

## **Council Meeting – 30 January 2013**

### **Questions:-**

**The Leader of the Council**

### **Question running order:**

**1<sup>st</sup>: Liberal Democrat**

**2<sup>nd</sup>: Conservative**

**3<sup>rd</sup>: Labour**

#### **1. Councillor Pickstone**

Much has been said in the past about how sharing services could save money and reduce frontline service cuts. Could the Leader update members on how many times the AGMA Improvement and Efficiency Commission has met in the last year? What shared service schemes are currently being taken forward by Bury?

**A. The Improvement and Efficiency Commission last met on 12 April 2012, and since then the work of the Commission has been absorbed by the AGMA Improvement and Efficiency Leadership Group which meets on a quarterly and reports up to the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (Council Leaders and Chief Executive's) and the Wider Leadership Group (Chief Executive's) which themselves meet on a four-weekly basis.**

**The intention is to combine future improvement and efficiency work with the Public Service Reform programme being developed from the success of the Community Budget Pilot so that there is consistent fit with the AGMA growth, reform, business management and governance structure.**

**Bury places an active part in the I&E Leadership Group which currently has 29 'live' projects within 8 workstreams.**

**Across AGMA the work started by the I&E Commission and continued by the Leadership Group is estimated to have generated savings that are projected to total £47.6m by 2015.**

**It is fair to say that the benefits to Bury will have been lower as a proportion of the total due to the fact that this work has made it clear that our services already operate at considerably lower unit costs than those in other authorities. Further details of shared services work undertaken in Bury are provided in a written answer provided to Councillor Gartside by the Leader and for brevity I won't repeat them here.**

## **2. Councillor Daly**

Has the leader of the council been approached by Unison since his Group shamefully defeated the motion on withdrawing Bury council tax-payers funding of trade union activities at the last Council meeting?

**A. In response to Councillor Daly's question I have to advise him that I have had no approach from Unison in particular, or indeed from any of the other recognised trade unions since the Conservative group submitted their motion at the last Council meeting.**

**However I am aware that following the meeting of the Joint Consultative Committee held last week that both Councillor Walton and Councillor Gartside approached the Branch Secretary of Unison and spoke with him and his Unison colleagues. I am not aware of the issues discussed by them but I would like to think that the purpose of that discussion was to apologise for the depths to which the Conservative Group opposite will sink to score a cheap political point.**

**I would also point out to Councillor Daly that he and his group need to acquaint themselves with the clear distinction in employment law between trade union duties and trade union activities. The ACAS Code of Practice makes a very clear distinction between trade union duties for which trade union representatives are permitted reasonable paid time off during working hours to carry out certain trade union duties and trade union activities. The position is that there is no statutory requirement that union members or representatives be paid for time off taken on trade union activities.**

**This labour administration fully complies with employment legislation and as a result allocates a tiny fraction of the budget to ensure that trade unions can carry out their duties effectively. However contrary to Councillor Daly's misconceptions about support for trade unions, no allocation of council tax payers funding is made to support trade union activities in this Council.**

### **3. Councillor Bury**

Please can the Leader explain to Council how much grant funding the Coalition Government is taking out of the pockets of Bury residents during the life of this spending review?

**A. Forecasting grant loss is extremely difficult due to the massive technical changes that are being made to local government finance on 1 April 2013. However it is fair to say that between 2011/12 and 2014/15 we anticipate that we will have lost £17m per year of government support and we expect that this will rise to £25m a year by 2017/18. This equates to £130 a year for every Bury resident and is on top of the £6m of grant cuts that were made in the emergency budget that George Osborne produced immediately after the last general election.**

### **4. Councillor O'Hanlon**

Could the Leader explain to members how he justifies introducing charging for school travel for many of the Borough's children, part-way through their attendance at a school?

