

ANNUAL REVIEW_{2013/14}

& CORPORATE PLAN_{2014/15}



Tamworth
Borough Council

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WELCOME

WELCOME TO TAMWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL'S ANNUAL REVIEW FOR 2013/14 AND CORPORATE PLAN FOR THE YEAR 2014/15. LIKE LAST YEAR, WE HAVE COMBINED THE TWO DOCUMENTS TO MAKE THE INFORMATION EASIER TO USE AND UNDERSTAND. THE DOCUMENT SETS OUT WHAT WE WANT TO ACHIEVE IN THE COMING YEAR AND WHAT WE ACCOMPLISHED LAST YEAR.



FOREWORD

FROM THE LEADER & CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF TAMWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL



Anthony E. Goodwin
Chief Executive



Cllr Daniel Cook
Leader of the Council

It has been well documented nationally via the media that Local Government has been the target for harder, deeper and earlier funding reductions than elsewhere in the sector and certainly more than any other Central Government department.

As a collective, local Councils have endured the steepest reductions in real terms (40%), the result of which in some cases has been to jeopardise the existence of some councils.

All that said, and equally well documented, has been the local government response; and Tamworth Borough Council has played an active role in that response.

As a relatively small, primarily urban local authority, the Council has planned and managed its journey through the recession and austerity measures with considerable merit to date. Accurate forecasting, strong leadership and meticulous planning have resulted in the organisation being able to sustain a full suite of essential services for those in most need and the most vulnerable in our communities.

Inevitably, there are consequences not just to the public but also to the organisation and the skilled and committed workforce it is proud to employ. The consequences of a 40% plus reduction in grants, coupled with the impact of major social benefit reforms and reduced income due to the recession, has led to a level of financial and organisational pressure of a scale not experienced before; and yet...

More than 95% of our stated intentions, ambitious plans and published targets were achieved in the year 2013/2014. Significant progress was made in relation to our shared priorities 'To Aspire & Prosper' and 'To be Healthier & Safer' however, there remains much to do. Demands for key services are increasing at the same time as our funding and capacity decreases and this is and will remain key to all decision-making for the next three to five years.

In addition to the outstanding performance of council services, the political executive was keen to obtain an independent and objective assessment of the organisation, its leadership, its ability to plan and manage throughout

challenging times; its overall performance and more importantly, how it works in partnership with others. To achieve this, the Council volunteered to engage in the Local Government Association (LGA) Peer Review or Peer Challenge. In essence, this is a voluntary inspection and assessment by a team of highly experienced (best in class) peers from across the country

It is with enormous pride that we can announce that the council came through the process with great credit and, rather than provide an edited summary, the full results are available to the public on our website.

It is reassuring to be told by independent experts that our approach, the commitment and professionalism of our workforce and the vision held by politicians is considered to be of such a high standard. And, with that reassurance and the confidence this brings, we have now set out our ambitions and plans for the forthcoming years and agreed a balanced budget to support them

While there are signs that the recession is easing, central government have made it clear that the financial constraints on public spending will remain for at least five to seven years. This means that the next period will be even more challenging, largely because we have already applied most of the 'efficiency' measures our neighbours are now using:

- ◆ Disposal of leisure facilities
- ◆ Outsourcing key services
- ◆ Shared use of assets
- ◆ Reviewing our services
- ◆ Joint working/shared services

Our challenge therefore is to revisit some or all of these measures but also to go beyond that. We need to explore new and innovative ideas; to be more commercial in our dealings and to leave no stone unturned.

This will require a level of trust and understanding beyond anything experienced to date; not just between the Council and the public – but politicians and officers - management and staff – trade unions... Everyone.

Despite all of this, the Council's primary focus remains upon **growth and regeneration** and the pressing need to meet our **housing needs**, both of which will help improve the local economy

We will work with communities and partners in order to continue the excellent work on health improvement and crime reduction and prevention....in other words creating a healthier and safer **'place'** where the **'people'** young and old, can aspire and prosper in a town that is **'open for business'**.



Anthony E. Goodwin
Chief Executive



Cllr Daniel Cook
Leader of the Council

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

Tamworth Borough Council is located in the south east corner of Staffordshire. The district covers 11.91 square miles, is the smallest of the seven Staffordshire districts and has a population of 77,100.

Our headquarters is at Marmion House in Tamworth where most of our staff are based, but there are staff at other locations across the Borough.

We provide a range of services to residents, businesses and visitors. These include waste collection and recycling, collection of council tax and business rates, local council tax discount, housing, support for the homeless, parks and

open spaces, planning and building control, street cleaning, promoting economic growth and regeneration, environmental health, leisure services, community safety and election administration.

Our 2014/15 corporate strategy gives us direction and focus. It sets out our vision 'One Tamworth, Perfectly Placed' and two strategic priorities 'to aspire and prosper in Tamworth' and 'to be healthier and safer in Tamworth'. These priorities are underpinned by specific objectives.



VISION AND CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Our Vision: One Tamworth, Perfectly Placed

Corporate Priorities

1. "To Aspire and Prosper in Tamworth"

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

How will we do this?

By working collaboratively with partners, we will:

- ◆ Raise the aspiration and attainment levels of young people
- ◆ Create opportunities for business growth through developing and using skills and talent
- ◆ Promote private sector growth and create quality employment locally
- ◆ Brand and market "Tamworth" as a great place to "live life to the full"
- ◆ Create the physical and technological infrastructure necessary to support the achievement of this primary outcome.

2. "To be Healthier and Safer in Tamworth"

To create a safe environment in which local people reach their full potential and live longer, healthier lives.

How do we do this?

