

Minutes of: CABINET

Date of Meeting: 12 February 2025

Present: Councillor E O'Brien (in the Chair)
Councillors C Cummins, C Morris, A Quinn, T Rafiq, L Smith,
T Tariq, S Thorpe and S Walmsley

Also in attendance: Councillors Bernstein, M Smith and D Vernon.

Lynne Ridsdale, Chief Executive, Jacqui Dennis, Monitoring Officer, Will Blandamer, Executive Director, Health and Adult Care, Adrian Crook, Director of Community Commissioning, Jeanette Richards, Executive Director Children and Young People, Rachel Stirk, Service Manager (Education Services), Kate Waterhouse, Executive Director of Strategy and transformation, Neil Kissock, Director of Finance, Paul Lakin, Director of Place and Chloe Ashworth, Democratic Services.

Public Attendance: No members of the public were present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Birchmore.

CA.296 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Birchmore.

CA.297 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

CA.298 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

CA.299 MEMBER QUESTION TIME

The following question was submitted in advance of the meeting by Councillor Birchmore:

Please can you provide me with the total amount of section 106 money currently held by the Council and break that amount down into:

- a list of the planning applications the section 106 payments were made for
- the amount of money awarded to each application
- how much of the money remains unspent for each application.

Responding, Councillor O'Brien reported that Local Authorities have a statutory requirement to produce an annual Infrastructure Funding Statement.

These Statements are required to be published to provide transparency on the contributions that are received through s106 agreements in the preceding 12 month period, along with any expenditure incurred over the same period.

These annual Infrastructure Funding Statements are presented to the Planning Control Committee, and are then uploaded on the Council's website. The latest Statement for the 2023/24 financial year indicates that on 31st March 2024 there was a rolling balance of £6,116,361, with the vast majority of this pot allocated to specific projects. The Statement also provides a high-level breakdown of the types of infrastructure that the monies will be spent on, and these are legally ringfenced for those purposes.

However, the statement does not provide the full details on all of the 'raw data' on every single s106 agreement and this would be an extensive list.

For completeness, Officers will seek to pull this information together and to upload this alongside the Infrastructure Funding Statement, and also request that this is then sent to all Members for information.

CA.300 MINUTES

It was agreed:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 08th January 2025 be approved as a correct record.

a FOR INFORMATION: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION

Members noted the recommendation from Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the 06th February 2025.

Councillor D Vernon, Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee attended the meeting following the recommendation made to Cabinet. He advised members that the Overview and Scrutiny Committee met with good attendance to discuss all the budget papers presented to Cabinet. The main concern raised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee was assurance that the Budget papers presented will be those that go ahead to Budget Council on the 19th February. It was confirmed that the budget presented to Overview & Scrutiny would proceed unaltered.

CA.301 ANNUAL HRA BUDGET 2025/26 & RENT SETTING

Councillor Thorpe, Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation presented the report which formed part of a suite of documents relating to the Council's budget setting process for 2025/26. It established the proposes the rent level and proposed increase for Council Housing, Dwelling and Garage rents, Sheltered Support, Management, Service and Heating charges and Furnished Tenancy charges.

Decision:

Cabinet approved the following and commend to the Council to:

- Approve the 2025/26 budget for the Housing Revenue Account
- Agree rents to be increased for 2025/26 by 2.7% which is the Government's maximum allowable increase being September CPI (Consumer Price Index) 1.7% plus 1% with effect from 7th April 2025.
- Shared ownership rents to be increased by 2.7% in line with the provision which is set out within shared ownership agreements with effect from 7th April 2025.
- Approve an increase in Garage rents by CPI as at September 2023 CPI + 1% 2.7%.

- Approve an increase in Sheltered Management and Support Charges by CPI + 1% 2.7%.
- Approve an increase in Service and Amenity Charges by CPI + 1% 2.7%
- Approve an increase in Support and Heating charges by CPI + 1% 2.7%
- Approve an increase in Furnished Tenancy charges by CPI+ 1% 2.7%
- Note that where a social rent property is re-let to a new or transferring tenant the rent level will be increased to the formula rent (target rent) for that property. In accordance with the Rent Standard, where an affordable rent property is re-let to a new or transferring tenant the rent level be set by reference to 80% of the market rent (including service charges where applicable) for a similar property at the time of letting or the formula rent for the property, whichever is the greater.

Reasons for recommendations:

To progress the Council's budget setting process to achieve an approved and balanced budget.

Other options considered and rejected:

None.

a THE COUNCIL'S 2025/26 REVENUE BUDGET AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS) FOR 2026/27 THROUGH TO 2027/28

Councillor Thorpe, Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation, presented the suite of budget papers with comprised of the key elements of the 2025/26 budget proposals and the framework for the longer-term Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2026/27 to 2027/28.