**A. Given the scale of the financial savings that the Council must find, it is essential that all areas of expenditure are scrutinized. Free transport is provided to approximately 1,000 of the 29,000+ pupils attending Bury schools, the majority of whom receive free transport on a discretionary basis as a result of attendance at faith schools. Whilst the need to withdraw funding for free transport for those attending faith schools is regrettable, it is essential that the Council makes these difficult decisions in order to ensure that its statutory functions can be met, and frontline services are protected. Pupils of families on low income will continue to receive free transport.**

## **5. Councillor Caserta**

Can the portfolio holder for Children's Services please give details on the outcome of the research and consultations carried out on the withdrawal of denominational school transport and what effect it would have on school roll numbers in our Borough?

**A. Being able to predict demand for places at any school is difficult given that this is entirely reliant on parental preference which can be influenced by many factors, resulting in fluctuating demand for places at an individual schools from year to year.**

**The performance of a school is one of the key determining factors influencing level of demand, and a number of Community schools experiencing interest from across a wide area even though financial assistance for transport is not available to pupils attending those schools.**

**What is clear is that demand for places in denominational secondary schools has been consistently high, and that overall demand for secondary school places across the borough is forecast to rise.**

**Early indications from applications for places in September 2013 suggest that the level of oversubscription for the three denominational secondary schools has been maintained, and in one instance has increased, despite it being made clear in the admissions literature that financial assistance towards transport may be withdrawn. This suggests that the risk of free transport being withdrawn is not seen as an impediment to those parents.**

**In discussion with neighbouring local authorities where financial assistance has already been withdrawn, there is no evidence to suggest that this has resulted on a downturn in demand for places in denominational schools.**

**Of course, if the three denominational schools believe that the withdrawal of transport will have such a dramatic impact on the demand for places, there is nothing to prevent those schools providing financial assistance to pupils, funded from their own budgets. All three schools had significant surplus balances at the end of the last financial year.**

## **6. Councillor Holt**

Can the Leader or relevant Portfolio Holder please give details of how many senior managers have left the Authority and not been replaced between 2008-09 to 2012-13?

**A. Thank you for your question Councillor Holt.**

**I have looked in detail at the impact of this Con-Dem government's slash and burn policy and noted the adverse effect that this has had on services throughout the Council.**

**During the period 1<sup>st</sup> April 2009 to 31 December 2012, 109 senior officers with salaries of £40,00 or more left this Authority. Their posts were either deleted or in some cases redundancies were 'bumped' and posts elsewhere in the structure were disestablished. More recently this labour administration has taken a positive and creative approach to managing the impact of budget reductions and we have identified ways in which services can be organised differently in order to protect front line services to the public and rationalise management structures.**

**Nevertheless, this reduction of 109 senior posts (in percentage terms) amounts to 24.3% - one quarter of the senior workforce.**

**The reduction in expenditure amounts to £1.98m taking account of the employer on-costs.**

**Some of this reduction in senior management capacity has occurred within back office or corporate services but we have also experienced lost capacity within the Council's technical services (there has been a 37% reduction in senior management capacity within EDS) and in school improvement, youth services and social care services; (Children's Services have experienced a 27% reduction in their senior workforce).**

## **7. Councillor Pickstone**

How many requests for road/pavement repairs (including 'pot holes') were received in 2012, how does this compare to 2011 and 2010? (I would be grateful if this information could be provided in writing to members on a Township or Ward basis.)

**A. The figures are presented in financial years and include requests received for both carriageway and footway repairs (including potholes).**

<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2693 year to date</b>
<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2493</b>
<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2549</b>

**The information will be circulated to members on a Township basis following the meeting.**

## **8. Councillor Gartside**

Can the Leader or relevant portfolio holder please give details of what talks or negotiations have taken place recently with other Councils regarding the sharing of back office and front-line council services ?

