

TAMWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN 2019-2022 (2021 UPDATE)



OUR VISION: To put Tamworth, its people and the local economy at the heart of everything we do

PEOPLE & PLACE

ORGANISATION

CORPORATE PLAN 2019-2022

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WELCOME

Welcome to Tamworth Borough Council's Corporate Plan update for the years 2021-2022.

The document outlines what we want to achieve in the remaining year of the 2019-2022 Corporate Plan and what we have achieved to date.

It also contains our new Recovery and Reset programme which was established as a response to the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on Council services.

INTRODUCTION

2020/21 was a challenging year for everyone. The Coronavirus pandemic has impacted on all of us in a way we could not have imagined when the last Corporate Plan update was published just a year ago.

These unprecedented times we find ourselves in have led to difficult decisions having to be made across our region, the country, as well as the rest of the world. The main focus has been, and continues to be, on all working together to stem the spread of this pandemic and protect those most at risk, while trying to mitigate the impact on our National Health Service.

The economic impact of Covid-19 is already affecting the entire country and while we have been able to assist with ensuring grant payments have been made to eligible businesses it continues to be a challenging time. Future forecasts vary as to the length and breadth of the potential impact and the effects to Tamworth's local economy is already being felt. However, the challenges that the pandemic presented has proved what an amazing place Tamworth is. The Council with the voluntary and business sectors swung into action, as well as community-spirited individual residents, and help was offered through various means.

Our absolute priority is protecting critical services and the most vulnerable members of our community as we navigate this crisis. To this end we combined short-term actions (next 12 – 18 months) with planning for a 'new reality' by establishing our new three-to-five-year 'Recovery and Reset' programme, which is designed to ensure the authority remains fit for the future, while protecting services for our residents, businesses and the most vulnerable in our community.

Despite dealing with the enormous challenges of the pandemic we did achieve some notable things in 2020/21; the second year of our 2019-2022 Corporate Plan.

Our performance highlights over the year include the Government award of £21.65m from the Future High Streets Fund which will be used to deliver the biggest transformation to Tamworth town centre in a generation, the completion of 140 units of Council housing at Tinkers Green and Kerria and the completion of building transformation works in Tamworth Castle on the new 'Battle and Tribute' exhibition.

The medium term financial planning process continues to be challenged by Government austerity measures as well as continued uncertainty. The accomplishment of a balanced three year Medium Term Financial Strategy for the General Fund is a major achievement as the Council, like others, has planned to deliver its budget process in light of unprecedented adverse economic conditions with a great deal of uncertainty over future investment and income levels.

Tamworth Borough Council still believes that it is important to grow the economy to generate funds to help those less fortunate and to find new ways to engage with our customers while ensuring service delivery is prioritised and equitable.

Our focus, energy and resources will continue to support our people, our place and our organisation to ensure that we achieve our vision:

To put Tamworth, its people and the local economy at the heart of everything we do'.



Andrew Barratt
Chief Executive



Jeremy Oates
Leader of the Council

On the 23rd February 2021, I was appointed as the new Leader of Tamworth Borough Council and I look forward to delivering the last year of this three year Corporate Plan. Looking forward, I fully support each of the priority areas and the outcomes and working on the development of a new three-year Corporate Plan.

OUR VISION, PURPOSE & PRIORITIES

CORPORATE PLAN – ON A PAGE

TAMWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL: VISION

To put Tamworth, its people and the local economy at the heart of everything we do

OUR PURPOSE IS TO:

- ▶ help tackle causes and effects of poverty and financial hardship
- ▶ increase all residents' resilience and access to information
- ▶ engage with our residents to promote community involvement and civic pride
- ▶ support the development of Tamworth now, and in the future
- ▶ help the local economy to grow in a way which benefits our residents and businesses
- ▶ utilise Council resources effectively
- ▶ help tackle the causes of inequality and increase opportunities for all residents and businesses
- ▶ help protect, nurture and celebrate our local heritage
- ▶ help prevent homelessness and help people access suitable housing
- ▶ help build resilient communities
- ▶ help develop and safeguard our environment and open spaces

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES FOR 2019-2022

People and Place



To meet housing needs through a variety of approaches and interventions



To facilitate sustainable growth and economic prosperity



To work collaboratively and flexibly to meet the needs of our communities



To create a new and developing vision for the continued evolution of Tamworth, including a town centre fit for the 21st century

Organisation



To be financially stable



To ensure our employees have the right skills and culture to help our residents, visitors and businesses



To ensure our service delivery is consistent, clear, and focused



To ensure our decisions are driven by evidence and knowledge

To understand and proactively respond to the impacts of the Coronavirus pandemic

PORTFOLIO HOLDER STATEMENTS

PORTFOLIO: ASSETS & FINANCE

CLLR ROBERT PRITCHARD DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL



The coronavirus pandemic has interrupted many of the authority's plans and we have focused on supporting those most in need in Tamworth. We have also had to adapt to new ways of delivering services and undertaking our day to day functions. The generational step forward in the use of technology has ensured that the council continued to function well.

Strong financial management has helped to ensure continued delivery of front line services without the need for major service reductions and the achievement of a three year balanced Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). At a time when many councils across the country are still cutting frontline services and support to vulnerable residents, we have continued to protect vulnerable people in our community who are in greatest need.

The Council's external auditors have again confirmed that the Council prepared a very good set of accounts, meeting statutory deadlines, and that the Council has a track record for delivering budgeted savings. Going forward, the preparation and provision of high quality financial management information will assist in enabling and informing the decision making process of the Council.

The Council's Revenues Team has once again performed to very high standards and has been proactively increasing the authority's income, and its preceptors, to assist in financing the balanced MTFS ensuring continued frontline service provision.

