

Minutes of: **Cabinet**

Date of Meeting: 3 December 2025

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

Also in attendance: Councillors R Bernstein, M Smith and J Rydeheard

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillor C Cummins and Councillor S Arif

CA.79 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Cummins and Councillor Arif.

CA.80 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

CA.81 Public Question Time

The following question was submitted in advance of the meeting by a member of the public, Alexander Abbey:

Why is the wording for the HMO SPD so weak on the consultation point 7.1; "will not normally be granted."? Why can the word "normally" not be removed? What exceptions are expected here?

Responding, Councillor Eamonn O'Brien reported that assuming that the SPD is formally adopted, all planning applications received for HMO's will need to be considered against the SPD and all other material planning considerations, as required by Planning law. The caveat in the SPD reflects this legislation, as there can be unforeseen circumstances that may warrant an exceptional approach to the determination of a planning application. It is not possible to list all exceptions as each application will be considered on their merits, but an example may be where all standards are met in full, but 1 bedroom fails to meet space standards by 1 cm. In such a situation, on balance, it may be that this could be considered to be within an acceptable limit and would not warrant an otherwise compliant application to be refused.

A further supplementary question was submitted:

Assuming the new HMO SPD passes tonight with previous support, how long before the planning committee votes on implementation of article 4 direction to include 6 bed and smaller HMOs, which don't currently require planning at all? Without this article 4 direction, this work is almost pointless as developers will just turn to these smaller developments, especially on streets of 3 beds houses, and all issues will still remain. Will that Article 4 be voted on regardless of how the consultation comes back?

Councillor O'Brien reported that the intention is to present a report to the next Planning Control Committee, which was scheduled for 16 December. This would not be affected by any ongoing consultations. This was also a public meeting and Mr Abbey was welcome to attend and observe.

The following question was asked by a member of the public, Rebecca Partridge:

At the last Cabinet meeting we came to, you described a one-to-one deal as something small, like a strip of garden for a homeowner, where open marketing isn't required. But FOI disclosures now show around 60 such one-to-one disposals since 2015 including multi million pound transfers to developers. Given that evidence, can you confirm that the Council's internal categorisation of a one-to-one disposal is not openly marketed? And, if not, can you explain what distinguishes these 60 unmarketed developer transactions from the definition you gave publicly?

Councillor O'Brien replied that this was a very complex question, if details on all 60 were being requested. He confirmed that one-to-one sales could range from bigger sales to very small ones, with the vast majority being smaller strips of land. The test for all these sites was whether it followed the legal framework, whether it provided best value to residents and the borough, and whether it met strategic objectives. With bigger sites, there were other thresholds and criteria on top of this. Without knowing all 60 sales referred to, the Leader declined to comment on which were openly marketed, and advised that any definition of a one-to-one sale wouldn't necessarily refer to marketing.

Rob Summerfield, Director of Regeneration and Project Delivery, added that each site was different and the intention of the disposal was different. The Council has the capacity to undertake direct disposals, but this was governed by a strict set of rules. There is no formal definition for a direct disposal as each site will be judged on its own merits; this was a very complicated process and could not be simplified in the way being requested.

The Leader clarified that the Council has had the Accelerated Land Disposal Programme (ALDP) which has been advertised as a whole, as well as being approached by residents about certain strips of land. He advised Mr Jacobs and Ms Partridge that the Council could review the list of 60 and provided details as to which were marketed.

The following question was asked by a member of the public, Daniel Jacobs:

Are you going to be releasing the Part B reports to the deals sold to developers as I have requested from the list of one-to-one deals? These requests have been rejected for, what I believe to be over-generous commercial sensitivity, but they were deals done years ago. You could reassure the public somewhat that you were acting in their best interests.

Councillor O'Brien replied that there are a variety of ways that members of the public and interested parties can request information, and it's up to the judgement of the Council's legal team to determine where information remained commercially sensitive. Crucially, elected Members do get the opportunity to scrutinise Part B reports,

including Opposition Members, so decisions are not made without objective scrutiny and are done with a reasonable level of transparency. That is how the Council can assure the public that these are decisions still made by public representatives and in full view of non-executive and opposition Members.

If judgements have been made about what can be released or not, this is not to be second guessed by Members today. The Leader confirmed he was satisfied that when decisions are made in Part B, they are done for the right reasons and that information is handled correctly. We can go away and look at what you've asked, but there has been lots in the public domain and we have endeavoured to give the information when we can and explained why we can't when this is the case. The Leader confirmed he was satisfied that the decision Mr Jacobs was interested in has been made for the right reasons in the right way. He agreed with the point being made about the importance of transparency, and advised that ultimately this was for the public, as well as independent external organisations, to decide if the Council was not handling information correctly.