It makes available the latest financial information that will underpin the 2025/26 budget and the MTFS. The report also sets out the process that will lead to the agreement of the budget and the setting of the 2025/26 Council Tax at Full Council on the 19 February 2025.

This report reflects the Government's Provisional 2025/26 Local Government Finance Settlement published in December 2024. The financial tables within the report focus on a three-year period.

The report is part of the suite of financial reports including:

- Council Tax Setting
- Treasury Management Strategy 2025/26
- Capital Strategy 2025/26 to 2027/28
- The Dedicated Schools Grant and the schools' budget 2025/26

Decision:

Cabinet approved the recommendations and commended to Council the following:

- Approve the Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2027/28 and the assumptions regarding resources and spending requirements.

- Approve the Council Tax base for Bury Council for 2025/26 of 58,697.86 Band D equivalent dwellings, this is the basis on which the Council Tax funding has been calculated (Appendix 1).
- Approve the net revenue budget of £238.256m for 2025/26. Page 32
- Approve the Council Tax requirement of £118.296m and the increase in Council Tax in 2025/26 of 2.99% in terms of General Council Tax and a further 2% for the Adult Social Care precept for 2025/26 (Appendix 1).
- Approve the budget assumptions of £23.210m in 2025/26.
- Approve the new revenue budget proposal relating to residents parking permits pricing structure for consultation and referred to Council for their consideration.
- Note the remaining budget gap of £11.571m over the medium-term to 2027/28.
- Approve the use of £5.858m of reserves from the budget stabilisation reserve for 2025/26.
- Note the forecast position on reserves over the medium-term to 2027/28.
- Approve the recommendations set out in the Treasury Management Strategy (Appendix 2)
- To approve the Treasury Management Strategy including the associated Prudential Indicators and Annual Investment Strategy.
- To approve the Treasury Management Policy Statement.
- To approve the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement.
- Approve the Capital Strategy and the Programme for 2025/26 – 2027/28 (Appendix 3).
- Approve the Dedicated Schools Grant budget for 2025/26 at £253.097m and approve the allocations between the four funding blocks as set out in Appendix 4 of this report.
- The Schools and Academies 20205/26 funding unit values as recommended by Schools Forum and detailed at Annex 1 to appendix 4.
- Approve the 2025/26 hourly rates for all early year’s providers as follows:
 - i. £5.48 per hour for 3- and 4-year-olds.
 - ii. £7.88 per hour for 2-year olds.
 - iii. £10.50 per hour for under 2’s.
- Note the Equality Impact Assessment for the budget report (Appendix 5).
- Note the Chief Finance Officer (Director of Finance) statement on the robustness of estimates and adequacy of financial reserves in setting the budget (Appendix 6).

Reasons for recommendations:

- The Council has a legal requirement annually to set a balanced budget and Council Tax and where necessary undertake consultation with the public, businesses, stakeholders and internally with staff and through Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

Alternative options considered and rejected 27. The current assumption within the 2025/26 budget and medium term is for an ongoing 4.99% annual Council Tax increase (2.99% general precept and 2% adult social care precept). 28. An alternative option could be made to increase its 'relevant basic amount of council tax' above the levels set out in the Provisional 2025/26 Local Government Finance Settlement published in December 2024 of 4.99%, but this would require holding a local referendum and a majority vote. 29. A 1% increase or decrease in Council Tax is the equivalent to c.£1.1m

b COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME

Councillor Thorpe, Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation presented the Council Tax Support Scheme that set out the Council Tax Support Scheme to be considered by Full Council and considered as part of the budget setting process. As part of the process, local authorities are required to consider whether to revise their existing scheme or replace it with a new one. The report outlined the background, current scheme, context of overall Welfare Reform and recommendations for delivering a local scheme of Council Tax Support with effect from April 2025.

Decision:

Cabinet endorsed to Council:

- Approve that the scheme continues in its current form for the year 2025/26
- Note the current disregard of all War Widow's/Widower's Pension or War Disablement Pension is continued
- Note the performance of the scheme continues to be closely monitored and will be reviewed and amended as appropriate on an annual basis.

Reasons for recommendations:

- The Council is required to set a local scheme for Council Tax Reductions, these recommendations are the same as in previous years based on an affordable model to support low-income households in Bury

Alternative options considered:

- The scheme for pensioners is determined by statute and the council has discretion regarding the award of council tax reductions for working age residents, the details of the scheme were last reviewed and consulted upon in 2017. A detailed review of new options for the scheme will take place in 2025/26 with a view to simplifying the scheme and proposals put before Cabinet.

CA.302 PROCUREMENT AND APPROVAL OF CONTRACT FOR THE HRA CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25

Councillor Cummins, Cabinet Member for Housing Services presented a report which follows on from that received at Cabinet on the 4th December 2024. The report included two projects which although tendered could not be confirmed at that time. The project Communal Works, Lots 1 & 2 were subject to tender clarifications and the report stated they would be submitted to the Cabinet for approval after clarifications with bidders had been confirmed.