**A. I would like to thank Councillor Gartside for his question or is this another one from the Pickles 50 Shades of Best Practice from the Eric Pickles Joke Book?**

**Cllr Gartside's question misses out two very important requirements and these are value for money and quality as part of the tests to be applied when considering the sharing of services.**

**As a responsible Council we continue to look for ways of reducing costs in order to secure value for money and the sharing or the selling of services is always a key consideration.**

**However, as I said value for money is a key consideration and a recent project to do a joint Emergency Duty Team service with a neighbouring Local Authority will not now go ahead because it's more cost effective to deliver one from Bury Council.**

**All Departments seek to explore opportunities and some recent examples will give the Members opposite some encouragement I'm sure.**

**Members heard previously of the new income stream created by charging for travelling Art Exhibition, well I am pleased to announce that our payroll section recently secured a top six place**

**on national tender list for payroll services. As a result, they have won a payroll contract in respect of supporting various Cheshire schools and colleges.**

**In addition the Benefits section undertakes benefit processing for another GM authority.**

**As for Children's Services – The Education visits Co-ordinator is jointly employed by Rochdale and Bury with use of a common system for organising and approving Education Visits by schools and Children's Services. In operation since September 2011.**

**With effect from April last year we have a Jointly Managed Education Psychology Service involving Bury, Salford and Wigan. A jointly employed Principal Education Psychologist oversees the three services.**

**Children's Social Care are consulting on proposals to develop a collaborative working arrangement for the provision of a Youth Offending Service with Rochdale MBC.**

**The key areas where we share services include:**

- We have procured contracts for the appealing of Business Rating assessments (2005 and 2010 Rating Lists), at favourable rates, on behalf of ten North West local authorities and one PCT.**
- We have also been undertaking property disposals and asset valuations for Bury PCT for the last couple of years.**
- We have bought in a Computer Audit service from Salford. This represents better VFM than having our own full time computer auditor.**
- We procure goods through the Yorkshire Purchasing Consortium and we are members of the AGMA Collaborative Procurement Hub**
- We have procured bailiffs services jointly with a number of north west Councils**

## **9. Councillor Matt Bailey**

Could the Leader inform Council of how many young people are in our care at present?

**A. The current number of children looked after by Bury Council is 321 (as of today - 29th Jan) and is a significant reduction from the end of last summer when the figure reached 346; a decrease therefore of 25 in a period of approximately five months.**

## **10. Councillor O'Hanlon**

Could the Leader inform members by how much the Authority is missing its targets on recycling? How much is this costing the authority in 2011-12 and how does this compare to the earlier business cases for new green and brown bins?

**A. The overall contract waste recycling rate\* achieved in 2011-12 was 34.5%. In 2012/13, the forecast based on information to end Dec 2012 is that we will have improved our contract recycling rate to 41.4% by the end of the year.**

**This falls short of the rate assumed when the WDA levy was set for 2012/13 of 43.3% (*which was based on a part year achievement of the target 50% recycling rate*). This means that there will be extra levy charges this year, estimated at around £350,000. But these costs will be offset by a one-off contribution of £170,000 from funds set aside in the levy reserve.**

**A comprehensive recycling action plan has been developed & implemented since the summer and this has seen a reduction of £144,000 in the forecast overspend since month 6. (£49,000-350,000).**

**Further savings of £60,000 are anticipated by the end of the year if the improvements continue, with the help of all residents of the Borough.**

**This would reduce the overall overspend to £120,000.**

**Brown bin tonnages are on target for this year, but green bin tonnages will fall short of target.**

**\* Please note that the contract waste recycling rate is calculated on all the waste that is delivered to the GMWDA PFI contract including commercial waste. The more often quoted household waste recycling rate is calculated, as the title suggests, on household waste only. This latter rate is always higher and is projected to be 45.5% at the year end.**



## **11. Councillor Daly**

Can the leader confirm if sufficient financial provision has been made for the potential legal costs should the outcome of the Gin Hall Development be challenged in court?

