

We Are Tamworth

Building Better Communities

2025-2030 Strategy

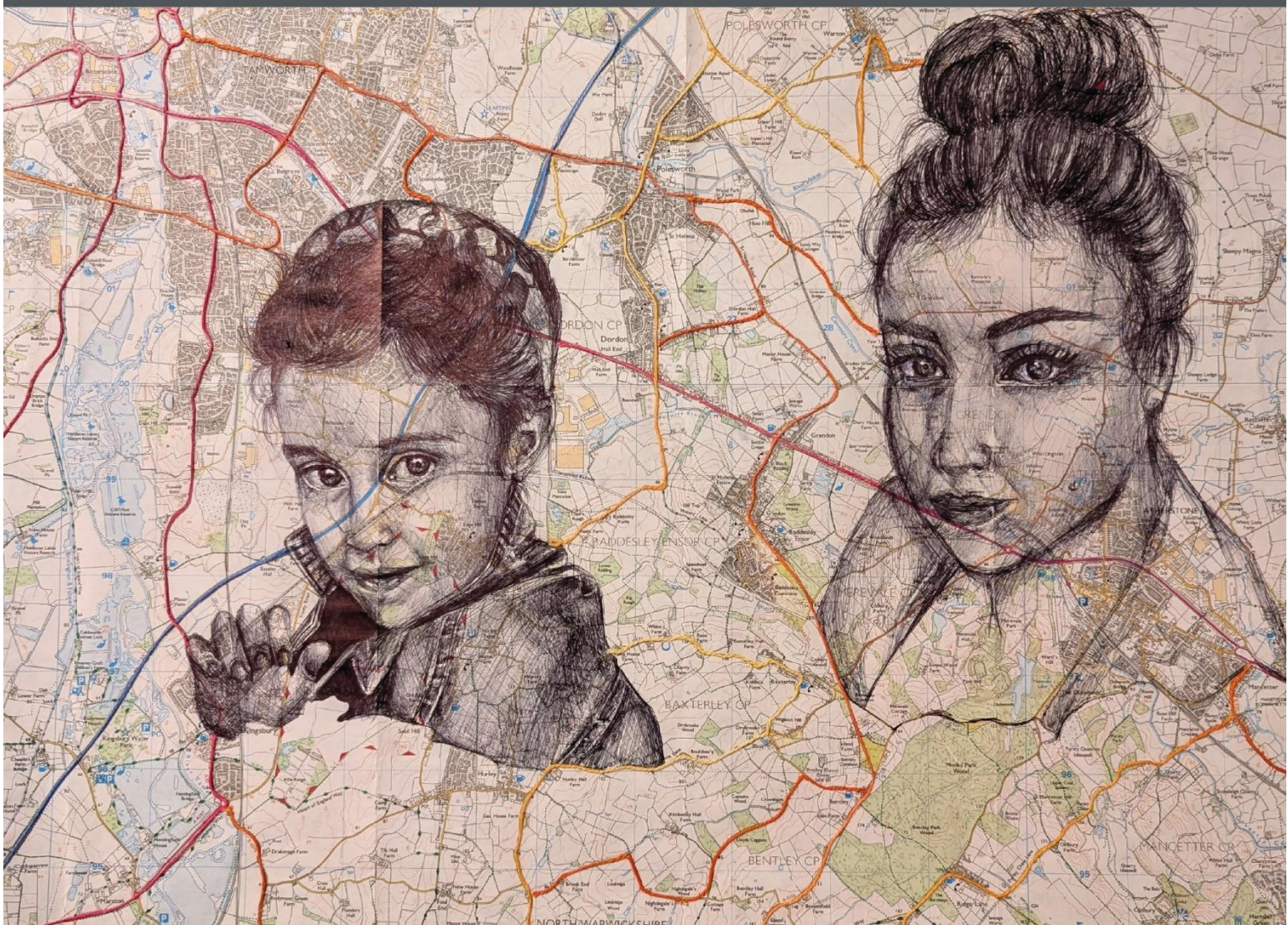


Image created by by Paige Jones whilst studying at Landau Forte Academy QEMS.

Tamworth
Borough Council

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Introduction

I am proud to endorse the *We Are Tamworth Strategy*, the result of many months of thoughtful collaboration, listening and shared commitment across our borough. This strategy is rooted in the voices of our residents, those born here and those who now call Tamworth home, and reflects a collective desire to build stronger, more connected communities.

I want to thank everyone who contributed to its development, especially those who participated in the honest conversations project. Your insights have shaped a strategy that is inclusive, forward-thinking, and grounded in real experiences. Special thanks go to our residents, council staff, strategic partners, voluntary, community and faith groups, business leaders, teachers who gave their time to help this strategy come to life.

The challenges we face, especially in the wake of the disorder of 2024, are real but so too is our shared vision: *a Tamworth that is fairer, more connected and inclusive, where all residents lead safe, healthy and happy lives.*

This strategy is not a quick fix. It is a long-term commitment to sustainable change, built on Tamworth's strengths and guided by an assets-focused framework. It offers a clear path for coordinated action, adaptability, and continuous learning.

Everyone has a role to play. I invite all residents, partners, community groups and organisations to join us in this journey. Together, we can create a safer, fairer and more connected Tamworth.

Sarah Daniels - portfolio holder for cooperative council, community partnerships and anti-social behaviour

We Are Tamworth is more than a strategy. It's a commitment to work together for a Tamworth where everyone feels valued and connected. This plan reflects Tamworth's resilience, partnerships, and shared pride in our community.

It's been shaped by the voices and experiences of local people, organisations and groups across the town who care deeply about Tamworth. Their ideas and honesty have helped create a plan that is practical, inclusive, and focused on what matters most to residents.

Thank you to everyone who contributed their time, views, and ideas to help shape this work. It shows what's possible when we listen and work as one community. Together, we will continue building a stronger, fairer, and more united Tamworth for everyone.

Stephen Gabriel – chief executive

Why we are building better communities

Where we are now

Our borough has much to be proud of.

Tamworth is a town with a rich history and a strong sense of identity. Once the heart of the Anglo-Saxon Mercia, it also has a proud industrial heritage in coal, clay, brick and manufacturing that helped shape the modern Midlands.