Decision:

Cabinet approved the following:

- Communal Works Lot 1 – Ian Williams contract value £659,979.91
- The award of a contract to the winning bidder for the initial period of the tender with the option to extend for a further 12 months in the event that additional work is identified.

Alternative options considered:

- Do nothing: This is not an option as the communal areas are in urgent need of upgrading and improvement. The works will enhance the physical appearance and security of common areas across the Borough and will be welcomed and valued by residents.
- Deliver Inhouse: In addition to a lack of capacity in the in-house contractor there is significant specialist door entry system works included in the contract.
- Open Tender: This option was considered however this would involve a significantly extended procurement process in both time and cost. The use of the Procure Plus framework which specialises in social housing investment works adds benefits in ensuring all tenderers meet capability, expertise and compliance requirements. The mini competition process allows the tender to be tailored to the Council's specific requirements. Using the framework offers clear benefits over the open tender route.

CA.303 ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING INFRASTRUCTURE - SUPPLIER FOR LEVI AND CRSTS FUNDING

Councillor A Quinn, Cabinet Member for Environments, Climate Change and Operations gave an overview of the report which sought approval for Transport for Greater Manchester, undertake the procurement to appoint a supplier to deliver the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) Programme on behalf of Bury Council

The Council recently appointed Be.EV to install Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure (EVCI) under a concessionary contract on Council land. This contract is aimed at installing areas in rapid charging infrastructure in areas with a good throughput of traffic that is likely to turn a profit for the operator.

The earlier report submitted to cabinet on 12th July 2024 outlined a proposal for Bury Council to utilise this funding to directly procure a supplier to install, operate and maintain EVCI on Council land. However, following this Cabinet report Government Office for Low Emissions Vehicles (OZEV) made it clear that they would prefer and favour collaborative working from city regions to support better funding distribution and efficient delivery of services. As a result, it was decided that TfGM should work with the ten Greater Manchester Authorities to carry out the procurement of an EVCI supplier on behalf of all the Greater Manchester Authorities. The successful supplier will keep the income from the network and operate it independently from the Council

Decision:

Cabinet:

- approved that TfGM, undertake the procurement to appoint a supplier to deliver the LEVI Programme on behalf of Bury Council.

- approved the signing of the Collaborative Memorandum of Understanding and delegating power to the Director of Operations in consultation with the Director of Law and Democratic Services for the final approval of the final terms of the MOU.

Reasons for recommendation(s)

1. The Council has a target of being carbon neutral by 2038. To achieve this goal, we need to significantly reduce carbon emissions. A significant amount of carbon emissions come from petrol and diesel cars. One way to reduce these emissions is for people to transition to electric vehicles, which have zero emissions at the tailpipe and a reduced carbon impact overall.
2. There is roughly £2m of funding being made available to the Council to install EVCI for people who do not have access to off-street parking.
3. We cannot use our existing EVCI concession contract to spend this funding.
4. The Council does not have the resources in place to install, operate or maintain a network of EVCI.
5. Therefore, we recommend appointing a supplier to work to install, operate, maintain, and operate EVCI. The Council can then combine this funding with investment from the supplier to increase the number of EVCI installed in Bury.

Reasons for recommendations:

- The Council has a target of being carbon neutral by 2038. To achieve this goal, we need to significantly reduce carbon emissions. A significant amount of carbon emissions come from petrol and diesel cars. One way to reduce these emissions is for people to transition to electric vehicles, which have zero emissions at the tailpipe and a reduced carbon impact overall.
- There is roughly £2m of funding being made available to the Council to install EVCI for people who do not have access to off-street parking.
- We cannot use our existing EVCI concession contract to spend this funding.
- The Council does not have the resources in place to install, operate or maintain a network of EVCI.
- Therefore, we recommend appointing a supplier to work to install, operate, maintain, and operate EVCI. The Council can then combine this funding with investment from the supplier to increase the number of EVCI installed in Bury.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

- Option 1 a. The Council could own and operate the EVCI keeping 100% of the income generated to support the operation and maintenance of the infrastructure. This would still require a procurement process to appoint a supplier to install the infrastructure and carry out the operation and maintenance. This approach would not encourage private investment and shifts the burden of risk onto the Council. We also do not have the internal expertise at the Council to operate and maintain electric vehicle charging infrastructure.
- Option 2 b. We could do nothing. However, this would mean we would miss out on the opportunity to access significant funding to provide our communities with a wider range of accessible EV charging infrastructure.

CA.304 MILLWOOD SPECIAL SCHOOL-UPDATE & REQUEST FOR APPROVAL TO GO TO TENDER

Councillor L Smith, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People presented the report to Cabinet with a full explanation of the latest position, details of the provisional programme including estimated budget costs and sought approval to go out to tender for the construction of the new wing extension, roofing remedial and other outstanding defects scheme.