**A. The proposals concerning Gin Hall are being progressed as part of the preparation of Bury's Local Plan Core Strategy. As such, provision for meeting costs associated with the preparation of the Plan have been provided for within existing budgets, together with the establishment of a Development Plan Reserve to spread funding costs across peaks and troughs in expenditure.**

**The Development Plan Reserve is considered to hold sufficient funds to cover anticipated Core Strategy costs and other Local Plan work.**

**However, as part of the Council's needs to make savings it has been decided that no further contributions are to be made to the current reserve. Therefore, the Council accepts that it is taking a risk, if costs were to exceed current provisions, but this is considered to be manageable and, if necessary, unforeseen additional costs would need to be met from Council reserves.**

***Note for information: The current balance on the Development Plan Reserve stands at £161,000. There are costs against the reserve for the current financial year but major calls on the Reserve are expected to come when plans go through the Examination in Public process and the Council is required to meet the costs of the Inspectors, Programme Officers and legal costs if barristers are required.***

### **Further information – Background context to Gin Hall**

**In July 2007, the Core Strategy Issues and Options Report highlighted the inadequacy of the Borough's employment land supply at that time in terms of both quantity and quality and that there was a distinct lack of opportunities for employment development in the north of the Borough. This report also presented three broad options for the future growth and development of the Borough. Option 2 involved an approach which sought to spread growth throughout the Borough and included an aim to overcome the lack of employment land in the north. The report recognised that, to achieve this, there may be a need to consider land designated as Green Belt. Consultation on the Issues and Options indicated a preference for spreading growth across the Borough and not wanting the Borough to become purely a 'dormitory' town – i.e. still wanted the Borough to have a strong local economy.**

**An evaluation of the three options, including taking into account the views received following consultation on the Issues and Options, was undertaken in order to identify a preferred option for the future growth and development of the Borough and this fed into the Preferred Options Report which was issued in May 2008. This preferred option included pursuing an approach that sought to identify new employment opportunities in areas of the Borough where deficiencies existed. The report recognised that in the north of the Borough, opportunities were limited and it identified an 'area of search' close to the A56 and M66 corridor recognising that this may require land within the Green Belt. A diagram within the report showing the preferred future distribution of employment land shows the Gin Hall area as forming the basis for this 'area of search'.**

**In response to consultation on the Core Strategy Preferred Options, the landowner of the Gin Hall site submitted supporting representations in relation to the identification of the 'area of search' and specifically put forward the Gin Hall site as a potential employment site.**

**In July 2010, the Council issued the Publication Core Strategy which identified 'Bury North' as an area for growth and development of employment. The 'Bury North' area of growth was focused on the Gin Hall area and recognised that development within this area would be likely to involve land designated as Green Belt. However, following objections, a Focused Change was sought seeking to have the identification of the Gin Hall area replaced by a wider Area of Search for employment provision across the whole of the Bury North area (i.e. the Ramsbottom, Tottington and North Manor Township). This Focused Change was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate together with the Core Strategy in January 2011.**

**Following the opening of the Examination in May 2011, the Core Strategy was withdrawn for a number of reasons but largely due challenges raised by Peel Investments. Walmersley residents put forward a view at this stage that the Council had failed in its duty to undertake 'effective' consultation in relation to Gin Hall because local residents had not been aware of what was being proposed until very late in the process. Whether this would have given any grounds for a 'legal challenge' was never tested.**

**Moving on to the current Core Strategy, the Area of Search covering the Ramsbottom, Tottington and North Manor Township**

**was incorporated into the Revised Draft Publication Plan in November 2011.**

**Objections at that stage included claims that the market appraisal work behind the Core Strategy was pre-recession and should be updated. The Council's Employment Land Review was also updated at this stage and resulted in a reduced quantitative need for employment land in the Borough.**

**Following updated market appraisal work by consultants Nolan Redshaw indicating a need to identify a large motorway site on qualitative grounds and a Council appraisal of alternative sites along the motorway corridor, the Gin Hall area emerged as a preferred site. That is, the site was not needed for quantitative reasons but would fulfil qualitative and spatial needs.**