More than ever, we recognise that our financial capacity will be less than in previous years which means that we will need to maintain our approach to innovation, collaboration and transformation. We will continue to review every service at the Council to ensure maximum efficiency. We will also focus our investment strategy to drive local economic growth and Council financial stability.

The Tamworth Information Centre has now relocated to the newly refurbished Assembly Rooms, but sadly had to close its doors because of the pandemic. The move will give the service a more central location and allows for more flexible and extended opening hours, including weekends and evenings when the theatre is open for shows. The Tamworth Information Centre will return to providing a range of services for residents and visitors to the town as soon as it can. This includes selling tickets for the Assembly Rooms and Tamworth Castle, coach tour and event bookings, National Express tickets, Arriva bus passes, parking permits, information on local amenities and services, green bin subscriptions, plus gifts and souvenirs.

The Council continues to progress with its comprehensive Asset Management Plan for both the Housing Revenue Account and General Fund assets in support of a revised Capital Strategy and has appointed consultants to complete this work and has commenced survey work. This will enable the Council to understand the current condition of its assets along with current and future investment requirements and has planned to carry out condition surveys in the coming year to support this approach.

PORTFOLIO: ASSETS & FINANCE cont.

Assets the Council has already planned to make better use of include garage sites, our limited number of town centre properties and other land assets dotted around Tamworth. Detailed assessments of the options for each Council garage site have been undertaken and decisions regarding the future of each site will be subject to further consideration during the new financial year.

We continue to work with Staffordshire County Council colleagues to ensure that the needs of Tamworth residents are fully understood in relation to the delivery of Disability Facilities Grants. The demand for Disabled Facilities Grants continues to outstrip available resources and the Council continues to press for a review of the means by which grant is allocated.

Over the next twelve months we will be investing in elected members and employees to ensure that they have the skills, knowledge and information they need in order to serve the town in the shadow of Covid-19.

Finally, the Council will continue to ensure it is open and accountable to the public, this will be achieved through a review of the Council Constitution and ensuring good governance across the authority. Through supporting the Leader of the Council and helping all members to bring their views and ideas to the discussion, I will work to create a better town for residents, businesses and visitors alike.



PORTFOLIO: ENVIRONMENT & CULTURE

CLLR JOHN CHESWORTH



Our shared waste collection service with Lichfield District Council continues to provide a quality service that delivers value for money and assists in meeting the challenging recycling targets set. The percentage of recycling collected against waste sent for incineration (energy from waste) is holding firm at 41.1%. The sign-up rates for our Green Waste collection service were around 50% and look to be heading the same way in 2021.

Waste collection services have been maintained throughout the Covid-19 pandemic, something that all those responsible for delivery of the service should be proud of.

There will be challenges to come in 2021 with the emerging National Waste Policy and how we dispose of dry recyclate collected in the blue bins. We will, however, continue to deliver the high standard of service to which our residents have become accustomed.

The Street Scene Team have again proven to be invaluable and are proactive in their approach. They deliver the day to day functions necessary to keep our town looking clean and tidy and this is recognised in the number of positive comments received about their work. They must be commended for maintaining their high standards during the Covid-19 pandemic. They are also responsible for maintaining our open spaces, ensuring that they are safe, attractive and fit for purpose during these difficult times.

Our events offering unfortunately suffered during 2020 due to the various restrictions placed upon us due to the pandemic. We did, however, deliver a number of outdoor events in the Castle Grounds once we were able to, including live music and outdoor theatre productions. These events were all delivered in a Covid safe manner, and social distancing was always maintained, whilst allowing the public to enjoy some live entertainment. We also introduced a new 'Drive In' cinema event over the course of a weekend, which was a Covid friendly alternative to our usual Outdoor Cinema offering. These events were all well received, and we are planning further, similar, events for 2021 before returning to a more comprehensive programme in future years.

We also hope that we will be able to re-introduce events to the Assembly Rooms at some point soon, always working within any restrictions that may still be in place. It was so frustrating to be able to open the Assembly Rooms, only to have to close again within a reasonably short period of time due to the outbreak of the pandemic.



PORTFOLIO: HERITAGE & PERFORMANCE

CLLR DANIEL COOK



It is clear to everyone that 2020 was a year in which the rate of change was unprecedented and this was certainly felt in the Heritage and Growth Portfolio with huge pressures on businesses and changes to the way we behave. Fortunately, the projects that were started within this portfolio were of a nature that they could not only progress but were at a stage where they could begin to adapt to the challenges brought about by the pandemic.

2019 saw Tamworth Borough Council embark on the 'Tamworth What's Next' discussions which generated a plethora of ideas and suggestions as to how the town centre could improve and ideas of what would benefit the town centre. Some of the suggestions involved structural change, some involved public realm changes and some highlighted areas where relationships between all partners could be improved. A number of key priorities were drawn out of this exercise and over half of them were included in our successful bid for Future High Street Funding; £21.65m of government funding is coming to Tamworth Borough Council to transform Tamworth's town centre.

We now have two large council projects within the town centre. The Future High Street Funding of £21.65m is a once in a generation chance to move Tamworth forward again but that money isn't going to deliver the whole project and that's where partners come in, including £3.9m of Tamworth Borough Council support and contributions via Tamworth College.

The second project is the redevelopment of the Gungate site which, for the first time, came into the ownership of the Council only a couple of years ago. This plan is slightly different in regards to its offer as is at master planning stage. The two projects will not just change the shape and feel of the town centre but will also build a thriving town centre.

