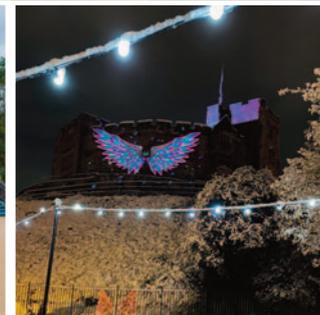


TAMWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN 2022-2025



OUR VISION: Tamworth – celebrating our heritage, creating a better future

CORPORATE PLAN 2022-2025

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WELCOME

Welcome to Tamworth Borough Council's new Corporate Plan and vision for the years 2022-2025. The document outlines what we want to achieve for the next three years and our progress against the 2019-2022 Corporate Plan. It also contains updates on our Recovery and Reset programme, which was established as a response to the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic on Council services and major high street regeneration programmes.

INTRODUCTION

Set in the beautiful county of Staffordshire, Tamworth is a vibrant town with a rich heritage.

Located in the centre of Britain, with a growing population of over 77,000 people, Tamworth is a borough with much to be proud of. Our transport links, unique shopping experience, developing town centre, green spaces, leisure offer, including our cultural and wide ranging outdoor events programme, as well as our historic buildings, all help make it a great place to live, work and visit.

In addition to all that Tamworth already has to offer, exciting times are ahead as we are about to embark on a period of significant transformation. Multi-million pound projects, such as the Future High Streets development, will help to bring about lasting change and improvements for the future.

This will assist with our mission to restore Tamworth town centre as the beating heart of the community, a place that people want to visit, rather than a place they have to visit.

Although it has not been possible as a council to undertake the usual levels of face-to-face engagement during this past year, we have continued to listen to our residents and partners. This has included carrying out a brand new Residents Survey to find out what matters most to people. The valuable information gained from the 'Talk To Us Tamworth' survey, together with the Budget Consultation and previous 'Tamworth What's Next' workshops, has been used to shape this new Corporate Plan and ensure it addresses those important issues.

We know, for example, that people value now more than ever having access to parks and outdoor spaces and that they are concerned about the economy and particularly their own financial security. With the backdrop of Covid and the announcements of ever-changing variants, the Council will continue to deliver what is important to its residents, businesses, communities and those most vulnerable in Tamworth.

Looking back

Over the past 18 months, individuals and organisations across the borough have had to adapt to new ways of living and working. As a Council we too have had to adapt in the way we deliver our services in response to the crisis and we will apply our learning to shaping our approaches for the future.

Working with a wide range of partners, and with an outstanding community response, we have continued to develop so that we can provide the best possible services, with the main aim of ensuring people have opportunities to live healthy and fulfilling lives in safe, thriving families and communities.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'A Barratt'.

Andrew Barratt
Chief Executive



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J Oates'.

Jeremy Oates
Leader of the Council

We know the challenges of the last 18 months will have a lasting impact on us all, but particularly on the wellbeing of children and young people and their education. With this in mind, we will continue to work closely with our partners and stakeholders to ensure this is prioritised. Where the Council does not have direct responsibilities, such as skills and education, in these areas we will use our influence with the relevant public bodies.

We also recognise the impact of the virus on elderly and vulnerable residents and will continue to work with our partners to help keep people safe with access to the services that are most critical to their needs.

Whilst the long-term impacts of the crisis provide an additional reason for people to avoid urban/town centres for a sustained period, we are already seeing the economic impact with reduction in footfall in the town centre, reduced use of car parks and fewer people visiting hospitality venues including Tamworth Assembly Rooms and Tamworth Castle.

Looking forward

That being said, we have plenty to be optimistic about, with lots of exciting projects and continuing partnership work on the agenda for the next 12 months and beyond.

This work has all been brought together by councillors, during a number of councillor-led workshops and seminars, into a new refocused vision to reflect new priorities. This year more collaborative budget setting workshops were held to ensure all councillors were able to have involvement in what is important to them and their residents.

Our new vision is **'Tamworth - celebrating our heritage, creating a better future'**

In order to achieve that vision, we have developed this new Corporate Plan which will be delivered with a workforce and organisation that has adapted to an unprecedented national challenge, working hand in hand with our partners and communities.

This new vision, together with our new Corporate Plan, details five areas of focus for the borough; including the key outcomes we are seeking to achieve and how we will work to achieve them.



