

Tamworth Borough Council

Annual Review 2010/11

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Anthony E. Goodwin
Chief Executive

Foreword

Never before have the changes and challenges facing local authorities been so radical or their impact so significant. As a result, the Council has been concentrating on 'what happens next?' and not upon 'what has already happened?'

The Annual Review provides all of this with an opportunity to look back and to remind ourselves of some of the great work we have done; despite the changes and challenges.

This year, we can look back with considerable pride and satisfaction and, with the aid of this review, measure how well we did against what we set out to do.

Our continued support for the voluntary sector meant that many of the most vulnerable in our communities were able to access support and services locally.

The introduction of what we now know to be an award winning Domestic Waste & Recycling Service has saved £500k per year and reduced the number of complaints.

Crime and anti-social behaviour figures continue to fall, making Tamworth a safer place, which in turn encourages major events such as the music festival and others to return.

With just one year to the Olympics, our Tourist Information Centre and Britain in Bloom teams have already won gold with the help of our communities.

All in all, yes, the Council performed well but there is still much to do.

Our focus shifts to the future.....our future; the need to raise the aspirations and attainment of our children, to increase the prosperity of our town and to continue our efforts to make Tamworth a safer and healthier place to live.

We will do all we can with the resources available and we know our partners will too. However we believe working with the community is vital to our success. Everyone within the borough has an essential role to play in helping us concentrate our efforts on 'One Tamworth, Perfectly Placed'.

The last 12 months has brought many challenges to councils and communities across the country, yet in Tamworth we are not only striving to seek new opportunities, we are implementing innovative ways of working.

This year I presented a four-year balanced budget to Full Council, which is a huge achievement when coupled with the fact we have frozen Council Tax with no cuts to front line services.

Despite the news portraying a gloomy national picture for many, we have worked hard to make sure we know what is going on in our communities and working with groups in key areas to make a difference.

We have spent more than £80,000 on community projects; chosen and voted for by residents. I believe this way of working is a radical departure from how many local authorities operate; and it works. I know having staff based in our communities means we are much closer to our residents, meaning we can address concerns before they become issues.

Our outdoor events programme continues to grow, seeing thousands flock to St George's Day, our impressive fireworks evening, our Christmas lights, to the many specialist days we run throughout the year.

These events not only bring people to the town but they also boost our economy; almost a million pound is spent in and around the town as a result of our events.

During the last financial year plans were put in place for a bigger and better information centre to put Tamworth on the map. This is now up and running and early indications show it is going from strength to strength.

While there is a lot going on in and around our borough that people can see, behind the scenes there is a great deal of strategic work going to shape Tamworth's future. Our new vision 'One Tamworth Perfectly Placed' means we are working towards one single goal. To achieve this, we have formed the Tamworth Strategic Partnership which is made up of organisations such as the police, the fire service, the youth service, social landlords and health professionals to make sure we are all working together.

I am constantly amazed at the wealth of knowledge, expertise and enthusiasm we have here in Tamworth. With so many people working together to make sure Tamworth really is 'perfectly placed', I am confident our borough will continue to offer excellent opportunities for businesses in Tamworth, visitors and residents, while ensuring our young people can meet their full potential.



Councillor Daniel Cook
Leader





The last 12 months: A look back

Working more closely than ever before with our residents in the very heart of our communities, news that the Staffordshire Hoard would be exhibited at Tamworth Castle, the Midlands Music Festival bringing 20,000 people to the Castle Grounds, free swimming for everyone, a new 'finding a home' service and a brand new waste management service were just some of Tamworth Borough Council's achievements over the past 12 months.



Despite the difficult financial backdrop faced by local authorities across the country, Tamworth Borough Council has continued to go from strength-to-strength, including new and innovative projects to make sure we are supporting the needs of Tamworth residents, visitors and businesses.

The Borough Council funded local groups to the tune of £750,000 to provide services urgently needed by the public. This included grants to the CAB, Barnardo's, Samaritans and Home Start.

In addition, Tamworth 'struck gold' in the Heart of England in Bloom competition which saw the entire borough awash with bright blooms, including a floral tribute to the 'Tamworth Two', the displays raised many positive comments from residents and visitors alike.

Our impressive outdoor events and entertainment programme saw more than 100,000 people attend. This raised an income of £185,000 and as a result of these events, almost £1 million was spent in and around the borough. This includes money spent on food, accommodation and visiting other places in the town.

Events included St George's Day, the fireworks extravaganza and the Christmas lights switch-on. At a time

when many others have been forced to significantly scale back events, we continue to not only believe - but also invest - in community events which evoke a feeling of community pride.