The report is issued without finalised figures as these will not be available until after the tenders have been returned. They will then be reviewed internally and validated by independent Quantity Surveyors. Provided that the tender figures can be recommended, an updated report will then be issued for Cabinet approval.

Decision:

Cabinet:

- approved the indicative budget and provisional works programme with an anticipated 12 month build scheme and targeted completion of September 2026.
- approved the seeking of competitive tenders for the works, subject to a further report being brought back to a future Cabinet meeting for approval of the tender sum and contract award to the preferred contractor.

Reasons for recommendations:

- Approval to proceed to tender is required for the Millwood scheme to progress. The scheme will include a new build extension it will also address the roofing remedial works/other defects that are unfinished due to the original contractors going into Administration in September 2024.
- Development of additional capacity at Millwood Primary Special School, as set out in the Project Safety Valve agreement between the Council and the Department for Education, is a key element of the specialist place sufficiency strategy. Taken together, the Agreement and strategy set out the business case for the development of new provision and expansion of existing specialist provision to meet increasing demand within Bury and reduce the reliance on placements in Independent Non-Maintained Special Schools (INMSS). The extension scheme at Millwood Primary Special School is a priority within this strategy.

Alternative options considered:

- Do nothing. If we don't proceed with the extension this would mean pupils being sent to out of borough provisions which would be at a large cost to the council We must address the roofing remedial works/other defects as a priority as the original contractors only re-roofed approximately half of the school roofs. The roof is deteriorating and needs to be replaced as soon as practically possible.

CA.305 SKYLINE GMCA RESIDENTIAL CHILDREN'S HOMES

Councillor L Smith, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People presented the report regarding Project Skyline which involves the ten Greater Manchester local authorities, NHS Greater Manchester and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) which will

create an increased supply of specialist children's homes for children in care in the Greater Manchester region for some of our most vulnerable young people. This will see ten new homes that can accommodate up to 24 children with complex mental health issues or Emotional Behavioural Difficulties. GMCA is leading the procurement to appoint the care home operators on behalf of the ten GM local authorities.

The Leader of the Council, wished to highlight regarding some of the local residents' concerns and acknowledged that some elected members may also share these concerns. Members were informed that this report should be seen as an opportunity and it is important the Council listens and assures local residents. Councillor L Smith added that discussions regarding planning permissions for Childrens Homes is taking place with the Department for Education currently.

Decision:

Cabinet:

- Noted the proposed arrangements for the delivery specialist residential care in Greater Manchester for Looked After Children ("LAC") and to agree that Bury Council should continue its due diligence prior to agreeing participation in the scheme.
- Dependent upon due diligence, agree to delegate authority to the Chief Executive/Executive Director Children & Young People, in consultation with the portfolio holder for Children and Young People, and Director of Finance to negotiate and finalise the Partnership Agreement and all other contractual and ancillary arrangements.
- Delegated to the Director of Law and Democratic Services to enter and complete the documentation necessary to give effect to the recommendations.

Reasons for the recommendations:

- To enable Bury to participate in progressing plans to invest in new regional provision that will be protected for GM children and seek to develop a portfolio of new publicly owned residential provision to support children in care to GM authorities in need of residential provision.
- At its core, creating dedicated GMCA provision is seeking to mitigate the exposure to market forces, particularly the escalating cost of provision and sometimes sub-optimal outcomes for children. The Project aims to establish 10 homes for up to 24 children and young people. Whilst this is a small number relative to the number of children in care to GM authorities in private sector children's homes (slightly less than 600 currently), it represents an important shift and a return to the children's homes market for GM local authorities.
- Bury is the only Local Authority in Greater Manchester that does not currently have internal residential homes, so we are the most challenged of all GM authorities in terms of sufficiency of specialist homes and our subsequent exposure to market forces, we have seen a marked increase in the number of residential placements currently at 46 having seen an increase in volume of 21% over the past 12 months, with an weekly average cost of £5,834 per child at the end of Q1 2024/25 and with a total cost of £8.7m at 2023/24 outturn.
- Engagement in Project Skyline would be a complementary facet of Bury's sufficiency strategy whilst we also develop plans for our own residential provision and build the number of fostering households and the range of needs that foster homes are able to meet.