CORPORATE PLAN SUMMARY

TAMWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL VISION

'Tamworth – celebrating our heritage, creating a better future'

1. THE ENVIRONMENT

- ▶ Enforcement and education with regard to litter and fly-tipping
- ▶ Development of infrastructure for acting on Climate Change
- ▶ Support more people to recycle and to reduce waste
- ▶ Working with partners to protect, maintain and improve the green space offer

3. INFRASTRUCTURE

- ▶ Review Local Plan to improve the transport links within Tamworth
- ▶ Improve existing walkways and cycling routes
- ▶ Ensure more people can access council services digitally/digital enhancement with partners and within Council housing stock

2. THE ECONOMY

- ▶ Development of business initiatives to promote start up and growth
- ▶ Support business growth to generate employment opportunities by working with businesses
- ▶ Provision of good quality and affordable housing
- ▶ Improve tourism in terms of good access to information for visitors to help local businesses and Tamworth as a destination as a whole, maximise and improve the quality of the visitor experience

4. LIVING IN TAMWORTH

- ▶ Ensure adequate supply of affordable housing through the Local Plan review
- ▶ Investment in Neighbourhood and Place environment
- ▶ Through our Economic Development team, we will support job creation and business retention and expansion through interventions and advice, and seek to protect the local economy where we can influence this.
- ▶ Improve and promote Tamworth's historic and cultural assets and events
- ▶ Community Safety focus on neighbourhoods and place
- ▶ Working with partners to ensure the fear of crime within Tamworth is reduced

5. TOWN CENTRE

- | | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Continue to develop street market and extend supporting events around the market to add vibrancy within the town centre ▶ Create a branding scheme for "Created in Tamworth" ▶ Provide the infrastructure to improve evening and night time economy ▶ Embrace Tamworth's history and culture so as to build a sense of local pride and support our children's education and understanding of the significant part Tamworth played in British history | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▶ Continue to promote all outdoor events ▶ Development of a new Tamworth Enterprise Centre as part of the structural transformation of the town centre ▶ Make the town centre more accessible ▶ Provide the environment where the leisure and food offer can grow and flourish ▶ Working with others seek to improve the night-time transport offer to support the overall night-time economy |
|---|---|

Our Corporate Plan involves transformational projects intended to shape the long term future for Tamworth the place, its communities and economy. Included are comprehensive plans for the regeneration of the town and fundamental changes to the way the council operates:

SHORT TO MEDIUM TERM PROJECTS	TRANSFORMATIONAL AND CHANGE LONGER TERM PROJECTS
▶ Development of an Organisational Development Strategy	▶ Future High Street Funds
▶ Town Centre Masterplan	▶ Gungate Development
▶ Place Investment Strategy	▶ Medium Term Financial Strategy and delivery plan
▶ Corporation Street Gateway Project	▶ Recovery and Reset Programme
▶ Undertake a self-assessment of our role as a social housing landlord against national regulatory standards.	▶ Completion of the Local Government Boundary Review
▶ Garage Site Development	▶ Net Zero Carbon Implementation Plan
▶ Asset Management Strategy	
▶ Town Hall Development	
▶ ICT Strategy Implementation Plan	
▶ Development of Tourism Strategy	



LONGER-TERM TRANSFORMATIONAL PROJECTS

Future High Street Fund which consists of an incredible £21.65m being awarded to transform the town centre into the busy, thriving heart of the community. When combined with funding from external partners and Tamworth Borough Council, the projects represents a combined investment in the town of around £40million.

There are five core elements of the project:

- ▶ **College Quarter:** The relocation of Tamworth College, part of South Staffordshire College, to a new building on the site of the Tamworth Co-operative Society department store
- ▶ **Enterprise Hub:** Refurbishment of the locally-listed part of the Tamworth Co-operative Society department store (the Colehill frontages) into a new enterprise centre for small businesses
- ▶ **Middle Entry Refurbishment:** Refurbishment and improvements to Middle Entry including a new semi-permanent structure for start-ups and niche businesses
- ▶ **Castle Gateway:** An improved entrance between the town centre and the Castle Grounds by enhancing the Castle Gatehouse area and adjoining Market Street properties
- ▶ **St Editha's Square:** The transformation of St Editha's Square into a multi-purpose outdoor space for entertaining and events

The **Gungate Development** is a project that will regenerate a multi-million pound vacant edge of town centre site, in the ownership of the Council and external stakeholders. Development of the land north and south of Spinning School Lane into a mixed use site including residential, which will support the town centre by delivering uses that complement the existing offer and increase footfall, choice and prosperity.

- ▶ **Finance and Commerciality** work will continue including the delivery of our Medium Term Financial plan as well as seeking to remove historic underspends and adopt an in-service approach to rigorous and controlled spending.
- ▶ **Reset & Recovery Programme** will include:
 - ▶ Smart Working – Exploration of the business impacts around current levels of home working and what the future is for agile working.
 - ▶ Marmion House, future building requirements and utilisation - Consideration of the best use of all our property assets to ensure the Council's resources are focused on front line service delivery.
 - ▶ 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 where appropriate
 - ▶ Service Re-design – A review to identify short, medium, and longer-term opportunities to improve delivery of services central to the Council's core purpose and strategic aims
 - ▶ 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.