**The site was identified in the Second Revised Draft Publication Plan in October 2012. Again, there have been a substantial number of objections (328) to the Gin Hall proposal and these are currently being considered.**

**The issue of a 'legal challenge' only arises once the Core Strategy has gone through the Examination process and been found sound, and the Council has resolved to adopt the Plan. On notice of Adoption any aggrieved party has 6 weeks to mount a legal challenge. Any such challenge must be on legal grounds, not on the grounds that they object to the Plan i.e. that legal requirements have been breached.**

**There is no indication from objectors to Gin Hall of any grounds for a legal challenge, other than previous claims concerning 'effective' consultation. Subsequent consultation on the Core Strategy has fully involved Walmersley residents so it is difficult to see any grounds for continuing with this claim.**

## **12. Councillor Noel Bayley**

Would the Cabinet Member responsible for Housing explain the impact that the 'bedroom tax' will have?

**A. The Bedroom Tax, or the 'under occupancy penalty' to give it its proper title, means that Housing Benefit will be restricted for tenants living in social housing if their house is too large for the size household.**

**The proposed reductions in benefit are:**

- **14% of the amount of rent charged for 1 spare bedroom**
- **25% of the amount of rent charged for 2 bedrooms and above**

**The Government's rules also mean that younger children will be expected to share bedrooms and there will be no extra allowances for foster children or for children who stay part of the week. So much for a Government that pretends to care about families.**

**Across the country as a whole the Bedroom Tax will mean that around 95,000 people could be forced into rent arrears and poverty because there are no smaller homes for them to move into.**

**In Bury, based on current caseloads, there will be 1,468 tenants affected, of which 907 are Six Town Housing tenants. Of this total, 1,194 have 1 bedroom too many, 263 have 2 bedrooms too many and 11 have 3 bedrooms too many.**

**Our best estimates are that these households will have a staggering £1.3m a year taken off their benefits as a result of the Bedroom Tax.**

### **13. Councillor Gunther**

Will the relevant portfolio holder, if they have not already done so, please investigate the status of the following charities with a view to assessing their level of referrals in recent years?

- Boys Clog Fund (Radcliffe)
- British Cotton Growers Association (Ramsbottom)
- David Young Medical Prize
- Eleanor Assherton Charity (Prestwich and Radcliffe)
- Hollins Institute Education Fund
- Nuttall and Barron Foundation Tottington
- Prestwich and District Sick Poor Fund

Also, In cases where very few or no referrals have been made, would the portfolio holder please contact the Charities Commission with a view to "winding them up" and wherever possible to distribute any funds to other existing charities, preferably keeping the local connection ?

**A. Thank you for your question Councillor Gunther. I will commission a review on this issue and ask for a report to Cabinet, or Council if appropriate.**

#### **14. Councillor Cummings**

Please will the Leader provide an update on progress with the proposed development of Radcliffe Town Centre?

**A. I am delighted to tell Cllr Cummings that after all the delays and disappointments that this scheme suffered from under the last administration we are now making significant progress towards honouring our commitment to Radcliffe.**

**Architects have been appointed to prepare a design for the up-grade of the market hall and we confidently expect to be working on site by the autumn of this year. Once costed and worked up designs are available then full consultation will be undertaken with the traders and with the Radcliffe Township Forum.**

**A considerable amount of work has been done with Transport for Greater Manchester around options for the relocation of the bus station and again I am delighted to say that agreement has now been reached to proceed with the original 2010 Masterplan bus station replacement. Negotiations are on-going around shared funding for the new bus station and we are also examining the possibility of submitting a joint bid against the DfT Local Pinch Points Fund. We are working to a programme that should see a planning application submitted in early summer and a start on site around December 2013.**

**Finally we are beginning a soft market testing exercise to explore opportunities for the retail development on the site of the existing bus station. Clearly much will depend on market conditions and I will ensure that the Township Forum is kept fully informed as matters progress.**

## **15. Councillor Frith**

Can the Leader update us on the new investment in adoption care for our Borough?