Town centres need people to thrive. So the aims of the two major projects are about bringing people into the town centre where they can support the shopping centres, night time economy, cafes and personal service businesses of Tamworth. Two key statistics are constantly in our thoughts – around 2/3rds of people are in town centres for other reasons than shopping and retail – over half of people are in town centres for social interaction whether they are living alone, young families, working in offices, unemployed or simply want to have a walk around where there are other people – all sets of people are likely to spend money in the town centre simply by being there.

The footfall of Tamworth's town centre will grow as a result of increased business, offices, residential units and Tamworth College. These projects will result in an immediate increase in footfall which will see growth in our economy.

Within the wider offer of the town centre and Tamworth's offer, Tamworth Borough Council has taken advantage of the enforced closures to our own venues and the government funding such as the Cultural Recovery Fund which we will see the fruits of in the coming year.

The Castle review, that was passed by Cabinet in March 2021, sets out a really exciting set of projects that see investment into the castle experience, including a new inclusive pricing structure, a new

combination of real life and augmented reality experience, online display of some of the collection, maintenance of the castle and the movement of the café to the stone building near the entrance to the Castle Grounds. Tamworth Castle needs to draw a local, regional and national audience and in doing so will play an important role in the growth of the local economy as well as promote the place branding that is Tamworth.

Tamworth Borough Council has successfully applied for cultural recovery fund for both The Castle and Assembly Rooms, the previously mentioned augmented reality project and options to improve the cataloguing and access to the archive we have in Tamworth. For the Assembly Rooms this will see additional equipment to broaden the types of events that can be put on there as well as improve the versatility of the facility as a conference venue. With the works mentioned we need to work better with others to ensure the Tamworth story is told in full.

It would be wrong not to mention how tough the last twelve months have been on local businesses and especially the hospitality industry in Tamworth. The Borough Council has been supporting local business in several different ways including sourcing advice, administering government grants, and promoting safe ways of working. Tamworth Borough Council also engaged with the Federation of Small Businesses and Tamworth and Lichfield Chamber of Commerce to provide advice and updates on the Covid-19 situation as it progressed.

In the year ahead Tamworth Borough Council will not only continue to provide this support but will also need to work closely with Local Enterprise Partnerships and local businesses to rebuild an economy that works for more, which will also include addressing the skills required to be successful in the post pandemic world, examples of these include modern methods of construction, electric vehicle maintenance, online remote working and flexible office space provision.

PORTFOLIO: REGULATORY AND SAFETY

CLLR STEPHEN DOYLE



Since March 2020 the Environmental Health Team have seen an exponential increase in workload as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. As well as enforcing the various lockdown/tier restrictions for different business sectors the team have also been commissioned by Staffordshire County Council to investigate outbreaks of Covid-19 in local workplaces.

At the same time, the service has continued to provide critical services including high-risk food hygiene inspections/complaints, taxi and alcohol licence applications, noise/odour complaints and planning consultations. As well as being focused on delivering the renewal of the Gambling Policy in the very near future. This additional workload will continue for the foreseeable future until a return to a more normal way of life resumes for everyone.

The Planning Team have been busy preparing tenders ready for a Local Plan Review. The start of this should be over the next twelve months and will take into consideration any changes to planning policy issued by Central Government as a result of the recent White Paper issued in August 2020. The Council's Policy Team has already responded to this White Paper on behalf of Members.

Work continues on legislative requirements that place a duty to cooperate with neighbouring and other authorities that have strategic and/or cross border matters in common, like those of our near neighbours Lichfield and North Warwickshire District Councils and those further afield within the Housing Market Area and Birmingham City Council.

The team will shortly be publishing an Infrastructure Funding Statement, which will transparently set out the Section 106, and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) spending to ensure that legislation is complied with.

The Development Control Team continues to be top performers with the Planning Team having engaged with neighbouring authorities to ensure that applications on the border of Tamworth contribute to necessary infrastructure in Tamworth to meet the needs of those new residents.

The team will continue their high performance over the next twelve months to ensure that the Borough Council's growth agenda is delivered such as the Future High Street Fund applications and other regeneration opportunities that the Borough Council brings forwards.

The Covid-19 crisis has resulted in a reduction of fees incoming due to a fall in the number of applications for the Building Control Partnership. This trend has been experienced across the private sector too. The partnership has looked to continue to deliver a full range of services throughout the crisis. The health and safety of staff and customers has remained a top priority throughout and officers have put in place measures that help maintain inspection delivery.

A new Building Control and Land Charges Partnership Manager was appointed in October 2020 and has quickly begun the process of recruiting and filling vacant posts which will have a positive impact on the land charges out turns. In addition, there is a move towards agile working with some building control officers trialling new ways of working to improve efficiency and accuracy.

Community Safety

The Community Safety Partnership continues to provide a high level of confidence amongst the residents in the community, of particular focus are those who are the most vulnerable in our society. One of the key drivers is to provide an environment where the partners can share information, looking to ensure cases are not overlooked and avoid duplication of effort allowing for the better focusing of resources of ourselves and our partners.

The updated Community Safety Plan 2020-23 has been adopted and provides an action plan to work together.

As part of the Council's key priorities there is a strong drive to seeking to protect the most vulnerable within our communities, by providing training and guidance to partners, working with neighbouring councils and more recently reviewing the Licensing Policy for Tamworth.

The review of the Licensing Policy, which was adopted late in 2019, continues to adopt a Cumulative Impact Assessment around Tamworth town centre. This limits the number of applications granted in areas where there is evidence to show that the number and density of licensed premises in the area is having a cumulative impact.

The future sees the team undergoing business transformation to become a digitised and streamlined service ready to meet the needs of the community it serves.

The on-going task of combating anti-social behaviour continues and recently we saw the renewal of the Public Space Protection Order (PSPO) for Dosthill Park which has proven to be popular and successful in its application and renewal of the Tamworth Dog Control and the Alcohol Restriction PSPO in the town centre and Amington.