PORTFOLIO HOLDER STATEMENTS

PORTFOLIO: ENVIRONMENT, ENTERTAINMENT AND LEISURE

CLLR ROBERT PRITCHARD DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL



As we emerge from the pandemic we have the opportunity to enjoy more of the best that Tamworth has to offer. The council will deliver a plan to ensure residents can do just that.

The council is investing in play, culture and open spaces - it is boosting our culture and supporting our whole town.

We have rebuilt the town's Castle Grounds play area into a flagship facility that is the envy of our neighbours; we will now embark on a plan to invest in our smaller neighbourhood play areas, ensuring that the whole borough has access to quality play.

We will provide a jam-packed schedule of events at our Assembly Rooms; fun and exciting outdoor events in our Castle Grounds and a Castle filled with historic eccentricity. We will do everything we can to ensure that Tamworth is always a first choice for a day out.

We are also investing in our neighbourhoods. The Street Scene team have again proven to be an invaluable and proactive force. 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.

We have also reformed how we manage our council estates and, over the next few years, residents will see a huge increase in the quality and standard of these areas. We will have a laser-like focus on ensuring that we have a clean town, a tidy town. We will also return to a year of full floral display, ensuring that the town sees a spring and summer full of colour.

The council will continue to work with the army of litter pickers across the town, ensuring that we support them in their fantastic work helping to rid the town of litter. Through the Covid crisis, an army of residents came out to litter pick in support of the council's team, and to those kind-hearted residents we say thank you.

The council will also work to tackle the source of litter and fly-tipping. We will be deploying new CCTV technology to catch litter louts in the worst hotspots. Fly-tipping continues to be a scourge on our open spaces and we will work with our neighbouring authorities to catch and punish these waste criminals. Finally we will be empowering councillors with ward-based budgets, so they can direct spend at a local level, ensuring that the local needs of residents can be better met by the council.

PORTFOLIO: FINANCE, RISK & CUSTOMER SERVICES

CLLR MARIE BAILEY



Finance

The council has continued to support our most vulnerable people with a scaled-up response to Covid-19 during the year, including the payment of Council Tax hardship funding to individuals and payments under the self-isolation test and trace scheme. Since the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020, over £23million in Government grants has also been distributed to local businesses, as well as expanded Businesses Rates Relief totalling over £20million to retail, hospitality and leisure businesses, with a further 50% relief to be factored in for 2022/23 ahead of the new financial year.

Our finance team's continued strong governance arrangements, including the setting of a balanced Medium Term Financial Strategy in February 2020 and again in February 2021, ensures that we are still able to deliver our frontline services.

We have completed the 2019/20 and 2020/21 accounts with our external auditor confirming that we continue to meet all statutory deadlines.

The council's Revenues Team has once again performed to very high standards, ensuring our debt exposure is kept to a minimum.

Progress is going well with our comprehensive asset management plan for both the housing revenue account and general fund assets.

IT & Customer Service

As we continue along on our transformational path, we have implemented the council's first ICT strategy which will ensure that we have the framework in place to support the council.

We have successfully delivered phase one of 'MyTamworth' customer portal, which includes self-service for reporting an issue, viewing of a council tax account and filing a complaint.

Our customer contact team have, over the last 12 months, dealt with over 45,000 queries ranging from benefits to housing and we continue to strive to have all queries resolved during that first contact. I am pleased to report that our satisfaction feedback is 100%.

To assist the residents of Tamworth on their own digital journey, our customer service staff attended St Editha's church Senior's Fayre, followed by some basic IT sessions for senior residents to enhance their knowledge and access to digital communications.

We continue to invest in our elected members and employees, ensuring they have all the training and development they need to carry out their role.

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.

PORTFOLIO: VOLUNTARY SECTOR, TOWN CENTRE, EVENING ECONOMY & COMMUNITY SAFETY

CLLR MARTIN SUMMERS



I am very excited to step up to Cabinet this year, and have the opportunity to take on such a diverse and interesting portfolio. We are incredibly lucky to have a vibrant and effective third sector in Tamworth that we should treasure and look to strengthen our working relationship with.

I am pleased to say as a Council we are soon to ratify the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sector pledge, and I look forward to us working together with those common aims for the good of Tamworth and its people.

Tamworth has such a potential to thrive, our town centre has changed so much over several decades which I have seen first-hand throughout my life here. We are still very much in the midst of those changes, in the face of a wholesale switch away from retail forming the basis of its offering.