By working collaboratively with partners, we will:

- ◆ Address the causes of poor health in children and young people
- ◆ Improve the health and wellbeing of older people by supporting them to live active, independent lives
- ◆ Reduce the harm and wider consequences of alcohol abuse on individuals, families and society
- ◆ Implement 'Total Place' solutions to tackling crime and ASB in designated localities
- ◆ Develop innovative early interventions to tackle youth crime and ASB, and
- ◆ Create an integral approach to protecting those most vulnerable in our local communities.

PORTFOLIO HOLDER STATEMENTS



Cllr Daniel Cook
Leader of the Council

As I stated last year, our Vision for Tamworth the Place has not changed; we are committed to meeting "One Tamworth, Perfectly Placed". But more importantly, we are committed to ensuring that we can use our ever tighter financial and staffing resources to meet the corporate priorities of this vision for Tamworth, to **Aspire and Prosper** in Tamworth and to be **Healthier and Safer** in Tamworth. This is the least the residents of this historic borough should expect from their Council. Our vision is shared by all public sector services in Tamworth, from the Police to the Fire and Rescue Service, from Education to the County Council and many more, meaning we are all working in one direction collectively for the taxpayers.

To continue to make this vision a reality, we need to make sure Tamworth's image, services, employment prospects and leisure opportunities are protected or enhanced, where possible. We need more than ever to be clever with our resources and assets collectively across all

government bodies. Firstly, as I have said many times, we need to be working together with partners to ensure that we will raise the aspiration and attainment levels of our young people, they are the employers and employees of the future and we need to give them a sound, confident footing. This will create employment opportunities and business growth within the region. Our economic links with the powerhouse that is Birmingham need to be further exploited and embedded into our development as a town. But we remain a key part of Staffordshire; we must remember and be proud of this.

We need to create and sustain a thriving local economy fit for purpose as Tamworth moves further into the 21st century. We need to become a more aspirational and competitive place to do business, to visit and to live. More jobs must be created in the region that Tamworth residents can access. We will develop a vibrant and prosperous town.



Historically we are a market town; it is important we do not lose that. The town centre needs to offer a wide range of leisure, recreation, housing and shopping choices, but to continue to believe the retail centre of Tamworth is the town centre is now gone. We now accept that Ventura Park is the retail centre of Tamworth and create an offer in the town centre that complements Ventura Park and vice versa. We need culture, night life for all tastes and town centre accommodation as well as specialist retail; only then can we state that we have a sustainable town centre offering recreation and employment for years to come. We must not forget the old argument that the elements of our town are in competition, we need them to work alongside each other as one complete offer for our residents, as well as drawing employment, visitors and tourism. We are working hard in partnership with Staffordshire County Council on the connectivity of the town and I continue to thank them for their commitment to our town. This is why development of a Cultural Quarter around the Assembly Rooms is essential.

Also, by working collaboratively, we will address the causes of poor health in children and young people, as well as improve health and activity levels of the older generation. We must try to find new and efficient ways of preventing crime, rather than reacting afterwards. Residents don't want to be reassured after crime, they want crime prevented, and Tamworth Borough Council – in partnership with the Police - is committed to achieving



this where possible. We must also ensure that we are well placed to support and protect the vulnerable in our communities and give them the opportunities we all enjoy. This is a massive challenge given the national and world wide economic picture, but be aware that we are striving as always to be there for those who need us.

Tamworth has some wonderful heritage, along with green spaces and parks which we must maintain for the benefit of our residents and visitors. We must protect our visual environment and improve it where we can. Our history is important and it must be preserved for the next generation. Our commitment to the Castle and the Assembly Rooms has never been greater. We must identify the best use of all our assets for the benefit and growth of the whole town.

Most importantly of all, we need to continue to be accountable, approachable and visible to our residents. The financial challenges which all aspects of government in Tamworth will face over the next few years is something we must stand up to and we must use the resources effectively to meet the commitments I have set out above. We have many efficiency programmes underway as well as many which have already delivered. This is why in these times of austerity, Tamworth Borough Council has still not ceased any of its services or events to the taxpayer. But the challenge gets harder and we must work with residents and community groups to ensure that we all understand this challenge and what it could mean to us all. The voluntary sector in Tamworth continues to receive good financial support and this must continue as they offer so much to our communities. They will be key over the next few years.

If we push to achieve the above, we will indeed become an ideal place to live, work and raise a family.



Cllr Robert Pritchard
Deputy Leader of
the Council

PORTFOLIO: CORE SERVICES AND ASSETS

Tamworth Borough Council has had a very good year. Following a peer assessment we have been found to be a well run and open council. We want to build on this good news as much as we can.

Many councils across the country are cutting frontline services and support to vulnerable residents. Thanks to our hard work over many years, we have protected our frontline services. We have still had to make difficult decisions like closing the golf course, but essential services like street cleaning, outdoor events, our historic castle and many other services are still being protected.

In order to ensure this continues, we will review every service at the council to ensure maximum efficiency. We will squeeze every penny of value we can from each service. For example, we will trial cashless parking, offering better flexibility for car park users and lower running costs.

We have redeveloped our website completely in-house. While some councils are spending many tens of thousands

on their websites, we have done the same for less than £5,000. We will also get as many resources and services accessible online as possible.

Marmion House will be used to greater efficiency. We have introduced agile working, bringing in 'hot desking' to reduce space. This in turn has allowed us to rent out floors to other partners. This brings more public services to our front reception, making life easier for local residents.



We will also use that principle with our other assets and will see the development of business incubation units in other council buildings.

Finally, we will work with other councils to share services. We have agreed a document (Memorandum of Understanding) with Lichfield which will allow us to develop a partnership to share costs, helping reduce pressure on council budgets and protecting important services.

We have a lot to be proud of at Tamworth Borough Council and a lot to look forward too.