'Big Society' is not new to Tamworth; we pride ourselves on our work with our communities – or 'locality' working. This has been a major priority and focus of our work for some time. In fact, in the last twelve months communities in a number of areas across the borough were given the chance to identify and vote for projects they wanted to see in their area. This saw £80,000 directly spent on funding activities provided by local groups and organisations and more importantly, voted for by local residents.

It is only by listening to our residents, businesses and visitors we can make sure our work and priorities meets their needs. We pride ourselves on making sure we consult as often as possible through work with our Citizens Panel, Tamworth Listens events and other avenues, while also tying our work into the national government agenda.

We are constantly reviewing our vision, priorities and values to make sure we continue to serve our communities as well as we can. We

know without the input of our residents, dedicated staff and councillors, we would not be able to provide the high level of services, events and new projects we pride ourselves on. We like to think we are leading the way in how a local authority should operate; regardless of the national picture.



Our vision, your priorities

For 2010/11, our vision was unchanged, but our priorities were revised slightly.

Vision

- By 2020, Tamworth will be an ideal place to live, work and raise your family in the Heart of England

Corporate priorities

- Working with local people and partners we will make our communities safer, more confident and better places to live
- Working with local people and others we shall develop and maintain an environment that reflects the needs of the future while conserving the uniqueness of our past
- Working with others we will develop a vibrant and prosperous town
- Working with local people and partners we will improve housing choice and address housing needs for the people of Tamworth
- Working with others we will promote Tamworth as good for business; great to visit and welcoming to all
- Actively support those responsible for the improvement of health and education standards in Tamworth
- To be accountable, approachable and visible



See our videos taken at the election, street wardens and from our community events: www.youtube.com/user/TamworthCouncil

Celebrating success

It would be almost impossible to list all of our achievements over the past year, however some of the highlights include:

- The launch of the Finding a Home Scheme
- Street wardens given powers to issue fixed penalty notices for littering and dog fouling
- £750,000 funding to local groups and organisations
- Introduction of a shared domestic waste and recycling service with Lichfield, saving £500k a year
- Heart of England in Bloom Gold award
- The Midlands Music Festival held in the Castle Grounds attracting more than 20,000 visitors
- The Tourist Information Centre winning Gold in the Enjoy England Excellence Awards
- St George's Day celebration saw 10,000 people flocking to the Castle Grounds

Achievements such as these, when set alongside the borough's major events programme and the securing of the Staffordshire Hoard exhibition, represent the headlines. What also warrants mention are the superb day-to-day achievements of our Benefits team, our housing staff, planning officers and environmental health teams who collectively and tirelessly work to make Tamworth a better place.

Our Community Development Officers have taken the 'localities' work from strength-to-strength, including community events which saw hundreds of people come together, raising community pride and spirit.

In addition, there are our support services which ensure Tamworth Borough Council continues to operate to such high ethical, financial and performance standards.

The organisation and running of last year's general election also warrants mention. It involved the delivery of almost 60,000 poll cards, running 77 polling stations, the count and the post election work.



This last year also saw a dramatic swing towards 'business led' achievements. Progress on promoting the unique blend of leisure, heritage and retail offers was made under the leadership of the 'Place Project', which sees the local authority working with private businesses and voluntary organisations to ensure Tamworth is promoted much better than ever before.

At the same time, the Greater Birmingham & Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) brought together private and public sector leaders from across the region, to focus on regenerating and rebuilding local prosperity.

Tamworth community and voluntary groups receive £3/4 million funding

In total nine organisations received £683,395, including £195,000 to Tamworth CVS, £180,000 to Citizens Advice Bureau while Barnardo's received £75,000.

The grants means taxpayers' money is being spent where it is most needed for residents living in Tamworth. It is the equivalent of almost £21 per household.

By working more closely with voluntary and community groups, the Borough Council was able to consider in greater detail what services were available and how they could better meet the needs of local people. By working with and commissioning local voluntary and community groups, it means that organisations can work in the heart of the community and provide good quality services.