Our town centre will soon, in only a few short years, benefit from massive investment courtesy of the Future High Streets Fund which seeks to shape the realistic and sustainable use of an important centre of our community.

I strongly feel that whilst our town centre is very different to how it once was, it is starting to provide what we now demand and need in terms of leisure and recreation. Our night-time offering is becoming ever more vibrant and thriving. We as a Council must do what we can to support that new demand and ensure that everyone can access and use local businesses whilst feeling safe in doing so.

Working and building relationships with our partners, Tamworth is becoming a safer family-friendly environment for our residents and visitors. Within my role I will endeavour to help build those relationships along with our officers who have already made great strides in doing so. After everything we as a town and country have gone through in the last few years, we deserve a positive future.

PORTFOLIO: HOMELESSNESS PREVENTION & SOCIAL HOUSING

CLLR ALEX FARRELL

I was very pleased to take on the portfolio for homelessness prevention and social housing, and I'm constantly in awe of our fantastic officers and how well they've coped during such a challenging couple of years.

It's been a busy year for the team, but here are just a few of the highlights: Our new Allocations Policy included the biggest change to the council's housing register since it first implemented choice-based lettings, and these changes reduced the register substantially from 1333 in May 2020 to 665 after its implementation.

I was pleased to oversee the council's 11th Annual Report for council tenants and I updated Cabinet on existing plans to undertake an independent review of the council's compliance with the regulatory standards and the social housing white paper, across the range of responsible corporate teams.

We refreshed and updated the Council Housing Repairs Policy and Voids Standards. It sets out proposals for further consultation with residents with a view to then formally adopting the updated policy. We also set out proposals for the potential move from a standard Schedule of Rates type contract to a Price Per Property style contract in respect of the response repairs elements. There is a planned consultation on the Tenancy Management Policy for council housing, specifically to deal with fixed term tenancies, following fundamental changes to case law.

I was so pleased to see the Tinkers Green & Kerria Regeneration project nominated for an award for social housing regeneration, and I attended the ceremony in Birmingham with the Leader of the Council and proudly talked up Tamworth.

We've had continued success with Homelessness Prevention. Our Rough Sleeper Count reported back to Homeless Link 2021 was one, a fall of four from the previous year of five - so that was a pleasing and significant reduction in rough sleepers in Tamworth. We were very happy to receive Rough Sleeping Initiative (RSI 4) funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to the sum of £100,000 for homelessness prevention activities and to update and set out amendments to the council's Allocations Policy as the Government has refreshed the guidance.

We also renewed our Winter Relief project, working collaboratively with the Heart of Tamworth once again, and I took part in a successful Health and Wellbeing Scrutiny project which highlighted the important work done in Tamworth to tackle homelessness of all forms.

We have continued to deliver disabled adaptations to tenants and the wider community through the grants process and completed detailed fire safety inspections of the high-rise blocks, as well as maintaining high levels of compliance in relation to gas servicing and electrical inspections.

During the pandemic we have delivered a programme of communication and engagement with all Tamworth residents as per National COVID-19 Shielding List distributed by Staffordshire County Council - including calls/sign posting/registering/referring/updating spreadsheet/welfare calls - facilitated by teams across the council. This was particularly important in our sheltered housing schemes and high rise flats, providing weekly communications with vulnerable residents who needed our support.

To date, I have chaired two informal Housing Sub-Committees where we have debated policy and had a chance to talk about the big issues facing Tamworth's social housing and homelessness prevention. This is a fantastic initiative and one we look to continue in the future.



CLLR STEPHEN DOYLE



Regulatory

With the pandemic still evident, the Environmental Health Team continue to face a high workload that continues to stretch them as individuals and a team. As well as working with local businesses to help them try to return to operation amid the changing restrictions for different business sectors, the team has also continued to support Staffordshire County Council to develop Standard Operating Procedures across Staffordshire.

Such successful joint working has led to a seamless approach across organisations responsible, in different ways, in identifying Covid outbreaks/hotspots and managing compliance. As such Staffordshire very quickly emerged as a county capable of rapid mobilisation to address such a difficult public health threat. The team has also worked, often at short notice, to identify locations for mobile testing units and vaccination centres to address the demand that has arisen.

In addition, the department has continued to provide critical services including high-risk Food Hygiene inspections/complaints, Taxi and Alcohol Licence applications, noise/odour complaints and planning consultations.

The Planning Team continues to move forward with the Local Plan Review, taking into consideration any changes to planning policy issued by Central Government.

The team has also determined 462 applications during 2021, which is 50 more than the 12 months before. The types of applications have varied significantly in scale and complexity, from householder developments to new employment sites such as the redevelopment of the former Co-op supermarket site.

In addition the team dealt with 30 formal pre-application enquiries and over 300 general enquiries, as well as 52 enforcement cases which led to three enforcement notices being served.