Cllr Steve Claymore

PORTFOLIO: ECONOMY & EDUCATION

The past 12 months have not only been another very busy year, but also a very encouraging year for economic growth and, as we continue to work to achieve our priority to "aspire and prosper in Tamworth", we remain committed to create a sustainable and thriving local economy and to tackle unemployment. Through our many initiatives and economic partnerships, we are supporting, encouraging and promoting our existing businesses and creating an environment that will encourage new enterprises to start up, creating new job opportunities.

The local economy in Tamworth has this year turned the corner, with unemployment down to just 1.7% (ISA claimants – Dec 2013), with many businesses showing growth from 2011-2013 and the amount of empty commercial property down by nearly a whole percentage point.

Our Economic Development team, through our shared service with Lichfield, have contributed to creating the ideal conditions for this recovery. We continue to support and engage with businesses, both through the Business and Economic Partnership (BEP) and the Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs). We have successfully delivered 'Tamworth 4 Business', a local business support service, providing both telephone and one-to-one interaction along with a series of training seminars and start-up support.

We have also worked with Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP to deliver the Business Development Programme, providing grant funding and mentoring services to growing businesses. Our business networking and support events, including the Think Local 4 Business Show, now in its tenth year, and a business support event bringing together 14 providers of support services, have proved ever popular.

The BEP has also provided a two-way communications conduit for the business community so that they can understand and contribute to the policy landscape in the local economy, as well as benefit as much as possible from business support programmes and initiatives. This has included the provision of a new web portal at www.bep4business.co.uk and the coordination of the Business Networks Forum, bringing together all the main networking groups from across the area.

As the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership continues to establish itself and stamp its mark on positive economic growth in the West Midlands, it is becoming even more apparent how important being an active member is for Tamworth.

Earlier this year, I had the opportunity to see at first hand how well our partnership with the LEP is proving to be when I attended the opening of a business new to Tamworth.

Through funding from the LEP business development programme, the company had been able to relocate into Tamworth and carry out the refurbishment of an existing factory unit into one which not only suits their current needs but will also allow expansion in the near future. This is just one of eight businesses which have received similar help and support this year.

Also with many of our population travelling in to the conurbation to work, along with our close proximity to Birmingham, Solihull and the motorway network, now known as 'UK Central', we are extremely well placed to see maximum benefit through our LEP partnership.

The official annual employment data for private sector job growth released in October 2013 showed that:

- ◆ Private sector employment in the GBSLEP area has increased by 19,000 (2.8%) in 2012,
- ◆ 3,700 of this increase was in Tamworth, giving us the third highest increase in jobs within the LEP area after Solihull and Birmingham,
- ◆ This jobs growth outperformed the national figure of 1.6%
- ◆ 42,000 private sector jobs have now been created - considerable progress towards the LEP target of 100,000 by 2020.

The creation of these job openings also means we have to ensure there is an available skilled workforce to fill them and, with schools having increasing autonomy and Councils having limited powers, it's essential that we maintain a key role by developing a culture of collaboration and co-operation with our education providers.

Locally we are doing this through the Education and Skills Board for Tamworth along with our community development team, and this will focus on the following outcomes;

- ◆ Promoting educational 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 and guidance,
- ◆ Achieving a positive dialogue between the education and business sectors,
- ◆ Raising aspirations of young people so more go into higher education.

In addition, through the LEP 'Skills for Growth' action plan, we are developing a number of actions;

- ◆ Work-based pre-apprenticeship programmes and or traineeships,
- ◆ Delivering an apprenticeship campaign to schools,
- ◆ Creating engagement clusters where groups of schools come together with colleges, universities and independent providers to build sustained relationships with employers,
- ◆ Recruiting employers onto school governing bodies,
- ◆ Developing Apprenticeship ambassadors,
- ◆ Produce a LEP Skills Plan based on detailed analysis of local labour markets and skills need,
- ◆ Recruit local industry champions for growth sectors and education who will lead on the requirements for change
- ◆ Deliver skills for growth compact, committing employers, colleges and schools to build a best in class skills service to correctly link pupils and learners with real world job opportunities.

All of this positive activity contributes to our LEP objectives to create a net increase of over 100,000 private sector jobs by 2020, increase Gross Value Added (GVA) by more than £8 billion over the same period, boost indigenous and inward investment, achieve global leadership in key sectors and build a world class workforce.



Cllr Steven Doyle

PORTFOLIO: ENVIRONMENT & WASTE MANAGEMENT

The portfolio for Environment and Waste Management has grown slightly since last year and now supplies eight distinct services, taking into the fold the Street Wardens. The team is highly motivated, as are the others, and have been pro-active in the engagement and support for the local community. The wardens act as ambassadors for the town and are a very welcome addition to an already outstanding Portfolio.

The Environmental Services & Regulation Team continues to deliver an outstanding performance and service, providing guidance and assistance to local businesses within Tamworth,

while also maintaining a very professional and consistent approach. The team has demonstrated time and again that they are dedicated, hardworking and focused on delivering a first class service.

A prime example of this is the new legislation for the Scrap Metal Dealers Act; the team has successfully

administered and implemented the new legislation under difficult circumstances with limited information and short notice changes.

For cemeteries, the introduction of the Friends of Wilnecote has gone well and they continue to operate and co-operate very effectively with Tamworth Borough Council and the Street Scene Team, providing a very positive example of volunteers making a valued contribution to their local community. The expansion of Wigginton Cemetery has gone well and is now complete, ensuring we will be able to meet the demand for burial space in the future.

Due to the success of the Wilnecote friends group, Wigginton may soon have its own 'Friends of' group as well as volunteers in the area looking to recruit members with the support of me and their local Councillors.

Street Scene continues to demonstrate a very pro-active approach, delivering a highly efficient service that is flexible and customer focused. It continues to be a prime example of what is possible through co-operation and imagination and instils the pride of Tamworth Borough Council. They are ideally positioned to face any challenges the future may bring.

