

AGENDA FOR
EMPLOYMENT PANEL



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To: All Members of Employment Panel

Councillors : M Walsh, T Tariq, L Smith, D Green, D Hill,
K Hussain, A Quinn, S Thorpe (Chair) and A Arif

Dear Member/Colleague

Employment Panel

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

Date:	Wednesday, 23 September 2026
Place:	Microsoft Teams
Time:	7.00 pm
Briefing Facilities:	If Opposition Members and Co-opted Members require briefing on any particular item on the Agenda, the appropriate Director/Senior Officer originating the related report should be contacted.
Notes:	

AGENDA

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Members of the Employment Panel are asked whether they have an interest in any of the matters on the agenda and, if so, to formally declare that interest.

3 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING *(Pages 3 - 6)*

The minutes of the meeting held on 20th July 2026 are attached for approval and accuracy.

4 ANTI-RACIST ORGANISATION STRATEGY *(Pages 7 - 22)*

Report and strategy attached.

5 ESTABLISHMENT OF AN ALL-AGE COMMISSIONING FUNCTION *(Pages 23 - 32)*

Report attached.

6 POST REDESIGNATION LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES *(Pages 33 - 36)*

Report attached.

7 URGENT BUSINESS

Minutes of: EMPLOYMENT PANEL

Date of Meeting: 20 July 2026

Present: Councillor S Thorpe (in the Chair)
Councillors T Tariq, D Green, D Hill, K Hussain, A Quinn and A Arif

Also in attendance: Jess Hall, People Operations Service Manager
Catherine King, People, Policy & Organisational Development Manager
Claire Kirke, People Policy Specialist
Tim Normanton, Interim Assistant Director of People and Inclusion
Kate Waterhouse, Executive Director, Strategy and Transformation.

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillor M Walsh and Councillor L Smith

EP.8 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence are noted above.

EP.9 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

EP.10 MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Interim Assistant Director of People and Inclusion explained that Minute EP.5 – Workforce Policy review - Recruitment Policy and Redeployment Policy, it stated, ‘in response to members questions around advertising roles on Greater Jobs and discretion on suitability for a redeployee, Tim Normanton outlined the process for approving a vacancy and explained that the vacancy ‘will’ be circulated to redeployees’.

It was stated that this should be replaced with ‘may’.

Members agreed that subject to the above amendment, the notes of the meeting held on 25 June 2026 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair

EP.11 WORKFORCE POLICY REVIEW

The Interim Assistant Director of People and Inclusion presented a report outlining a suite of new and revised employment policies and procedures for consideration by the Employment Panel.

The Panel was advised that the proposed changes had been developed to ensure the Council's employment framework remained legally compliant, reflected current working

practices, supported employee wellbeing and inclusion, and incorporated legislative and organisational developments where appropriate.

The following documents were presented:

- New Leave Policy
- New Flexible Retirement Policy
- Updated Salary Loans Procedure
- Revised Time Off for Reservists Policy
- Updated Facilities Time Policy
- New Dignity at Work Policy
- Revised Grievance Procedure
- Revised Flexible Working Policy, updated following comments received at the June 2026 Employment Panel meeting
- Briefing Note regarding Equality Staff Networks

The Panel received details of the key amendments contained within each document, including the consolidation of various leave arrangements into a single Leave Policy; the introduction of a standalone Flexible Retirement Policy; amendments to the Salary Loans Procedure to limit applications to one loan within a rolling 18-month period; updates to the Time Off for Reservists and Facilities Time Policies to reflect current legislative and policy requirements; the introduction of a new Dignity at Work Policy; consequential amendments to the Grievance Procedure; and revisions to the Flexible Working Policy following regulatory changes and feedback previously received from Members.

The Panel also considered the briefing note relating to Equality Staff Networks and the proposal to provide protected time to support network activity and leadership responsibilities.

Members of the Employment Panel were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments, and the following points were made:-

- Councillor Green referred to requests for leave of 3 weeks' or more and asked how many requests were received.

It was explained that this information was not readily available. However, all leave requests are considered in accordance with the operational requirements of the relevant service area, and approval from Senior Management is required before any leave can be authorised.

