

**Lynne Ridsdale  
Chief Executive**

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*Date* 7 January 2025  
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**TO: All Members of Council**

**Councillors :** A Arif, S Arif, N Bayley, R Bernstein, D Berry, C Birchmore, C Boles, A Booth, R Brown, C Cummins, D Duncalfe, U Farooq, E FitzGerald, N Frith, I Gartside, R Gold, D Green, J Grimshaw, S Haroon, J Harris, M Hayes, J Hook, K Hussain, B Ibrahim, J Lancaster, G Marsden, L McBriar, G McGill, C Morris, E Moss, E O'Brien, T Pilkington, A Quinn, D Quinn, T Rafiq, M Rahimov, I Rizvi, M Rubinstein, J Rydeheard, L Ryder, K Simpson, L Smith, M Smith, J Southworth, G Staples-Jones, T Tariq, S Thorpe, D Vernon, S Walmsley, M Walsh and Y Wright

Dear Member/Colleague

**Council**

You are invited to attend a meeting of Council which will be held as follows:-

<b>Date:</b>	Wednesday, 15 January 2025
<b>Place:</b>	Council Chamber, Bury Town Hall
<b>Time:</b>	7.00 pm
<b>Briefing Facilities:</b>	If Members require briefing on any particular item on the Agenda, the appropriate Director/Senior Officer originating the related report should be contacted.
<b>Notes:</b>	

## **AGENDA**

The Agenda for the meeting is attached.

The Agenda and Reports are available on the Council's Intranet for Councillors and Officers and also on the Council's Website at [www.bury.gov.uk](http://www.bury.gov.uk)

**Yours sincerely**



**Chief Executive**

**(Note: Members are reminded that under Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, if a Member of a Local Authority has not paid Council Tax for at least two months and, even if an arrangement has been entered into to pay arrears, then at any meeting where consideration is given to matters relating to, or which might affect the calculation of Council Tax, that Member must declare the fact that he/she is in arrears and must not vote on the matter).**

## AGENDA

1 **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members of the Council are requested to declare any interests which they have in any items or issues before the Council for determination.

3 **MAYORAL COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS**

To receive communications from the Mayor and any announcements by the Leader of the Council or the Chief Executive on matters of interest to the Council.

4 **MINUTES** (Pages 9 - 14)

Minutes attached.

5 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

To answer questions from members of the public, notice of which has been given, on any matter relevant to the Council or its services to the community. Up to 30 minutes will be set aside for this purpose. If time permits, further questions will be invited from members of the public present.

6 **RECOMMENDATIONS OF CABINET AND COUNCIL COMMITTEES** (Pages 15 - 20)

<b>Committee/Date</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>
Audit Committee 3rd December 2024	Appointment Independent Persons	Recommend to Council the appointment of Ben Thomas and David Webster as Co-opted Independent Members of the Audit Committee for a two year term, with immediate effect.
Audit Committee 9 <sup>th</sup> January 2025	COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE STATUTORY RECOMMENDATIONS UNDER SCHEDULE 7 OF THE LOCAL AUDIT AND ACCOUNTABILITY ACT 2014	It was agreed: That the Audit Committee:  Note the issues raised by the external auditors and progress made since 2021 to mitigate highlighted risks.  Accept the auditors statutory recommendation and to deliver an organisational

		<p>improvement plan.</p> <p>Endorse the proposed action plan, with the addition of reference to the Member Assurance Group and revised implementation date for the plan of February 2026 and recommend adoption to Council. Agree inclusion on the work plan for the Audit and Overview and Scrutiny Committees respectively ensuring Member oversight of delivery of the action plan</p>
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**7 LEADER' STATEMENT AND CABINET QUESTION TIME** (Pages 21 - 66)

To receive a report from the Leader of the Council on the work of the Cabinet and to answer written questions from Members of the Council to the Leader, Cabinet Members and Chair of a Committee on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties which affect the Borough, provided the necessary written notice has been given. (30 minutes)

A member may ask a verbal question of the Leader, any Member of the Cabinet or Chair of a Committee about any matter on the Council agenda and which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the Borough. Only one verbal question per Councillor. (20 minutes)

