

COUNCIL MEETING
1 FEBRUARY 2012
LEADER'S STATEMENT

Madam Mayor, Members and Officers of the Council, members of the public, may I first of all take this opportunity to wish you all a Happy New year on behalf of the Executive at this first meeting of the Council in 2012.

Madam Mayor, before I begin my report on the work of the Executive since we last met as a full Council, I should like to offer my personal tribute to the late Councillor and Deputy Mayor, John Byrne who I was proud to call my friend.

I first met John Byrne in 1972, 40 years ago and began to serve the communities of East Ward alongside John & Trevor in 1994. John was always a constant, always present to share in trials and tribulations and to share in triumphs for social justice and equality which meant so much to him, and to Members where he was always ready to offer advice (whether you wanted it or not!!).

To the very end, when John was so swiftly taken from us, he continued to serve this community, the community that he knew so well, and loved so much. John Byrne will always be remembered as a great Elder Statesman of this Borough, for he more than most represented what our Borough stands for: Taking this fine Borough forward for the better in unity with the communities, that we Bury Council are so very privileged to serve.

Madam Mayor, turning now to the work of the Executive, I should like to highlight key policy issues that were considered and approved by the Executive at meetings held on the 21 December 2011 and 18 January 2012 respectively.

At the Executive meeting on 21 December 2011, Members considered and agreed to adopt an important Supplementary Planning document that governs recreation provision in new housing developments.

The same Executive meeting also considered A Strategy to Continue to Engage and Support our Employees through the Pan for Change.

Madam Mayor, the Executive held its first meeting of the New year on the 18 January in Tottington, where we considered a range of proposals.

I am delighted to report that this administration's draft Medium Term Financial Strategy was approved as the basis upon which, together with the Plan for Change, the Council will seek to address the significant financial challenges we face in the medium term because of this ConDem Government's cuts to vital public services.

Reports were also presented to that meeting that aim to update our ICT Strategy and to clarify our Social Media Policy together with a proposal to Six Town Housing as a registered housing provider with one of the main reasons for doing so to secure nationally available funds to bring empty homes back into use.

Madam Mayor, I have previously mentioned my delight at the way the residents of this Borough have positively engaged in the new recycling initiative launched last October. Very quickly we have reached a recycling rate of 43%, from a low of 28%!

On the back of that success, and as this Labour Administration **promised**, I am now able to inform Council that we intend to take the next step in driving up our recycling rates to 50% and beyond by completing the roll out of Brown bins and food caddies to 25,000 properties.

The new bins are due to be delivered during April in readiness for new collections to start in May.

This will involve ensuring virtually all remaining properties in the Borough that have the ability to participate in green waste (our brown bins) and food waste collections. We will also ensure we capture more recyclates from apartments and flats, schools and commercial organisations.

There's another good news story here too – it will provide nine new Jobs and, of course, these will be initially ring fenced to those previously affected by the original service changes.

In a previous statement to Members I spoke of good progress being made in resolving the long standing issue of Equal Pay. I am pleased to announce that agreement has been reached with Unison which will mean settlement offers will now be going out to our employees and former employees.

However, there are still outstanding claims to be progressed with other claimants who are either not represented or represented by firms other than Solicitors who represent the Unison claimants.

A joint application with Unison has also been made to the Tribunal defer the Appeal Hearing scheduled for March, thus saving further legal costs.

Members will be aware of the temporary one way system outside the Town Hall. Following a period of consultation I can advise Members that it Traffic Officers have recommended that Knowsley Street becomes a two way thoroughfare as soon as possible.

And finally, Madam Mayor, we all know the dreadful toll this recession is having on young people. More than 1,500 young people between the ages of 16-24 are out of work in Bury, a truly depressing statistic.

As a Council we have been trying to do what we can to help young people get jobs by meeting with local employers, Head Teachers from our secondary schools and Principals from our two Colleges. I want publically thank them for their continuing support, but we must and need to do more and go the extra for our young people.

Madam Mayor, I am announcing tonight the launch of the Backing Young Bury Initiative which is also supported by other public and private bodies in the Borough. The Council's Lead for this initiative, Councillor Peter Bury, has been working with the Principal of Bury College, Lauran Chatburn, to grow and extend this work.

For our part I am pleased and **delighted** to announce what initiatives the Council will champion. We will be offering 100 extended work experience placements; a 3 month pre-employment training support package and crucially extending our Apprenticeship Scheme over the next three years to offer a **minimum** of **30** new places to young people in our Borough.

The Greater Manchester Commitment to Youth Employment is also soon to launch a separate initiative which is aimed at promoting apprenticeships in the private sector which will see over 1,000 placements being created with over 300 are being made available in Bury. Recruitment to these placements will be co-ordinated by Council officers here in Bury.

These are major commitments from this Administration and across Greater Manchester that will make a real difference to the young people of our Borough.

Madam Mayor, thank you that concludes my report to Council.

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