Minutes of:	**THE CABINET**
Date of Meeting:	3 September 2014
Present:	Councillor M Connolly (in the Chair) Councillors G Campbell, A Isherwood, J Lewis, R Shori and S Walmsley
Apologies:	**-**
Public attendance:	40 members of the public were in attendance

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CA.206 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Connolly declared a personal interest in any matters relating to the fact that his partner is employed by Adult Care Services.

CA.207 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A period of fifty minutes was allocated for members of the public present at the meeting to ask questions about the work or performance of the Council or Council services. The Chair allowed the extension of the Public Question Time in view of the number of public present at the meeting wishing to ask questions relating to the agenda item Alternative Services – Under 5's.

Topic: Alternative Services Under 5's
Question: Why has Children's Services been chosen for budget cuts?
Response: The Council is being forced to make cuts across all the services it provides. There are £16 million of cuts to make on top of the substantial cuts that have already been made. The Council will have lost up to 50% of its budget by 2015/16. Under these financial pressures it is not possible to maintain the level of services as they currently stand. The way Council services are provided will have to change and some services will no longer be provided.

Topic: Alternative Services Under 5's
Question: There is concern that the loss of this provision will have an impact in the long term. Has the Council considered this?
Response: The Council has considered the long term need. Bury has high levels of deprivation (as detailed in the Index of Multiple Deprivation) and those areas would be targeted. Children's Centres provide an effective universal service but more could be done through targeted outreach work. The proposal would introduce more front line staff to achieve this. Just keeping the existing Children Centre buildings open but not providing effective services would not be the best way forward.

Topic: Alternative Services Under 5's
Question: Women will be affected through the loss of the universal service through closure of centres which has helped many new mothers avoid post natal depression and developed confidence for mothers to breast feed their baby. Do you accept the point that this will have an impact on other services down the line?

Response: This is a good point. Consideration must also be given to the later cost of those children from families in most who are not accessing these important services. The Council will continue to work in partnership to ensure support for breastfeeding is still available.

Topic: Alternative Services Under 5's
Question: What audit data was used across the borough? There is evidence to show that nursery places are available so what are the Council doing to get places taken up rather than offer more?
Response: We have data to show areas of lower take up and this relates to the locality of the nursery provision. The proposal will target families to take up the 15 hours nursery provision.

Topic: Alternative Services Under 5's
Question: The Children's Centre has helped my wife to breastfeed our baby and she is willing to give something back as are other people. Is the consultation with all interested stake holders going to consider other ways of providing services rather than closing centre?
Response: Yes, the Council will be consulting across the board. This is a proposal and provides a starting point for the discussion to begin. This will include community groups, Township Forums and all stakeholders.

Topic: Alternative Services Under 5's
Question: The proposal appears to be based on financial savings being made on management costs, is this so? There is no financial information on the 2 year offer. You are changing the model.
Response: The proposal is based on targeting efficient service provision. We consider this to be the best way to promote the universal service and 2 year old offer. The whole policy is being consulted on and to make the process effective the report submitted is honest and open because we want people to be aware of what the challenges are. The Council cannot change the service without changing the model it would be irresponsible to not look at this as a whole.

Topic: Alternative Services Under 5's
Question: I am an immigrant to this country and have made many friends through the children's centre where I live. How will immigrants meet other people if they don't have this kind of facility?
Response: The new hubs will have the 'stay and play' as part of the universal service and this will provide a chance for parents to meet. The targeted service will also look to help and support isolated mothers.

Topic: Alternative Services Under 5's
Question: As part of the consultation could service users be targeted to record their experiences of the services in children's centres to recreate a similar service in the new proposal? This could help to improve the quality of life for users.
Response: Yes it is very beneficial to record the views and experiences and service users' advice to help enhance the new proposals.

Topic: Alternative Services Under 5's
Question: All new mothers feel isolated and need social contact with other mothers, where will they have the opportunity to meet? I have made many friends through the children's centre and the breastfeeding group.
Response: individual meetings with mothers would not prevent breastfeeding groups from continuing to meet up or other services to be provided.

Topic: Alternative Services Under 5's
Question: Not all new mothers can absorb the information from a 1 to 1 meeting shortly after giving birth. It helps being in a group of other mothers to learn and gain confidence.
Response: These issues can be addressed by providing more clarity and information as part of the consultation process.

Topic: Alternative Services Under 5's
Question: Could the Council look at providing services in community centres in a more cost effective way to prevent the loss of universal services.
Response: The consultation process will allow you to put forward your ideas and we welcome this.

CA.208 MINUTES

Delegated decision:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16 July 2014 be approved and signed by the Chair as a correct record.

CA.209 ALTERNATIVE SERVICES – UNDER 5'S

The Cabinet Member (Children and Young People) submitted a report proposing a re-design in the way in which Children's Centres in Bury are currently operating to support under 5's and their families.