- Citizen's Advice Bureau, £180,000 – To increase access to debt and financial well being advice
- Tamworth CVS, £93,000 – build support for voluntary and community sector
- Barnardo's - £75,395 – provide support for parenting and support for families
- And an additional £75,000 – To support vulnerable adults at risk of mental health
- Home Start - £75,000 – Supporting parents and people with young families vulnerable to mental distress due to social isolation, bereavement and marital breakdown
- Barnardo's - £50,000 – promote the well being and mental health of all children and young people, especially those at higher risk
- Staffordshire Wildlife Trust – £45,000 – protect and enhance wildlife and wild places and encouraging community involvement
- Tamworth CVS – £27,000 – increase awareness and knowledge of volunteering
- Home Start - £27,000 – working with families on low incomes to prevent debt and poverty
- Samaritans - £21,000 – supporting vulnerable people experiencing mental health issues and those at risk of self harm or suicide
- Tamworth Credit Union, £15,000 – provide affordable loans and promote savings





Our achievements

Our performance over the last 12 months has been strong – The facts speak for themselves: we are performing well against our indicators. Our Corporate Scorecard, which gives information on performance against our performance indicators, is available on our website. However we are constantly learning and moving things forward. For 2011/12, we have revised our corporate priorities and our performance framework is now dedicated around 'Tamworth the Place'. Read our Corporate Plan 2011/12 on our website: www.tamworth.gov.uk

'Making our communities safer, more confident and better places to live'

The work of the Community Safety Partnership, of which we are a lead member, has resulted in a fall in crime and anti-social behaviour during 2010/11. Innovative projects such as the "Red Card Campaign" to tackle domestic violence, "Operation Safer Nights plus" and the "Safer Tamworth" event held at the Assembly Rooms have been contributory factors to this success.

The Council's Community Safety team has now relocated to the police station, providing operational and tactical benefit through better tasking and co-ordination.

The participatory budgeting programme – which saw communities vote on projects they wanted to see in their area - continued with events held in our priority areas of Glascoate, Belgrave and Stonydelph. To date, 14 groups have been supported.

Our "Grants to voluntary organisations scheme" recognises the valuable contribution such organisations make to our borough. This has resulted in £9,500 being shared among 18 such groups.

Our continued commitment to working with communities saw the opening of the fourth ARCH (Advice Resource Community Hub) centre in Belgrave.

Grants totalling £750,000 were given out to CAB, Tamworth CVS, Barnardo's, Home Start, Staffordshire Wildlife Trust and Tamworth Credit Union.



'An environment that reflects the needs of the future while conserving the uniqueness of our past'

The new joint waste collection service has delivered not only yearly cost savings of £500k, but has also resulted in an improved household waste recycling figure which in turn has led to lower waste to landfill figures.

Following the award of silver gilt in 2009 in the Heart of England in Bloom competition, we went one better in 2010 and were awarded gold for our floral displays. The various estate walkabouts and "tidy up" events with residents contribute to keeping the borough tidy.



'Get behind us!' – street wardens urge public on litter campaign

Street wardens urged the public to lend their support to their new litter campaign. Every week, Borough Council Street Scene staff collect more than 200 bags of litter from the streets. This is equal to 215 tonnes a year – the weight of 50 African elephants - and costs in region of £1 million every year to clean up.

The new campaign saw street wardens given enforcement powers, meaning they could issue fixed penalty notices for littering or letting their dogs foul. Failure to pay the fixed penalty could lead to prosecution.

'Get Behind Us' was in response to surveys which revealed more than half of residents felt litter was a problem in Tamworth, while 89% of residents supported an active approach to environmental crime.

- More than 100 fixed penalty notices and 124 environmental crime notices have been issued
- Tamworth Borough Council provides 750 street litter bins
- These bins are emptied by Street Scene staff 2,282 times per week
- Street Scene staff collects on average 200 bags of street litter per week
- It costs approximately £1 million per year to manually clean litter in Tamworth every year

See our 'In Bloom' and street warden videos:
www.youtube.com/user/TamworthCouncil

'Developing a vibrant and prosperous town'

The Assembly Rooms, Castle, Castle Grounds, Snowdome, Ventura Park and our historic town centre, including St Editha's Church, are just some of the attractions Tamworth has to offer.

We have proved time and time again that we are expert at handling major events; the weekend-long Tamworth Music Festival attracted more than 20,000 visitors to the town and the spectacular annual firework display was attended by 18,000 people. These events also bring around £1 million into the borough.

As well as the leisure and history element to our town, we have an enviable infrastructure. Despite the economic downturn businesses have continued to invest in Tamworth, showing their confidence in the borough. In addition, Gungate was demolished, paving the way for a major redevelopment of the site.

John Lewis at Home, Outfit (which incorporates a number of leading high street brands), and a new B&Q are all recent additions to Tamworth. As well as bringing more money into the area, these companies are also providing employment.

We fully supported and helped shape Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). This means we now have a bigger voice when it comes to important decisions, while influencing key policies and investments.

This, coupled with the branding of 'Tamworth the place', will help us to attract more inward investment, a positive step for the town. Through the shared economic development service with Lichfield District Council, a number of projects have been jointly managed and delivered, including Think Local 4 Business.