Alternative options considered:

- Do nothing - The Council is exploring the Skyline model before committing to enter into a Partnership Agreement, it would be prudent to explore this option fully.
- Develop in house provision - The Council has already approved the development of its own residential provision in November 2024 and Project Skyline should be seen as complementary to the Council's own proposal, rather than either being an alternative to the other. Project Skyline aims to provide up to 24 homes for children across GM and the Council's own development provides for the development of 6 homes for children. These figures should be seen in the context of close to 600 children in private sector residential homes across GM and 46 children currently in the care of Bury. One can see that this is the beginning of a broader rebalancing of provision between public and private sector.
- Furthermore, as part of the plans across GM, Project Skyline envisages developing specialist children's homes for children vulnerable to extra-familial safeguarding risks and with acute mental health/behavioural concerns. This provision would differ from the type of homes that Bury itself would be seeking to establish.

CA.306 ADULT SOCIAL CARE PROVIDER FEES 25/26

Councillor T Tariq, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing presented the report which detailed the fee engagement process including timelines and proposed recommendations for the standard fee proposal to contracted providers of adult social care services for the period 2025/26. For each provider sector, the Council has uplifted the staffing element of the fee by 5% in line with the increase in the Real Living Wage and 6.73% for those paying the National Living Wage.

In response to a members question regarding the changes to National Insurance contributions for Employers, members were informed that the impact is 1.5% which equates to £1.68 million pounds, members were assured that Bury Council is ensuring care providers employed by Bury Council are not place under any further financial stress.

Decision:

Cabinet:

- Noted the outcome of the fee engagement process detailed below.
- Approved the uplifted 2025/2026 Hourly Fee Rate, with effect from 1st April 2025.

Reasons for recommendations:

- The Council is required to carry out a provider fee engagement process and has done so for year 25/26. The uplifts are within budget and look to drive the provider market to meet needs now and going forward, while ensuring provider sustainability in light of current pressures. The recommended fee rates also support providers to pay their staff the Real Living Wage and continue the move towards the Cost of Care.

Alternative options considered:

- Alternatives were not considered as we are required to issue fee uplifts within allocated budgets.

CA.307 ANNUAL REVIEW OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE FEES & CHARGES 2025-26

Councillor T Tariq, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing presented the report which proposed the 2025/26 Adult Social Care fees and charges across the Health and Care directorate to take effect in April 2025.

Decision:

Cabinet:

- Approved the proposed Adult Social Care Fees & Charges for 2025/26 detailed in Appendix A of the report.

Reasons for recommendations:

- In accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations, there is a requirement to review fees and charges on an annual basis.

Alternative options considered:

- No alternatives were considered. The uplift to 2025/26 Adult Social Care fees are in line with the 2025/26 Adult Social Care Provider Fee Uplifts or in line with the November 2024 Autumn Statement which announced that Department of Works and Pensions benefits will increase by 1.7%.

CA.308 CARERS STRATEGY AND COMMISSIONING INTENTIONS

Councillor T Tariq, Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing presented the report which proposed the approval and implementation of the new Bury Adult Carers Strategy- 2025- 2029 and commissioning intentions, based on aspirations to improve the quality of life of unpaid carers in Bury.

Decision:

Cabinet:

- approved the implementation of the Adult Carers Strategy 2025-2029.
- approved a tendering exercise for a provider to deliver a service for unpaid carers across Bury.
- Approved that the new provider will enter a 4 year arrangement, including a 1 year extension subject to performance and review.
- Delegated authority to the Director of Adult Social Services and Community Commissioning for contract award and any future extensions relevant to this contract. (Within the specified Contract provision).

Reasons for recommendations:

- The previous Bury Carers Strategy 2021- 2024 is now out of date and requires updating to ensure that it is fit for purpose.
- To reflect the new commitments in the Strategy there is a need to refresh the current service specification delivered by commissioned provider
- Current contractual arrangements end on the 31st May 2025, therefore there is a need legally to procure for a new service.
- The Local Authority has a duty to provide care and support to those individuals assessed as needing this pursuant to assessments under Part 1 Care Act 2014.

This includes under s 10 a duty to assess carers who may have needs for care and support and under s 20 a duty and in certain circumstances provide any assessed eligible care and support needs for carers.

Alternative options considered:

- Procurement rules do not allow any further extensions to previous contractual arrangements. Therefore, the only option is to engage in a procuring process

CA.309 ACQUISITION OF NEW AND PRE-OWNED PROPERTIES IN THE BOROUGH

Councillor Cummins, Cabinet Member for Housing Services presented the report which sought approval to purchase new build homes on private developments in the borough where available, using retained Right to Buy receipts up to £3.019 m generated from the period 1st April 2022 to the 31st of March 2024, to accommodate homeless households, negate the need for expensive bed & breakfast and hotel provision and reduce service costs.

In response to a members question regarding spending the £3.019 million within a short space of time. Members were assured that the officer involved in this work has the correct skill set to deliver the ask for the council.

The Leader requested that the Cabinet Member for Housing Services ensures an update to the correct committee's and meetings on how the work is progressing.