Building on this heritage, Tamworth offers a wealth of places that foster community connections. From Tamworth Castle and its grounds to the Assembly Rooms and from the parks and allotments to the skate park and nature reserves, there are many spaces where our residents and communities already meet each other and share experiences.

Tamworth benefits from excellent transport links and a strong local economy. Employment is high and educational outcomes are improving. Local employers and Tamworth College offer a range of apprenticeship opportunities. This is providing a foundation for inclusive growth and community development.

The £21-million town centre regeneration is another positive step, seeking to restore historic buildings and making our area more attractive and welcoming, a project with real potential to boost pride in the town. The relocation of Tamworth College to their new building in the town centre is already welcoming students through the doors, as well as bringing staff and other visitors into our town centre, both in the daytime and for evening courses.

People in Tamworth have a long tradition of helping each other, whether through volunteering at foodbanks, joining neighbourhood clean-ups, or getting involved with local faith and community groups. While our voluntary, community and faith-based organisations in Tamworth may be small, they are trusted, close to the ground and play a vital role in supporting residents.

It is clear that our commitment to building a thriving local area is shared by local communities, services, charities and businesses.

At the same time, our borough faces a number of challenges that put pressure on community life and trust between groups.

Many Tamworth residents face real challenges with the cost of living and many residents report feeling left behind. Low pay, job insecurity and health inequalities are leaving many residents feeling opportunities are limited, fostering frustration and resentment.

Tensions across the town have been brought into focus by the 2024 summer disorder in Tamworth, centred on a hotel being used to accommodate people seeking asylum. Local faith and community leaders report growing anger and polarisation, as well as concerns about changes to the make-up of our community. Hate incidents, particularly race and disability-related, have also increased.

Misinformation and disinformation are adding to the tensions we face.

Trust in our local and national democratic institutions has fallen, both here in Tamworth and nationally. Many people feel their voices are not heard and their needs are going unmet.

The pressures our borough faces are not unique. Many other towns and cities across the country are grappling with the aftershocks of the pandemic, poorer standards of living and inequalities, as well as issues related to demographic changes, growing mistrust and polarisation.

It is vitally important that we now focus on building better communities for people in Tamworth.

Without action, the pressures facing our residents and local organisations risk deepening division and further undermining confidence in national and local institutions. There are many strong and positive features across our borough that can be harnessed to bring people together. By acting now, the council and its partners can work with our residents to resolve community tensions, strengthen trust between residents and institutions and build a more confident and inclusive local identity for the years ahead.



The purpose of our strategy

In the Tamworth Borough Council Corporate Plan 2025-2030, we commit to working with our partners to deliver a shared vision for Tamworth, one rooted in aspiration, community cohesion and creating an environment for success. We reaffirmed our dedication to community wellbeing, with a focus on helping residents lead safe, healthy and happy lives in inclusive communities, where diversity is celebrated.

This *We Are Tamworth: Building Better Communities* strategy has been developed to bring sharper focus and specificity to those ambitions. It provides a framework for Tamworth Borough Council, strategic partners and agencies and local organisations and residents to work together to identify clear priorities and practical approaches to deliver better and more connected communities.

Spanning five years (2025-2030), this presents our vision for strengthening communities across Tamworth. It is designed to embed cohesion into the everyday operations of services, policies and partnerships.

What people told us

Between November 2024 and September 2025, Tamworth Borough Council invited the Belong Network to hold in-depth ‘honest conversations’ with residents and to facilitate a strategy co-design process with the community and various stakeholders across the borough.¹

Belong held discussions with a wide range of residents across Tamworth, representing people of different ages, areas, socio-economic contexts, nationalities and ethnic backgrounds. They organised community discussions and focus groups with the voluntary and community sector and held interviews with people seeking asylum who were staying in Tamworth, as well as those who have moved on into other towns and cities.

The process engaged with elected councillors, as well as the local Member of Parliament and her staff. Interviews and discussions were held with officers working in frontline local authority roles, at both the borough and county level too.

Overall, Belong held 22 discussion groups, more than 60 individual interviews and the ‘We Are Tamworth: Building Better Communities’ conference in summer 2025 that brought more than 60 people together to share their views on the major challenges facing communities and the best ways to build connection. In total, more than 40 organisations and over 500 people across Tamworth added their voices to the process.

The themes below summarise what people told us throughout this listening exercise.

Our assets in Tamworth

When asked about the existing assets, ‘levers for good’ and enabling conditions for connected communities in Tamworth, people focused on the following:

Residents’ outlook

A sense of potential across the town

The most important asset in Tamworth is the people themselves. Residents repeatedly spoke of their pride in their communities and their desire to contribute to positive change. Even where challenges exist, there is a clear willingness to support each other and contribute to community life. That sense of potential, of people wanting to be part of something bigger, is the foundation for everything this strategy seeks to promote.

The council

Vision and leadership

One significant strength in Tamworth is the vision and leadership within the council on community cohesion. Both senior officers and elected members have consistently shown commitment to building better communities and fostering cohesion. That visible commitment sets the tone across the organisation. In a time when trust in institutions can feel fragile, clear leadership gives residents a sense that their council is serious about creating spaces where people belong. In the current

¹ The Belong Network is a non-governmental organisation established in 2019 with a vision to build a more connected, less divided society.

challenging funding context for councils, any allocation of funding toward the promotion of community relations, however minimal, is the result of bold leadership on this agenda.

Frontline staff with commitment to resident engagement

Frontline staff are one of Tamworth's most valuable assets. They are the people who residents meet day to day, whether it's through housing, wellbeing services, or community outreach. What stands out is their willingness to engage and to build their own skills all in service to building stronger, more connected communities.

Funding pathways for organisations and community groups to build better communities

The 'We Are Tamworth' crowdfunding initiative has opened a door for grassroots ideas to thrive. By partnering with Spacehive², the council has provided not only financial support but also visibility and momentum for community-led projects. It empowers residents to shape their own areas, whether that's through small-scale improvements or bigger community-building events. It is a clear demonstration that local ideas are valued and supported.