The proposal involved five Children Centre Hubs and one 'spoke' to deliver targeted services to the most vulnerable families across the borough and would come under the control of the Local Authority. The focus of the Hubs and 'spoke' will be on the delivery of:

- Improved health for U5's
- Improved school readiness for U5's
- Effective early intervention in safeguarding
- Improvements in families' economic prospects

The Hubs will be resourced based upon recognised need as detailed in the Index of Multiple Deprivation Rankings. Staffing would involve a shift in the balance from co-ordination, management and administration posts to front-line outreach support with 24 additional outreach staff being deployed into the community.

The remaining eight current Children's Centres will be de-designated as centres and seven of the centres will be converted to provide for the delivery of the 2 year old childcare offer for the 40% most deprived families in the borough. Currently there is shortage of these places in Bury.

The Local Authority will not run the 2 year old provision but will tender the service out to interested providers. There will be an initial subsidy of the rents for these centres to encourage schools or private providers to enter the market for two year old provision.

Delegated decision:

That approval be given to the proposals as detailed in the report submitted going forward to a full 12 week consultation.

Reasons for the decision:
The consultation will allow all interested stake holders to have an input into the proposals. The implementation of the proposals will help the service to meet the £820,000 savings target.

Other option considered and rejected:
To reject the recommendation.

CA.210 EMPTY PROPERTY ACTIVITY AND COMMUTED SUMS FUNDING

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member (Health and Well Being) submitted a report which set out the positive progress which has been made in relation to private sector empty property activity and the Radcliffe Empty Property Pilot.

The report also described the proposed approach going forward and sought approval to extend the use of previously agreed commuted sums funding for empty properties beyond the Radcliffe pilot in other parts of the Borough.

Delegated decisions:

1. That the progress made with the Radcliffe pilot be noted.

2. That approval be given to plans for extending work on empty properties to other parts of the Borough as outlined in Section 7.3 of the report submitted.

Reason for the decision:
Extending work to other parts of the Borough will enable external funding conditions to be met and optimise the use of Council resources already allocated to reduce the number of empty properties.

Other option considered and rejected:
To restrict the action on empty properties to the Radcliffe pilot scheme only.

CA.211 CORPORATE FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT – APRIL 2014 TO JUNE 2014

The Leader of the Council submitted a report informing Members of the Council's financial position for the period April 2014 to June 2014 and provided a projection of the estimated outturn at the end of 2014/2015.

The report also provided Prudential Indicators in accordance with CIPFA's Prudential Code.

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Delegated decisions:

1. That the financial position of the Council as at 30 June 2014 be noted.

2. That approval be given to the s151 Officer's assessment of the minimum level of balances.

Reason for the decision:
The report has been prepared in accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations relating to budget monitoring.

Other option considered and rejected:
To reject the recommendations.

CA.212 ESTATE STRATEGY

The Cabinet Member (Resources and Regulation) submitted a report outlining a summary in respect to land and property held by Bury Council for non-operational purposes (The Let Estate).

The Estate Strategy sets out an overview of the existing portfolio and outlines the purposes for which the Council should hold property in the future. The Strategy also provides a framework for assessing property assets identifying those which shall be retained and those which will be put forward for disposal.

Delegated decision:

That approval be given to the Estates Strategy as detailed in the report submitted.

Reason for the decision:
The strategy seeks to maximise the returns from Council investments at acceptable levels of risk.

Other option considered and rejected:
To reject the recommendation.

CA.213 INVESTMENT PROPERTY ACQUISITION STRATEGY (2014-2018)

The Cabinet Member (Resources and Regulation) submitted a report outlining the proposals contained within the Property Acquisitions for Investment Strategy designed for the acquisition of property assets for investment purposes. This would increase the financial performance of the commercial portfolio and increase revenue income to the Council.

Delegated decisions:

1. That approval be given to the Property Acquisition for Investment Strategy as detailed in the report submitted subject to amendments being made to acquisition criteria around property location and ethical considerations of building tenants.

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2. That approval be given to establish an initial fund utilising either prudential borrowing or existing cash investments, to fund properties to be acquired for investments which satisfy the pre-determined objective criteria and to use the net proceeds from on-going property disposals to create a rolling fund.

3. That approval be given to establish a Member/Officer Property Appraisal Group to evaluate acquisitions for investment proposals.

4. That approval be given to give delegated authority to the Executive Director of Resources and Regulation in consultation with the Cabinet Member (Resources and Regulation), to consider, and if appropriate, to approve acquisitions recommended by the Property Appraisal Group.

5. That the Executive Director of Resources and Regulation be requested to advise Cabinet on an annual basis, for information purposes, of any acquisitions made in the preceding year.

Reason for the decision:
The Strategy provides a mechanism whereby the Council can enhance the yield on its investments.

Other option considered and rejected:
To reject the recommendations.

CA.214 MINUTES OF ASSOCIATION OF GREATER MANCHESTER AUTHORITIES / GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY

Consideration was given to the minutes of the AGMA Executive Board and Greater Manchester Combined Authority both held on 25 July 2014.

Decision:

That the minutes of the meetings of the AGMA Executive Board and Greater Manchester Combined Authority held on 25 July 2014 be noted.

COUNCILLOR M CONNOLLY
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7:10 pm)