The Joint Waste Management Service operated between Tamworth and Lichfield provides an excellent example of

joint working between authorities and a model for future working in difficult and testing times. The service continues to demonstrate that this is the right one for Tamworth, with a first class and efficient service.

In the last year there has again been a further decrease in the weight of residual waste sent to landfill, and all of Tamworth's residual waste is now sent to the County Council's new energy from waste plant to divert our waste from going into landfill.

Through working closely with employees and listening to them, the service has also moved to a different working arrangement for the 80 waste management staff. This move has happened with the minimum of disruption and was managed effectively.

All of the members of the portfolio are working very closely with me and fellow Councillors to ensure the services we provide offer value and help support the community of Tamworth and the Council in the delivery of its strategic priorities.





Cllr Michael Greatorex

PORTFOLIO: PUBLIC HOUSING AND VULNERABLE PEOPLE

The past year has seen some significant achievements in relation to housing. Our plans for the regeneration of the Tinkers Green Estate and Kerria Centre have moved forward, with the first residents successfully moving to new homes. In all 14 residents who were considered to be particularly vulnerable moved to new accommodation.

I will shortly be bringing forward proposals to Cabinet for the next phase of the decant process along with confirmation of the overall timescales for the achievement of these multi-million pound developments. We also appointed our development consultants, GVA. The Council will now start the process of developing plans and designs for the two areas. This will be done in consultation with a range of stakeholders including, of course, local residents.

The redevelopment of underused garage sites for new affordable housing also saw significant progress this past year, with construction beginning on eight sites. It is anticipated that the first of these 42 new homes will be available for letting during the autumn of this year. The scheme is expected to include a further four sites

set to provide 16 homes in total, with a multi-million pound investment from the Council's partners.

Investment was also made in those garage sites which remain in Council ownership. As part of its £1.7m environmental works programme, four garage sites were entirely updated with new garages and improved surfacing, along with the refurbishment of a number of garages under flats, which also benefited from upgraded thermal insulation.

Also included in the environmental works programme were schemes such as the complete overhaul of the drying areas to a number of blocks of flats, improvements to the communal spaces in sheltered schemes, paving improvements across a number of estates, along with the general improvements to open spaces across many estates.

The Council also undertook two pieces of work during this past year to support our strategic plans. The first was the completion of a stock condition survey of Council housing. This included completing surveys of almost 60% of Council homes. This information will help to inform

future investment decisions. Also underway is an update to our Housing Revenue Account Business Plan. This document provides the basis for financial management of the Council's housing stock and outlines our ambitions for the delivery of regeneration and the delivery of new housing.

I was pleased this year to have been able to bring forward proposals to provide gas mains supply and new heating systems to areas of Belgrave. This initiative between the Council and its partner Affordable Warmth Solutions will provide benefits for 274 residents of this area, ensuring that they have a choice of energy types.

We have continued to develop approaches to ensure that the health impacts of housing are positive. Our 'Hospital to Home project' seeks to remove barriers for those in hospital to ensure that they can return home. This includes providing a range of support and delivery of a joined-up approaches between the Council, health providers and social care agencies. Working with our partners, Brighter Futures, we will be looking to extend this project for a further six months. In addition we have developed a number of projects and schemes to contribute to overall health improvements including a healthy eating campaign involving Council tenants.





Cllr Jeremy Oates

PORTFOLIO: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Over the past 12 months the Council has continued to work closely with its partners to improve the health and wellbeing of Tamworth residents.

The Healthy Tamworth project has gathered momentum, and following two events in October and January, has received the support and endorsement of a range of public sector organisations, business leaders, voluntary sector groups and retailers. This 'movement for change' is intended to drive cultural change in Tamworth to deliver the right advice, support and environment for residents to make the choices in their lives which will help to deliver better health outcomes for themselves, their families and communities.

Central to this project is an understanding that public sector bodies can only provide support to help people in making these choices. In the end it will be down to individuals to choose to improve their own health. Over the coming months we will be seeking to engage with residents to encourage a



widespread adoption of healthy lifestyle choices.

Our Let's Work together scheme has continued to develop, helping to make sure that public services are delivered in a joined-up way. This scheme has already helped a number of residents to receive the support they need to help them to live independently and safely.

The Council has led the development of a Local Health and Wellbeing Board, bringing together our Clinical Commissioning Group, County Council and Public Health colleagues among others. This board, in addition to overseeing the development of the Healthy Tamworth Project, has also delivered a number of key projects including the establishment of information and advice hubs in schools. In addition, the board has worked to review available information on health needs for the borough to support decision-making within the borough.

The Council has continued to develop its partnerships and joint working with health partners and has been a key player in the development of the countywide Health and Wellbeing Board. Tony Goodwin, our Chief Executive, represents all Staffordshire Chief Executives on the Board. The Health and Wellbeing Board has produced a countywide strategy for improving health across the county and the Council is developing its approaches to deliver the aims of the strategy in Tamworth.

WHAT WE WILL DO IN 2014/15

"To Aspire and Prosper in Tamworth"

Key projects

- ◆ Further work on the Cultural Quarter Project will include a business case and funding bids.
- ◆ The Growth and Regeneration plan includes a number of work strands including; business support, skills and employment, the town centre, employment sites, housing and transport.
- ◆ Work on the Local Plan will include a consultation draft, a submission document, examination and an adopted Local Plan.
- ◆ The improvement of the green environment including management and maintenance of local nature reserves, open spaces and parks, and provision of an efficient waste collection service will continue to be of prime importance. Particular achievements will be:
 - ◆ Works to make BroadMeadow accessible and completion of the Local Nature Reserve designation.
 - ◆ Town Wall gaining designation as a Local Nature Reserve by March 2014.
 - ◆ Achieving a gold award in the Heart of England in Bloom competition, and acknowledgement in the national Britain in Bloom judging.
 - ◆ The waste collection service delivering further efficiencies throughout the year which complement opportunities created by the new energy from waste disposal facility.