Decision:

Cabinet:

- Approved the acquisition of new build homes on private developments using retained Right to Buy receipts up to £3.019 m, as set out within this report.
- Approved the acquisition of suitable pre-owned property using retained Right to Buy receipts up to £3.019 m where the Council is unable to obtain appropriate new build property within time limits.
- Delegate the finalised terms and acquisition of property to the Director of Regeneration & Project Delivery and Director of Housing, in consultation with the Director of Finance and Cabinet Member for Housing Services.

Reasons for Recommendations:

- To provide additional accommodation for households in priority need, negate the need for costly bed & breakfast and hotel provision and reduce service costs.
- To enable the Council to support vulnerable households and fulfil its statutory obligations.
- To increase the housing stock; generate additional rental income and council tax revenue.

Alternative Options Considered:

- Do nothing - this option has been rejected as these monies give the Council an opportunity to increase the housing stock and generate significant savings by reducing the need for temporary accommodation, in particular costly bed & breakfast, and hotel provision.
- Give the monies (£3.019 m) to a local registered provider for the acquisition of housing – this option has been rejected because the Council would lose control

of any housing assets acquired, together with the opportunity to maximise rental income and increase productivity.

- Use the monies to build/develop new affordable housing – this option has been rejected as these monies must be expended by the 31st of March 2026 to ensure maximum efficiency. The development of new affordable housing would not be completed within existing time limits and would incur additional expenditure/resource.
- Use the monies to improve/renovate existing housing stock – this option has been rejected as these monies can only be used to provide replacement affordable housing e.g. social and affordable rent and low-cost market housing such as shared ownership.

CA.310 NORTHERN GATEWAY WESTERN ACCESS SCHEME – STRATEGIC OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE ENDORSEMENT AND CONTRACT AWARD APPOINTMENT OF CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTOR AND ASSOCIATED MULTI-DISCIPLINARY CONSULTANT TEAM

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth presented the report which sought Cabinet's endorsement of the Strategic Outline Business Case for the Northern Gateway's Western Access scheme (Pilsworth Road Corridor Improvements). The Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) stage represents the first step in the on-going development and refinement of a HM Treasury (Green Book) compliant business case for the Western Access scheme. The SOBC's preliminary concept designs and associated high level cost estimates will now be reviewed and further updated as part of the development of the Western Access scheme's Outline Business Case during 2025.

Decision:

Cabinet:

- Endorsed the Strategic Outline Business Case for the Northern Gateway's Western Access scheme (Pilsworth Road Corridor Improvements) as a basis for on-going review and development during the scheme's Outline Business Case stage, including the identification of a preferred scheme option.
- Delegated the endorsement of future iterations of the Western Access scheme business case to the Director of Law and Democratic Services in consultation with the Executive Director of Place and Director of Finance and the Council Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth.
- Approved the appointment of Balfour Beatty UK Ltd as the scheme's main construction Contractor to undertake pre-construction stage work packages covering the Outline Business Case / RIBA 3 Stage and Full Business Case / RIBA 4 Stage.
- Delegated final acceptance of a final contract sum up to a provisional maximum of £600,000 covering the Outline Business Case stage work packages, to the Director of Law and Democratic Services in consultation with the Executive Director of Place and Director of Finance and the Council Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth.
- Delegated finalisation and sealing of the pre-construction services contract including appropriate break clauses, to the Director of Law and Democratic Services in consultation with the Executive Director of Place and the Council Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth.

Reasons for recommendations:

- Significant progress is now being made to progress the delivery of the Northern Gateway Investment Zone ('Places for Everyone' Joint Development Plan' allocation JPA 1.1), which is the largest designated development site in the Atom Valley Mayoral Development Zone (MDZ).
- The Western Access scheme (Pilsworth Road Corridor Improvements) will provide the necessary off-site, highway and transportation infrastructure required to access the early development phases of the Northern Gateway Investment Zone (IZ) site (JPA 1.1 allocation). The construction of the Western Access scheme will create the potential capacity to unlock circa 3.5M sq/ft – 4M sq/ft employment generating uses, including advanced manufacturing commercial floor space.
- The Western Access scheme Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) provides the robust basis for the on-going review and further development of the scheme's concept design and business case during the scheme's pre-construction stage. Initially this will cover the preparation of the scheme's Outline Business Case (including identification of a preferred scheme option) in line with HM Treasury's 'Green Book' business case procedure, and the associated development of the scheme's planning designs and costings in line with the RIBA 3 planning stage.
- IZ year one revenue grant funding has now been allocated from 1st April 2024. Following Cabinet's approval of the Grant Funding Agreement (GFA) in November 2024, the year one grant (£800,000) has now been released and there is now an urgent need to swiftly and flexibly progress the development of the Western Access scheme to meet the challenging grant funding milestone deadlines.
- These GFA milestones include the production and approval of the Western Access scheme's Outline Business Case and associated RIBA 3 planning designs by December 2025, and thereafter the production of the scheme Full Business Case and RIBA 4 technical designs and costings by March 2027. GFA milestones also stipulate that the procurement of the scheme's main Contractor (and associated multi-disciplinary team) should occur during November 2024, and the subsequent contractual appointment to be in place by February 2025.
- In adherence with the above, the procurement of Balfour Beatty UK Ltd and its associated multi-disciplinary team to undertake the scheme's pre-construction work packages under a two stage Design & Build contract, has now been completed in full compliance with the Council's Corporate Procurement and Contract Procedure Rules, and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015, and in alignment with the approved Western Access Procurement Strategy.