- Councillor Tariq referred to the Flexible Working Policy and support given to employees requesting this. He also stated that confusion in relation to pensions can be something that employees may need assistance with relation to flexible working.

It was explained that the Council was committed to flexible working and also supporting protected characteristics within the workforce. Advice and support was given in relation to every application.

- Councillor Thorpe stated that flexible working arrangements can be very positive if done well. He asked if there was any data available on how many applications were made and how many were successful.

The Interim Assistant Director of People and Inclusion stated that there were a broad range of flexible working options available and all requests would be considered in line with the needs of the relevant service. The Interim Assistant Director advised that he would provide the requested information with regards to flexible working requests to the Panel.

- Councillor Tariq referred to the Equality Staff Networks and explained that he had seen these groups go through many changes since their implementation. Councillor Tariq stated that he supported the work of the groups and raising their visibility and impact was very important particularly when holding the employers to account.

He asked how the work of the groups could be evaluated by the Employment Panel.

The Interim Assistant Director of People and Inclusion suggested that a report in relation to the workplan for the networks would be presented to the Employment Panel at its meeting in November and the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager invited to attend the meeting to set out the work and progress.

It was agreed:

1. That the Employment Panel approves:

1. The new Leave Policy;
2. The new Flexible Retirement Policy;
3. The updated Salary Loans Procedure;
4. The revised Time Off for Reservists Policy;
5. The updated Facilities Time Policy;
6. The new Dignity at Work Policy;
7. The revised Grievance Procedure;
8. The revised Flexible Working Policy; and
9. The Equality Staff Networks Briefing Note, including the proposed allocation of protected time for network members and network leads.

2. That the above documents be submitted to the Corporate Joint Consultative Committee on 21 July 2026 for endorsement and, subject to endorsement, be published on the Council's intranet and communicated to staff.

3. That the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Manager be invited to attend a future meeting of the Employment Panel to set out the work and progress of the Equality Staff Networks.

EP.12 EMPLOYMENT PANEL TRAINING

Tim Normanton delivered a training session in relation to Employment Panel hearings.

EP.13 URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

COUNCILLOR S THORPE
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 8.00 pm)

Meeting:	Employment Panel
Meeting date:	23 September 2026
Title of report:	Anti-Racism Strategy
Report by:	Assistant Director People Inclusion and Culture
Decision type:	For noting
Ward(s) to which report relates:	ALL

Executive Summary

The council has committed to becoming an Anti Racist Organisation in the 2026/27 corporate plan. This aims to strengthen our approach to tackling and preventing racism, Antisemitism and Islamophobia as an organisation and is the council's response to meeting our commitment to adopting the [GM Race Equity Framework](#). The Anti-Racist Organisation Strategy is part of this commitment.

Recommendations

The Employment Panel is requested to:

- Note the content of the new 2-Year Anti-Racism Organisation Strategy, which has been developed as part of our corporate plan commitments.

Anti Racist Organisation Strategy

This is a two year strategy to move us from being a non-racist organisation to becoming anti-racist. This meets our commitments of the GM Race Equity Framework but is also responds to the rise of antisemitism, islamophobia and racism we are seeing in our borough and across the UK. As such it is closely aligned with our community cohesion planning and delivery.

The strategy recognises that a true anti racist approach, that seeks to proactively prevent and effectively tackle racism needs to be systemic rather than about people alone. This means ensuring our people understand racism and anti racist principles but also the policies and processes they use also support anti racist outcomes. This extends further to partnership working and in co-production.

The goals of the strategy reflect this need for a simultaneous people and systems approach to becoming anti racist detailing the need to focus on policy, procedure and systems, workforce capability, leadership commitment, service delivery, a strong community voice and

a visible, unambiguous and consistent zero tolerance approach.

Year one of the strategy focuses on education and internal processes so that we can fully practice anti-racism. This means fully understanding racism, how it manifests, root causes, identifying it and effectively addressing and preventing racism.

Year two focuses on anti-racism in action, putting our learning from year one into practice so we have an anti racist outlook in everything we do and working with partner organisations and our communities to address and prevent racism in our borough on an ongoing basis.