Enhancing connection and inclusion through existing service delivery

Across Tamworth Borough Council, there are examples of service delivery that, while delivering its core functions, are also focussed on fostering inclusion and building connection across the borough. The Active Wellbeing programme is a great example, leveraging sport as both recreation and a way to engage young people around antisocial behaviour to create safe, positive outlets. It has also been used to support people seeking asylum to integrate into local life and meet local people. This shows how wellbeing programmes can work directly to boost cohesion and an approach that can be easily scaled.

Directly owned and managed housing provision

Tamworth Borough Council's role as a landlord is another unique strength. With around 4,300 homes under its management, the council has direct relationships with thousands of tenants. That creates a sense of accountability and opportunities for rich, ongoing engagement with whole communities. At a time when many councils have transferred their housing stock, Tamworth's continued ownership and the existing ties between resident associations and the council, is an asset that can be used to combat isolation and to foster stronger community spirit with residents.

Festivals and flagship community events

Festivals and flagship events are where pride in place comes to life. From the St George's Day celebrations in the Castle Grounds, to the Kaleidoscope of Dreams festival led by schools, these moments allow people of all ages and backgrounds to come together. They are not just entertainment, they are opportunities to showcase art, heritage, culture and community, to build intergenerational connections and to celebrate Tamworth's diversity. By co-creating these events with a wide variety of stakeholders from across Tamworth, we can ensure that these events strengthen bonds across the community and showcase the many talents that exist.

² Launched in 2025 with £165,000 in funding available from the government's community recovery fund, the ['We Are Tamworth' programme](#) will empower local groups to bring forward projects that build and promote good relationships in our neighbourhoods and strengthen bonds between people of all backgrounds and ages.

Shared spaces

Council-run sites for socialising

Tamworth is fortunate to have a wide range of public spaces, from the Castle and its grounds, parks, play areas and the Assembly Rooms. These are everyday places where people meet and they act as natural hubs for socialising. The more accessible these spaces are made, the more they can do to build belonging, pride in place and coming together across groups in Tamworth.

Economic regeneration

The town centre regeneration project is not just about infrastructure; it is a chance to boost pride in place. When residents see their town evolving positively, it builds confidence that Tamworth is moving towards a new and shared town centre. Regeneration also needs to be linked to cohesion at the neighbourhood level, making sure that development and improvements also deliver pride of place where it matters to them in their everyday environments, as well as the town centre.

Spaces of civic pride and community ownership

Our residents shared that Tamworth also has under-used green spaces within many areas. We heard that there is an appetite for these places to be more than scenery and to become symbols of ownership and agency for residents. Community asset-transfers, especially in the most deprived wards, were discussed as options to give residents a real stake in their areas.

Community hubs and welcoming spaces for outreach

Community hubs play a vital role in outreach and support. Spaces like the Hub run by Community Together CIC, the Heart of Tamworth and family hubs across Glascote, Leyfields and Basin Lane provide a base for vital community contact, parenting support, cost-of-living advice, interfaith events and warm welcome activities. They show how small, welcoming places can become anchors for belonging, especially for families, new arrivals and people struggling with isolation.

Partnerships

Strong strategic partnership working

One of Tamworth's enabling conditions is its culture of partnership working. Through the Tamworth Strategic Partnership, the Community Safety Partnership and other collaborations, agencies have built non-defensive, trust-based ways of working, often helped by co-location. This makes it easier to respond to challenges together.

Faith, voluntary and community organisations

Faith and voluntary organisations in Tamworth have deep roots in civic self-help and a strong tradition of supporting vulnerable people, from poverty alleviation to work with people seeking asylum. Their practical, hands-on direct support makes them trusted voices in communities. Faith and voluntary organisations in Tamworth are not just service providers; they are critical bridges into the lives of those who might otherwise feel unheard.

Committed and innovative education sector

Schools and the college have shown real commitment to building understanding and trust between young people and to support their resilience to growing misinformation and disinformation. After the 2024 disorder, for example, they held assemblies and tutorials to help students process events

and many have developed initiatives to build young people's pride in their town. The education sector is a critical asset in encouraging inclusion and building resilience against division.

Business community

The business community has also shown it wants to play a role in building and developing community. There is an appetite in this sector, which needs to be harnessed by creating more opportunities for collaboration between business and civic life. This could start by ensuring they are adequately engaged and represented within the existing strategic partnerships that exist in the borough.

Sports clubs as community anchors

Sports clubs are trusted anchor organisations in Tamworth. Many places are perceived by residents as authentic community hubs, where people can come together over a shared interest. They already attract high local interest and respect, and they have untapped potential to foster stronger bonds across groups.

Transport links across Tamworth

Tamworth's transport network is better than average for a town of its size. While some residents explain difficulties travelling between the different residential areas of Tamworth, good coverage, integrated day tickets and regular connections mean that most residents are within reach of hourly services to the town centre, more so than in many other Staffordshire towns. This is an enabling factor for accessing jobs, services and social spaces that strengthen community engagement.

Our challenges in Tamworth

When asked about current challenges that undermine connected communities in Tamworth, local organisations, services and residents shared the following issues:

Resident snapshot

A sense of decline

Tamworth has a proud working-class heritage, but many residents feel left-behind. Economic loss, health inequalities and long NHS waits create frustration and scarcity. For some, this translates into a sense of decline, particularly among residents who have struggled to find secure work and that can fuel grievances against others.

Place-based identities and change

People often speak with nostalgia for a Tamworth that no longer exists. Rivalries between areas and a lack of inclusive identity mean many do not feel part of a shared story. A shared and inclusive identity needs to be co-created through events, schools and community projects that genuinely involve local people.

Contrasting views and narratives on the 2024 disorder

The 2024 disorder in Tamworth revealed not just division, but also deep disagreement about what happened and why. Some saw racism, others frustration at being left behind and about feeling powerless about changes in their communities and others blamed authorities, both national and local. These competing narratives show how divergent local perspectives are and how easily mistrust can grow without spaces for contact and dialogue.

Concerns about Home Office dispersal accommodation

The presence of people seeking asylum in dispersal accommodation continues to be a flashpoint. Fears and concerns exist, while some have negative attitudes that spill into prejudice. Without structured integration programmes, both locals and new arrivals are left unprepared, increasing tension and isolation.

