Council to help secure expansion of the neighbouring Birch Coppice site and work with partners to ensure site is accessible to our residents

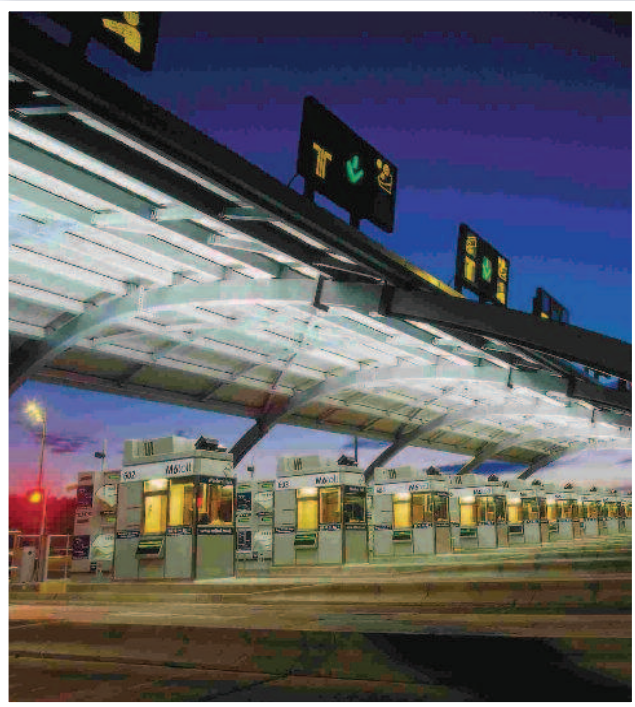
“ The availability of a broad range of quality employment sites and premises is key to our future economic prosperity. ”

Transport programme

3.5

While Tamworth is centrally located and adjacent to the national highway network, there is a need to continually assess and improve the ability for residents and goods to move around, into and from the borough.

We have excellent transport links, being on the A5 and M42, close to the M6 and A38, with two major rail lines passing through the town and meeting at Tamworth station (the West Coast Main Line and the Edinburgh - Plymouth Cross



country line). Birmingham International Airport is 15 miles away and East Midlands Airport is just 25 miles away. This is a strength for Tamworth and we will ensure it remains that way through a number of projects and initiatives that have been identified in our Local Transport package.

This programme will be delivered through nine projects

- A strategy for priority improvements along the A5 Corridor
- Dedicated local rail service to Birmingham
- Complementary Tamworth Rail Station improvements to those being carried out by London Midland
- New and enhance access solutions to maximise the development potential in the Anker Valley
- An £8m programme of new bridges, public realm improvements and highway remodelling to improve town centre linkages for pedestrians
- Improved urban traffic and congestion control for the main retail park through the Ventura Transport Package
- The Upper Gungate Transport Package to support the Gateways and Gungate developments
- Work to reduce congestion through the Junction 10 pinch point improvement
- Secure the greatest benefit from HS2 and related investment for Tamworth residents and businesses

BUSINESS

connecting to

Tamworth Borough Council
Growth and Regeneration Plan

Accessible, coherent
business support

and delivering

More jobs
More wealth
More successful
business

PEOPLE

connecting to

Tamworth Borough Council
Growth and Regeneration Plan

Raised, aspirational,
accessible and
relevant training

and delivering

More robust,
valued,
motivated and
skilled workforce

PLACE

connecting to

Tamworth Borough Council
Growth and Regeneration Plan

Public Sector
investment

and delivering

Attractive,
sustainable
sites securing
private sector
investment

Strategic Overview

Business

Our wealth creating business community will deliver the growth – and we will facilitate this by ensuring businesses are plugged into a coherent business support offer. Our key economic drivers for change are:

- Low enterprise start-up rate
- High rate of business failures
- Low level of high tech manufacturing
- Lack of innovation
- Limited uptake of support

... and a more aspirational and economically competitive Tamworth will see:

- Business strongly connected to the support that is available
- A high level of innovation and R&D support accessible in the area
- More businesses and employment in key niche sectors
- An increase in the level of entrepreneurship

People

Our people will be the engine of economic growth – and we will facilitate this through raising aspirations across our community, making learning accessible, and showing the economic value of training and qualifications. Our key economic drivers for change are:

- Low level of professional and managerial occupations
- High level of elementary and manual occupations
- Low levels of Level 4 qualifications
- Low numbers of undergraduates
- Poor GCSE results

.... and a more aspirational and economically competitive Tamworth will see:

- A better qualified workforce
- Significantly improved educational performance
- A more informed and prepared group of school leavers
- More graduates from Tamworth and more graduates working in Tamworth

Place

Private sector investment will change our borough – and we will facilitate this by building confidence in our town centre and creating the conditions for investment across our borough. Our key economic drivers for change are:

- Old employment sites
- Underperforming town centre
- Projected population growth
- Small tight urban borough
- Low job density

... and a more aspirational and economically competitive Tamworth will see:

- A rebalanced town centre complementing the out of town offer
- Modern, attractive employment sites
- Jobs, leisure and services made more accessible through relevant and attractive transport provision
- Sustainable development balancing population growth, housing provision, and employment
- A growing visitor economy

