

COUNCIL MEETING
28 MARCH 2012
LEADER'S STATEMENT

Madam Mayor, Members and Officers of the Council, before I report on the work of the Executive since the last Council meeting, I would like to briefly reflect on the achievements of this Labour Administration during this municipal year.

Madam Mayor, this Labour Administration has improved recycling rates across the Borough to close to 50% (from a low of 28%) in less than 6 months thanks to the hard work of our staff and the positive response of our residents.

Madam Mayor, I am also pleased to report that despite the deep and swift cuts passed down to this Council by the Con Dem Group, I am **proud** to say that this Council has continued to draw upon the commitment, enthusiasm, and innovation of service users, our staff and fellow councillors who have worked tirelessly to promote independent living and provide varied choices to older vulnerable people in this Borough. There are lots of examples of good practice in this area – I could go on all night – but I won't! I would however like to shine a light on the tremendous service improvements that have begun to take effect as a result of further modernisation of older peoples services - a policy framework that assists the Council to make significant service improvements for the most vulnerable in our community.

Madam Mayor, I would now like to turn to our services that support Children and Young People. I am particularly pleased to report that Officers and Members of the Council and Members of the Youth Cabinet have worked together tirelessly throughout the year to explore ways in which young people can play a full and active role in democracy and in the community at large. The young people of Bury deserve a forum to be heard and opportunities to influence Council business. This Labour Administration has provided an array of opportunities for young people to shape their own lives and their communities.

Madam Mayor, none of this would have been possible without the continuing commitment of our residents. Madam Mayor, this Labour Administration protected area working from being consigned to the scrap heap as a result of the parties opposite disregard for the engagement of the public in Council Decision Making. Madam Mayor, Councillor Walmsley will be updating the Chamber on the work of the Township Forums since their launch last year later, I won't say any more on this matter and allow her to share with this Chamber how Communities have engaged with the Township Forums.

And finally Madam Mayor before I report on the work of the Executive since the last Council meeting, I would like to put on record my personal thanks and, my Administrations thanks to **All** of our staff for their unstinting commitment, and loyalty to this Council maintaining a professional attitude in challenging times, and continuing to deliver high quality services throughout our Borough so consistently.

Madam Mayor, the Three Year Plan for Change Budget agreed by this Council last month represents a new way forward: The Council represented by Elected Members, and Officers, with residents and businesses agreed a Plan of Action **together**.

We all know the future path will be difficult to tread because of the straightened financial climate the Plan is set within. But all can be assured Madam Mayor that this Administration will lead in an honest, open and transparent manner, engaging residents, staff and other stakeholders at every point along the way.

Madam Mayor, since the last meeting of the Council, The Executive has met on two occasions.

At the Executive meeting held on 7 March in Prestwich, the Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Finance submitted a report concerning the Vehicle and Plant Replacement Programme for Period 2011/12-2013/14.

Madam Mayor following consideration of the report, the Executive approved amendments to the 2011/12 Vehicle and Plant Programme, and authorised the purchase of vehicles and plant in 2012/13 and 2013/14 to be funded from Leasing (or Loan if more cost effective) and Revenue.

Madam Mayor, at the meeting of the Executive last week, I am delighted to report that approval was given to establish a **unique** partnership agreement between the Council and Bury FC.

The Agreement is for two years, and its aim is to: Increase levels of physical activity, engage communities in Healthier Lifestyles – including those most socially excluded and, promote a positive and healthy environment.

And finally Madam Mayor, I would like to pay tribute to a truly **amazing** man. A man who has served this Borough with great conviction and passion for more than 40 years. A man, who has led this Council, has played both leading roles in Greater Manchester, the North West, and who has most certainly represented this Borough's best interests at a National Level. Madam Mayor, I am of course talking about Councillor Derek Boden.

Madam Mayor, Councillor Boden will be standing down from front line politics at the Local Election, but I know that he will not be donning the slippers! his well worn walking shoes will remain firmly on his feet, as he continues to be the formidable community activist he is and has been for virtually all of his adult life.

Derek, you leave a tremendous legacy of Achievements to this Council and to this Borough. The Council Chamber and indeed the Labour Group will somehow not be quite the same without your considered questions, and earnest and passionate speeches. Your presence and gravitas is without equal; Quite simply there has been no finer spokesperson to grace the Local, Regional, National and indeed European stage on behalf of the citizens of this Borough than you. Thank you on a personal level for all the help, support and advice you have given to me over the years. Thank you for your unstinting service to the Labour Group.

Thank you on behalf of the Borough for your dedicated service and wisdom. Your contribution to local politics has been truly awesome!!!

Madam Mayor that concludes my statement to Council.

ENDS