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 has also published an Infrastructure Funding Statement, that transparently sets out the Section 106, and CIL spending to ensure that legislation is complied with.

The Development Control team continue to be top performers and with the planning team having engaged with neighbouring authorities to ensure that applications on the border of Tamworth contribute to necessary infrastructure to meet the needs of those new residents.

The Building Control and Land Charges Partnership continues to perform well, sharing the considerable knowledge and experience of six local authorities.

The team is ISO 9001 certified and offers advice and guidance to make sure projects meet the building standards. They also aim to save time and money through a fast, efficient, responsive, and professional service.

Community Safety

There have been several policy updates over the last year for Community Safety, refining the council's approach and commitments.

- ▶ Update of Environmental Crime Policy
- ▶ Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Statement 2019/20
- ▶ Tamworth Community Safety Partnership Plan 2020-2023 (2021 Update)
- ▶ Corporate Enforcement Policy

The service continues to provide a high level of confidence amongst the residents in the community, focusing on those who are most vulnerable. Continuing to support environment where our partners can share information on cases and improve focus on resources in resolving issues.

The Community Safety Plan 2020-23 has been updated and continues to provide an action plan to work together. Providing a three-year rolling plan which outlines how partners are going to collectively tackle community safety issues in the Tamworth borough.

Community Wardens

The Community Wardens continue to engage with residents and our partners through events such as the ASB Awareness Week and Operation Mischief, carrying out late joint patrols with police officers also engaged in the Rough Sleeper annual count, checking on homeless people borough-wide.

CCTV

The project to update the town's CCTV has been a success with mobilisation of all 104 cameras switched over from Tamworth to WMCA, providing a seamless transition to the new CCTV monitoring platform. The new system now consists of digitally HD cameras, providing much needed monitoring clarity.

There is also the development of detailed quarterly reports, a mechanism for recording data and intelligence to help identify hot spots of activity, also trends.

There has also been mobilisation of MRS Radio, working with MRS, WMCA & TIS engineers as well as installation and implementation of Police Client View for the local police so they can access footage as required.

THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

STEFAN GARNER, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR FINANCE



The Medium Term Financial Planning process is being challenged by the ongoing uncertain economic conditions. The attached forecast is based on a 5 year period, but does contain a number of uncertainties.

For two years, the Government has only held single-year Spending Reviews, with 2019 being a single year due to the political turbulence around Brexit, and 2020 being a single year, given the COVID-19 pandemic. However, on 7th September 2021, the Chancellor wrote to Secretaries of State to confirm the Government's intention to complete a multi-year Spending Review (SR2021), setting revenue and capital budgets for 2022/23 to 2024/25.

As part of the recent Spending Review, no announcement was made about the Government's plans for funding reform or a reset of the Business Rates Retention (BRR) system, both of which were originally expected to be implemented in 2019/20, but which have been delayed a number of times.

The 2022/23 Local Government Finance Settlement has now been published, for one year only and is based on the Spending Review 2021 (SR21) funding levels. This is the first time since 2015 that, in the context of a multi-year Spending Review, the Government has only provided local authorities with a single-year settlement.

No detailed announcements were made on funding reform, though Government confirmed that it is committed to ensuring that funding allocations for councils are based on an up-to-date assessment of their needs and resources.

While this means the Council will be able to retain its business rate growth for 2022/23, it also means that the uncertainty continues and potentially the Council still faces losing this growth from 2023/24 as, over the coming months, the Government have stated that they will work with the sector before consulting on funding reform.

There is a high risk that these reforms will have a significant effect on the Council's funding level from 2023/24.

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. 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 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.

On 22nd February 2022, Council approved a 3 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, a 5 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 2022/23 are:

- ▶ a General Fund Net Cost of Services of **£6,580,410**
- ▶ the Band D Council Tax would be set at **£191.89** an increase of **£5** (2.68% - c.£0.10 per week) on the level from 2021/22 of **£186.89**;
- ▶ a General Fund Capital Programme of **£18.837m** for 5 years;
- ▶ a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Expenditure level of **£16,640,27** for 2022/23 (excluding interest & similar charges);
- ▶ an average rent of **£92.87** set in line with the approved Rent Setting Policy including a 4.1% increase in average rent (on the 2021/2022 average rent of £89.21 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 £85.73 on an annualised 52 week basis;
- ▶ a Housing Capital Programme of **£46.454m** for 5 years.