Bury Council Anti-Racist Organisation Strategy

2026-2028

Local Context

Our borough has a richly diverse demographic of different cultures, ethnicities, nationalities and religions that has grown and developed over many decades. This has contributed to our six towns being a welcoming place to live, work and visit for everyone.

As a council we are proud to lead such a diverse and welcoming borough and are committed to delivering a borough where all our residents, regardless of their background or characteristics can live, work and thrive equitably. This is enshrined in our LET'S Do It 2030 vision.

Despite this, we recognise that racism and the impacts of racism are having a profound effect on our ethnic minority communities and our workforce who experience racism.

As a council we are clear that racism has no place in our organisation or society and as such we take a zero tolerance attitude and approach to racism in every form.

Becoming an anti racist organisation is our commitment to strengthening our approach to tackling and preventing racism as an organisation. Giving us a strong foundation to remove systemic racism from our borough by working collaboratively with residents and partner organisations.

National and Global Context

We acknowledge historic racism spanning centuries has created systemic, ingrained and institutional racism in the UK which feeds disadvantage and inequality in all aspects of life.

George Floyd's murder in 2020 focused global attention on **Black Lives Matter** and exposed a limited understanding of historical racism and its ongoing effects on life in the UK.

Since then, rising anti-immigration rhetoric and community tensions have been fuelled by **global conflicts, the climate crisis**, and the spread of **misinformation and disinformation** across social, print and broadcast media.

We've seen the tangible effects of this in the **2024 riots, Raise the Colours** and increased **terrorist attacks** on places of worship including the attack on the **Heaton Park Hebrew Congregation Synagogue** in October 2025.

These experiences have left people living in genuine fear with residents and colleagues reporting overt racism in public, having to change how they live and work, avoiding certain areas, not going out alone and self imposing curfews to keep as safe as possible.

We're also seeing our harder to reach communities and residents, who are often in most need of our services and support, become harder to reach because of these increased tensions.

What is Racism?

Racism can be broadly defined as prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism by an individual, community, or institution against a person or people on the basis of their membership of a particular racial or ethnic group, typically one that is a minority or marginalised.
(Oxford English Dictionary, Mar 2026)

In the context of this strategy and the council's understanding of racism, this extends to nationalities and religions which experience marginalisation in the UK.

The Equality Act 2010 highlights unlawful behaviours relating to race and religion
Discrimination

Treating someone or a group of people less favourably based on race or religion

Harassment

Creating a hostile or degrading environment or removing the dignity of a person or group of people due to race or religion

Victimisation

Discriminating or harassing someone or a group of people because they have made a complaint of racial or religious discrimination or harassment

What is Racism?

Race and religious related hate crimes were first defined in the **Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

The **Sentencing Act 2020** classed race related hate crime as 'aggravated' allowing prosecutors to apply an uplift to sentencing of those convicted of race hate crime

The **Online Safety Act 2023** requires social media companies to protect users from content that stirs up racial hatred

Racism can be based on:

- Cultural Identity
- Intersectionality
- Languages and accents
- Nationality or ethnic origin
- Physical features e.g. hair type
- Religious Beliefs
- Skin colour

Racism can be:

- Ideological
- Internalised
- Interpersonal
- Institutional
- Representational
- Structural
- Systemic

Antisemitism and Islamophobia

Bury Council has adopted official definitions of Antisemitism and Islamophobia, recognising these as particularly relevant forms of racism that have and continue to impact our diverse communities in Bury

In 2017 Bury Council adopted the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance's working definition of antisemitism

“Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

In 2020 Bury Council adopted the All-Party Parliamentary Group on British Muslims working definition of Islamophobia

“Islamophobia is rooted in racism and is a type of racism that targets expressions of Muslimness or perceived Muslimness.”