CA.82 Member Question Time

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

I was pleased to work cross-party to mandate the provision of item 7, however I am concerned by the proposed contents of the supplementary planning document (SPD). Please can the Leader clarify how the parameters set out at point 7 of the report were decided upon, and may he clarify how these parameters would prevent mini-clusters of HMOs every 100m on every street in the Borough?

Responding, Councillor Eamonn O'Brien reported that the consultation draft HMO SPD sets three locational measures for new HMOs coming through Planning. The concentration threshold sets a maximum limit of 10% or no more than four properties (whichever is the lower) within a 100m radius – so this includes the streets 100m behind or in front of the application property. This is a more stringent than examples seen in other boroughs where there is no maximum limit within a 50m or 100m threshold. The sandwiching restriction (restrictions on properties being enclosed by HMOs) and the restriction on three adjacent HMOs place further limits which seek to prevent clustering.

A further supplementary question was submitted:

Part of the motion that we passed was to do with consultation with all parties in the Chamber with regards to density caps; please can you detail when that took place and what representations were taken?

The Leader undertook to produce a report on this information outside of this meeting and to circulate it to all Members.

CA.83 Minutes

It was agreed:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 5 November 2025 be approved as a correct record.

CA.84 Northern Gateway, Western Access scheme: Approval of Main Construction Contract to undertake Pre-construction and Construction Stage activities

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth presented a report regarding the acceptance of a final contract sum for the next phase of the Northern Gateway, Western Access scheme's Pre-construction stage (Stage 2b), and the associated NEC4 ECC Option C X22 Main Contract. These activities include the finalisation of the scheme Outline Business Case, preparing a likely Planning Application, Planning Designs, and undertaking a comprehensive programme of on-site surveys and ground investigations.

Decision:

Cabinet:

1. Delegated final acceptance of a final contract sum, up to a provisional maximum of £2,830,403 covering the finalisation of the Outline Business Case stage work packages (Stage 2b), 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; and
2. Delegated finalisation of the Main Pre-Construction and Construction Contract (NEC4 ECC Option C X22 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 the decision:

The Western Access scheme (Pilsworth Road Corridor Improvements) is a cross-boundary scheme with Rochdale Council. It 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 therefore support the creation of high quality, employment floor space, including space within the advanced manufacturing and foundational sectors.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

- That the recommendations are not approved, and the Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 Investment Zone revenue grant funding totalling £1.5M is not fully utilised, 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 delivery of the Western Access scheme would erode confidence in the Council's ability to deliver a key strategic priority for both Bury Council 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 and emergent Mayoral Development Corporation, Northern Gateway Development Framework (supplementary planning document), Bury's Economic Strategy, the emergent Greater Manchester Transport Strategy, amongst others.

CA.85 Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document - consultation draft

The Cabinet Member for Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth presented a report seeking approval to carry out consultation on the Draft Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). This would provide guidelines and key considerations for the determination of planning applications for Houses in Multiple Occupation. The aim of the SPD is to avoid an over-concentration of HMOs and ensure that they provide suitable living standards for future occupants and reduce potential for detrimental impacts on local communities. It was noted that the consultation period had been increased from 4 to 6 weeks, owing to the time of year.

In response to Members' questions it was noted that there were deep concerns about the growing concentration of HMOs, which could change local housing markets and potentially limit opportunities for larger families. The Leader advised he was confident that there were sufficient grounds to propose the Article 4 Directive but it was ultimately up to the Planning Committee to make a decision on this, with advice from planning officers and specialists. If agreed, and the consultation approved, there would be some flexibility in the implementation period, but this would likely be a matter of weeks rather than months considering the long, public debate and consultation as well as the pressing need. It was noted that a decision on implementation would likely come early in the new year, with the views from other Party Leaders being sought. In response to other Member comments, it was agreed that a Member Development session would be arranged for all councillors, in order to refresh their knowledge and support their role in representing local residents at Planning meetings.

Decision:

Cabinet:

1. Approved the draft Houses in Multiple Occupation SPD as the basis for a six-week public consultation commencing December 2025; and
2. Delegated approval to the Executive Director of Place to undertake the public consultation and make minor non-material modifications to the draft Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document before consultation commences.