Alternative options considered:

- That the recommendations are not approved, and we do not utilise the approved year 1 grant funding, with the funding being reallocated elsewhere in Greater Manchester. This presents a high risk to the delivery of the Places for Everyone joint development plan and specifically, the delivery of the Western Access scheme and the Northern Gateway Investment Zone (JPA1.1 allocation).
- Delaying the approval of the pre-construction Contract will delay the preparation of the Western Access scheme Outline Business Case (OBC) and associated

RIBA 3 planning designs. Consequently, this will delay the delivery of the subsequent Full Business Case (FBC) / RIBA 4 technical design stage during 2026 and thereafter delay the start of the construction delivery (RIBA 5 stage) of the Western Access scheme which under the grant funding requirements should commence by April 2027 and be completed by March 2029.

- Delaying the Western Access scheme OBC, FBC and construction delivery stages will jeopardise the delivery of the early phases of the Northern Gateway site Page 379 development. The delivery of the Western Access scheme is critical to providing the necessary highway capacity and associated transportation improvements required to unlock the Phase 1 IZ site (JPA 1.1 allocation).
- Delaying the delivery of the Western Access scheme would erode confidence in the Council's ability to deliver a key strategic priority for both Bury and its strategic partners, including Rochdale Borough Council, Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Transport for Greater Manchester and National Highways. Delaying the delivery of the Western Access scheme would undermine supporting the delivery of a number of major, corporate strategies and Team Bury initiatives including the Council's 'Let's Do It' Vision and Strategy, Northern Gateway Strategic Development Vision, Atom Valley MDZ Vision, Northern Gateway Development Framework (supplementary planning document), Bury's Economic Strategy, amongst others.

CA.311 DISPOSAL OF FORMER LIBRARY, PINFOLD LANE, WHITEFIELD

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth presented the report which provided an update on the proposed relocation of the Uplands Medical Centre in Whitefield, and the proposal to sell the former Whitefield Library to the NHS Property Services (NHS PS).

Decision:

Cabinet:

- Approved the sale of the former Whitefield Library, Pinfold Lane, Whitefield to NHS Property Services
- Approved the demolition costs for two small structures within the retained Pinfold site to enable the NHS to proceed with their works.
- Approved that the Council owned portion of the currently Uplands Medical Centre, once the practice has relocated, be deemed surplus to requirements and be placed on the Asset Transformation Programme disposal list.

Reasons for recommendations:

- To enable the Uplands Medical Centre and related services to be relocated
- To make best use of the Council's property assets.
- Disposing of property assets to reduce holding costs, reduce the Councils' carbon footprint and to generate capital receipts.
- To enable the Council to continue to generate capital receipts that can enable other Council projects to be supported. Alternative options considered and rejected
- To sell the site in the open market, however this option would prevent the proposed relocation of the Uplands Medical Centre and has therefore been discounted

CA.312 UNIT 4 SYSTEM UPGRADE & TRANSFORMATION REPORT

Councillor Thorpe, Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation presented the report regarding the Unit 4 System upgrade which was a follow on from the Unit 4 Contract Award Report approved by Cabinet on 25 September 2025. The report provided a summary of the Strategic Outline Business Case (SOBC) produced by the Strategic Partner and sought approval from Cabinet to proceed with the full transformation delivery option required to deliver the implementation of the Unit 4 cloud-based ERP Financial Management System and the transformation programme.

A member sought assurances with regards to contingencies in place to support the transition. In response Councillor Thorpe, Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation confirmed that the system used currently and the planned new system are both based on the same software decreasing the risks of an issue. There is also project management support and the original license does not elapse until 2026 giving time to transition.

The Leader, requested that appropriate progress reports on the advancements are received.

Decision:

Cabinet:

- Approved to proceed with the Full Transformation Delivery option.
- Approved the estimated one-off capital investment cost to be incepted into the capital programme, to be funded from a combination of earmarked reserves and/or capital receipts
- Noted the progress made with regard to the procurement of the Strategic Partner, with the final award to be considered for approval by Cabinet in March.