Struggles responding to racism and prejudice

Stakeholders acknowledge that discrimination and racism is a persistent challenge. Much of it falls below the criminal threshold, leaving frontline staff unsure how to respond. The 2024 disorder highlighted the importance of proactive action on addressing prejudice and while intent to act is now strong, capacity and confidence still need to be built.

Rising discrimination in schools

Educators and leaders working in Tamworth schools and college consistently raised concerns about growing discrimination among young men. Social media can play a role in normalising harmful attitudes towards women, but schools feel under-equipped to tackle it. Without coordinated support, there are risks of entrenching division at an early age.

The spread of misinformation and disinformation

Many residents, community-based organisations and service providers describe how false narratives travel faster than facts. In Tamworth, misinformation deepens mistrust, increases hostility towards minorities and fuels division. Council messages are often met with scepticism, creating a no-win loop. To counter this, responses need to be faster, clearer and more collaborative across partners and trusted voices in the community.

Weaker youth voice in governance and service design

Young people across Tamworth often feel under-stimulated, unsafe, or disconnected and feel that their voices are missing from decision-making. Building meaningful youth voice into civic life and governance could help address disengagement and create a stronger sense of belonging.

Partnerships

Systemic vulnerabilities in the voluntary, faith and community sector

Civil society in Tamworth is committed but under-resourced and many organisations are volunteer-led. While this keeps our community sector close to our communities, it also leaves them financially fragile and there is scope to further strengthen their links to national funders. Sustaining support for accessing funding and partnerships are critical to their survival. Although local government institutions are not in a position to offer the levels of funding that are required, closer partnership working between statutory agencies and the volunteer-led sector can help make the case for external funding, add weight to grant applications and build capacity within the sector.

Strengthening tension monitoring within partnerships

Partners have daily contact with residents, with some having communications staff mandated to monitor social media content, creating significant opportunity for multi-agency coordination and response to community tensions. There are opportunities to strengthen the way in which relevant observations are managed within the partnership; there's a need for clearer thresholds around what constitutes relevant tensions and more defined pathways for reporting and inter-agency

sharing of community tensions. Stronger coordination will help risks to be spotted earlier, shared more effectively and addressed more efficiently.

Strengthening the role of the business sector

The business community is currently an under-used partner in regard to community development and building stronger communities. Some business leaders are keen to contribute and recognise improved action in this area, but there is a need to focus on rebuilding relationships and recognising businesses' role in civic life. This could bolster local skills and employment, unlock sponsorship, collaboration and new ways to celebrate and understand Tamworth.

Engaging sports assets

Sports clubs already carry local respect. They are authentic community hubs with untapped potential for cohesion. With the right support, sports clubs could do even more to connect communities across divides.

Enhancing collaboration with and between schools and college

Educators want clearer frameworks and better information-sharing with the council. They need resources to tackle difficult conversations, from migration to misinformation, often in real-time as and when trigger events take place. Strengthening inter-school collaboration and interconnections with voluntary and community-based originations, would give young people practical opportunities to learn inclusion through lived experience.

Service delivery

Trust in authority

Residents trust in authority, whether national or local, is often low. Concerns about changes to services often reinforce distrust and many local people describe feeling far from and disillusioned with, decision-making and decision-makers.

Role of political leadership

Political leaders have a critical role in setting the tone of community relations. While representing constituents authentically is critical for trust in democratic representation, there is also an opportunity for leadership to be more assertive and to step in to bridge divides and to counter misinformation and disinformation. This will require new skills and more nimble ways of working.

Perceptions of uneven service delivery

Many communities feel that regeneration focuses mostly on the town centre, reinforcing feelings they were being left behind. Building pride in place through regeneration must extend beyond the town centre, with support tailored to local areas.

Integration for new arrivals

Many people seeking asylum and other new arrivals to Tamworth feel motivated to contribute and connect with local people, but some feel disconnected from local life. There are opportunities to strengthen structured integration support, with simple steps like directories of local services, volunteering opportunities and language support could make a big difference. These steps benefit not only newcomers but also long-term residents feel more connected as a community.

Supporting everyone who works, studies, visits and lives in Tamworth, whether temporary or long-term, is in the shared interests of the council. This approach aligns with the council's ability to make political representations in relation to national government policy on immigration and the handling of resettlement policy. Whilst national frameworks set the context within which Tamworth agencies need to work, our priority is to respond in ways that respect and support all members of our community.

What better communities look like in Tamworth

The views of our residents and local organisations have shaped our vision and guiding priorities for building better communities in our borough.

Our vision

Our vision is for a Tamworth that is **fairer, more connected and inclusive, where all residents lead safe, healthy and happy lives.**

We will work for a borough where:

1. **Everyone feels proud to belong and live in Tamworth**, with an inclusive local identity (Pride in Tamworth).
2. **Our partnerships across sectors are strong and inclusive**, so that varied organisations and community groups work together with each other and communities to strengthen connections and community (Partnerships for building better communities).
3. **Residents feel that services and regeneration are benefitting them in the areas where they live.** All communities have opportunities for ownership and agency over their local spaces and projects and are empowered to include those whose voices are underrepresented (Empowering communities and building trust).
4. **Everyone feels included and connected**, with opportunities to share experiences, build understanding and ensure that every voice is heard (Neighbourliness, connection and belonging)
5. **Communities are confident in democratic values and resilient to division.** Differences of opinion, however strongly held, are handled by working together to uphold freedom of speech, fair and civil debate, to build up trusted, accountable and representative institutions and to encourage well-informed participation in public life (Democratic resilience).
6. **Everyone has access to opportunities, prosperity and wellbeing**, which are shared equally across all communities (Prosperity and wellbeing)



Our approach

Assets-focussed

Our pathway to delivering our vision will be built on long-term commitment and financial sustainability, so we will adopt an '**assets-focused framework**' drawing on Tamworth's strengths

- We will recognise, celebrate and build on existing good practice, scaling-up and promoting what already works.
- We will build on existing partnerships, the commitment of local leaders and local and regional partners that are ready and willing to engage to build better communities.
- We will focus on working with and enhancing, the capabilities and strengths of current community organisations, community leaders and partners.