Reasons for the decision:

To ensure that all stakeholders are given the opportunity to have their say on the draft Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

To not approve the SPD for consultation. This would prevent stakeholders from commenting on the SPD and would prevent the Council from being able to proceed to adopt the SPD because it is a statutory requirement that such documents must be consulted on before adoption.

CA.86 Prestwich Village Regeneration Project: Phase 1B and 2 Development Strategy

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth presented a report regarding the next stage of the Prestwich Village Regeneration Project, which included new housing, new retail units, a market hall, new leisure facilities and a new home for the library and attractive public realm. The Leader advised that the scheme was progressing steadily and this approval would keep the momentum up after the conclusion of the first phase.

In response to Members' questions it was noted that the Prestwich scheme was quite advanced in terms of delivery when compared with other schemes. Prestwich and other town centres were becoming tired and suffering from vacancies, in contrast to their vibrant communities, and therefore the schemes benefitted from being very clearly defined. Bury Town Centre regeneration, however, was coming from an existing position of strength, which was a different dynamic and arguably more complex in terms of sequencing delivery.

Decision:

Cabinet:

1. Approved the commitment of circa £3,475,000 to deliver design, planning demolition and vacant possession activities required to achieve agreed milestones required to secure GMCA funding. This funding requirement is broken down as follows:
 - Underwriting of £2,250,000 in design fees (funded initially by Muse Places on behalf of the Joint Venture)
 - £1,000,000 in demolition costs
 - £225,000 to achieve vacant possession
2. Noted the risks and proposed mitigations associated with the implementation of this development strategy.

Reasons for the decision:

Commitment of funds and delivery of the milestones stated below are required in order for the Council to secure external grant/Patient Equity funding via the GMCA in their March 2026 funding round.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

Pause the Prestwich Village Regeneration project following completion of Phase 1A of the development until external gap funding is secured via another route/funder. This option has been rejected as there is no clear alternative route to external funding for the project, other than that which is on offer from the GMCA. Following devolution, the majority of external grant funds are now managed via the GMCA. As such, their regeneration support funding is the most effective route to project delivery.

CA.87 Corporate Plan Quarter Two 2025-26 Performance & Delivery

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation presented the summary report for the Corporate Plan. This described the progress made in the second quarter of the financial year (July – September 2025) including some significant achievements such as the lifting of the ILACS intervention, ongoing SEND transformation, and key regeneration projects progressing on track or ahead of schedule. Councillor Thorpe also highlighted some Amber rated indicators, which

would be reviewed and mitigated for Quarter 3, but advised that these largely did not reflect the Council's ability to deliver but were delayed by external influences.

Decision:

Cabinet noted the Quarter Two position on progress against the Corporate Plan 2025-26

Reasons for the decision:

To enable transparency and robust monitoring of performance and delivery of the Corporate Plan.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

Not applicable.

CA.88 Draft 2026/27 Revenue Budget

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation presented a report which presented the updated budget position for 2026/27, informed Members of the updated budget gap of £16.000m for 2026/27, presented a draft set of budget proposals and the remaining budget gap, informed members of the forecast reserves position over the three years 2026/27 to 2028/29, and set out the 2026/27 budget setting process ahead of Budget Council on 25 February 2026. Members thanked officers in the Finance Team and across departments for their work in developing these proposals, as well as Cabinet Members for leading on their portfolio areas. It was noted that a one-year MTFS was proposed until more detail was available regarding the Fairer Funding review, and that consultation would begin on 4th December.

In response to Members' questions it was noted that the zero base budgeting exercise had been valuable in identifying efficiencies and therefore securing savings that would not impact residents. Even when a service was changing, e.g. Adult Care, proposals included changing service provision in order to retain or improve the standard of care. Some fees and charges would increase, but these would be in-line with financial assessments and were increasing from a historically low base. It was noted that the delivery plan would provide greater detail on any expected impact, and where noticeable impact on a group or a service was anticipated, a specific consultation would be held around that issue.

With regards to collaboration with other boroughs, this would be done where appropriate. School transport was an area with possibilities for an efficient and equitable shared service but was complex to develop, and it was important for other local issues to secure Bury-specific solutions. It was noted that a benchmarking exercise would be undertaken to see how Bury compared with other boroughs.