### **A. 1.0 BACKGROUND**

**The adoption invest to save bid was approved in October 2012 with the aim of recruiting more adopters. The money was given to the team to:**

- **Fund additional posts to build capacity within the team to be able to focus on recruitment; and**
- **Allocate money to the team specifically for marketing purposes.**

**The adoption team aim to recruit more adopters so that their reliance on Voluntary Adoption Agencies (VAA's) that charge expensive premiums for finding placements is reduced. The adoption team aims to expand the current pool of adopters by a maximum of 14 each year which would produce approximately 20 placements. The team will focus on recruitment outside the borough.**

### **2.0 WHAT WE HAVE DONE SO FAR:**

**The adoption team have successfully recruited an excellent assistant team manager who has many years experience working in adoption and will start in early March. This extension to the team will be complimented by the arrival of two new adoption social workers who will be able to look specifically at recruitment of adopters. As well as recruiting, the adoption team have also:**

- **Launched an advertising campaign using Car Parking tickets in the borough.**
- **Have updated information packs with new images and style, in line with corporate branding guidelines, to create modern and engaging literature. One area that has been identified as a priority is the recruitment of same sex couples as adopters as they are currently under represented. Adoption has redesigned their same sex couple leaflet in order to be able to appeal to a more diverse range of adopters.**

### **3.0 OUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE**

- **To launch a targeted recruitment campaign for same sex adopters through attendance at events such as Manchester Pride.**
- **To use Twitter and Facebook to keep the public informed of Adoption events and to raise the profile of the Adoption service.**
- **To prepare updated publicity material that can be used in semi-permanent displays such as libraries and GP surgeries, as well as "pop-up" events.**

- **To provide more targeted post placement support through adopter groups.**
- **To embed new staff in the team and develop targets around family finding timescales.**
- **Once in Higher Lane, the team will look at increasing the frequency of information evenings for people contemplating adoption.**
- **To research effective means of out of borough advertising.**
- **To lead on the recruitment of carers to the “Foster to Adopt” scheme.**

## **16. Councillor Columbine**

Can the Cabinet Member responsible explain the new pricing structure for new bins for Bury residents?

**A. From 1 January a new or replacement 140 litre grey, residual waste bin is free of charge.**

**A 240 litre new or replacement grey, residual waste bin still costs a householder £25.**

**Evidence from elsewhere clearly demonstrates that a reduction in residual bin capacity ‘pushes’ people into recycling more. This differential charging system is designed to encourage residents to downsize and thereby push them to recycle more than they perhaps did previously. This should help to improve the Council’s recycling rate.**

**All recycling bins remain free of charge and residents can have as many green and blue bins as they require. Households are limited to one brown bin per property.**

## **17. Councillor Southworth**

Life expectancy rates vary widely across the Borough. Could we please have an explanation of why this is and what we are doing across the Borough to address this issue?

**A. Although there has been significant improvement in life expectancy both nationally and locally it is clear there is room for improvement. Bury people overall can expect to die one year earlier than the national average but perhaps more worrying is the gap between areas – with people in the more deprived areas dying 10 years sooner than residents in more affluent wards.**

**There are many reasons for this. Genetics, life choices, lifestyle factors (eg smoking, obesity) and what are known as the wider determinants of health (such as housing, employment and poverty) all play a part.**

**As a Council, we aspire to improve the health of all our residents and reduce the inequalities that exist although our ability to intercede in the current economic climate presents a significant challenge. Nevertheless, looking after those in need remains integral to the Council's values, it is a central tenet within the public health white paper, "Healthy Lives, Healthy People" and forms an important part of the draft Health and Well-Being Strategy which is currently out to consultation.**

**I would also like to mention the forthcoming transfer of public health responsibilities to Local Authorities in April 2013 which I believe represents a great opportunity for us to make a difference. Of course public health will continue to have important links to the NHS around health care, health improvement and health protection but many of the causes of inequality are due to poor life choices or social factors – aspects which the Council is well placed to address as community leader, regulator and service provider. By co-ordinating the knowledge, skills and resources available will put us in a much better position to tackle the causes of inequality that exist.**



## **18. Councillor Tariq**

Following the exciting announcement the Leader of the Council made last year about the proposal of a brand new sports hall to be built at the Derby High School in the Redvales Ward, please could he outline when this project is expected to be completed?