Tamworth remains a key player in the Mercian Trail Partnership and is part of the 'Hoard on Tour 2011'. This is a very exciting prospect for the town when visitors will have the opportunity see the top 40 Staffordshire Hoard items on display at Tamworth Castle.



See our fireworks and music festival videos:
www.youtube.com/user/TamworthCouncil

'Improving housing choice and addressing housing needs'

New housing scheme proves a big success

The 'Finding a Home' scheme which gives people looking for a home a lot more choice over where they live has been hailed as a success, almost a year on from its launch.

Tamworth Borough Council's Finding a Home scheme – or choice-based lettings – began in May last year and means people looking for a council home are able to bid for properties they are interested in, rather than having a home allocated by the authority.

Under the Finding a Home scheme, people registered with Tamworth Borough Council are told which band they fall into and which properties are available to them, instead of the old points-based waiting list system.

Existing and potential tenants can express an interest in – or 'bid' for – up to three properties a week. All empty homes are listed on the Borough Council's website and displayed in Marmion House. The homes are then allocated based on housing need and length of time an applicant has been registered.

Since the launch of Finding a Home last year:

- More than 300 properties have been let
- 6-7 properties a week are available for bidding on
- An average of 44 bids a week are made on available properties
- Customer satisfaction surveys show that 93% of people who have used choice-based lettings to find a home are satisfied with the service



Affordable homes are one of the objectives under this priority and during the last twelve months, 70 units of this type of accommodation were completed. Home Energy Advice Tamworth (HEAT) continued and many residents took advantage of free or discounted home insulation measures.

Tenant satisfaction with our landlord services improved from 65% in 2008/09 to 75% in 2010/11.



See our carnival, TIC and St George's Day videos: www.youtube.com/user/TamworthCouncil

'Promoting Tamworth as good for business, great to visit and welcoming to all'

Tamworth truly is a great place to visit. The Assembly Rooms hosted more than 100 events last year, our Outdoor Events team ran 17 events and were involved with 15 arts development projects. The events and programmes attracted more than 100,000 visitors to the town with a 97% satisfaction rating.

Examples of these include the French and Italian markets, Heritage Open Weekend and the St George's Day celebrations. The TIC achieved recognition for the sterling work to promote our town and its wide range of services by winning gold in the regional final of the Enjoy England Excellence Awards.

To further enhance the service provided, plans were underway to relocate to bigger and better premises in the Philip Dix centre during 2011/2012.

Businesses are also continuing to invest in Tamworth and bringing more employment to the area. This is very encouraging during the current financial situation.

'Supporting the improvement of health and education standards'

Our revised priorities recognised that while we do not have a direct responsibility for health and education, it is something which is very important to us. Examples of how we play a major part in the health and education agenda include: an outdoor gym in the Castle Grounds, the launch of the various "life check" services and free swimming for the under 16s and over 60s. Plans to provide free swimming for all at Wilnecote Leisure Centre were also under discussion for 2011-2012.

We also worked closely with primary schools, including pupils getting involved in a vegetable growing competition for 'In Bloom', the work the street wardens carry out in local schools and the hosting of events at the Assembly Rooms for education and NHS services.



'To be accountable, approachable and visible'

The Annual Audit letter issued by the Audit Commission gave an 'unqualified' opinion on our accounts, it also praised us for our approach to consultation with communities over budget setting, working with residents to allocate resources in their area and joint working such as the waste management service, building control, economic development and health and safety.

As part of the Tamworth Listens initiative we undertook a "speed date your councillor" event. This enabled members of the public to pose questions to Councillors, officers and representatives from the fire and police services. An on-line forum gave members of the public the opportunity to have a blog chat with the leader of the council. Plans are being made for a "Cabinet on Tour" which will see residents being able to put questions to senior councillors at different venues throughout the borough during the year.

Even in difficult economic times our collection rates for council tax, business rates and debtors remain high and for those experiencing difficulties, our benefits team were able to process claims speedily.

Our online election coverage, which included live blogging and video, was highlighted as best practice by Socitm, the membership association for ICT professions across public sectors.

We also introduced a number of social networks including a blog, YouTube channel and Twitter account. This has enabled residents to get involved in a debate with the borough council, meaning we can have a two-way dialogue with our communities.



Our Councillors 2010/11

Tamworth Borough Council consists of 30 councillors in 10 wards. Following the local authority election in May 2010, the Council was made up of 24 Conservative, five Labour and one Independent councillors. Details of all our councillors can be found by visiting: www.tamworth.gov.uk





A look to the future: 'One Tamworth, Perfectly Placed'

'One Tamworth, Perfectly Placed' is the new, single vision for Tamworth Borough Council, approved by Cabinet at the start of the year.