“To be Healthier and Safer in Tamworth”

Key projects

- ◆ Work will continue on the ‘Healthy Tamworth’ initiative and will include the formal establishment of a steering group, the development of a delivery framework and the completion of community engagement. This is a multi-agency project to support the delivery of improved health and wellbeing in Tamworth. It is intended to provide the right environment to encourage and support residents to make the right choices to improve their own, their own health and wellbeing, as well as that of their families and community. The project includes a range of approaches including wide community engagement.
- ◆ Housing regeneration in Tinkers Green and Kerria will see the start of the decant, the completion of the consultation and the submission of outline planning permission.
- ◆ The new Allocations Policy will be implemented.
- ◆ Ensure that all regulatory functions provided by the Council are delivered in a transparent, consistent and fair manner to promote public safety and to minimise the burden to businesses
 - ◆ All planned food and health and safety inspections completed
 - ◆ Air quality Improved
 - ◆ All licensing applications processed in a timely fashion, with any appeals dealt with in a professional manner
 - ◆ A reduction in workplace accident investigations
 - ◆ Statutory nuisance investigations/actions completed within acceptable timescales

“Approachable, Accountable and Visible”

Value for money and accountability will underpin the delivery of all corporate priorities. Working with others, the Council will deliver services that are well-governed, ethical, effective, efficient and economically viable.

Key projects

- ◆ Continue the implementation of Individual Electoral Registration which will see new applicants registered from July and the publication of a revised register in December.
- ◆ Undertake both Local and European elections.
- ◆ Undergo a legal spend review including a shared service agreement with Lichfield District Council.
- ◆ The continued development of corporate information security.
- ◆ Work on the Access and Digital Inclusion Strategy will result in access to services being reviewed with opening times reviewed in line with customer demand, as well as an interactive, multifunctional, informative, transactional internet based on customer demand and self service.
- ◆ The Customer Service Centre will be developed to provide a range of benefits including a Corporate Customer Intelligence information hub for the Council, improved management of customer feedback through the ‘Tell Us’ scheme and an improved and consistent service to the customer.



LEADERSHIP & RESOURCES

Political Arrangements

The council currently has 30 members (17 Conservative, 12 Labour, 1 Independent) representing its ten wards.

The Council's Cabinet is made up of:

- ◆ The Leader of the Council

Portfolio Holders for:

- ◆ Core Services & Assets
- ◆ Economic Development & Enterprise
- ◆ Environment & Waste Management
- ◆ Community Development
- ◆ Housing

There are two scrutiny committees, a number of regulatory committees and some ancillary committees.



ORGANISATION





John Wheatley
Executive Director
(Corporate Services)

THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The 2014/15 budget and Medium Term Financial Strategy ensures that appropriate resources are focused on the single vision and strategic priorities. We will continue to identify where our resources can be realigned to ensure, where possible, we meet the needs of local people.

'One Tamworth, Perfectly Placed' and the strategic priorities are clear by stating what we are aiming to achieve, how we will do it and the resources we will use to support these. Long before the current austerity measures and on-going public sector spending cuts, Tamworth Borough Council has been proactive in the design and implementation of innovative and effective measures for driving efficiency.

The Council's Executive Management Team recognises that Members will need to focus on strategic decisions relating to high level financial issues as flexibility within future budgets will be extremely limited, given the need to identify substantial savings following significant constraints in public spending (post grant reductions of 34% since 2010 and announcements from CSR 2013 of further grant reductions for District Councils of more than 15% from 2015/16 – more than 40% in real terms since 2010/11).

There also remains a high degree of uncertainty arising from the most significant changes in Local Government funding for a generation with effect from 1st April 2013, arising from Business Rates Retention, changes in Support for Council

Tax and technical reforms to Council Tax - as well as other changes arising the Government's Welfare Reform agenda.

The Council holds sufficient funds in reserves and balances to allow it to plan its approach to budget setting, and Cabinet, on 22nd August 2013, endorsed the document 'Planning for a Sustainable Future' as the overarching strategy for meeting the challenges forecast for the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and a series of workstreams designed to deliver savings and efficiencies to tackle the forecast deficit long before it becomes a reality. This includes exploring new and innovative ideas and to be more commercial in our approach to business, including making better use of our assets.

Council, on 25th February 2014, approved a three-year Medium Term Financial Strategy for the General Fund with Council Tax increases lower than the Government referendum limits – in order to continue to deliver those services essential to the local community. However, in the longer term, the Council faces on-going grant reductions and income uncertainties which mean that substantial savings will need to be made from 2017/18 onwards to deliver a balanced budget.

The Local Plan has identified the need for increased housing provision within the Borough and associated service demand. In the future, under the current funding arrangements,

financial resilience is strongly linked to future growth in council tax and business rates income. Opportunities for identifying, promoting and supporting economic growth are actively being pursued.

Capital spending for the General Fund is extremely limited by resource constraints – each project is robustly challenged through a business case, return on investment assessment.

With regard to the Housing Revenue Account, a five-year MTFS was approved by Council, including significant investment in regeneration projects to meet future housing needs and sustain the HRA in the longer term. Following HRA self-financing, the majority of the capital funding is made through revenue contributions. A recent update to the 30-year HRA Business plan has been finalised and shows that the HRA is financially sound for the future.

The proposals arising from the work streams will change the organisation and how it works, what we do, how we do it and the delivery method to achieve the prioritised outcomes; will require Members to take difficult decisions and adhere to them; will involve managed risks and will sustain essential services critical in supporting the most vulnerable in our communities at a time when demand is increasing and resources reduce. Whether to implement change, react to funding reductions or simply to ensure compliance with reforms, the adoption of a 'problem solving' approach to accommodating change has enabled the Council to maintain high quality public services. We will continue to work with partners to explore opportunities for joint working in future service delivery.