Decision:

Cabinet:

1. Approved the set of draft revenue budget proposals totalling £14.577m for inclusion in the Cabinet proposals for the setting of the 2026/27 revenue budget to be considered by Council on 25 February 2026;
2. Approved consultation on draft budget proposals between 4th December to 19th January 2026;

3. Noted that the outcomes of the budget consultation will be reported back to Members and used to inform the budget setting proposals and referred to Overview & Scrutiny Committee for their consideration;
4. Noted the remaining budget gap of £7.547m for 2026/27 with further budget proposals to be presented to Cabinet in January 2026; and
5. Noted the forecast reserves balance for 2026/27.

Reasons for the decision:

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:

- The current assumption within the MTFS is for an on-going 4.99% annual Council Tax increase (2.99% general precept and 2% adult social care precept). An alternative option could be made to increase its 'relevant basic amount of council tax' above the levels that will be set out in the 2026/27 Local Government Finance Settlement published later in the year, but this would require holding a local referendum and a majority vote. A 1% increase or decrease in Council Tax is the equivalent to c£1.27m.

CA.89 Adult Social Care Performance Quarter Two Report 2025/26

The Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Health, and Public Service Reform presented the Adult Social Care Department Quarter 2 Report for 2025-26 which outlined delivery of the Adult Social Care Strategic Plan, preparation for the new CQC Assessment regime for local authorities, and provided an illustration and report on the department's performance framework. In response to Members' questions it was noted that some effects of summer holidays but also the time taken preparing for CQC this quarter had resulted in drops in activity which had led to increases in waiting lists and outstanding reviews, but recovery in Quarter 3 was expected.

Decision:

Cabinet noted the report.

Reasons for the decision:

N/A

Alternative options considered and rejected:

N/A

CA.90 Neighbourhood Support Housing Services - Young People's Accommodation & Support Tender - Part A

The Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Health and Public Service Reform presented a report regarding a tendering exercise for Young People's Accommodation and Support Services. This commission would be the most significant transformation of accommodation for young people in the last 20 years in the borough, having a positive impact on young people and young families experiencing or at risk of homelessness in Bury, in particular Bury Care Leavers.

Decision:

Cabinet:

1. Delegated finalisation for the provision of Young People's and Young Families Accommodation and Support Services, to the Director of Law and Democratic Services with approval from the Director of Adult Social Services and Community Commissioning and the Executive Director of Children's Services; and
2. Noted that joint funding arrangements between Adult Social Care and Children's Services were previously agreed at Cabinet on 9th July 2025 and are detailed in Part B.

Reasons for the decision:

- The current contract ends on 1st February 2026; this contract cannot be further extended. New contracts will therefore need to commence on 2nd February 2026.
- Each Lot requires the availability of a significant number of units of accommodation. To deliver this effectively and on time, the successful provider/s will require a reasonable mobilisation period. Therefore, it is recommended that Cabinet delegate finalisation and sealing of contract awards, for the provision of Young People's and Young Families Accommodation and Support Services, to the Director of Law and Democratic Services with approval from the Director of Adult Social Services and Community Commissioning and the Executive Director of Children's Services.
- This decision will enable the division to inform successful providers following the conclusion of the tender evaluation process and standstill period, which is expected to be completed the week commencing 15th December 2025.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

The current contract is due to end on 1st February 2026; previous extensions have been awarded on this contract and procurement rules do not allow any further extensions to the current contractual arrangements.

CA.91 Housing Major Works Programme 2025/26 - Part A

The Cabinet Member for Housing Services presented a report which sought formal approval of two contract awards which form part of the Housing Major Works Programme in respect of internal works consisting of new kitchens and bathrooms, heating and electrical works. It was noted these works would target individual properties rather than estates.

Decision:

Cabinet:

1. Approved the contract award to Emanuel Whittaker Limited in respect of internal works consisting of new kitchens and bathrooms, heating and electrical works to 93 properties in the South of the Borough for the sum of £855,589.05 including £50K contingency.
2. Approved the contract award to Jackson Jackson and Sons Limited in respect of internal works consisting of new kitchens and bathrooms, heating and electrical works to 93 properties in the North of the Borough for the sum of £899,041.44 including £50K contingency

3. Noted that there is the option to extend for a further period of 1 year up to an estimated total contract value of between £4 and 5 million subject to the availability of funding.