**A. The scheme to provide The Derby High School with a sports hall is progressing well. It is anticipated that Construction will start on site in April with completion expected mid January 2014.**

## **19. Councillor Quinn**

Will the Leader congratulate the staff of Bury Council for supporting FC United's 'Big Coat Day'? This is the annual initiative that FC United organised to collect winter clothing for the homeless of Greater Manchester.

**A. I would remind members that the "Big Coat Day" involved football fans being urged to donate clothing at FC United's match at Gigg Lane against Witton Albion on Boxing Day. Yet again, our staff responded superbly in supporting this worthy cause and my thanks and congratulations goes to them and all supporters who responded so positively.**

**I would also congratulate FC United on yet again demonstrating how a community football club can make a difference by tapping into the generosity of fans, and helping those who suffer through the cold weather conditions.**

## **20. Councillor Simpson**

Does the Leader agree that Bury's active and diverse third sector play a vital role in helping to strengthen communities, reduce in equalities and improve the quality of life for the people of Bury and how is the Council working with the sector to provide support and involve them, particularly within the current challenging economic climate?

**A. I agree that Bury's voluntary and community sector play a vital role in helping to ensure that Bury continues to be a great place to live, work and visit. This Council values the work these groups do in helping to ensure that our communities are more cohesive, active, healthy and inclusive.**

**We recognise that in the current financial climate where significant cuts to public sector budgets have been made, it is even more important to continue to work closely with our third sector partners to ensure we can understand the impact this is having on them and, where possible, mitigate against any negative impact. We will continue to work with and support them through a number of initiatives including:**

- **Allocation of funding support through the Council's grant funding programmes (small grants, ward grants and commissioning fund)**
- **Involvement in major council consultations including Plan for Change**
- **Involving them in the planning of initiatives at every level. This includes their valued representation and contribution to key partnerships including Team Bury, Children Trust and Shadow Health and Wellbeing board. It also includes representation on Township Forum Advisory Groups.**
- **Commissioning a number of third sector organisations through the Council's Third Sector Commissioning Fund to deliver vital projects and services to the people of Bury. These organisations include:**
  - **ADAB**
  - **Bury Third Sector Development Association**
  - **Bury District Citizens Advice Bureau**
  - **Bury Housing Concern**
  - **Bury Law Centre**
  - **Bury Metropolitan Arts Association**
  - **Homestart**
  - **Mosses Community Association**
  - **Victim Support**
  - **Women's Housing Action Group**
  - **Bury Coalition For Independent Living**
  - **Bury Gateway**
  - **Bury Society for Blind & Partially Sighted People**
  - **Bury Society for Deaf & Hearing Impaired People**
  - **Bury Independent Living Development**
- **Working with Bury Third Sector Development Agency during 2013/14 to review and develop the Compact "Working Together".**

## **21. Councillor Fitzwalter**

We have heard a lot about procurement within the Children's Services Department. Could the Leader please tell me how much money has been saved this overall since we took control in 2011?

<b>A. Year 2011/2012</b>	<b>total savings achieved:</b>	<b>£242,167.13</b>
<b>Year 2012/2013</b>	<b>total savings to date:</b>	<b>£313,919.70</b>

**(target £280,458)**

**Since 2011 the total savings are £556,086.83**

**Savings are generated through:**

- 1) negotiating with service and good providers to get the best price**
- 2) negotiating lower costs for existing contracts, or for social care placements**
- 3) working with the social care team to identify needs of young person and matching those to the best cost option, working to help make transitions for the young people ensuring that the needs of the young person are met whilst getting best value from placement providers.**

## **22. Councillor FitzGerald**

Following last week's announcement by the OBR of increased public borrowing in December 2012 versus December 2011, data from the National Office of Statistics that there was a (0.3%) contraction in Q4 2012 that could lead to an unprecedented triple dip recession and the IMF's Chief Economist's comment that Osbourne's austerity plan is failing, what will be the impact to Bury of the Tory-led mis-management of our economy?

