

**Minutes of: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Date of Meeting:** 1 November 2022

**Present:** Councillor D Vernon (in the Chair)  
Councillors R Bernstein, C Birchmore, A Arif, N Bayley,  
N Boroda, N Jones, K Peel and T Pilkington.

**Also in attendance:** Councillor O'Brien, Leader  
Councillor Gold, Cabinet Member for Finance and Communities  
Sir Howard Bernstein  
Sam Evans, Executive Director of Finance  
Sarah Poruu, Assistant Director of Regeneration Delivery  
Robert Summerfield, Assistant Director of Regeneration  
Delivery  
Jacqui Dennis, Director of Law and Democratic Services  
Chloe Ashworth, Democratic Services

**Public Attendance:** five members of the public were present at the meeting.

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillor D Green and Councillor M Walsh

**OSC.1 APOLOGIES**

Apologies are noted above.

**OSC.2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**OSC.3 MINUTES**

It was agreed:

The minutes of the meeting held on the 06<sup>th</sup> September 2022 be approved.

**OSC.4 MATTERS ARISING**

There were no outstanding matters arising.

**OSC.5 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME (Pages 7 - 10)**

Notice had been received of 5 questions. The Chair advised that copies of the questions had been circulated to all Councillors. The Chair also gave an undertaking to make these available on the Council Web Site.

<b>Questioner</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Responding</b>
David Stanley	Lease	Cllr O'Brien
Mandy Gane	The Longfield Suite	Cllr O'Brien
Steve Devine	Prestwich Public Engagement	Cllr O'Brien
Andrea Turner	Prestwich Neighborhood Plan	Cllr O'Brien
Steve Wright	The Longfield Suite	Cllr O'Brien

## **OSC.6 MEMBER QUESTION TIME**

There were no member questions.

## **OSC.7 REGENERATION UPDATE**

It was agreed that this item will be split into two sections.

Part A: Sir Howard Bernstein provided an overview in relation to the work he is supporting regarding Radcliffe Regeneration.

Sir Howard advised the Committee that a strong and robust management team is in place and the scheme has an engaged contractor onboard who is engaged with the work programme.

Areas highlighted as potential concerns are transport and the department of education delivering a national procurement programme to open the new School in the required timescales.

To address these concerns Sir Howard Bernstein advised, Greater Manchester have backed the regeneration scheme and supported the bid that went into central Government, in conclusion we now have confirmation that £9 Million has been earmarked for Radcliffe. In addition, Sir Howard assured Committee Members that work has been done to support the department for Education to deliver the schemes that will ensure the school is delivered in timescales needed.

Finally, Sir Howard advised the People and Communities strategy may be a piece of work the Committee want to review in the future.

In addition, Councillor O'Brien provided a brief overview of the work undertaken as part of the Radcliffe Regeneration Scheme and gave thanks to officers and local members for their support and work so far undertaken.

Discussions took place regarding the Parking Strategy recently developed by WSP Ltd. In assurance to the Committee the Leader advised this work can be viewed and is a report that will be shared with elected members following the meeting. Further questions took place regarding the parking in Radcliffe, and when this will be considered considering the building of the Radcliffe Hub.

The Committee were reassured that a project board and details such as transport and contractual restrictions are in place to increase the likelihood of the school being delivered by September 2024.

Part B: Councillor O'Brien provided an overview of Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan, Prestwich Town Centre, and Bury Business Improvement District (BID).

Ramsbottom plan sets out a series of high-level proposals and concepts that look to enhance the town centre for residents, the business community, and visitors. Proposals include creating quality workspace in the heart of the town, as well as identifying opportunities for improvements to the built environment, public realm and active travel routes.

Prestwich: The Council and Muse Developments Ltd have agreed to form the Prestwich Regeneration LLP to bring forward a multi-phase, mixed use regeneration scheme. It will comprise a Community Hub accommodating Council services (library, adult learning and community / well-being space) and Public Sector partners. In addition, there is an opportunity

to deliver a market (food and beverage), retail space for established independent traders, residential apartment buildings, town houses and a green travel hub / multi storey car park.

Bury BID: The model will help to deliver the Council's ambitions for Bury town centre and the town centre businesses, it will create a strong/effective partnership approach and be complimentary to the regeneration and development work of the Council, particularly linking to the implementation of the Bury Town Centre Masterplan and the emerging Economic Development Strategy that will support inclusive economic growth.

A member sought assurances on how partnerships will shape the regeneration work and how it will continue. In response Councillor O'Brien advised partnership working is a key priority and some of the partnership relations included are transport providers including Transport for Greater Manchester, Housing Partners and Health services. In assurance to members Cllr O'Brien advised the detail of the health partnerships will be evidenced though ensuring new services such as leisure and health providers will be suitable and accessible to residents.

Discussions took place regarding the spaces each township will have for business units. In conclusion members were advised feasibility work is taking place but there is enough demand for each place in the Borough and commercial assessments are taking place to ensure the product is fit for purpose for each area. In addition, the business support team and the growth hub will be involved in discussions to support businesses in these units to put packages of support in place for businesses.

Assurances were sought regarding not pricing local and independent businesses out the market. In response Councillor O'Brien did assure the Committee that the strength of Prestwich is its local offer and is successful for smaller scale single unit businesses.

Further discussions took place regarding Social Value and an overarching Strategy will be brought forward soon.

Discussions took place regarding health promotion and illness prevention and how this will be included in regeneration plans.

The Leader was asked if we are confident that we have the skills in Bury to deliver on regeneration. In response Councillor O'Brien advised the varying sectors, such as the digital offer is being worked on to promote digital inclusion, skills and education.