Reasons for recommendations:

- The current Financial Management System is nearing the end of its lifecycle, which limits efforts to modernise. Challenges include fragmented financial processes, reliance on manual tasks, and a lack of self-service options for staff and suppliers. There are also number of inherent risks and compliance concerns regarding the existing system alongside high reliance on manually based financial transaction activities which is affecting the efficiency of the finance service and the wider organisation.
- As stated in the September Cabinet report, Unit 4 have informed clients that the current on-premises version of Unit 4, which the council operates will be unsupported after 2026 and therefore this creates a burning platform to change and modernise the Financial Management System, but also an opportunity to drive through financial transformation programme throughout the Council.

Alternative options considered:

- Three options detailed in the body of the report were identified and their respective estimated cost & benefits were considered prior to making this recommendation.

CA.313 RESTRUCTURE OF THE REVENUES AND BENEFITS DEPARTMENT – APPROVAL OF REDUNDANCY COST

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Affairs and HR, Councillor T Rafiq, presented the report which sought support to request Council approval for three individuals whom expressed an interest in voluntary redundancy which totals more than £100,000. Therefore, in accordance with the requirement of section 38 of the Localism Act 2011 and associated statutory guidance as well as the Council's Pay Policy statement, approval of these applications is a matter for Council.

Decision:

Cabinet:

- Supports payment of the redundancy and capital costs associated with the aforementioned staff and commends this proposal to Council for their agreement. The wider, post consultation, proposal for implementation of the restructure have been subjected to approval by the Cabinet Member for HR and Corporate Affairs under their delegation.

Reasons for recommendations:

- The offer of voluntary redundancy has been made in accordance with Council Policy.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

- To refuse the three applications based on cost. The staff members could resign and claim constructive dismissal for breach of trust and confidence on the grounds that they had been deprived of a redundancy payment and the associated pension contributions.

CA.314 APPOINTMENTS REPORT

The Cabinet Member for Corporate Affairs and HR, Councillor T Rafiq, presented the report which set out amendments to the appointments made at the Annual Meeting of the Council held on 22nd May 2024.

The Leader, Councillor O'Brien reflected that he has met with the two new Independent Co-opted Members, Ben Thomas and David Webster and they are welcome additions to give the Audit Committee external rigor and support and bring great experience to the Committee.

Decision:

Cabinet:

- Noted the appointments and amendments to appointments made since the Annual Meeting of Council as set out at paragraph 2.

Reasons for recommendations:

N/A

Alternative options considered and rejected:

N/A

CA.315 MINUTES OF ASSOCIATION OF GREATER MANCHESTER AUTHORITIES / GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY

It was agreed:

That the minutes of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority meeting held on 13th December 2024 be noted.

CA.316 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

CA.317 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Decision:

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100 (A)(4), Schedule 12(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, for the reason that the following business involves the disclosure of exempt information as detailed against the item.

CA.318 MILLWOOD SPECIAL SCHOOL-UPDATE & REQUEST FOR APPROVAL TO GO TO TENDER - PART B

Councillor L Smith, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People presented the Part B report Millwood Special School. The report set out the full financial details.

Decision:

Cabinet:

- approved the indicative budget and provisional works programme with an anticipated 12 month build scheme and targeted completion of September 2026.
- approved the seeking of competitive tenders for the works, subject to a further report being brought back to a future Cabinet meeting for approval of the tender sum and contract award to the preferred contractor.

Reasons for recommendations:

- As set out in Part A

Alternative options considered:

- As set out in Part A

CA.319 DISPOSAL OF FORMER LIBRARY, PINFOLD LANE, WHITEFIELD - PART B

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth presented the Part B report regarding the disposal of former Library, Pinfold Lane, Whitefield. The report set out the financial details.

In response to a member question the Leader advised that 10% of the capital receipt will be used within Whitefield.

Decision:

Cabinet:

- Approved the sale of the former Whitefield Library, Pinfold Lane, Whitefield to NHS Property Services

- Approved the demolition costs for two small structures within the retained Pinfold site to enable the NHS to proceed with their works.
- Approved that the Council owned portion of the currently Uplands Medical Centre, once the practice has relocated, be deemed surplus to requirements and be placed on the Asset Transformation Programme disposal list.

Reasons for recommendations:

- As set out in Part A.

CA.320 UNIT 4 SYSTEM UPGRADE & TRANSFORMATION REPORT - PART B

Councillor Thorpe, Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation presented the Part B report regarding Unit 4. The report set out the financial details.

Decision:

Cabinet:

- Approved to proceed with the Full Transformation Delivery option.
- Approved the estimated one-off capital investment cost to be incepted into the capital programme, to be funded from a combination of earmarked reserves and/or capital receipts
- Noted the progress made with regard to the procurement of the Strategic Partner, with the final award to be considered for approval by Cabinet in March.

Reasons for the decision:

- As set out for Part A.

Alternative options considered:

- As set out for Part A.

COUNCILLOR E O'BRIEN
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.00 pm)