The main financial headline figures for 2014/15 are:

General Fund

- ◆ A General Services total cost of services of £9,132,290 an increase of 1.9%;
- ◆ A transfer of £1,195,653 from General Fund (GF) balances;
- ◆ The Band D Council Tax would be set at £155.50, an increase of £3.00 (1.97%) - 2013/14 of £152.50;
- ◆ A General Fund Capital Programme of £4m (for 3 years);

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

- ◆ A Housing Revenue Account Expenditure level of £14,429,640 for 2014/15 (excluding interest & similar charges);
- ◆ A transfer of £984,240 from HRA balances;
- ◆ An average rent of £86.60 which represents an increase of £3.78 (4.6% on the current average rent of £82.82) in line with the Government's Rent Restructuring rules (based on a 48 week rent year), equating to £79.94 on an annualised 52 week basis (as agreed within the base budget report);
- ◆ A Housing Capital Programme of £52.5m (including c. £29.5m relating to the Regeneration Projects) for 5 years.

The delivery of a balanced Medium Term Financial Strategy (three years for the General Fund & five years for the HRA) is a major achievement and shows we are in a good position. Like many others, our budget planning process had to be carried out in light of unprecedented adverse economic conditions. This included a great deal of uncertainty over future investment and income levels such as car parking, land charges and corporate property rents. It is also facing increased financial demands from central government for service improvements in areas such as local democracy and transparency – as well as substantial reductions in Government grant support in the future.

An important part of our budget process is identifying areas of our work where we can make savings by reviewing the way we deliver services to make them more efficient.

The key challenges affecting the medium term financial planning process, which add a high level of uncertainty to budget projections, arise from:

- ◆ Future Revenue Support Grant levels;
- ◆ Fundamental changes to Local Government Finance and associated grant funding levels from the planned localisation of the retention of business rates and support for council tax;
- ◆ Changes set out in the Welfare Reform Act and introduction of Universal Credit – potentially impacting on income receipts of the Council;
- ◆ The impact of any further uncertainty over future interest rate levels and their impact on investment income/treasury management; and
- ◆ The severity of the recession and the impact it has had and still could have on the Council's income streams.



CELEBRATING SUCCESSES 2013/14 – A QUICK LOOK BACK



WHAT WE DID IN 2013/14

Shown below, against our objectives, are some of our achievements in 2013/14. Not everything that has been achieved is included but we have identified those achievements which we feel will be of most community interest due to their impact and benefits.

“To Aspire and Prosper in Tamworth”

Raise the aspiration and attainment levels of young people

- ◆ More than 800 students attended the ‘Which Way Next?’ event. This aimed to raise the aspiration of Tamworth pupils by giving them information and advise on career and education options available to them after 16,

Create the physical and technological infrastructure necessary to support the achievement of this primary outcome

- ◆ Broadmeadow, a 61-acre site off Lichfield Road became Tamworth’s sixth Local Nature Reserve,
- ◆ The Cultural Quarter Project has seen the Assembly Rooms element get project management and architectural support,
- ◆ 60% of all Council-owned housing stock was surveyed and the results obtained will be used to inform the capital programme and business plans for the next five years,
- ◆ We have worked with other public sector partners to maximise occupancy within council premises. This has included the establishment of an ‘agile working’ floor within Marmion House.

Create opportunities for business growth through developing and using skills and talent and promote private sector growth and create quality employment locally

- ◆ Tamworth Borough Council and Lichfield District Council Economic Development Service organised an event on behalf of the Business Development Programme to highlight funds available to small and medium sized enterprises which are planning to expand and create jobs,
- ◆ The Created in Tamworth project was launched, giving local creative industries the chance to take up studio, gallery and shop space in the former Tamworth Information Centre shop in Market Street at a subsidised rent. The building can accommodate five creative businesses, with each having their own studio and sharing the gallery and shop space on the ground floor,
- ◆ In support of the Small Business Saturday initiative, all Council car park charges were waived for the day and a small grant was made available to fund market stalls for small businesses,
- ◆ Tamworth Borough Council and Lichfield District Council Economic Development Service won the Best All Round Friendliness award at an event run by The Federation of Small Businesses, Staffordshire and West Midlands,

Brand and market “Tamworth” as a great place to “live life to the full”

- ◆ The outdoor events programme was varied, successful and attended by the following numbers of visitors; Castle Grounds St. George’s Day celebrations - 10,000, Tamworth Heritage Event - 3,000 Town centre Christmas Lights switch on - 7,000 Castle Grounds fireworks display - 22,000 We Love Tamworth Event - 8,000 Gate Gallop - 3,500 participants and spectators, Bandstand concerts - 800 visitors throughout the season, Stars and Stripes line dancing event - 4,000 participants
- ◆ We were awarded gold for the 4th year running in the Heart of England in Bloom competition and will be representing the region in the national Britain in Bloom competition later this year,

- ◆ Tamworth Castle was in the top 10% of attractions when it comes to pleasing customers, according to figures released by an international travel website. Trip Advisor awarded Tamworth Castle a prestigious ‘Certificate of Excellence’, given to those businesses and visitor attractions which consistently earn high ratings from Trip Advisor users,
- ◆ The Tamworth Information Centre was awarded a Staffordshire Environmental Quality Mark (SEQM). This was in recognition of all its work on promoting local nature reserves, supporting local goods, showcasing the area’s heritage and museums, selling tickets for charity events and promoting local businesses.



