



How we developed this Strategy

Healthier Housing Strategy 2011-2014

So how did we develop the Healthier Housing Strategy?

This section considers how the new strategy was developed and the process that was undertaken to achieve the completed document.

With Tamworth Borough Council's old Housing Strategy expiring in 2010 this strategy has been developed to continue to build on the successes of the previous strategy and additionally now incorporates Health recognising the impact housing can have on a person's health and wellbeing.

The health benefits associated with improving housing are difficult to quantify due to other determinants, such as socio-economic factors, however there are clear arguments and evidence to suggest improving housing conditions significantly improve health outcomes for people.

Reducing health inequalities in Tamworth remains one of the greatest challenges facing the Council and its partners. Tamworth's designation as a Spearhead Authority under the Department of Health's Communities for Health Programme has helped to inform strategic thinking on the interventions needed to reduce health inequalities in the most deprived areas of Tamworth. Success in achieving genuine reductions in health inequality is dependent on a joined-up approach that embraces close partnership working, sharing of resources and a common vision for delivering public health services that will deliver real improvements in people's health.

Consequently, partners in Tamworth are working together to address health inequalities through an outcome-focused approach to address the broader determinants of health and ascertain opportunities for long-term and sustainable impacts.

Spearhead areas were allocated additional funding to ensure progress was made to reduce these health inequalities more quickly than in other parts of the Country. However achieving genuine reductions in health inequalities can only be accomplished through a strong partnership working approach. Better health is an objective that must be aimed at for everyone living in Tamworth via traditional short-term measures but also with consideration being given to the wider determinants of health which are not the responsibility of Health Organisations but do have a significant impact on people's health. Everyone should be given the opportunity to access appropriate accommodation, with support if required in an area where they want to live because poor housing acts as a catalyst for poor health.

A joined-up Tamworth Healthier Housing Strategy was a key recommendation made as a result of a visit to Tamworth by the NHS Health Inequalities National Support Team. The team visited Tamworth in the summer of 2009 and worked with the South Staffordshire PCT and its partners to identify strengths and effective practice. Following a series of interviews with key people from a range of organisations, a comprehensive action plan which looked at addressing gaps in service delivery was developed. This

recognised the role that housing plays in people's health and is innovative in its approach to the Council and the PCT working together in true partnership.

Following the initial National Support Team visit and recommendations, a workshop was arranged to begin the process of developing a new Healthier Housing Strategy. The workshop introduced a framework for linking housing and health and this was structured under 4 key headings:

- Access to a home
- Factors relating to the home itself
- Factors relating to the local neighbourhood
- Individual health and social behaviour within the home

To begin the process of developing the Strategy, following a series of project group meetings, consisting of representatives from Housing Management, Planning and the Strategic Housing Service, the decision was taken to commission Outside Consultants to undertake an extensive piece of research to link available Housing and Health data relating to Tamworth. This research was structured in such a way to reflect the four aforementioned headings and the sub themes incorporated in the National Support Team workshop.

Simultaneously to the commissioned piece of work being undertaken extensive consultation was completed with key housing and health staff and members of the public to determine the priorities for housing relating to Housing and Health. All of this information was then collated and utilised in the formulation of the 4 new strategic priorities. Each of these priorities relates to the framework and the subsequent research and fits under the 4 key elements of the framework as linked below.

This Healthier Housing Strategy sets out priorities and actions that are intended to ensure housing in its broadest sense is effectively utilised to help tackle identified health issues and improve the health and wellbeing of residents in Tamworth. The following section utilises the National Support Team framework to assess local housing and health data in more detail in order to:

- Better understand the links between housing and health in Tamworth
- Identify priorities and key actions that are required to deliver positive outcomes that contribute to wider strategic priorities relating to a more prosperous, safer and healthier town
- Begin the process of developing a meaningful set of health related, housing performance indicators
- Ensure that issues around diversity and equality are incorporated into the approach towards housing and health and are articulated in both equality and health impact assessments

Consultation Process

The consultation was conducted during the period October – December 2010 and took a simple approach to the identification of the issues that might have been pertinent to the people spoken to. In excess of 300 people were spoken to. Engagements took a number of formats from questionnaires to sticky dots on charts and in a variety of diverse places to ensure a good mix of people were consulted with.

The key issues identified from the consultation are highlighted below and reflect many of the key themes identified within the above section relating to Access to a home, Aspects of a home, Factors relating to the local neighbourhood, and Individual health and social behaviour within the home:

The Results?

So what did the consultation tell us?

Housing & Recession Survey 2009

Early consultation began with a survey during the recession in 2009 which saw a comprehensive random selection of the Tamworth population complete a survey.