Partnership-driven

Our strategy has been co-designed alongside a wide variety of Tamworth residents, stakeholders and strategic partners with the aim of promoting improved collaboration between all of those concerned with the benefit of our borough and residents. It provides Tamworth-wide priorities to galvanise and coordinate action to build better more connected communities across a wide range of organisations.

Elected members (councillors, cabinet leads at borough and county levels)	Senior council leadership (at borough and county levels)	Communications media teams	Community safety / neighbourhood teams
Partner agencies (e.g. police, NHS, fire service, education)	Frontline service teams (e.g. Housing, Social care, Anti-social behaviour officers)	Voluntary, community and faith sector	Education sector (e.g. early years and schools and adult, community and further education).
Business sector (e.g. Lichfield and Tamworth Chamber of Commerce)	Arts, culture and heritage sector	Residents (e.g. tenants engagement groups and informal leader, including youth)	Sports and active wellbeing sector (e.g. local sports clubs)

Our priorities for building better communities

Based on that we heard from residents, local organisations, services and other stakeholders about the existing assets and current challenges relating to connected communities in Tamworth, we will focus on achieving our vision by coordinating Tamworth-wide action on the following priority areas:

Priority 1: Pride in Tamworth

"I want to build on our reputation for being a friendly town where people know each other"
(Resident, We Are Tamworth Conference, August 2025)

Goal: Build and sustain an inclusive local identity and civic pride, coordinating partners and communities to co-create a shared positive vision for the future.

How we will achieve this

- *Develop a shared, inclusive story of Tamworth that reflects its diversity and fosters belonging across all communities*

Use the regeneration, civic events, local history projects and cultural programming to co-create a modern identity that resonates with all residents, offering an optimistic and future-facing vision for Tamworth and the areas that make it. We will create opportunities for shared experiences across communities, creating inclusive place-based identities, bringing people together across age, class, ethnic, faith, political and geographic divides.

- *Make use of housing provision to combat social isolation and build community spirit*

We will use existing engagement groups and networks to create greater opportunity to engage with tenants and residents on issues around change and pride in place. There are

opportunities to use existing tenant engagement platforms to increase bridging between local services and the faith and voluntary organisations and our residents, offering opportunities and events across our communities. This can be promoted through both directly owned and managed housing, as well as through the private and housing association sectors.

- *Help the community recover and become stronger after the 2024 disorder*

Promote community healing and restorative justice following the 2024 disorder, addressing the divisions and varied interpretations of the events. Entry points for our work include engaging with families affected by sentencing, supporting dialogue across communities who were involved in or affected by the 2024 events and ensuring proactive responses to underlying tensions, including racism and anti-asylum sentiment and to the new forms that these issues take.

Priority 2: Partnerships for building better communities

“We need good communications between organisations and stronger partnership working.” (School safeguarding lead, We Are Tamworth Conference, August 2025)

Goal: Sustaining and strengthening collaboration with strategic partners across Tamworth to strengthen communities, increase connections and build pride in place.

How we will achieve this

- *Enhancing community safety and security*

Through strong existing strategic partnerships, we will work to make a borough where everyone feels secure in their neighbourhoods and lives free from fear of crime, antisocial behaviour, harassment and hate incidents. Across the relevant multi-agency spaces, including the Community Safety Partnership, we will further strengthen tension monitoring and community sentiment analysis.

- *Strengthen civil society and faith sector partnerships*

Support and sustain Tamworth’s voluntary, community and faith sectors as key partners in building stronger, more connected communities. Key areas for support include improving funding access and grant-making skills, promoting transparency in funding distribution and facilitating coordination across small, volunteer-led organisations.

- *Collaborate more closely with trusted sports clubs in Tamworth*

Partner more effectively with local sports clubs as trusted ‘anchor’ institutions for community engagement and cohesion, using their authenticity and reach to support youth development, inclusion of marginalised groups and civic pride.

- *Strengthening the role of the business sector in community development*

Continue and bolster reinvigorated relationships between the council and business community to foster civic pride and cohesion. Opportunities include celebrating mutual

contributions, aligning on shared initiatives for community cohesion and building collaborative leadership through events and strategic partnerships.

- *Enhancing collaboration with and between colleges and schools*

We will work with partners to strengthen collaboration between schools, colleges and the council to support cohesion and inclusion, addressing specific challenges being faced by young people in Tamworth and clearly identifying roles for them in celebrating pride in place and participating in civic life. We will streamline communication channels, support inter-school working and provide resources to support discussing migration, misinformation and belonging. Key priorities include working with partners to better equip schools and youth services to challenge misogyny and discriminatory attitudes among young people and supporting cross-cultural exchange initiatives in schools that enables individuals to learn from one another, fostering mutual respect and promote an inclusive education system

Priority 3: Localising community empowerment and building trust

"People need to feel that we services are for them, really for them... Be really clear what matters for them right in the areas where they live... reaching out to those communities to understand what they need, supporting in the issues they really really care about" (Police officer, Interview, June 2025)

Goal: We will empower residents and community groups in the areas where they live, exploring options for supporting them to take ownership of local spaces and projects, while broadening engagement with those whose voices are underrepresented.

How we will achieve this

- *Enhance feelings of localised delivery*

We will build on our work ensuring that service delivery, development and regeneration benefit all areas of Tamworth, promoting pride in place across the whole borough.

- *Explore community ownership and asset management*

We will explore options to empower residents of Tamworth in their local areas by supporting them and community groups to take ownership of local spaces and projects that matter for them. By looking into community-asset-transfers we will identify potential pathways to build trust with communities and empower grass-roots groups to strengthen agency, pride in place and neighbourliness.

- *Build and strengthen connections across all the communities and areas of Tamworth*

We will continue to engage with communities where we have strong relationships. We will also focus on engaging with residents that are not currently in the local authority networks and where historically there have been lower levels of engagement and trust, showing a 'listening approach' and raising awareness of opportunities for community ownership.