The correct use of PSPO's empower both the Police and our own Community Wardens, looking to reinforce existing laws and policies as well as providing reminders to residents. An example of the success of PSPO's is the co-operation of the Police and the Borough Council with the borough-wide Vehicle Nuisance PSPO.

The Community Wardens continue to provide an important service to both the Council and our partners and we look to further develop the service to meet both changing times and new demands.

As time progresses, the individuals in the Community Wardens Team have demonstrated a flexible approach to their role in the presence of changing circumstances such as that posed by Covid-19. They continue to engage with residents, particularly with the younger members of the community, and work with our partners in maintaining community safety.

The Partnership Team officers continue to engage with our primary schools on issues such as internet safety, bullying and anti-social behaviour, proactively working to deliver virtual sessions during the Covid pandemic and in partnership with the Safe and Sound programme through Staffordshire Fire and Rescue.

Domestic violence remains a high priority for the Council and we actively support our partners in combating domestic crime. The Assistant Director Partnerships works with Police and Fire and Rescue colleagues to Chair the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) in Tamworth to protect high risk victims of domestic abuse. The model used has now been rolled out across Staffordshire due to its success.

We continue to work with Staffordshire County Council colleagues around the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2020 to ensure the maintenance of safe accommodation through funding to Pathway and the continue funding of New Era, the County domestic abuse service.

Early intervention remains key to much of the work carried out by Tamworth Borough Council and our partners.

The Partnerships Team have proactively worked with staff and partners to introduce guidance around how to assist vulnerable customers who threaten suicide. The guidance will be included in the updated Safeguarding Policy along with updated training.

This will all be supported with Champions for Safeguarding within the organisation for Officers and Members, key to this role is to provide support and signpost people to the correct contacts when identifying potential cases.

PORTFOLIO: NEIGHBOURHOODS

CLLR MICHELLE COOK



When I completed the highlights of 2019 and set out our ambitions for 2020, I certainly could not have envisaged the year that we would all face and the challenges it would bring. I am very proud to say that collectively our teams rose to the task and continued to deliver, whilst adapting to a Covid-19 world.

During 2020, we had the introduction of a new ten year repairs contract, which saw ENGIE join us to undertake repairs and Wates Living Space have responsibility for planned repairs, including bathrooms, kitchens and external works. In addition, after listening to customer feedback, the repairs call centre was moved back in-house, thus allowing more measurement and monitoring of the service offered.

This long-term contract approach has enabled a more joined up partnership which we believe will provide better customer satisfaction levels. To date, this has been working very well with 95% of all callers stating they are 'satisfied'. This is a marked improvement on previous years and something I hope will continue to improve with time.

The £19m redevelopment of the Kerria and Tinkers Green estates continued to progress towards completion. In December 2020, the final keys were handed over at Tinkers Green finishing off the new 96 home project and the Kerria site keys were handed over in February 2021. This redevelopment marks the completion of the first major rebuild of council housing stock in a generation within Tamworth. I am confident that these homes will be much loved and most importantly, fit for purpose for those who need them.

We have continued our acquisitions project using our Right to Buy receipts. Unfortunately, we were not able to complete as many as we had hoped in year, partly due to the partial shutdown of the housing market at the start of the pandemic.

Investing in our council owned stock has, like every year, remained a priority. Whilst some planned projects and non-urgent repairs were not able to continue, all those that did were done in a Covid secure way.

Moving towards a contact-free lettings service was critical to ensure people could continue to move home during the pandemic. This is just one way in which the Housing team enabled business as usual, as well as introducing the new allocation policy.

Our Housing Strategy was completed in year, which sets out the overarching way Tamworth Borough Council will manage housing demand going forward. This demonstrates that a significant part of our work is supporting non-council tenants and households.

During the year, 64 Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMOs) were licensed, which ensures that the standards for their residents are adequate.

The last item I wish to draw attention to is the team supported the installation and supply of gas at Willowbank, which helped to improve heating options for local residents.

2021 will see a number of similar challenges to 2020, but the resilience of our staff and contractors, will enable another successful year where we all able to continue to put Tamworth residents at the heart of our operations. We will continue to focus on the business as usual activities, as well as seek to implement an energy efficiency strategy as part of our goal to become Carbon Zero by 2050, and implement any recommendations that come out of the High Rise Fire Safety review.

THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

STEFAN GARNER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (FINANCE)

Future levels of funding for the Council are uncertain. The budget setting process has faced significant constraints in Government funding in recent years; over 50% in real terms since 2010. The accomplishment of a balanced three year Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the General Fund is a major achievement as the Council, like others, has planned to deliver its budget process in light of unprecedented conditions with a great deal of uncertainty over future investment and income levels such as car parking, land charges and corporate property rents.



The extraordinary events we are living through follow a decade of austerity, triggered by the financial crisis of 2008/09, which had already placed considerable strain on local authority finances. Increased demand for many local public services, directly related to the outbreak of the virus, has placed immediate pressure on local authority cash flows and expenditure budgets. The longer-term consequences of recession and unemployment on demand for services have yet to be experienced.

When the budget and MTFS for 2020/21 were approved, future levels of funding for the Council were uncertain pending the most significant changes in Local Government funding for a generation. The reforms were planned to be in place by 2020/21 but were deferred until 2021/22. The Government has confirmed that the longer-term reforms for the local government finance system, including the move to 75% Business Rates Retention and Fairer Funding Review of Relative Needs and Resources, will be deferred again as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, although no timescales have been released. In addition, the next planned national Business Rates Revaluation, planned for 2021 has now been deferred to 2023.

As a nation we are likely to feel the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, and the measures to contain and mitigate its effects, for years to come.