- 61% of respondents felt their life had been impacted on by the recession
- 52% of the respondents were owner occupier
- 38% of respondents stated increased debt as their main experience of the recession followed by 21% stating that a family member had been impacted
- 70% of respondents stated their accommodation was adequate for their future needs leaving 30% who felt it would be unsuitable later-on
- A number of respondents stated that increased bills such as electric and gas had been the main impact on them within the current economic climate
- 43% of respondents stated affordability as their main housing concern within Tamworth followed by 40% stating lack of affordable housing for young people
- The council service with the least awareness was the Sanctuary Scheme at 7%
- 51% of respondents were aware of the council's debt advice service followed by the Community Advice Network at 30%,

Place Survey

These results were taken from the local area and community safety section of the Place Survey – a regular survey sent out by Tamworth Borough Council to determine perceptions about Tamworth as a place.

- 54% of people said that they felt very/fairly strongly that they belong to their neighbourhoods. 46% didn't feel that they belonged to their neighbours.
- Most need for improvement in an area was: Activities for teenagers (48%), clean streets (40%), the level of crime (40%), Level of traffic congestion (37%), Road and pavement repairs (32%).
- 90% of residents said they were very to fairly satisfied with their home as a place to live; only 4% was very/fairly dissatisfied.
- 80% of resident over 65 are both satisfied with their homes and their neighbours.
- Participants were asked to name the top 5 things that made anywhere a good place to live, the results were: The level of crime (69%), clean streets (54%), Health services (41%), Affordable decent housing (37%), Education provision (33%).

National Support Team Consultation

As part of our objective to fully integrate health into this strategy a workshop was arranged with a number of key partners to explore the NHS Health Inequalities National Support Team framework within a local Tamworth context.

- Making the 'business case' for linking Housing and Health in order to obtain strategic 'buy-in'
- The potential to enhance existing arrangements with the Fire and Rescue Service to address a number of issues around fire risk and air quality - Fire Safety checks accompanied by gas fire checks/ CO detectors, addressing smoking in the home, and checking for key indicators of inadequate heating and insulation
- Enhancing partnership arrangements to sustain work on Housing and Health, with Steering Group/Partnership arrangements for Seasonal Excess Deaths /Affordable Warmth in particular.
- The potential for a Healthier Housing Strategy to address the needs of an ageing population with a holistic approach, addressing issues which are particularly pertinent to older people -Lifetime Homes, cold and damp housing, telehealth and telecare, intermediate care /extra care housing, access to the handyperson service, and under-occupation in the older population.
- The potential for developing joint commissioning between Housing, Social Care and Health
- Tackling behavioural issues such as drug and alcohol abuse demands a strong cross-partnership approach e.g. the involvement of Health and Housing in Integrated Offender Management, and specific service

responses such as the appointment of appropriately skilled Health Trainers and the development of supported accommodation.

Young People Consultation Oct –Dec 2010

As part of the Tamworth Homeless Education Prevention Project young peoples views were sought about how they felt their health could be affected by becoming homeless. 29 young people around the ages of 14/15 were spoken to and completed a questionnaire.

- 6 young people chose not to answer the question.
- 5 young people said that you would have no food or drink.
- 4 young people commented that you may have a lack of sleep, or you would be tired.
- 3 young people said it may make you ill, one young person named depression, as an illness.
- 5 young people gave one word answers like “dirty” “smelly” and “Badly”
- 1 young person said they didn’t know how their health would be affected
- 1 young person said “...a lot, might die”
- A lot of young people listed a few things such as “don’t have food, or drinks, also clean clothes” and “lack of hygiene lack of sleep and you will smell, and have bags under your eyes because you can’t get to sleep, and it’s to cold outside.”

General Consultation

The following groups and events were engaged with and consultation undertaken which asked people to tell us their top 5 issues relating to Housing generally and Housing and Health, with the table after setting out the top three results from each event.