**A. It's very interesting that it isn't only the IMF that think Plan A is failing - a number of other very influential people are calling on the Chancellor to think again.**

**Goldman Sachs were quoted as saying that "policy has been on the wrong path" with their chairman saying "fiscal policy has been tightened too much". The investment group Fidelity have said "the more time that passes the clearer it is that America's gradual and delayed approach to fiscal tightening is the right one", the Institute of Economic Affairs have said that "if the Government does have a strategy for growth it plainly isn't working" and even the Mayor of London has been damning of the current policy when he said "the hair shirt stuff, that is not the way to get Britain motoring again".**

**Sadly, it seems likely that the Chancellor will continue to bury his head and delude himself that his policy is working and the end result will indeed be a triple dip recession and a downgrading of the country's credit rating.**

**But Madam Mayor, it could have all been so different, especially if we remember that in 2010 Mr Osborne inherited from Labour an economy that was continuing to grow.**

**What this means for Bury is that the poorest of our residents will see a perfect storm of benefit cuts, the strivers will see tax increases and our public services will continue to be decimated.**

**As far as the Council is concerned we already know that in the coming year we are faced with a 5.1% cut in government funding and looking ahead we are expecting to see further cuts of 9.0% in 2014/15 and 7.8% in 2015/16 and all the projections are that this trend will continue until at least 2017/18 by when we will have lost at least £25m a year of central government funding.**

**This shows just how dangerously complacent the prime minister was last autumn when he said that the "good news will keep coming".**

### **23. Councillor Haroon**

Could the Leader provide an update on progress being made regarding Township Plans. In particular, what arrangements are proposed to develop the action plans to support delivery of each of the Township Plan priorities for the next Municipal Year (2013/14)?

**A. Township Plans have been developed and agreed by each Township Forum. The Township Plans identify a small number of priorities for each Township Forum for the next three years where, working together, they can make a difference. A more detailed annual action plan incorporates key projects and actions that contribute towards delivery of each priority. In summary, Township Plans provide an essential focus to the work of each Township Forum.**

**Progress updates in relation to the Township Plans are shared at public meetings of the Township Forums. Successes to date include:**

- **Work with First Bus in Bury West and Whitefield/Unsworth to secure changes/improvements in local bus service provision**

- **Projects to support community safety, pride and belonging in Radcliffe including work with partners to support 'Make Radcliffe Safer' campaign and use of ward funding to partly fund a major archaeological project in Radcliffe, working with Manchester University, local schools and residents.**
- **The Prestwich Township Forum has worked to support a number of local events which promote community pride and belonging. In particular, providing an important vehicle for local people to share their views on local concerts and events and to promote the work of Local in Prestwich.**
- **Bury East Township Forum has been awarded £90K over two years from the National Alcohol Prospectus Fund to support projects that help address alcohol related anti-social behaviour. The Bury East Township Forum very recently welcomed Baroness Newlove (the Government's Champion for Safe and Active Communities) to visit projects funded through our Township Forum.**
- **The RTNM Township Forum has worked to promote local apprenticeship opportunities by developing links with local employers. New links have been developed with a local business in Ramsbottom who are delivering an exciting new project to train and employ local young people aged 14-25 to develop the skills and experience to help get them a career in the food sector.**

**The first meetings of the Township Forums taking place in the next municipal year (April 2013 onwards) will be used to review and agree the 2013/14 Action Plans for each Township Plan. A detailed performance report will also be shared at these meetings.**