At the same time, several important sources of local authority income including Council Tax, Non domestic (business) rates, fees and charges, rents and investment returns have, to a greater or lesser extent, been subject to reduction or suspension.

In light of the projected impact of Covid-19 on the Council's MTFS, an immediate suspension of all non-essential spending was approved by Cabinet on 9th July and managers were required to review their budgets and identify all non-essential spending for 2020/21 and approval was sought for the budget to be revised to remove these.

No one can know what the effect of the Covid-19 crisis will have on the economy and ultimately the impact for the Council's finances. It will be many months before we have a clearer idea on how the economy has been affected – including any lasting effects for individual businesses and their

employees. Social distancing measures will remain in place for the foreseeable future – impacting mainly on the Council’s ongoing income receipts.

Financial resilience is, and has been, the key requirement for local authorities at any time, but in the current crisis it has assumed unprecedented importance. Perhaps the biggest difficulty with the pandemic is that there is no certainty about time scales; it is impossible to draw any conclusions about how long the effects will last.

During the crisis, the Council has lost income which will significantly impact on the potential sustainability of the organisation, as will be the case across many Local Government organisations. Whilst the full extent of this cannot be known at present it will be necessary for the Council to take an accelerated approach towards the development and implementation of an effective sustainability strategy, linked to an overall vision for the organisation.

Cabinet, on 22nd October 2020, approved the Recovery and Reset programme which aims to consider how we can tackle the financial challenges facing the Council as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. This will include reviewing services, reducing waste demand on services (basically this is any action or step in a process that does not add value to the customer), exploring opportunities for income generation and identifying any further savings.

The overriding goal is to make sure our organisation remains fit for the future, while protecting services to the most vulnerable in our community. The Recovery and Reset programme outlines that this work be split into eight projects.

The Council remains committed to promoting and stimulating economic growth and regeneration; meeting our housing needs; creating a vibrant town centre economy and protecting those most vulnerable in our communities. The Council is responding to these challenges by considering the opportunities to grow our income. We are ambitious with our commercial view and will continue to work hard to identify income streams that enable us to continue to meet the needs of our residents.

More than ever, we recognise that our financial capacity will be less than in previous years which means that we will need to maintain our approach to innovation, collaboration and transformation.

This approach will change the organisation and how it works; will require Members to put evidence and insight at the heart of our decision making to ensure that we are transparent about the rationale for our decisions and plans; 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 reducing.

STEFAN GARNER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR (FINANCE)

Work is continuing on a number of actions to address the financial position in future years:

The Recovery and Reset programme approved by Cabinet aims to consider how we can tackle the financial challenges facing the council as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. This will include reviewing services, reducing waste demand on services (basically this is any action or step in a process that does not add value to the customer), exploring opportunities for income generation and identifying any further savings. The overriding goal is to make sure our organisation remains fit for the future, while protecting services to the most vulnerable in our community.

The Recovery and Reset programme outlines that this work be split into eight projects:

1. **Financial Management and Commerciality** – Seeking to remove historic underspends and adopt an in-service approach to rigorous and controlled spending.
2. **Smart Working** – Exploration of the business impacts around current levels of home working and what the future is for AGILE working.
3. **Building Requirements and Utilisation** – Consideration of the best use of all our property assets to ensure the council's resources are focused on frontline service delivery.
4. **Front Reception and Customer Service Offer** – Exploration of customer service models to assess the impact of front reception closing during the pandemic and how acceleration of digitising services can be delivered whilst ensuring our most vulnerable customers retain face to face services.
5. **Service Re-design and Review** – An organisational wide review of each service to identify short, medium and longer-term opportunities to improve delivery of services central to the Council's core purpose and strategic aims.
6. **Third Sector Support and Vulnerability Strategy** – Recognising that one of the most positive outcomes to the pandemic is the overwhelming ability of 'anchor organisations and communities' to mobilise and support each other, this project will explore how the Council's commissioning framework can be aligned to build on these foundations going forward and how we define and develop our vulnerability strategy, building on the baseline assessment commissioned over the summer.
7. **Economy and Regeneration** - Work has continued on the future of our high street and alongside this the economic recovery and regeneration of Tamworth is central to our future Recovery and Reset.
8. **Heritage** – This project will attempt to define and establish a baseline of all of our heritage assets and review all opportunities to celebrate, nurture and protect our local heritage.

Together with any opportunities arising from the response to the Covid-19 pandemic, for Member consideration during the budget process.

- ▶ Ongoing lobbying of Government to provide additional support, in light of the financial impact of the pandemic, and clarity over future funding arrangements – including discussions with the MP and continued Local Government Association (LGA) representation and parliamentary briefings.
- ▶ Monthly completion of Covid-19 financial monitoring returns to the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) and sales, fees and charges income loss compensation scheme claims.
- ▶ Non-essential spend review identified £1.2m in 2020/21 (including vacancies of £0.5m) and ongoing year on year savings included in the base budget of c.£0.75m (from the £1.2m identified in 2020/21). In light of the financial situation facing the Council, managers were tasked with identifying low level non-essential budgets for removal from the budget.
- ▶ Recruitment freeze for all but essential posts (which are subject to robust re-justification process).
- ▶ Review of Property fund investment options to generate improved returns of c. 4% to 5% p.a. (plus asset growth). A savings target to return c.4% p.a. from the planned investment of £12m in Diversified Property Funds has already been included from 2021/22.
- ▶ Review of reserves – undertaken in November (including ensuring adequate provision for the funding uncertainties /creation of fund for transformation costs).

Council, on 23rd February 2021, approved a three year Medium Term Financial Strategy for the General Fund with a Council Tax increase of £5 for the year – in order to continue to deliver those services essential to the local community.

With regard to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA), 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.