WHAT WE ACHIEVED IN 2021/22

ECONOMY AND REGENERATION



- ▶ Successful bid for £21.65m from the Future High Streets Fund programme, and project inception.
- ▶ New market operator contract awarded including successful delivery of a large food festival at the end of October.
- ▶ Business case, procurement and operational delivery of new car parking machines to maximise opportunities for income and consistency of data.
- ▶ Delivery of a Skills Officer on behalf of GBSLEP focusing on supporting the Employment and Skills Board across Southern Staffordshire.
- ▶ Design and delivery of business support programmes to support food and hospitality businesses particularly in the town centre.
- ▶ Delivery of Government funded support schemes in particular Welcome Back fund and Reopening High Streets Safely totalling £135,000.
- ▶ Completion of feasibility and viability studies for Reset and Recovery programme focusing on Marmion House regeneration.
- ▶ Heads of Terms agreed with Homes England to support collaborative work on Gungate site, including allocation of funding and resource.
- ▶ Procured, approved and entered into a contract with an electric vehicle charging point supplier for 4 fast chargers on designated council car parks.
- ▶ Two successful applications to the Cultural Recovery Fund. Projects included turning the gatehouse into Castle-run kiosk and café; implementing a new augmented trail at the castle, digitising the castle collection and archive, installing new interpretation panels around the town, adjusting and updating wayfinding across the town centre.

PLANNING



- ▶ The number of planning applications received reached over 480, which is higher than four of the last five years.
- ▶ The team has also determined 462 applications during 2021 which is 50 more than the 12 months before.
- ▶ Dealt with 30 formal pre-application enquiries and over 300 general enquiries, as well as 52 enforcement cases which led to three enforcement notices being served.
- ▶ Work has also begun on the development of a new local plan for Tamworth
- ▶ Collected over £3million that will contribute towards the development of infrastructure within the borough in the coming years.

WHAT WE ACHIEVED IN 2021/22 cont.

OUTDOOR SPACE, ARTS & EVENTS (INCL ASSEMBLY ROOMS)



- ▶ The Council reopened Tamworth Assembly Rooms in September 2021 following its closure due to the Covid pandemic. The theatre has hosted many sell out shows and Christmas party events, with a full catering offer for the first time ever and selling over 10,000 tickets by December 2021.
- ▶ Recovery funding enabled the purchase of a cinema screen which has added a further dimension to the theatre.
- ▶ New enhanced weddings package developed at Tamworth Castle and Tamworth Assembly Rooms.
- ▶ New outdoor events, outdoor cinema, theatre and Roller Rink have proved very successful. Fireworks night and the Christmas lights switch on returned this year with record numbers of attendees.
- ▶ New outdoor table tennis tables and gym in the Castle Grounds have opened providing more outdoor leisure facilities.
- ▶ Additional picnic benches have been placed in Castle Grounds and Dosthill Park.
- ▶ The Castle Grounds play area underwent a £375k refurbishment, opening in September and a new play area was installed within the new development at Tinkers Green.

TAMWORTH CASTLE



- ▶ In May 2021 Tamworth Castle reopened following closure due to covid19 and recorded 12,856 visitors by October 2021.
- ▶ In May 2021 the new Castle lighting scheme was implemented enabling the castle to be floodlit with different colours to mark special occasions within the town and to join in with national celebrations.
- ▶ Battle and Tribute gallery was opened in May 2021.
- ▶ Tamworth Castle launched a new collections website.
- ▶ Tamworth Castle increased its Visit England VAQAS rating in summer 2021 and in October was awarded the 'Best Told Story' accolade for interpretation, staff and volunteer guides.
- ▶ Over 3,000 learners visited in the autumn term.
- ▶ Over 500 people of all ages contributed to a community art project to create a 'shield wall' of decorated shields.
- ▶ In September, around 6,000 people attended a Saxon Encampment weekend in the castle and the grounds.
- ▶ The new Christmas event sold out and attracted over 1,000 visitors to the castle over two weekends during December 2021.
- ▶ The Gibbs and Canning 'griffin' in the museum collection was conserved and installed at Tamworth Castle thanks to funding from Tamworth Borough Council and Friends of Tamworth Castle. It is exhibited alongside two other items from the social history collection.

FINANCE



- ▶ Over £23million in Government grants has been distributed by the Council to local businesses since the start of the Coronavirus pandemic in March 2020, and expanded Business Rates Relief totalling over £20million to retail, hospitality and leisure businesses, with a further 50% relief to be factored in for 2022/23 ahead of the new financial year.
- ▶ Continued support for vulnerable people and a scaled-up response to COVID-19 during the year including the payment of Council Tax hardship funding to individuals and through payments to over 1,240 people under the self-isolation test and trace scheme.
- ▶ Continued strong Governance arrangements including the setting of a balanced Medium Term Financial Strategy in February 2020 and again in February 2021 and completion of the 2019/20 and 2020/21 accounts following sign off by the external auditors in line within statutory deadlines.