- *Supporting funding pathways for building better communities*

Create funding opportunities for organisations and community groups to deliver meaningful and impactful projects across Tamworth in their local communities. We will support ideas that build and promote good relationships in our communities and strengthen bonds between people of all backgrounds and ages. We want these projects to strengthen resilience to hate and intolerance and promote cohesion and understanding across our community. We will also seek to support communities to access and manage funding opportunities through national government and charitable sources, such as the Pride in Place Impact Fund, in ways that promote safety, inclusion and positive community relations.

Priority 4: Neighbourliness, connection and belonging

“Better links to our older people who are isolated and between those who live in the hotel and the community” (Church leader, We Are Tamworth Conference, August 2025)

Goal: Support the inclusion and participation of all people across Tamworth, creating opportunities to better understand each other and have all voices heard.

How we will achieve this

- *Strengthen participation in civic life and address isolation and loneliness*

We will work with partners to widen access to volunteering, support community organisations to involve more people and recognise the contribution of volunteers. By creating inclusive opportunities, we aim to make volunteering a central part of local life.

- *Amplify youth voice and engagement*

Alongside our partners, we will create opportunities for integrating youth voice in local governance and service design, addressing feelings of disconnection by involving young people in shaping their town and services.

- *Improve integration support for migrants and people seeking asylum*

We will strengthen structured integration programmes and outreach for newly arrived people in Tamworth, working closely with our partners. Key aspects of this will be to provide language classes, cultural orientation so that people who are new to living in our borough are supported to understand established norms and expectations, volunteering opportunities and directories of local services and groups to foster connection and understanding.

- *Increase and sustain bridging activities between people seeking asylums and residents*

We will strengthen opportunities for contact that can support the development of positive relations and familiarity, using sport, cultural activities and volunteering.

Priority 5: Democratic resilience

“Being able to have healthy conversations... disagreeing without being disagreeable... but also knowing when to challenge discrimination” (Charity worker, We Are Tamworth Conference, August 2025)

Goal: Supporting communities to uphold democratic values, practices and institutions when faced with challenges such as polarisation, misinformation and disinformation and social division.

- *Enhance responses to racism, prejudice and misinformation and disinformation*

Our approach is rooted in the belief that everyone in Tamworth should feel informed, respected and empowered to participate in civic life regardless of background or viewpoint. We will enhance council, strategic partner and voluntary and faith organisations capabilities to respond confidently and rapidly to racism, prejudice and misinformation. We will strengthen opportunities for training, consensus-building on what constitutes prejudice and harness our new communications strategy³ to counter harmful narratives. We will enhance communication pathways for tackling misinformation and disinformation, building a trusted network of community leaders and ‘champions’ to quickly share accurate and trusted information.

- *Support political leadership to promote positive relationships, cohesion and counter division*

Our aim is to foster a civic culture where differences of opinion are navigated through dialogue, trust and shared democratic values. Building on the existing willpower and commitment within council leadership, we will work with democratically elected members to strengthen the role and confidence of councillors as leaders for positive change, as well as supporting and promoting platforms for cross-organisational leadership to tackle polarisation and share accurate information. This involves enabling debate in appropriate terms on disputed issues, including racialised issues around migration and doing so on the basis that all participants should be treated with respect and consideration.

Priority 6: Tackle deprivation, hardship and inequality

“... initiatives to promote economic inclusion. Poverty is a cohesion issue here.” (Mental health worker, We Are Tamworth Conference, August 2025)

Goal: Address the root causes of deprivation and reduce the hardship faced by many residents. By working with partners across sectors, we aim to challenge structural inequalities, promote inclusive growth and ensure that prosperity and wellbeing are shared more evenly across all our communities.

How we will achieve this

- *Equity and opportunity*

We will work with partners to reduce the barriers that hold people back, ensuring fair access to housing, education, employment and healthcare, so all residents can achieve their potential.

- *Reducing hardship and inequalities*

Targeted support for those experiencing poverty and vulnerability, strengthening pathways for economic opportunity through employment, skills, CV building activities and ensuring resources reach those most in need.

³ [TBC communications strategy 2025-2030](#).

- *Inclusive growth that benefits everyone*

We will work with partners to make sure that national and regional investment into transport, homes, employment and businesses benefit all residents.

How we will monitor and measure our progress

It is critical that our strategy delivers real impact for Tamworth residents. This is why the We Are Tamworth: Building Better Communities strategy is accompanied by a Delivery Framework.

It sets out clear performance indicators and provides a framework for council leadership, officers and partners to align priorities with practical actions, define how progress will be tracked and identify who is responsible for delivery. By regularly monitoring outcomes and reporting openly, we will be able to demonstrate what has been achieved, learn what works and adjust our approach where needed.

Senior Responsible Officer: Jo Sands

Cabinet member and portfolio holder: Councillor Sarah Daniels

Oversight: Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny committee and the Better Together Strategic Partnership.

Appendices

Appendix 1: Demographic context and data

With 7,000 residents in 1931, Tamworth's urban population grew significantly after the Second World War, particularly in the 1960s. It is a new town, although Tamworth was never afforded official New Town status. In the 1960s, council housing and modest detached houses were built for workers and their families who moved north as part of Birmingham's slum clearance and 'overspill'.

Tamworth's population stood at 78,600 in the 2021 Census, an increase of 2.4% since 2011 - , a lower rate of growth than the England and Wales average of 6.3%. This recent population increase is due to international migration and to a lesser extent internal migration flows, particularly from Birmingham. Demographic data for Tamworth and three comparable local authorities is given in Table 1 below.

Tamworth is the largest town in Staffordshire and will be the second largest settlement after Stoke-on-Trent in the proposed county combined authority. It is a largely urban local authority, apart from countryside in Spital Ward in the northeast and southwest of the borough.

Tamworth is 18 miles north of Birmingham city centre and separated from the city by statutory green belt. It is linked to Birmingham by rail and could be considered a commuter town. With a journey time of 15 minutes and regular trains, a sizeable proportion of Tamworth's population commute into Birmingham for work – estimated at [one in six](#) (17%) of the working-age population in 2011. However the proportion of commuters is lower than in neighbouring Lichfield (22%), where the population includes a larger proportion of people with higher level skills.