It has long been a political aspiration that organisations we work with agree to tackle the most important issues facing Tamworth and we all share the same vision.

By working towards one single goal, this will help us achieve our new goal for those who live, work and visit the area; to ensure our focus is 'One Tamworth, Perfectly Placed'.

However, the real challenge facing politicians and officers is balancing the increasing needs and aspirations of our diverse communities, with the funds and resources available.

We believe we have done this: the single vision shows how we will deliver services, support communities and influence partners and organisations. This allows us to tackle the most important, long term issues facing Tamworth, the community and the place.

The County Council, Police, Health Service, Fire & Rescue Services, voluntary sector and others will also adopt a similar approach.

Working together, sharing skills and resources while focusing on what is important, is the most effective way for not only the borough council to work, but all our partner organisations. By adopting one single vision we know residents will see a difference.

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.

To achieve this we will:

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



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.

To achieve this we will:

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



Draft Unaudited Summary Accounts

The Cost of Council Services for 2010/11

The **Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account** below shows the cost of running Council services between April 2010 and March 2011, where the money came from to finance those costs along with the surplus or deficit at the year end.

Tamworth Borough Council budgeted to make a deficit of £1.13m in 2010/11. The year-end position was a deficit of £0.37m.

The improvement in the Council's estimated financial position arose mainly from extra income from a Non-Domestic Rates refund, a VAT refund and savings in contingency budgets. The Council's general fund balances at 31st March 2011 was reduced by the in year deficit to £4.51m.

Comprehensive Income and Expenditure Account

2009/10 £m	2010/11 £m
0.6	0.9
9.1	9.8
0.1	0.4
(7.0)	34.4
1.4	1.7
1.4	1.6
0.2	(7.0)
5.8	41.8
1.8	(2.3)
3.2	(28.6)
10.8	10.9
(3.4)	
(1.6)	(3.5)
(5.5)	(1.0)
0.3	0.4
5.2	4.9
4.9	4.5

Housing Revenue Account

The overall revenue financial position relating to council housing shows a surplus for the year of £0.37m. This equates to an overspend of £0.16m when compared to the approved budget for the year, mainly due to higher Government subsidy costs due to lower interest costs together with lower than expected garage rent income. This has resulted in an increase in housing revenue account balances from £4.71m to £5.09m to be carried forward to 2011/12.

2009/10 £m	2010/11 £m
(16.4)	
9.4	(16.6)
1.2	50.9
4.9	1.1
(0.9)	(0.4)
3.8	4.7
4.7	5.1

Capital Expenditure

During 2010/11 the Council spent £5.62m on capital works. The majority of expenditure related to improvement, enhancement or ongoing construction works. Fixed asset acquisitions in the year include the purchase of IT equipment (software & hardware); costs associated with the expansion of the Waste Management and Recycling Scheme; the cost of works to the river bank and the enhancements to the CCTV System.

During the year Wincrest House flats were demolished and the site cleared.

2009/10 £m	2010/11 £m
4.2	
0.0	4.4
0.5	0.1
0.0	0.5
0.4	0.1
0.1	0.4
0.3	0.0
0.1	0.0
3.4	0.1
9.0	5.6
	Financed by:
1.0	Capital Receipts
0.6	Government Grants & Other Contributions
3.5	Revenue/ Reserves
0.5	Supported Borrowing
3.4	Supported Borrowing Icelandic Impairments
0.0	Unsupported Borrowing
9.0	5.6



Balance Sheet – what the Council owns, owes or is owed

31 March 2010	31 March 2011
£m	£m
220	169
16	16
(7)	(6)
17	15
(39)	(23)
(20)	(20)
187	151
7	7
10	10
3	2
206	155
(39)	(23)
187	151

The Council's Statement of Accounts has been prepared in accordance with the Accounting Code of Practice under International Financial Reporting Standards. For the purposes of this summary some simplifications have been made to provide more meaningful information.

Following conclusion of the audit by the Audit Commission, a full copy of the Council's 2010/11 audited accounts will be available on the Council's website.

A copy of the Council's 2010/11 unaudited accounts is available on the Council's website www.tamworth.gov.uk and available for inspection at Marmion House. Please contact the Corporate Director Resources on 01827 709252 for further details.



Contact Us

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

For more information about Tamworth Borough Council visit our website at www.tamworth.gov.uk or pick up a copy of our residents' magazine, Talkback.

Alternative Formats

If you require this document in another format or language please contact us.

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