Population and Hate Crime Metrics

Census 2021 Bury Population

Overall Population: 193851
Ethnic Minority: 42323 (21.83%)
Jewish: 10734 (5.54%)
Muslim: 19243 (9.93%)

Hate Crimes Reported in Bury 2025

Race Hate Crimes: 563
Religious Hate Crimes: 65
Antisemitic Hate Crime: 36
Islamophobic Hate Crime: 15

Bury Council Workforce 2026

Overall Workforce: 2868
Ethnic Minority: 337 (11.89%)
Jewish: 4 (0.14%)
Muslim: 123 (4.34%)

Hate Incidents Reported in Bury 2025

Race Hate Incidents: 26
Religious Hate Incidents: 8
Antisemitic Hate Incidents: 4
Islamophobic Hate Incidents: 3

Ethnic minority describes people whose ethnic origin is different to being white, UK nationals as described in the census. It includes UK nationals who are not white. These ethnic origins are most susceptible to different forms of racism

Socio-Economic Factors

Indices of Multiple Deprivation

Cross analysis of the 2025 indices of multiple deprivation along with the 2021 census shows:

40% of our ethnic minority population

28% of our white British population

Live in **30% of the most deprived** areas of the borough

18% of our ethnic minority population

45% of our white British population

Live in **30% of the least deprived** areas of the borough

Ethnicity Pay Gaps

The most recent estimate of the ethnicity pay gap in the North West of England (ONS, 2022) were:

A gap of **16.3% in favour** of white people compared to black people

A gap of **13.5% in favour** of white people compared to people with Asian heritage

Bury council's own ethnicity pay gap for 2025/2026 was **8.07% in favour** of white colleagues compared to ethnic minority colleagues

Working age not in employment

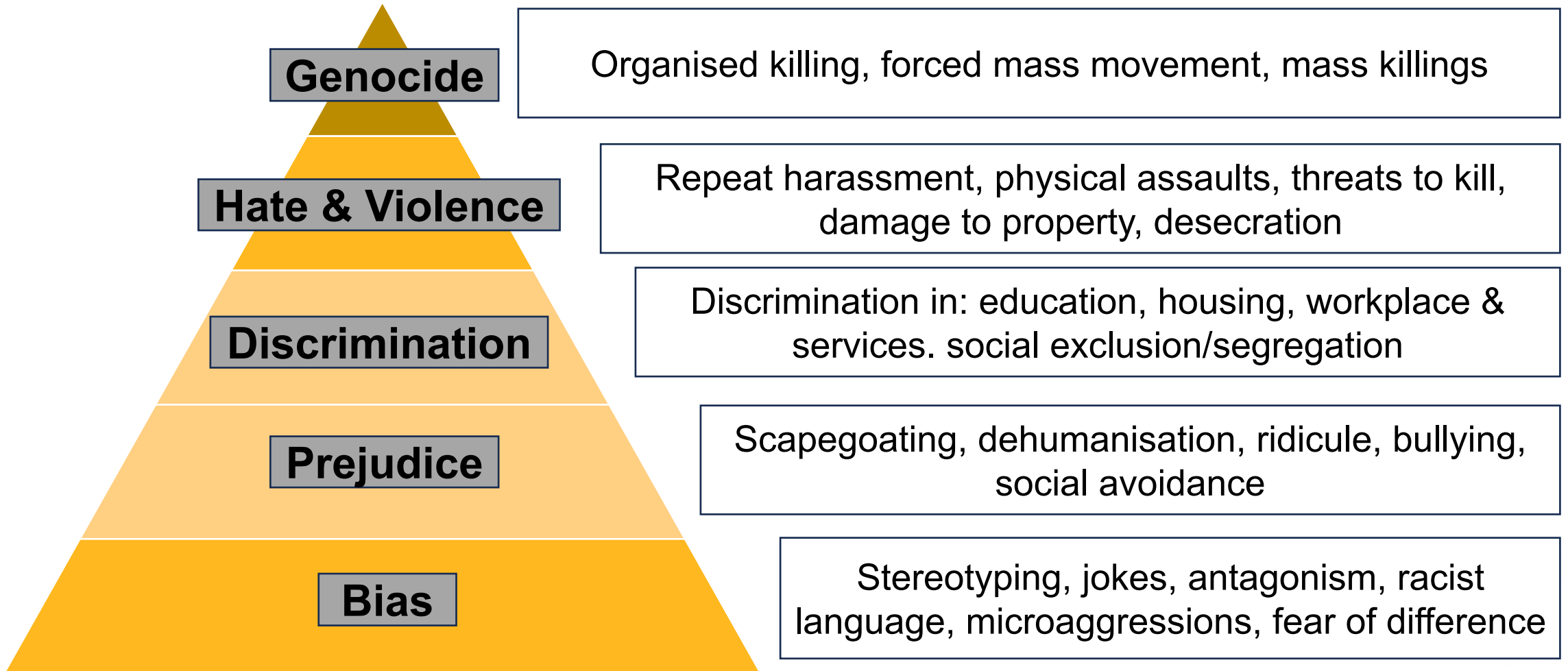
The 2025 Annual Population Survey shows the % of working age (16-64) residents not in employment is:

3.83% of our white British residents

11.32% of our ethnic minority residents

Racist behaviours – Pyramid of Hate

The pyramid of hate demonstrates how uninterrupted racist behaviours can escalate at scale



Moving from Non Racist to Anti Racist

- Policies and procedures enable racism
- Differential outcomes are accepted
- No desire for change
- Unwilling to acknowledge unwanted behaviours

Institutionally Racist

Non Racist

- Policies and procedures try to prevent racism
- Differential outcomes are challenged retrospectively
- Need for change is acknowledged
- Unwanted behaviours noted in training and policy only

- Policies and procedures designed to eliminate racism
- Differential outcomes eliminated proactively
- Change is embraced and active
- Unwanted behaviours eliminated through commitment to zero tolerance

Anti Racist



Strategy Aim and Goals

Aim: Become an anti racist organisation through developing a strong anti racist culture



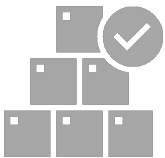
Goal 1: Policies, procedures and systems support anti racist outcomes



Goal 2: Build workforce capability to practice anti racism



Goal 3: Leadership demonstrates anti racist commitment



Goal 4: Deliver anti racist services



Goal 5: Voice of ethnic minority communities and residents is heard



Goal 6: Zero tolerance is understood and consistent

Become an anti racist organisation through developing a strong race critical culture		
Goal 1 Policies, procedures and systems support anti racist outcomes	Goal 1 Objectives Policies reviewed by staff networks Demonstrate inclusive LET’S values Dignity at work policy Procurement equality requirements Policy anti discrimination statements Policies reviewed by race panel	When/From Ongoing Ongoing 2026/27 Q1 2026/27 Q2 2026/27 Q3 2027/28 Q1
Goal 2 Build workforce capability to practice anti racism	Goal 2 Objectives Regular bitesize learning Intranet anti racism resource area Dignity at work staff briefing (Quarterly) Introduce anti racism at induction Let’s Talk About Race learning Cultural competence training	When/From Quarterly Ongoing 2026/27 Q1 2026/27 Q2 2026/27 Q3 2027/28 Q1
Goal 3 Leadership demonstrates anti racist commitment	Goal 3 Objectives Guaranteed assessment scheme EDI Development for COLT Equality objectives for leaders Senior race champions Reciprocal mentoring	When/From 2026/27 Q1 2026/27 Q3 2027/28 Q1 2027/28 Q1 2027/28 Q1

Become an anti racist organisation through developing a strong race critical culture		
Goal 4 Delivering anti-racist services	Goal 4 Objectives Monitoring in all public consultations and surveys New projects/services reviewed by staff networks Collation of service user data Countering disinformation about services Service plans include specific anti-racist actions Co-productions with VCFA race panel	When/From Ongoing 2026/27 Q2 2026/27 Q2 2026/27 Q4 2026/27 Q4 2027/28 Q1
Goal 5 Voice of ethnic minority communities and residents heard	Goal 5 Objectives VCFA led race panel established Countering disinformation about communities Co-productions with VCFA race panel Access to anti racist learning	When/From 2026/27 Q3 2026/27 Q4 2027/28 Q1 2027/28 Q1
Goal 6 Zero tolerance is understood and consistent	Goal 6 Objectives LET’S Demonstrates zero tolerance commitment Zero tolerance embedded in policy and practices Explicit, safe and unambiguous reporting routes Learning activities include message of zero tolerance Explicit and effective addressing of reports of racism Countering disinformation in partnership	When/From Ongoing 2026/27 Q1 2026/27 Q2 2026/27 Q2 2026/27 Q4 2027/28 Q1

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Classification
Open Item No

Meeting:	Employment Panel
Meeting date:	23 September 2026
Title of report:	Establishment of an All-Age Commissioning Function
Report by:	Cllr. Sean Thorpe, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Corporate Services
Decision type:	For Decision
Ward(s) to which report relates:	ALL

1. Executive Summary:

This report seeks approval to implement the strategic commissioning recommendations arising from the independent review of Children's Social Care and Adult Social Care undertaken by IMPOWER (a leading UK management consultancy which specialises in public sector reform).