“To be Healthier and Safer in Tamworth”

Address the causes of poor health in children and young people

- ◆ The ‘**Live Life to the Full in Belgrave**’ project was launched, giving residents the chance to get involved in an exciting project to improve health. The three-year project is funded by Tamworth Borough Council to the tune of £10k per annum and is run by Groundwork West Midlands,
- ◆ Improvement works were completed in **the Castle Grounds play area**, giving an even bigger recreational experience to its young users,
- ◆ Work on the ‘**Healthy Tamworth**’ initiative began and saw a practitioner workshop, Tamworth Co-op event and a Healthy Tamworth Workshop,

Create an integral approach to protecting those most vulnerable in our local communities

- ◆ The **Help To Buy scheme** is being promoted by Tamworth Borough Council as an affordable housing option for people in the borough, giving them the opportunity to take advantage of a Government equity loan of between 10 and 20% of the value of a newly-built home,
- ◆ More than £16,960.25 was shared among 25 organisations and charities from the **Voluntary and Community Grants, Arts Grants and Sports Grants schemes** to help them develop and provide services for the residents of Tamworth (figures at end of q3 2013/14),
- ◆ Work on the **Tinkers Green and Kerria regeneration** projects has seen the completion of the assessment of delivery vehicles and the first decant of affected residents,
- ◆ The redevelopment of **underused garage sites** saw construction start of eight sites and will result in the provision of 42 new affordable rented homes,
- ◆ Tamworth produced the best results in the County on **Troubled Families** due to its strong partnership work through the existing Community Safety Hub and a focus on this agenda. The links to other services such as employment support have helped get people back into work.

Improve the health and wellbeing of older people by supporting them to live active, independent lives

- ◆ The first focused **needs and assets evaluation for older people** was completed. Key priorities were agreed; hospital discharges, falls and suitable housing,
- ◆ Through the Borough Council, the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Voluntary and Community Sector Forum, Tamworth contributed more than a quarter of responses received to ‘**Conversation Staffordshire**’. This was a consultation exercise to inform the development of the Staffordshire Wide Health and Wellbeing Strategy,

Implement ‘Total Place’ solutions to tackling crime and ASB in designated localities and develop innovative early interventions to tackle youth crime and ASB

- ◆ Tamworth Borough Council provided a further three years of funding from to the **ASB Victim and Witness Champion service** (This is provided by Victim Support and has been running in Tamworth since July 2010 and gives practical help and advice to people experiencing ASB, both as victims or witnesses),

Reduce the harm and wider consequences of alcohol abuse on individuals, families and society

- ◆ ‘**Operation TARPA**’ nights were carried out. This is a Tamworth Community Safety Partnership (TCSP) initiative – led by Tamworth police and involving partners including Tamworth Borough Council street wardens and housing staff, youth workers and T3 drug and alcohol service. Many young people were spoken to during the operations and given advice,
- ◆ ‘**It’s Never OK**’ was launched by the TCSP to tackle domestic abuse. Nearly 300 people were given information during the awareness events.

“Approachable, Accountable and Visible”

Value for money and accountability underpinned the delivery of all corporate priorities. Working with others, the Council will deliver services that are well-governed, ethical, effective, efficient and economically viable

- ◆ As part of the Tamworth Listens initiative, the first ever **Question Time event** was held at Tamworth Assembly Rooms. This proved popular, attracting more than 170 residents. It gave attendees the opportunity to ask a panel of public sector representatives questions about future plans for the town centre and community safety issues,
- ◆ The annual **State of Tamworth Debate** was held,
- ◆ Our external auditors gave an unqualified **opinion on our accounts** and our approach for securing value for money,
- ◆ Achieved **collection rates** which met target levels for council tax, business rates and debtors,
- ◆ The investment in **new technology and telephony**,
- ◆ More than 200 members of staff attended the **AGM**.
- ◆ The **LGA Corporate Peer Challenge** found that Tamworth Borough Council has:
 - ◆ A clear vision of place for the town,
 - ◆ A sound understanding of the economic drivers impacting on the borough,
 - ◆ Good working relationships between the senior political and managerial leadership,
 - ◆ Staff who have passion, pride and commitment to doing their best for the people of the town,
 - ◆ A medium-term financial strategy based on prudent assumptions.

RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE STATE OF TAMWORTH DEBATE

At the State of Tamworth Debate in November 2013, the following recommendations were made:

- ◆ That the Aspire and Prosper Scrutiny committee focus even more effort on the town's education opportunities and challenges in a positive way,
- ◆ That the cross party Local Plan working group increase its work looking at and looking to resolve the Town Centre challenges of the 21st century,
- ◆ That this Council receives an update from Councillor Claymore on the Skills agenda undertaken by the Local Enterprise Partnership,
- ◆ The Council publicly thanks 100 plus people who attended this year's Tamworth Listens event.

SUMMARY ACCOUNTS 2013/14

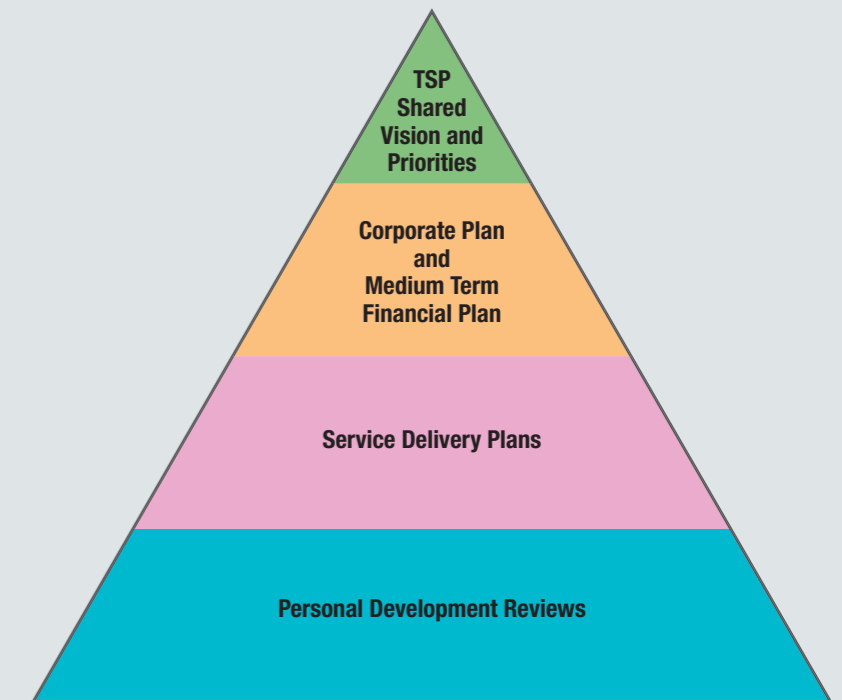
Due to the earlier publication of this combined document, the draft summary accounts for 2013/14 are not yet available. As soon as they are (approximately end of June 2014) they will be posted on the Council's website.