Reasons for the decision:

A key regulatory requirement for Housing is to ensure all Bury Council homes are maintained, as a minimum, to the Decent Home Standard. A key expectation of the Regulator for Social Housing is that all our homes are of good quality, well maintained and safe homes for tenants and comply with the Decent Homes Standard.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

- Do nothing: Maintaining homes to at least the Decent Homes Standard is a regulatory requirement, and the Council would quickly become non-compliant with the Home Standard part of the Regulatory Requirements if these works were not brought forward
- Deliver Inhouse: These are major contracts, and the in-house contractor does not have the capacity to carry out these works.
- Open Tender: This option was considered and is a possibility. However, this would involve a significantly extended procurement process in both time and cost.

CA.92 AB Electrical EICR and LD2 Services Contract Award Decision

The Cabinet Member for Housing Services presented a report which sought formal approval of a contract award, through the Procure Plus framework, for the completion of Electrical Installation Condition Reports (EICR) and the installation of fire detectors to a Category LD2 system standard required in all domestic property circulation areas that form part of the escape routes and in all specified rooms or areas that present a high fire risk to occupants.

Decision:

Cabinet approved the award of a contract to the contractor placed number 1 on the Procure Plus Framework, AB Electrical and Building Ltd for the initial period of 3 years with the option to extend for a further two periods of 12 months.

Reasons for the decision:

The contract delivers Landlord Statutory Compliance Services on behalf of the Council.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

- Do nothing: There is no current contract in place for these services which are a legal requirement under The Electrical Safety Standards in the Private and Social Rented Sectors (England) Regulations 2020/2025 so the Council would quickly become non-compliant
- Deliver in house: These are major contract's carried out in our housing stock of over 7500 properties, sheltered and extra care schemes and communal blocks and we lack the capacity in house. The new structure of the Building Safety Team is designed to be contractor led and managed by the Building Safety Team.

- Open tender: This option was considered and is possible. However, this would involve a significantly extended procurement process in both time and cost.

CA.93 Local Authority Housing Fund, Round 3, (LAFH)

The Cabinet Member for Housing Services presented a report regarding an expression of interest submitted by the Council for 40% grant funding under LAFH Round 3 to acquire seven properties to provide temporary accommodation for homeless families. Bury was successful and has been awarded £447,200 from MHCLG, and this report sought approval to match fund the grant.

Decision:

Cabinet approved the use of £690,000 of match funding from the General Fund Capital Programme 25/26 to enable the purchase of seven homes to help reduce reliance on unsuitable and costly temporary accommodation.

Reasons for the decision:

2.1 Approval is needed for 60% General Fund Capital Programme match funding to support the purchase of seven properties. Rents will be set at affordable rent levels. This approach supports long-term sustainability reflecting an invest-to-save model, reducing reliance on expensive Bed and Breakfast placements. Estimated savings are approximately £1,164m million over three years. The proposal aligns with LAHF grant conditions enabling the Council to meet its statutory housing duties while easing financial pressure.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

Do nothing: These properties will provide long-term, financially sustainable temporary accommodation for the borough, with the council contributing only 60% of the acquisition cost. If this option is not pursued, the council may need to continue relying on expensive bed and breakfast placements, which would not support a cost-effective, invest-to-save approach.

CA.94 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.95 Neighbourhood Support Housing Services - Young People's Accommodation & Support Tender - Part B

The Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Health and Public Service Reform presented the Part B report containing the full financial information.

Decision:

Cabinet:

1. Delegated finalisation for the provision of Young People's and Young Families Accommodation and Support Services, to the Director of Law and Democratic Services with approval from the Director of Adult Social Services

and Community Commissioning and the Executive Director of Children's Services; and

2. Noted that joint funding arrangements between Adult Social Care and Children's Services were previously agreed at Cabinet on 9th July 2025.

Reasons for the decision:

As set out for the Part A report.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

As set out for the Part A report.

CA.96 Housing Major Works Programme 2025/26 - Part B

The Cabinet Member for Housing Services presented the Part B report containing the full financial information.

Decision:

Cabinet:

1. Approved the contract award to Emanuel Whittaker Limited in respect of internal works consisting of new kitchens and bathrooms, heating and electrical works to 93 properties in the South of the Borough for the sum of £855,589.05 including £50K contingency.
2. Approved the contract award to Jackson Jackson and Sons Limited in respect of internal works consisting of new kitchens and bathrooms, heating and electrical works to 93 properties in the North of the Borough for the sum of £899,041.44 including £50K contingency
3. Noted that there is the option to extend for a further period of 1 year up to an estimated total contract value of between £4 and 5 million subject to the availability of funding.

Reasons for the decision:

As set out for the Part A report.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

As set out for the Part A report.

COUNCILLOR E O'Brien
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 6.05 pm and ended at 7.30 pm)