**8 COMBINED AUTHORITY REPORT AND QUESTIONS TO THE COUNCIL'S COMBINED AUTHORITY REPRESENTATIVES** (Pages 67 - 72)

- (A) A combined authority update report is attached, for information. The focus of this update will be Transport For Greater Manchester (TfGM)
- (B) The TfGM representative, Councillor Alan Quinn will then be invited to present a verbal update on the work of the Authority (5 minutes).
- (C) Members will be allowed to ask verbal questions on the verbal update (5 minutes).
- (D) Questions (if any) on the work of the Combined Authority to be asked by Members of the Council for which the necessary notice has been given in accordance with Council Procedure Rules. (10 minutes)

**9 NOTICES OF MOTION**

**(i) Re-introduction of township forums**

Members are asked to consider a notice of motion in the names of Councillors Carol Birchmore, Cllr Donald Berry, Cllr Andrea Booth, Cllr Des Duncalfe, Cllr Glyn Marsden, Cllr

Ken Simpson, Cllr Mike Smith and Cllr Mary Walsh

Township forums would allow local people to have a say and raise issues such as regeneration, bin collections, road maintenance, invasive weeds, crime and disorder, the environment, health and fly-tipping.

Potential benefits of township forums are:

- Residents would have the opportunity to ask direct questions of council officials.
- Residents would be able to challenge council decisions in an open forum.
- They could provide residents with the opportunity to get together and discuss issues of common interest.
- They would focus on local issues.

Up until 2017 Bury Council had township forums but they were replaced by “a new Neighbourhood Engagement Framework”. It was claimed that the new framework would offer a flexible approach to community engagement across Team Bury partners and support and facilitate the new relationship between public services and citizens, communities and businesses that is required to support wider neighbourhood working. However, despite good intentions it has been found that often residents and sometimes councillors have felt they have been in the dark about important decisions being made about their towns. Residents have often objected to decisions made by the Council stating that they believe they have not been fully consulted.

The replacement for the township forums concentrated a lot on the provision of online feedback but this can sometimes provide a barrier to residents who might struggle with written feedback or possibly the use of the technology to provide the feedback in the required format.

It has been claimed that attendance at forums was poor, but this was potentially down to the fact that there were no significant projects taking place in the townships at the time. With activity taking place with regards to regeneration plans for our towns it is likely that there will be far more information to report to residents with regards to changes in their towns and a greater opportunity for residents’ feedback to make a difference.

It has previously been claimed that grouping wards together was not always the best option since what is an issue in one ward is not necessarily an issue in another ward in the same township area. However, the counter to that is that if you take the example of Prestwich or Radcliffe just considering issues for a single ward boundary is more constricting when you consider groupings of similar area demographics cross the ward boundaries e.g. looking at Radcliffe town centre MSOA. What should be avoided is grouping non similar wards together e.g. the demography of Radcliffe is different to Bury West.

Although some parties/groups or individual councillors have good social media presence the transfer of important information or proposals relies on full and open communication and online discussion might not benefit from the challenge of direct public questioning from residents. This proposed motion would allow council officers and councillors to receive direct feedback at the same time and could avoid errors in communication chain translation.

**This Council resolves to:**

- Recognise the role the forums could play in providing spaces for conversation,

connection, shared purpose and debate as part of a localism agenda

- Bring back township forums on a quarterly basis for all townships in Bury MBC
- Use the township forums to introduce/obtain feedback that will contribute to consultations about local issues e.g. regeneration plans and discussions about changes to road layouts
- Include PACT meeting in township forums to ensure that crossover issues such as anti-social behaviour and parking are considered in the whole

### ***S151 Officer Comment***

***Currently there is no budget provision, any proposal will need to be funded, the extent of the funding will be dependent on a number of factors including recruitment of additional staff, venue and equipment hire.***

### **(ii) Save Prestwich Crown Post Office**

Members are asked to consider a notice of motion received from Councillors: A Arif, Bayley, Boles, Cummins, Farooq, Fitzgerald, Frith, Gold, Green, Grimshaw, Haroon, Hayes, Hook, Ibrahim, McGill, Morris, Moss, O'Brien, Pilkington, Quinn Alan, Quinn Deborah, Rafiq, Rahimov, Rizvi, Rubinstein, Ryder, Smith Lucy, Southworth, Staples-Jones, Tariq, Thorpe, Walmsley.

#### **This Council notes that:**

- 1) The Post Office announced in November 2024 a list of 115 post offices across the country that were being considered for closure.
- 2) On that list was the Crown Post Office in Prestwich, as well as 7 others across Greater Manchester.