- Citizens Advice Panel 2010
- Elderly Sheltered schemes Consultation 2010
- Housing and Health Professionals 2010
- Market Consultation & HEAT promotion in the Council’s reception area.
- CVS newsletter SNAP survey (October 2010)
- Park Homes 2010
- Locality Working Consultation 2010

Results from general consultation	
Housing and Health – Top 3 issues	General Housing – Top 3 issues
Citizens Advice Panel - October 2010	
Damp homes - 67.1%	Cleaner and tidier neighbourhoods - 50.2%
Cold, poorly heated homes - 66.7%	Physical condition of estates and local environment - 45.9%
Impact of anti social behaviour - 66.2%	Affordable homes for first time buyers - 42.5%
Sheltered Schemes – October 2010	
Cold poorly heated homes - 15.8%,	Cleaner tidier neighbourhoods - 17.3%
Impact of anti social behaviour - 14.2%	Repairs and maintenance of council housing - 11.8%
Damp homes - 10.7%	Affordable homes for first time buyers – 11.8%
Housing and Health Professionals – October 2010	
Houses poorly maintained - 17.4%	Availability of supported housing - 12.4%
Cold poorly heated homes - 16.7%	Availability of aids and adaptations - 11.2%
Defective gas and electrical appliances - 10.1%.	The quality of housing generally - 9.4%.
Market and Reception general consultation – October 2010	
Cold poorly heated homes -15.5%	Cleaner tidier neighbourhoods - 11.2%

Damp homes - 12%	Affordable homes for first time buyers - 9.8%
Impact of anti social behaviour - 9.8%.	Quality of housing generally - 9.6%
CVS Snap Survey – November 2010	
Damp homes - 84.6%	Affordable homes for first time buyers - 53.8%
Cold poorly heated homes - 76.9%.	Physical condition of estates and local environment - 53.8%
Defective gas or electrical appliances and fire/risk hazards - 53.9%	Availability of affordable housing to rent 61.5%.
Park Homes – November 2010	
Damp homes - 19.1%	Private landlords being accountable for their properties - 20%
Poor home security - 14.3%	Quality of housing generally - 12%.
Fire risk/Hazard – 14.3%	Availability of affordable houses to rent – 12%
Locality Working – November 2010	
Damp homes - 15.1%	Affordable homes for first time buyers - 14.6 %
Cold poorly heated homes – 13.2%	Cleaner tidier neighbours - 11.7%
Impact of anti social behaviour - 13.2 %	Physical condition of estates and local environments - 10.7%

Where next?

Once the consultation had been completed and Outside Research completed their report the process began to draft the strategy. Initially following the early research 4 key priorities were decided on in line with the NST four key headings and additionally develop a vision for the strategy. Once this was

completed the Housing Strategy Team then held a further consultation event to communicate the priorities and the vision and determine, prior to the main document being developed, that these were the correct way to proceed.

Healthier Housing Strategy Consultation Event

At this event there were a number of presentations about how the strategy had been developed to date and broad agreement on the priorities and the vision. Additionally partners were asked what they are currently working on that could contribute to the priorities and what they have planned that could contribute in the future to the strategy.

Key work being undertaken and to be developed from the event include

- Tenant Involvement and the development of this in line with legislation
- Partnership working
- Partner stock information indicating good levels of decency
- Private Sector decency
- Aids and adaptations
- Financial assistance to homeowners
- Assistance to maintain independence
- Impact of service provision on hospital admissions and the length of stays
- Warmer homes
- Partnership working and information sharing
- Engagement with Private Sector Accredited Landlords
- Signposting and referrals
- Funding

Where next?

Once the vision and the priorities had been agreed at the consultation event the development of the strategy began. A long draft was produced by May 2011 and consulted on with a variety of key internal and external partners and the following feedback was received.

- Confusion regarding sources of data
- Format of document
- Ensuring action plan is SMART
- Strategy should be supported by a peer review
- Role of landlord function to be more prevalent within the strategy
- Commissioning role of the strategy
- More information re housing targets
- More appropriate links to planning policy
- Acronyms should be clearly identified in the form of a glossary of terms
- Ensure the audience of the strategy is clearly identified and targeted
- More work needed to improve the flow of the document
- Original draft of the strategy was too long

- More targeted actions within the action plan to ensure these can be measurable

Finalising the Strategy

Once all of this was completed the long draft was subject to peer review and took on all of the criticisms received and in line with this the Strategy format altered. The resulting document has the following components:

- Strategy Document
- A yearly action plan with years 2 and 3 to be developed to inform Business Planning
- A document highlighting the challenges faced in Tamworth
- A process Document outlining the process gone through
- A section on how the strategy will be monitored and reviewed

Monitoring and Reviewing the Strategy

As with any strategy in order to establish whether it has been delivered requires effective monitoring.

This strategy will be closely monitored by an effective monitoring and management system and fed into a newly formed delivery group who will be responsible for the delivery of the action plan. A structured and comprehensive monitoring and review process (as illustrated in the diagram below) will be put in place. In adopting this approach, it is intended that all actions within this Strategy will be monitored and that this process will feed into the continuous development and review of both the housing strategy and related sub-strategies and the longer term housing vision.