COMMUNICATIONS



- ▶ Widespread 'Shop Safe' publicity campaign created and rolled out to support the safe reopening of businesses and the town centre.
- ▶ Created new email distribution lists for businesses and 'community champions' to keep them up to date about key coronavirus announcements and other news.
- ▶ Worked closely with partners across the county to ensure consistent and joined up messaging to help and support people through the pandemic.
- ▶ New Transforming Tamworth website created to promote the wide-scale regeneration projects taking place in Tamworth town centre.
- ▶ Development of a new website for Tamworth Castle.
- ▶ Added to our social media presence with new accounts on Instagram, LinkedIn and Next Door. The communications team now manages 16 channels across Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram, Next Door and YouTube.
- ▶ Social media statistics relating to our 14 core channels during 2021:
 - ▶ Total of 86,124 fans/followers across 14 main channels - an increase on every channel
 - ▶ 9,948 posts published by the communications team
 - ▶ More than 16 million impressions across the 10 channels where this data is recorded - up on 8, down on 1, no data for 1
 - ▶ Engagement - 309,282 (up on 8 channels, down on 5)
- ▶ Created and rolled out a major new residents' survey. 'Talk to Us Tamworth' received more than 500 responses and is set to become an annual exercise to improve two-way communication with our residents.
- ▶ Issued more than 160 press releases resulting in 290 positive news articles across a range of media outlets.

WHAT WE ACHIEVED IN 2021/22 cont.

REPAIRS CONTACT CENTRE



- ▶ Call handling performance – satisfaction feedback attaining 100%
- ▶ Over 1700 repairs raised.
- ▶ Gas servicing calls enabling legislative compliance circa 900.
- ▶ Service innovation to include creation of 'How To' videos for routine maintenance such as bleeding a radiator, unblocking a waste pipe, etc.

TAMWORTH INFORMATION CENTRE



- ▶ Sold 1152 tickets.
- ▶ Rebooked/ refunded 2235 tickets.
- ▶ 3097 enquiries for Tamworth based tourist information.

CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE



Striving to resolve all queries at the first point of contact including.

- ▶ Responded to 6,000 benefits queries.
- ▶ Handled 16,000 council tax enquiries.
- ▶ Actioned 3,000 estate issues.
- ▶ 5,000 housing needs enquiries dealt with.
- ▶ Responded to a further 15,000 general enquiries.

INFORMATION GOVERNANCE



- ▶ 540 Freedom of Information requests received – 92% of which were replied to within the prescribed timeframe.
- ▶ 397 complaints received and responded to.

ELECTION



- ▶ Complex combination of polls ran in May 2021 during the pandemic - accepted to be the most complex set of polls in history specifically due to areas not being co-terminus.
- ▶ Delivered a by election in February 2022 within minimum legislative timescales.
- ▶ Processed 2600 postal vote applications throughout the election period.

CANVASS AND REGISTRATION



- ▶ Implemented the new style canvass resulting in a canvass of 31,474 with an overall response rate of 94.09%
- ▶ Maintained an accurate and complete register throughout the year:
 - 12045 individual registration applications
 - 5878 deletions
 - 17061 amendments
- ▶ Issued 3154 postal vote applications.

THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH TEAM

- ▶ Since March 2020 have been almost exclusively dealing with Covid management.
- ▶ Have led on coordinating Staffordshire authorities to develop Standard Operating Procedures which provided a consistent basis upon which Covid management was organised and governed across the County.
- ▶ Introduced Covid marshalls to provide valuable support.
- ▶ Supported locations for mobile testing units and vaccination centres to address the demand that has arisen.
- ▶ Throughout the summer, dealt with a significant level of illegal encampments that appeared with regularity.

WHAT WE ACHIEVED IN 2021/22 cont.

LAND CHARGES AND RIGHT TO BUY

During Jan 21 – Dec 21 the Legal Land Charges and Right to Buy Team completed the following:

- ▶ Right To Buy sales 30
- ▶ Full Searches 369
- ▶ Personal Searches 1460
- ▶ Leasehold Sales 7

DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

- ▶ Organised and supported 27 online committee meetings and from May 2021 administered & supported 43 in person committee meetings.
- ▶ Organised 19 Councillor induction and training sessions in person and online.
- ▶ Supported the Mayor with 46 events/visits.