The headline figures for 2021/22 are:

- ▶ a General Fund Net Cost of Services of **£7,134,620** a reduction of 22.1% compared to 2020/21;
- ▶ the Band D Council Tax would be set at **£186.89** an increase of **£5** (2.75% - c.£0.10 per week) on the level from 2020/21 of **£181.89**;
- ▶ a General Fund Capital Programme of **£30.732m** for 5 years;
- ▶ a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Expenditure level of **£14,745,710** for 2021/22 (excluding interest & similar charges);
- ▶ an average rent of **£89.25** set in line with the approved Rent Setting Policy including a 1.5% increase in average rent (on the 2020/2021 average rent of £87.93 based on a 48 week rent year) in line with Government confirmation that social housing rents can increase to include 'up to' a factor of the consumer price index (CPI) measure of inflation plus 1% for five years from 2020, following the conclusion of a consultation of the new rent standard, and equates to **£82.38** on an annualised 52 week basis;
- ▶ a Housing Capital Programme of **£33.742m** for 5 years.



SUMMARY ACCOUNTS 2020/21

Due to the earlier publication of this combined document the draft summary accounts for 2020/21 are not yet available. As soon as they are (approximately end of June 2021) they will be posted on the Council's website.

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT

The Annual Governance Statement is a statutory document published following a review of the effectiveness of the Authority's system of internal control. It explains the governance framework (systems and processes, culture and values) that the Authority has in place, and includes an action plan to address any significant governance issues identified.

Due to the earlier publication of this combined document, the annual governance statement for 2020/21 is not yet available. The Annual Governance Statement is published with the Annual Statement of Accounts and will be available later in the year.



WHAT WE'VE DONE SO FAR

OUR PRIORITIES: PEOPLE & PLACE PRIORITIES

Priority	Key Actions/Deliverables 2019/22	What we have done so far
<p>1. To meet housing need through a variety of approaches and intervention</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Completion of new council housing at Tinkers Green and Kerria to deadline and budget ▶ Implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act and associated actions ▶ Reviewing our local plan to ensure it is fit for purpose and reflective of housing needs ▶ Working with Landlords to help ensure relevant standards for private rented are achieved 	<p>This £24.25 million project was completed in January 2021 providing 140 homes.</p> <p>The new Repairs & Investment contract commenced in April 2020 supported by an in-house call centre.</p> <p>There were 87 Bed & Breakfast placements in the calendar year 2020.</p> <p>The new Housing Allocations Policy was implemented in June 2020.</p> <p>The Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy was approved by Cabinet in December 2020.</p> <p>Cabinet approved the phased ending of the Private Sector Leasing scheme and replaced it with the allocation of ten 'floating' Council stock properties (based on flexible need) for a permanent Council stock temporary accommodation scheme.</p> <p>Cabinet endorsed the response to consultation on the Government's White Paper 'Planning for the Future' which creates uncertainty in setting out the timescale for the delivery of the new Local Plan and the preparation of a Local Development Scheme.</p> <p>The new Housing Strategy was approved by Cabinet in November 2020.</p> <p>The Private Sector Housing team have supported initiatives in partnership with the Warm Homes Fund to deliver new gas services in Tamworth and to promote the Green Homes Schemes.</p> <p>The Council has continued with its work to proactively ensure the licensing of all relevant houses in multiple occupation. 33 licences were issued in 2019/20 ensuring that the properties are safe and managed properly and 11 are in progress.</p> <p>Work is ongoing in this area including update of web based information and signposting to energy efficiency advice through our HEAT service.</p>
<p>2. To facilitate sustainable growth and economic prosperity</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Development of a Place Investment Strategy 	<p>A draft of this strategy has been completed prior to the Covid pandemic, and is currently awaiting further review to ensure it is still fit for purpose prior to the consultation phase.</p>

Priority	Key Actions/Deliverables 2019/22	What we have done so far
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Production of a viable and deliverable masterplan to encompass the Gungate site that is both reflective of the towns needs and fiscal requirements ▶ Delivery of sound business advice through locally engaged growth hub advisors 	<p>A masterplan has been developed, and was put out for resident consultation during February 2021, however given this work was completed prior to the pandemic it is likely some elements will need to be revisited to ensure it are still fit for purpose and will respond to economic recovery post pandemic.</p> <p>The Council hosts an officer embedded in the Greater Birmingham and Solihull Local Enterprise partnership Growth Hub, a service that delivers information, advice, guidance and practical support to businesses based in Southern Staffordshire. Since the inception in 2019 the council has supported the Growth hub in delivering the following activity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45 intensive 1-2-1 sessions with businesses on topics ranging from grants, to starting a business up, to skills. • Over 120 general enquiries and signposting to direct business support providers. • Triaging and advising businesses on Covid-19 related matters.
<p>3.To work collaboratively and flexibly to meet the needs of our communities</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Review of Tamworth Strategic Partnership ▶ Promotion of the Council's role in community leadership and member involvement 	<p>The review of the Tamworth Strategic Partnership has been completed resulting in the establishment of a Partnership Coordination Group including statutory agencies and third sector representatives who work together to coordinate activities.</p> <p>£34,000 of funding has been allocated through the Community Safety Partnership and County Council Early Help funding to facilitate a project for young people at risk of Criminal exploitation.</p> <p>The Community Safety Partnership continues to support the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) domestic abuse meetings for high risk victims.</p> <p>During the current pandemic the Council has worked pro-actively to support the voluntary sector in supporting vulnerable people and wider community needs. This approach has seen Council staff embedded within third sector organisations to support the provision of practical support to those shielding. In addition the Council has provided financial and other support to support the resilience of Tamworth's high performing and committed third sector organisations.</p>