This independent review identified significant opportunities to improve outcomes for residents, strengthen prevention, improve market management, and deliver sustainable financial benefits through the development of an integrated all-age strategic commissioning approach. The review concluded that the Council should establish a single strategic commissioning function bringing together commissioning, sufficiency planning and market-shaping activity across children's and adult services.

We anticipate that an all-age commissioning approach will become the Council's long-term operating model. The temporary arrangements outlined in this report relate solely to leadership and organisational structure during implementation, allowing the Council to make shorter-term improvements in our approach whilst also co-designing arrangements which meet the unique needs of Bury residents and other stakeholders.

2. Recommendations

The Employment Panel is requested to:

- 2.1 Support the establishment of a new All Age Commissioning function within the Council.

- 2.2 Note the temporary expansion of responsibilities for a period of up to 24 months to allow the current Director of Adult Social Services and Community Commissioning to develop this function.
- 2.3 Support an honorarium payment in accordance with Council policy for the duration of these additional responsibilities.
- 2.4 Support consequential interim arrangements to ensure continued operational leadership of Adult Social Care services.
- 2.5 Note that a full review of the operating model and leadership arrangements will be undertaken following implementation.

3. Background

In 2026 the Council commissioned a leading UK management consultancy which specialises in public sector reform to undertake a review of Children's Social Care and Adult Social Care. The review by IMPOWER identified opportunities to:

- strengthen strategic commissioning capability.
- improve sufficiency planning.
- reduce market fragmentation.
- improve transition pathways between children's and adult services.
- strengthen partnership commissioning arrangements with health.
- improve financial sustainability.
- increase the Council's focus on prevention and early intervention.

A key recommendation emerging from the review was the development of an integrated all-age strategic commissioning function, bringing together leadership of commissioning activity across the life course.

The review recognised that many of the Council's most significant demand pressures and financial challenges do not sit within either children's or adult services. Instead, they arise across systems including housing, health, SEND, mental health, learning disability, transitions, and prevention.

The proposed model seeks to address these challenges through a more coordinated approach to strategic commissioning.

4. Progress to Date

The recommendations contained within the review built upon significant improvement activity already underway across Children's Social Care and Adult Social Care.

Workstream 1: Sustaining Practice Improvement

Considerable progress has been made in stabilising demand, strengthening decision-making and improving outcomes across children's and adult services.

Progress delivered in Children's Social Care includes:

- Reduction in the number of children requiring high-cost residential placements from previous peak levels.
- Delivery of substantial cost avoidance through improved practice, demand management, and placement review activity.
- Strengthened oversight through Residential and Complex Care Panels.
- Implementation of the VCARE needs profiling methodology to improve understanding of children's needs and support placement matching.
- Training delivered to practitioners to support more effective assessment and decision-making.
- Review of existing placements to identify opportunities for improved outcomes, placement step-downs, and value for money.
- Growth in fostering capacity and a renewed focus on supporting more children to remain in family-based care where appropriate.

Progress delivered in Adult Social Care includes:

- Continued implementation of strengths-based practice.
- Robust performance from reablement and short-term intervention services.
- Development of demand management programmes focused on maintaining independence and reducing long-term care dependency.
- Identification of significant savings opportunities through service transformation and redesign.

Collectively, this work has created a stronger platform from which to deliver the next phase of change.

Workstream 2: Strategic Commissioning and Sufficiency

The Council has already begun strengthening its commissioning capability and developing a more strategic approach to market management.