There has been some in-migration into Tamworth from Birmingham, with lower house prices a driving factor for families. Community social media and Belong's interviews also suggest that

perceptions around demographic change in Birmingham has also been a factor in family decisions to move from Birmingham to Tamworth. At the same time, the population pyramid suggests that there has been some out-migration of young people from Tamworth, likely for higher education.

Table 1: Demographic data for Tamworth, Nuneaton, Lichfield and Burton-on-Trent.

	Tamworth	Nuneaton (Warwickshire)	Lichfield	Burton-on-Trent (East Staffs)
Total population Census 2021 – urban area	78,600	89,000	34,750	76,250
Internal migration inflow (Year End June 2023 LA figures)	4,500	7,600	7,950	7,400
Internal migration outflow (Year End June 2023 LA figures)	3,950	5,850	6,000	6,000
Ethnic minority population Census 2021 LA data	4.2%	12.9%	3.5%	13.7%
% of population with non-UK identity only, Census 2021	4.7%	6.7%	2.6%	9.3%
% Non-UK born population, Census 2021 LA data	6.4%	13.8%	4.8%	13.9%
Largest non-UK born populations, Census 2021	Romania Poland Ireland	India Poland Romania	Poland India Ireland	Pakistan Poland Romania
People seeking asylums in contingency accommodation (mostly hotels) March 2025	165	0	0	0
People seeking asylums in dispersal (community-based) accommodation March 2025	18	230	0	49
Homes for Ukraine scheme	58	155	267	266
Afghan Resettlement schemes	17	56	9	39

The ethnic background of Tamworth's population remains largely white British. Indeed, the ethnic minority population of Tamworth is proportionally lower than comparable nearby towns such as Nuneaton and Burton. People of Indian, Chinese and mixed ethnicity were the largest ethnic minority groups in Tamworth at the time of the 2021 Census. The ethnic minority population of Tamworth has increased since the 2021 Census, largely due to international migration for work and asylum migration. There has been an increase in the numbers of migrant workers from India, the Philippines and China, in particular. Sir Robert Peel Community Hospital has recruited overseas-born staff, with recent groups arriving from India and Botswana.

Migrants from the EU moved to Tamworth after the accession of new member states in 2004 and 2007. People from Romania and Poland remain the largest overseas-born groups. While initially concentrated in private rental accommodation in the town centre and Glascote wards, many EU migrants have now bought their own properties in Tamworth.

In line with the United Kingdom as a whole, Tamworth has also seen an increase in asylum migration, with a hotel used to accommodate people seeking asylums being the target for the riots of summer 2024. Small numbers of people seeking asylums are also now housed in dispersal accommodation in communities. However, Tamworth's asylum-seeking population differs in many respects to other towns in the West Midlands. First, Tamworth housed almost no people seeking asylums until December 2022, when the Holiday Inn Hotel was commissioned to provide contingency accommodation. In Tamworth, the majority of people seeking asylums are housed in this hotel. In contrast, as Table 1 shows, in Nuneaton and Burton-on-Trent, most people seeking asylums are housed in community-based dispersal accommodation, where there is a larger chance that local residents will get to know people seeking asylums as neighbours.

Table 2: Country of birth by local authority ward in Tamworth, Census 2021.

Ward	% born UK	% born EU	% born Europe non-EU	% born Africa	% born Middle East & Asia	% born Americas and Caribbean
Amington	93.1%	4.8%	0.2%	0.5%	1%	0.4%
Belgrave	92.7%	5.3%	0.3%	0.4%	0.9%	0.3%
Bolehall	92.7%	5.3%	0.3%	0.5%	0.9%	0.2%
Castle	89.7%	7.4%	0.6%	0.7%	1.1%	0.3%
Glascote	93.1%	5.6%	0.2%	0.4%	0.5%	0.1%
Mercian	93.6%	4.9%	0.1%	0.3%	0.7%	0.1%
Spital	92.6%	5.3%	0.4%	0.5%	0.8%	0.3%
Stonydelph	93.6%	4.7%	0.2%	0.5%	0.7%	0.3%
Trinity	96.3%	1.9%	0.1%	0.4%	1%	0.2%
Wilnecote	95%	3.4%	0.2%	0.4%	0.7%	0.4%

Appendix 2: Economic context and data

Tamworth in the 1960s and 1970s was a thriving blue-collar town with more than half of its jobs in manufacturing. The automotive industry, light engineering, bricks and tiles, plastics and paper, were important industrial sectors, with Tamworth's residents also employed in the nearby pits of the South Staffordshire and North Warwickshire coalfields.

After the 1970s, there was a hollowing out of the labour market in the UK, with secure and often skilled manual jobs in manufacturing lost, as a result of the offshoring of production, changes in consumption patterns and automation. These economic trends affected Tamworth which saw many manufacturing jobs disappear. The Reliant Motor Company, an important Tamworth employer, ceased production in 2001. Although there are still manufacturing jobs in Tamworth – in automotive industry supply chains, light engineering, metals and plastics – the majority of jobs are now in low-paid and low-skilled sectors such as retail and distribution. Secure manufacturing jobs tend to be highly prized in Tamworth.

Tamworth's location, near to key transport routes, makes the distribution sector particularly important, with a significant proportion of residents working in this sector. UPS, Ocado, Eurocar Parts and VW have distribution centres ⁴Tamworth. In *Hired*, the journalist James Bloodworth describes his experience of physically demanding and low-paid warehouse work⁵. While migrants and refugees are employed in the distribution sector, the nature of the work itself, shift work, staff turnover and the use of agency staff means that warehouses are rarely a site of meaningful social contact between different ethnic groups.

The average gross weekly earnings of full-time workers in Tamworth is 6.5% below the Great Britain average and also below the West Midlands average (see Table 3 below).

Tamworth's industrial history and the current predominance of low-skilled jobs means that engagement with education and career ambitions are often shaped by limited opportunities. As can be seen from Table 3, Tamworth's working-age residents are less likely to have higher level qualifications and more likely to be qualified below level 2 than the West Midlands or Great Britain averages. More than one in five working age residents (22.5%) does not have a good GCSE level, intermediate level apprenticeship or equivalent qualification. School achievement indicators are significantly lower than average, with just one-in-three children getting good passes in maths and English at GCSE. Tamworth has a higher proportion of people with apprenticeships (6%) than the England average (5%).