OUR PRIORITIES: PEOPLE & PLACE PRIORITIES

Priority	Key Actions/Deliverables 2019/22	What we have done so far
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Engage with residents to shape our services, test customer satisfaction and empower communities ▶ Ensuring early help and intervention is at the heart of service delivery 	<p>The Council has also invested in community responses during the pandemic through its commissioning and is delivering, through Ward Councillors, a grants programming aimed at supporting communities.</p> <p>Cross agency working has continued to support those who are currently clinically vulnerable.</p> <p>Budget consultation completed.</p> <p>The Council has undertaken a vulnerability assessment to identify those communities who may require additional support and service approaches. This assessment will support the Council's service redesign programme as part of the Recovery and Reset programme.</p> <p>The Council has developed a plan which will include the review of all service areas over the coming years to ensure that service delivery is evidence based and transparent and that vulnerable households are supported to access the services they need.</p>
<p>4. To create a new and developing vision for the continued evolution of Tamworth, including a Town Centre fit for the 21st century</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Develop a Master plan for the Town Centre ▶ Delivery of a co-ordinated Town Centre Programme ▶ Relocation of Tamworth Information Centre ▶ Delivery of the HLF funded 'Battle and Tribute' project at Tamworth Castle ▶ Timely opening of the refurbished assembly rooms 	<p>Due to the successful work on the Future High Streets Fund (FHSF) this was different and somewhat superseded. Work over the next three years will include scoping and inception, procurement, consultation then delivery.</p> <p>Work in this area has included the Town Centre Strategy, Gungate Masterplan, Market retender, Town Centre funding applications and a car parking strategy.</p> <p>The Tamworth Information Centre relocated into regenerated Assembly Rooms in January 2020.</p> <p>Building transformation works were completed in Tamworth Castle on the new 'Battle and Tribute' exhibition that will transform the top floor of the castle to an Anglo-Saxon, interactive tribute.</p> <p>The Assembly Rooms reopened in January 2020 following a multi-million pound refurbishment; the biggest in its 130 year history. For the 8 weeks the venue was open all shows were sold out. Headline acts were booked with a full programme to take the venue into 2021 and beyond putting it firmly on the map for a destination of choice.</p>

Priority	Key Actions/Deliverables 2019/22	What we have done so far
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Develop a masterplan for new community green space and the delivery of a local centre at Amington. 	<p>New Green Space</p> <p>The considerable re-planning of the site to make sure that it blends in with the surrounding development is underway. The project has been delayed due to remodelling of the landscape which is to be completed by Redrow, Covid when the developer and landscape consultant staff were furloughed for some time and to changes to the shape and size of the woodland. There is still an 'in principle' grant available for £100k but the Council will need to re-apply in 2021 to secure, once the woodland is officially transferred to the Council in the first half of 2021. Work should start on site in late 2021.</p> <p>New Local Centre</p> <p>Following completion of the relevant demand studies (retail, later living, children's nursery, primary care) a masterplan for the local centre has been agreed which includes a temporary National House Building Council construction training centre. Negotiations with the Clinical Commissioning Group are on-going with regards to the provision of primary care services at the local centre.</p> <p>Discussions are on-going with Staffordshire County Council to determine the potential need for public sector care facilities.</p>

Priority	Key Actions/Deliverables 2019/22	What we have done so far
<p data-bbox="116 1485 312 1697">2.To ensure our employees have the right skills and culture to help our residents, visitors and businesses</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="355 477 847 533">▶ Complete a commercialisation review and implement measures identified <li data-bbox="355 831 890 976">▶ Invest in commercial activities including <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="355 864 858 913">1. Development of Council’s Trading company and associated income stream <li data-bbox="355 925 890 976">2. Maximise returns of cash flow through Property Fund investments <li data-bbox="355 1693 890 1776">▶ Continue with channel shift to digital across all departments. Implement Corporate customer portals 	<p data-bbox="943 477 1458 633">The review of the approach to commercialisation by the District Councils across the region has been completed. The results and recommendations arising from this has informed the development of a Commercialisation Strategy (in draft).</p> <p data-bbox="943 645 1458 779">This will inform the action plan being developed under the Financial Management and Commerciality workstream within the Recovery and Reset Programme approved by Cabinet in October 2020.</p> <p data-bbox="943 831 1458 887">1. Company established during 2018 (Solway (Tamworth) Limited)</p> <p data-bbox="943 898 1458 999">The delivery frameworks for the planned development have been explored and, during 2020/21, consideration of the potential impact of the pandemic.</p> <p data-bbox="943 1055 1474 1469">2. Since 2018 the Council has started to invest in Commercial Property Funds to establish a portfolio which is managed to generate a revenue return to the Council to support financial sustainability and to protect the provision of services to residents, along with maintaining and growing the capital value of the investment. A capital scheme of £12m was included within the 2018/19 capital programme to generate a target net additional income of c. £300k per annum financed from part of the capital receipt from the sale of the former Golf Course. During 2018, the Council invested c. £4m in 2 property funds – which are yielding a return of c.4% p.a.</p> <p data-bbox="943 1491 1474 1648">Due to the current economic uncertainty, it was agreed by Council in December 2020 that the planned investment of the remaining £8m in property funds be deferred, with a review during Spring 2021 when the situation should be clearer, to inform future investment plans.</p> <p data-bbox="943 1693 1474 1850">Work on the implementation of the MyTamworth (Customer Portal) continues and skills are being further enhanced to enable self-sufficiency in the portal. Implementation of the portal is expected by the end of quarter one 2021.</p> <p data-bbox="943 1872 1474 2007">In addition, the MyHousing (Housing Portal) was launched in December 2020 which provides Council tenants with information such as details of their rent accounts, repairs history/status, etc.</p>