HUMAN RESOURCES



- ▶ Implementation of e-recruitment module.
- ▶ Held basic ICT sessions for senior residents to enhance their knowledge and access to digital communications.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY



- ▶ Mobilised the workforce to total remote working within 2 weeks due to pandemic lockdown.
- ▶ Replaced /rebuilt 120 laptops to support remote working.
- ▶ Deployed 60 new desktops.
- ▶ Replaced 160 mobile phones.
- ▶ Provided an uninterrupted service desk function to support remote working.
- ▶ Identified and rolled out Teams lives event to support virtual council meetings.
- ▶ Implementation of Tamworth Borough Council's first ICT Strategy.
- ▶ New mobile phone contract procured and implemented resulting in an estimated £25k savings over a 3 year period.
- ▶ Development and implementation of the Orchard Portal – My Housing.
- ▶ Major upgrades to the 2 firewalls ensuring continued and improved cyber security.
- ▶ Secured grant funding of £5000 for improving cyber governance and £3000 for additional training for cyber security practitioners.

ASSETS



- ▶ Completion, handover and occupation of final properties on the Kerria site in Amington, including remaining houses, flats and retail unit with the scheme nominated for an award for social housing regeneration.
- ▶ Delivered both a response repairs and planned renewals programme to housing stock with high levels of customer satisfaction.
- ▶ Completed a number of neighbourhood improvement projects across Tamworth.
- ▶ Maintained high level of compliance in relation to gas servicing and electrical inspections.
- ▶ Completed detailed fire safety inspections of the high-rise blocks.
- ▶ Acquired a number of new properties for council housing through the acquisitions programme.
- ▶ Obtained planning consent for the development of new houses in Glascode and worked with partner organisation to agree the refurbishment of an existing building along with new houses in Wilnecote.
- ▶ Repairs and Investment contractors delivered apprenticeships as well as social value projects across Tamworth as part of their commitment to the Tamworth contract.

WHAT WE ACHIEVED IN 2021/22 cont.

NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES



- ▶ Housemark ASB Accreditation plan was approved in December 2020 for 3 years.
- ▶ Decrease of £26,075.31 rent arrears from £507,450.79 in 2019/20 to £481,375.48 2020/21.
- ▶ Neighbourhood shielding list/EVP completed and returned to Staffordshire County Council with 100% successful contact.
- ▶ Introduced a revised £20,000 hardship fund, funded by the HRA, in the summer of 2020 in response to the impact of Covid-19.
- ▶ The new Housing Allocations Policy was approved by Councillors during November 2019 and was implemented in June 2020.
- ▶ Continued success at Eringden with the appointment of a Resident Support Officer and installation of CCTV. Escalation process and support for vulnerable residents and new lighting installed in Eringden communal landings.
- ▶ The WMCA CCTV system is continuously developing its technology meaning that Tamworth Borough's CCTV system will be at the forefront of CCTV within Staffordshire.
- ▶ The 'noise app' was introduced to capture problematic noise transfer due to restrictions around installing noise monitors in properties.
- ▶ Continued to support and develop the following involvement groups under the Tenant Involvement & Empowerment framework: Tenant Involvement Group, Tenant Consultative Group, Complaints Review Panel, ASB Service Improvement Group.
- ▶ Winter Relief 2020/2021 extended with Heart of Tamworth until June 2021 due to pandemic and success of assisting rough sleepers.
- ▶ Continued commitment to DA Safe accommodation working group with County.
- ▶ Successful bid to the (MHCLG) for RSI 4 money £100K, successful launch of project in June and runs until 30th June 2022.
- ▶ Successful bid from MHCLG for Protect Plus awarded £5K and £6400 for Cold Weather fund.
- ▶ Temporary accommodation success with no longer using private sector landlords and expanded temporary accommodation pilot made official.
- ▶ Rough Sleeper Count reported back to Homeless Link 2021 was 1 previous year was 5 so significant reduction of 4 in rough sleepers, excellent success.
- ▶ Developed Homeless Housing Options weekly surgeries at St John's and working with the third sector and RSI 4 team supporting.
- ▶ Continued success of keeping numbers in B&B below 10 all year.

COVID AND CUSTOMER SERVICES

Supported the organisational response to Covid -19 including:

- ▶ Almost 1,000 food bank referrals.
- ▶ Help and advice for over 1,200 business grants.
- ▶ 25 extremely clinical vulnerable customers signposted for priority shopping slots.
- ▶ Over 1,500 environmental health enquiries including signposting to covid testing within the borough.
- ▶ Enabled 46 family contact sessions.
- ▶ Repairs call centre called all tenants prior to attendance at their property to reassure customers of our covid prevention measures which enabled non-emergency repairs to be delivered.
- ▶ Targeted programme of weekly high rise vulnerability calls undertaken to provide support, assistance, signposting and referrals to appropriate agencies.
- ▶ Enhanced targeted support for all sheltered scheme tenants with tailored specific daily welfare calls, tenancy management planning, literature and a wealth of health and safety information throughout all schemes.

TAMWORTH BOROUGH COUNCIL CORPORATE PLAN 2022-2025

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

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