CORPORATE PLANNING PROCESS

The corporate planning process forms a fundamental part of the successful management of the Council. Our corporate planning framework sits within a wider planning hierarchy which has the Tamworth Strategic Partnership shared vision and priorities at the top. The Council's corporate plan and medium term financial strategy focuses on how the Council will deliver its contribution to these while the service delivery

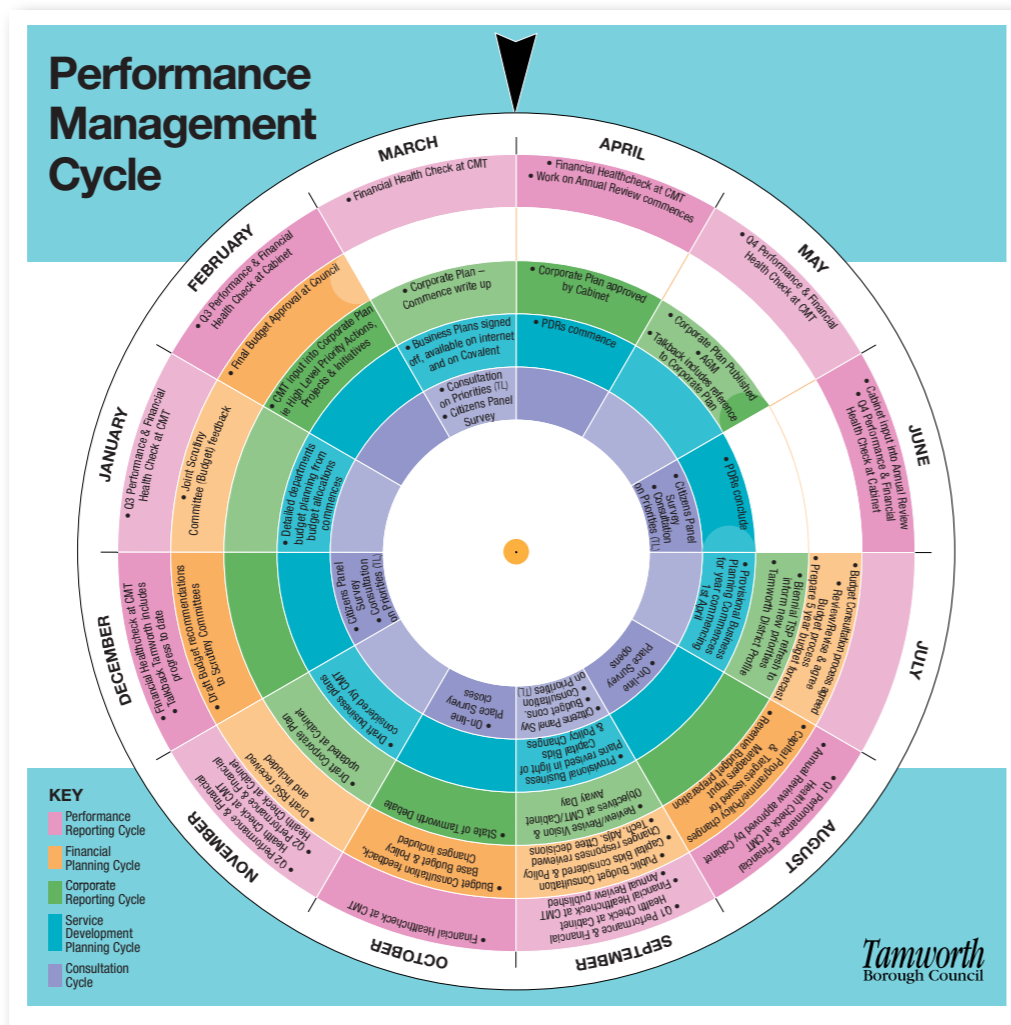
plans show how the services will also contribute. Below this are the personal development plans for each employee. The links between the plans form the "golden thread" that ensures everyone in the organisation is working towards the same goals and that the priorities will be achieved.

CORPORATE PLANNING PYRAMID



PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

Performance management is a process not an event. It operates as a continuous cycle. All elements of Tamworth Borough Council's performance management framework are built around the annual performance cycle as shown in this diagram.



HOW WE WILL ASSURE WHAT WE DO

Performance Scorecard

Tamworth Borough Council balances its attention across its priorities. Summary performance of service activities and projects is indicated by the status of business and service plan actions, indicators and identified risks.

Performance Monitoring & Reporting Arrangements

The Performance Scorecard is monitored by:

- ◆ Individual officers and members assigned to or with a particular interest in an action, indicator or risk,
- ◆ Corporate and Directorate Management Teams,
- ◆ Cabinet,
- ◆ Scrutiny Committees.

A link to our current and past performance is available on the council's website: www.tamworth.gov.uk/performance



CONTACT US

To provide feedback specifically on the form and content of this Annual Review and Corporate Plan, email john-day@tamworth.gov.uk

For more information about Tamworth Borough Council, visit our website at www.tamworth.gov.uk

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