The Committee questioned the transportation required to engage all other area's together with the opportunities the regeneration work will offer, for example Whitefield. In response Cllr O'Brien advised that Whitefield has been designated for the high street task force.

Discussions took place regarding the Metrolink and linking up with Ramsbottom. In response Councillor O'Brien advised this has been of keen interest to Rossendale but there are still many considerations that need to be discussed prior any decisions are made.

It was agreed:

1. The Chair thanked Sir Howard Bernstein, Councillor O'Brien and all officers for their attendance and engagement with the Committee.

## **OSC.8 BURY FOOTBALL CLUB**

It was agreed that Bury Football Club be discussed as urgent business and taken after the regeneration item.

Councillor Vernon advised he wished to raise the recent Bury FC vote on the merger and the Council's decision to withhold the £450,000. Councillor Vernon asked for an update, potential options going forward and whether the funding is going to still be available.

In response Councillor O'Brien advised the result of the vote showed that a merger was not immediately possible. In addition, Councillor O'Brien did confirm it would be a huge mistake to assume the result of the vote would be an endorsement of a 'go it alone approach'. At this stage the Council's money (£450,000) cannot be accessed as the merger has not yet taken place which ultimately does not meet the conditions set in the Cabinet report. If conditions can be met by another means and potentially with another opportunity in the future, we would seriously consider putting the offer back out.

Geoff Little, Chief Executive reiterated that as a Council the position has always been that the investment is dependent on there being community benefit and being commercially viable which requires a merger.

Members of the Committee were assured discussions are taking place with Government Officials regarding their funding on the matter.

Councillor O'Brien did advise there are some opportunities for progression such as Gigg Lane could be rented out and this will be explored and if this is not an option fans may wish to revisit the decision at a future date.

Councillor Vernon thanked Councillor O'Brien for his update on the Bury Football Club merger.

## **OSC.9 THE COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30TH JUNE 2022**

Councillor Gold, Cabinet Member for Finance and Communities outlined the forecast financial position of the Council at the end of the first quarter of the 2022/23 financial year based on information known on 30th June 2022. The report sets out the position for both revenue and capital and provides an analysis of the variances, both under and overspending.

Councillor Gold highlighted that as at the end of quarter 1 there is a projected forecast yearend deficit of £1.5 million on the revenue budget and this is before utilisation of the utilities reserve of £1.5 million. The highest areas of overspend is within the One Commissioning Organisation which is £2.5 million, Operations at £1.1 million and Children's £1 million. These are however offset by an underspend of £3.6 million of which £2.5 million is on borrowing costs due to rephasing.

A member sought clarity on how the quarter 2 outcomes are looking now we are nearing this period. In response, Sam Evans, Executive Director of Finance advise that we now have confirmation of the pay award, rising pressures in Children's Services and we are in negotiations with Yorkshire Purchasing Organisation who we purchase our gas and electricity through. The One Commissioning Organisation pressures are not changing significantly, and the Persona savings are being taken into the next financial year.

A member questioned if financial modelling has taken place against the cost of borrowing, in response Sam Evans did advise that this is currently taking place and the rephasing will be included in the quarter 2 Cabinet report.

A member questioned if it is correct to assume it is cheaper to run 3 Knowsley Place than Bury Town Hall. In response Councillor Gold responded to confirm this is correct but the Town Hall will show the positive effects of the window replacement scheme soon and it's important to note we lease 3 Knowsley Place but we own the Town Hall and it is £682,000 per annum and

subject to a 3 year review. In addition, it was requested that the costings of the temporary boiler system be provided to the Committee

A member sought assurances on the delivery of savings; it was stated that there is a forecast delivery against the total savings (target of £18.9 million) is £15.46 million. It was asked what is being done to close the gap and ensure the required savings are made. Councillor Gold assured the Committee regular meetings discussing the delivery of savings and holding Executive Directors to account takes place.

Discussions took place regarding the Airport Dividend receipt is now pushed back to 2026/27. Sam Evans, Executive Director of Finance advised how interest incurred through the loan borrowed is covered. Discussions are currently taking place regarding the recovery and when the repayment can commence.

It was agreed:

1. The play area and park strategy to be circulated to members of the Committee
2. Councillor Jones questions and answers submitted before the meeting will be circulated with the minutes for members to view
3. Further information on the 'Streets for all' allocation to be circulated to members.
4. Members be provided with costings to the Council of the temporary boiler system currently being used.

## **OSC.10 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY REFRESH**

Councillor Gold, Cabinet Member for Finance and Communities provided an overview of Bury Council Medium Term Financial Strategy which runs to 2025/26 and will be refreshed as part of the annual budget setting process in February 2023. A mid-year review of the Strategy has been undertaken as a matter of good practice and in the context of the unprecedented inflationary and demand pressures being experienced so far this year. The review has indicated a provisional budget deficit of £29.204m in 2023/24; a further gap of £3.475m in 2024/25 and a further £5.866m in 2025/26.

A member challenged the savings that are made and then not delivered. In response Councillor Gold concluded transformation is being looked at and a paper is being taken to December Cabinet. Sam Evans, Executive Director of Finance added that capitalisation of staff salaries is being done to mitigate overspends.

Discussions took place regarding unpaid leave for members of staff, and how buying leave and unpaid leave is being promoted which in turn is supporting savings. Members asked how this is managed with service delivery. In response Sam Evans did advise there is a balance especially around front-line service delivery, and it is not mandatory.

Further discussions took place regarding increases in charges that are set out in Appendix 3. In response Councillor Gold did advise the proposed charges are going through consultation and necessary to keep services functioning and have been benchmarked with other local authorities.

Councillor Vernon thanked Councillor Gold and Sam Evans for their attendance.

**COUNCILLOR D VERNON**  
**Chair**

**(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 10.00 pm)**