This Council is concerned that a significant number of residents and businesses across the borough will be severely impacted by this potential closure. This will include:

- 1) Many elderly residents, those who are digitally excluded and a lot of small businesses.
- 2) The staff who currently work at Prestwich Crown Post Office, many of whom are local residents and may lose their jobs.

#### **This Council welcomes:**

- 1) A petition started by the Prestwich Labour Councillors, which has been signed by over 2400 people online and over 300 people in-person.
- 2) The representation by the Member of Parliament for Bury South, Christian Wakeford MP, in opposing this closure and campaigning action to save it.
- 3) The campaign by the Communication Workers Union opposing these closures across the country

#### **This Council resolves to:**

- 1) Fully support the campaign to keep Prestwich Crown Post Office open.
- 2) Write to Gareth Thomas MP, the Minister responsible for the Post Office, and Nigel Railton, the Post Office interim Chair, setting out our opposition to any closure and demanding an immediate halt to the proposals.

### **(iii) Consultation regarding moving Council Local Elections to a 4- year cycle**

Members consider a motion in the names of Councillors S.Arif, Bernstein, Brown, Gartside, Harris, Hussain, Lancaster, McBriar, Rydeheard, Vernon

#### **This Council Notes that:**

1. A change to whole-council elections would see the Council secure significant savings over a four-year period which would contribute to its financial stability without any impact on front-line service delivery.
2. While arguments exist in favour and against such a change, better value for money is obtained from whole-council elections.
3. Currently (based on May 2024) a Local Election costs the Council £317,000. In the whole-council election held in 2022 the cost was £360,000.

#### **This Council further notes;**

1. A four- year cycle is currently estimated to cost £951,000 for three years of elections. Moving to whole-council elections would therefore produce a potential saving of circa £580, 000 over the four -year cycle, subject to the potential costs of any by-elections (circa £15k each).
2. Legislation enables the council to change its electoral cycle at certain fixed periods of time.
3. The council presently elects its councillors by thirds, meaning a third of the councillors are elected every year for three years, with no elections in the fourth year.
4. Councils that presently elect by thirds can move to whole-council elections and, if at a later date, it is considered necessary to do so, can revert back to elections by thirds. The council may not however pass another resolution until five years has passed since the resolution was made to change.
5. If the Council wishes to move from elections by thirds to whole-council elections, it must follow the process in accordance with s33 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007.
6. A council must comply with this section in passing a resolution for whole-council elections. The council must not pass the resolution unless it has taken reasonable steps to consult such persons as it thinks appropriate on the proposed change.
7. The resolution must be passed—At a meeting which is specially convened for the purpose of deciding the resolution with notice of the object and by a majority of at

least two thirds of the members voting on it.

8. The resolution must specify the year for the first ordinary elections of the council at which all councillors are to be elected.
9. Prior to passing the resolution to convert to whole-council elections, the Council must have taken the decision to consult with such persons as it thinks appropriate. Legislation does not specify the nature of that consultation. In order to ensure that the decision is reasonable, the Council would provide sufficient publicity and variety of engagement methods with members of the public, stakeholders and political parties for comments and representations to be made. Councillors must also be consulted in their own right.
10. A consultation process will be undertaken in line with the legislation. Specific consideration will be given to ensure the consultation engages with residents who are often harder to reach, including those with a disability, who are older and are from a black, Asian or minority ethnic heritage.
11. Consideration will also be given to consulting with younger people of voting age who are often under-represented in voting at local elections. Moving to whole-council elections may provide an opportunity for the Council to positively impact on the opportunities of these groups to participate and vote in elections.

**This Council resolves to**

1. That Council agrees to commence a wide reaching consultation process of a minimum 6 weeks on whether the Council should change to whole-council elections every 4 years.
2. That the Council then hold a future Extraordinary Full Council meeting to hear the outcome of the consultation and make a determination on whether to move to whole Council Elections or stay as Elections by thirds.

**10 FOR INFORMATION ONLY - COUNCIL MOTION TRACKER (Pages 73 - 76)**

A report setting out progress in respect of Motions passed at the last meeting of Council is attached for information.

**11 SCRUTINY REVIEW REPORTS AND SPECIFIC ITEMS "CALLED IN" BY SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

None.

**12 QUESTIONS ON THE WORK OF OUTSIDE BODIES OR PARTNERSHIPS**

Questions on the work of Outside Bodies or partnerships on which the Council is represented to be asked by Members of the Council (if any).