

From Ken Forest

Submission for Theme 1 - Matter 4.4  
Allowance for Job Growth

4.4 Allowance For Job Growth

Whilst there are recent signs of improvement these are nominal. There are many vacant units around the town being advertised for sale or rent for which little progress is being made. An example of this is the 2.5 acres Calico Park Development off Sandy Way, Amington. Much of this remains brownfield site and is overgrown. An application was approved in the Autumn of 2013, subject to conditions such as retaining boundary vegetation as a noise and visual barrier for nearby residents and for biodiversity. The application had support from residents and myself. We were informed that the applicant was seeking to expand and move from the Lichfield Road Ind. Est. and work was expected to start in the Spring of 2014 and be completed by the Autumn. A reserved matters application was withdrawn for reasons unknown and since then no progress has been made by the site owner.

This site symptomatic of the lack of progress towards the growth of jobs generally in the borough. Another site at Ventura Park however, for a car showroom is under construction. The Local Plan provides some additional units, mainly on the Amington Ind Est. but of to date there is no progress being made.

The Council allocates some additional need required outside the borough, which in my view could be provided internally. But the emphasis appears to be on housing growth rather than jobs growth. I continue to monitor and would support this badly needed jobs growth, but I fully expect that around 70% of the market housing occupants to come from outside of the borough (based on information imparted by estate agents.) and drive to their jobs in other areas each day. Monitoring of the Staffordshire Business Magazine shows little to no promotion of Tamworth as a place to do business.

At present it appears that Tamworth is repeating the mistakes made in the 1960's to encourage housing immigration (as a Birmingham overspill), but without the job creation. This is not a sustainable approach. Analysis of the larger housing development proposals indicates that these are principally housing with little or no job creation. Tamworth badly needs jobs growth and the lack of progress for this need remains a matter of grave concern.