OUR PRIORITIES: ORGANISATION PRIORITIES

Priority	Key Actions/Deliverables 2019/22	What we have done so far
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Complete phase 2 of Senior Management Review 	<p>The review was completed delivering savings of around £380k per annum.</p>
<p>2.To ensure our employees have the right skills and culture to help our residents, visitors and businesses</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Develop an Organisational and People Strategy that ensures the organisation is focussed on the future ▶ Undertake a Peer review ▶ Develop a training and development programme that focusses on generic skills as well as the technical skills required for the 21st Century public servant ▶ Develop a member training portal to equip elected members with the necessary skills and knowledge to allow them to act as public advocates 	<p>As a reaction to the Pandemic the HR / OD strategy included immediate changes to work patterns, policies and procedures as well changes to communication processes.</p> <p>Work is now ongoing with the strategy which will be further informed as the organisation moves into the delivery phase of the Reset and Recovery Project.</p> <p>A Leadership Programme has been developed and is now launched which will ensure managers at all levels have the opportunity to participate in practical and theoretical learning across a full range of management disciplines.</p> <p>This was due to take place in June 2020 but was postponed due to the pandemic. It is now anticipated to take place in 2021 (or later should Covid restrictions continue).</p> <p>All non-essential training and development was paused due to the impact of the pandemic. However, where essential skills and knowledge are required delivery has continued.</p> <p>All posts which require formal qualifications and / or continued professional development has also continued.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Member training programme was established and has included training on: • Data protection and freedom of information, • Scrutiny skills, • Equality and diversity, • Safeguarding, • Communications, PR and media.
<p>3.To ensure our service delivery is consistent, clear, and focused</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Development of a Communication Strategy that reinforces public expectation of transparency and accountability from the Council ▶ Delivery and approval of the Tamworth Community Offer 	<p>A working group has been established and the strategy is scheduled for finalisation in the first quarter of 2021/2022.</p> <p>A Local Government Association Communications Health Check was completed in November 2020 resulting in recommendations which will support the work plan for 2021/2022.</p> <p>This is scheduled for 2021/22.</p>

Priority	Key Actions/Deliverables 2019/22	What we have done so far
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Work collaboratively with our partners to maximise our effectiveness and support vulnerable people and communities 	<p>Work was undertaken with the Housing Quality Network to define vulnerable groups and the effects of the pandemic on them.</p> <p>A shared Close Circuit Television service with the West Midlands Combined Authority was developed and commenced in April 2020.</p>
<p>4.To ensure our decisions are driven by evidence and knowledge</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Review our data sets and collate into one data repository ▶ Creation of a data/insight resource ▶ Make full use of available customer insight and resident feedback to inform our decisions 	<p>Customer services have commenced work on data collection in terms of customer profiling.</p> <p>This is scheduled for 2021 /22.</p> <p>The Repairs centre was launched in April 2020. This has supported monthly performance reporting on customer satisfaction, analysing complaints, operational data and preventative measures.</p> <p>Social media usage is now further monitored and analysed so as to reduce demand on service provision.</p>

RECOVERY AND RESET PROGRAMME

The council has set out a new three-to-five-year 'Recovery and Reset' programme, which is designed to ensure the authority remains fit for the future, while protecting services for our residents, businesses and the most vulnerable in our community.

The programme is split across eight project areas (workstreams) including; financial management and commerciality, smart working, a review of Tamworth Borough Council buildings, exploration of customer services models, economy and regeneration and local heritage – including opportunities to celebrate, nurture and protect.

More detail is included in the table below.

Workstream	Objective
Financial management & commerciality	Deliver savings and increased income via processes that include an assessment of the impact on delivery of corporate objectives & organisational aims.
SMART working	Deliver a costed business case to consider the potential for mandatory SMART working including the assessment of benefits & risks.
Building requirements	Develop a costed plan for potential disinvestment in Marmion House including options for alternatives.
Front reception & customer services offer	Deliver a costed business case to assess the potential for re-design of the transformation of the customer services offer. Support the digital transformation agenda by mapping transactions in line with benchmarked best practise. Establish & define the customer service offer based on universal, targeted & specialist support.
Service redesign	Develop & implement an approach for service redesign across the organisation including service reviews of every service area over the life of the programme. Establish a base line review of each service in order to prioritise income generation, savings opportunities in the short & medium term.
Third sector support & vulnerability strategy	Develop an approach to third sector commissioning linked closely to achievement of the Council's business aims. Share the vulnerability baseline assessment with relevant stakeholders. Develop a Vulnerability Strategy exploring all the recommendations detailed.
Economy, business, regeneration	Develop a strategic approach to supporting business & regeneration of the town. Link Future High Street Funding outcomes to wider place based service delivery.
Heritage	To scope what is meant by the term 'heritage asset'. Undertake a review of the current heritage offer within Tamworth to establish a baseline/inventory of all heritage assets (including buildings, land & collection). Propose an effective economical business (operational, commercial & financial) model which will protect Tamworth's heritage for future generations. Secure the future safety & accessibility of the heritage collection & archives to ensure compliance with Arts Council requirements.



TAMWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN 2019-2022 (2021 UPDATE)

CONTACT US

To provide feedback specifically on the form and content of this Corporate Plan update, email enquiries@tamworth.gov.uk.

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

Tamworth Borough Council
Marmion House
Lichfield Street
Tamworth
B79 7BZ

Email: enquiries@tamworth.gov.uk

Designed and produced by

Tamworth Borough Council,
Marmion House,
Lichfield Street,
Tamworth,
Staffordshire
B79 7BZ

Tel: 01827 709709

Email: enquiries@tamworth.gov.uk

Website: www.tamworth.gov.uk