Employers report a mismatch between skills and the jobs that are available, an issue that Staffordshire's 2022-2030 economic strategy and Tamworth's 2025-2030 corporate plan aim to address. These strategies aim to regenerate town centres, support innovation, address low education aspirations, skill gaps and help more residents to move into better paid and more secure jobs. However, there are opportunities to ensure that understanding and buy-in to the strategy by local residents is improved, helping them better understand how it will bring positive changes to their ⁶COBJ, particularly in the context of the cancellation of the northern leg of HS2 and the risk of job losses in the automotive industry across the West Midlands. UK automotive industry jobs are highly vulnerable due to the move to electric vehicles, changing consumption patterns, future access to EU markets and US tariffs.

Policymakers have used the term 'left-behind' while geographers write about peripherality. These terms can be defined as being on the margins - either geographically, economically, socially or politically - relative to the centre of power, resources or wealth. Tamworth has many of the conditions that define peripherality. This impacts on community cohesion because people may feel they have no voice, their concerns are not heard and their needs are not met, leaving people feeling marginalised or resentful of out-groups.

Table 3: Income, economy and skills data for Tamworth, Nuneaton, Lichfield and Burton-on-Trent, 2024

⁵ Bloodworth, J. (2018) *Hired: Six months undercover in low-wage Britain*, London: Atlantic Books.

⁶ For a discussion of how local residents understand economic strategies and local labour markets see Rutter, J. (2023) *Walsall Pathfinder*, Leicester: Learning and Work Institute.

	Tamworth	Nuneaton (Warwickshire)	Lichfield	Burton-on-Trent (East Staffs)
Working age population in employment ⁷ West Midlands average = 77.5% GB average = 78.6%	72.6% ⁸	80.9%	81%	80.2%
Working age population Unemployed ⁹ West Midlands average = 4.3% GB average = 3.8%	3.6%	3.9%	3.4%	3.0%
Working age population Economically inactive West Midlands average = 22.5% GB average = 21.4%	23.5%	16.9%	15.5%	18.7%
Average gross weekly earnings ¹⁰ of residents West Midlands average = £689.90 GB average = £729.80	£685.40	£670.80	£792.30	£670.30
IMD ¹¹ % of Lower Layer Super Output Areas in 20% most deprived areas	20.4%	20.3%	3.6%	15.9%
Working age residents in Socio Economic Groups 1-3 (managerial and professional jobs) West Midlands average = 50.7% GB average = 53.4%	37.3%	31.9%	54.7%	46.6%
% of jobs in manufacturing ¹² West Midlands average = 10.2% GB average = 7.5%	13.3%	11.1%	8.7%	16.1%
Largest industrial sectors	Wholesale/retail 23.3% Manufacturing 13.3%	Wholesale/retail 20% Health and social care 17.8%	Prof/scientific/technical 11.5% Admin/support 11.5% Wholesale/retail 11.5% Health/social care 9.6%	Wholesale/Retail 17.7% Manufacturing 16.1%

⁷ Annual Population Survey, Jan-June 2024

⁸ Census 2021 employment rate = 73%

⁹ Model-based unemployment, not a claimant count

¹⁰ Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings

¹¹ Index of Multiple Deprivation.

¹² ONS Business Register and Employment Survey

% working age population with higher level qualifications ¹³ West Midlands average = 43.3% GB average = 47.6%	43.2% Census = 21.9% but this is the total adult population.	31.9%	38%	42%
% working age population qualified below Level 2 West Midlands average = 12.3% GB average = 10.9%	22.8%	15.7%	9.7%	18.6%
% of L4 pupils passing GCSE maths and English at grades 5-9, 2023/24 England = 45.9%	33.2%	40.5%	51.2%	40.8%
Apprenticeship starts Apprenticeship achievements Aug 24-Jan 25	320 100	600 200	580 250	560 210
% of population who have a language other than English as main language who do not speak English well or at all	14% (462 people)	18.3% (1,742 people)	16.1% (340 people)	20.2% (2,420 people)
Businesses with more than 250 employees	10	15	10	35
% businesses with 1-9 employees	87%	89%	79%	83.6%

Appendix 3: Housing context and data

There is evidence to show increased pressure on private rental and social housing stock in Tamworth. Pressure is mostly being experienced in the private sector in Tamworth. As of February 2025, the average monthly private rent in Tamworth rose to £895, marking a 7.7% increase from £831 in February 2024. This above inflation rise reflects insufficient supply to meet demand. In this context, any largescale housing of people seeking asylums in dispersal accommodation risks creating resentment. While Tamworth has a small social housing waiting list, it experiences fewer social housing pressures than nearby local authorities.

In May 2025, Tamworth Borough Council hosted a housing summit to address and reduce the risk of homelessness, highlighting the community's proactive approach to this issue¹⁴.

Table 4: Housing indicators

	Tamworth	Nuneaton (Warwickshire)	Lichfield	Burton-on-Trent (East Staffs)
Household tenure: owned outright ¹⁵	32.2%	37.3%	42.5%	38.9%
Household tenure: owned with mortgage	38.3%	35.9%	34.8%	32.7%

¹³ Level 4 and above. Level 3 is an A Level or equivalent qualification.

¹⁴ <https://www.tamworth.gov.uk/home-summit-marks-major-step-forward-tackling-homelessness>

¹⁵ Census 2021

Household tenure: private rent	12.1%	13.6%	10.5%	15.9%
Household tenure: social rental	17.4%	13.3%	12.2%	12.5%
Total social housing stock ¹⁶	6,311 units, 68% rented by LA	9,057 units, 62% rented by social landlords	6,552 units, 97% rented by social landlords	7,145 all rented by social landlords
Numbers of households on Local Authority housing register (waiting list) December 2023 and December 2024	401 434	3,178 3,764	345 518	6,200 6,935
Homeless households in temporary accommodation, June 24	36	144	30	114
New build housing completions 2023/24	253	1,003	736	760
Average monthly private rent February 2023 ¹⁷	£787	£692	£883	£695
Average monthly private rent February 2025	£895	£837	£998	£802

¹⁶ MHCLG Housing live tables

¹⁷ ONS Index of Private Rents