Progress delivered in Commissioning Development includes:

- Strengthened commissioning arrangements across children's services.
- Improved integration between operational services, commissioning teams, and brokerage functions.
- Development of provider intelligence and market oversight arrangements.
- Introduction of provider segmentation approaches to better understand market performance and risk.
- Enhanced use of data, market intelligence and forecasting to support commissioning decisions.

Progress delivered Brokerage and Market Management includes:

- Greater collaboration between brokerage and commissioning teams.
- More proactive placement-finding and market engagement activity.
- Improved provider relationship management.
- Increased focus on market shaping rather than reactive purchasing.
- Introduction of tools and methodologies to support placement review and challenge costs where appropriate.

The Council is also actively engaged in Greater Manchester's Regional Care Cooperative and associated regional initiatives, including:

- Regional sufficiency planning.
- Shared market intelligence.
- Foster care recruitment initiatives.
- Regional approaches to needs assessment.
- Development of longer-term placement sufficiency solutions.

This work provides a solid foundation for the development of an all-age strategic commissioning model.

Workstream 3: Prevention and Demand Management

The Council has continued to strengthen its preventative approach through neighbourhood working, early intervention and partnership-based delivery.

Progress delivered in prevention activity includes:

- Continued delivery of LET'S Do It principles and strengths-based approaches.
- Development of integrated neighbourhood and community-based approaches.
- Expansion of family support and early intervention activity.
- Continued operation of Edge of Care and Family Reunification services.
- Ongoing implementation of Family Hub and Families First reforms.

Progress delivered in system integration includes:

- Increased collaboration between children's and adult services around transition pathways.
- Multi-agency work to improve outcomes for young people moving into adulthood.
- Strengthened engagement with health partners around mental health, neurodiversity, and learning disability pathways.
- Early development of an all-age perspective on demand management and prevention.

Whilst substantial progress has already been achieved, the IMPOWER review identified further opportunities to strengthen outcomes, improve financial sustainability, and reduce demand through a more integrated all-age strategic

commissioning approach. The proposed All Age Commissioning arrangements represent the next phase of this improvement journey.

5. Strategic Case for Change

The Council currently operates separate arrangements for commissioning activity across several service areas.

Whilst these arrangements have supported service delivery, they can limit the Council's ability to:

- take a whole-life approach to residents' needs.
- plan strategically across transition points.
- shape provider markets consistently.
- maximise opportunities for joint commissioning.
- coordinate sufficiency planning.
- leverage system partnerships across Greater Manchester.

The proposed All Age Commissioning function represents the next stage of the Council's improvement journey and will provide a single strategic focus for:

- commissioning.
- market management.
- sufficiency planning.
- provider relationship management.
- demand forecasting.
- prevention and early intervention.
- strategic partnerships.

The intention is not to merge children's and adults' services operationally, but to strengthen strategic commissioning leadership across both systems.

6. Proposed Scope of the All-Age Commissioning Function

The proposed function will initially include:

Children's Strategic Commissioning

- Children in Care commissioning
- Independent fostering and placement sufficiency
- residential care commissioning
- preparation for adulthood commissioning
- links to the Greater Manchester Regional Care Cooperative
- community safety, violence reduction, and domestic abuse services
- Independent non maintained education placements

Adult Strategic Commissioning

- adult social care commissioning
- learning disability commissioning
- autism commissioning
- supported living commissioning.
- commissioned community support services
- carers services commissioning

Cross-Cutting Strategic Functions

- market shaping and development.
- sufficiency planning
- provider relationship management
- contract management oversight!
- commissioning intelligence
- demand analysis and forecasting.
- strategic partnership development

Strategic Partnerships

- NHS Greater Manchester
- Integrated Care Board partners
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority
- Regional Care Cooperative arrangements
- housing and prevention interfaces
- Greater Manchester Violence Reduction Unit

These temporary arrangements will also allow the Council to undertake work to understand the interface of commissioning with the Council's procurement activity. An integrated procurement and commissioning function may reduce hand-offs, minimise rework, improve productivity and ensure more consistent, joined-up decision-making that delivers better value for money and service outcomes. The procurement service is of course a council-wide function and does not solely support the people commissioning footprint; it is also a service subject to its own improvement journey at present. Any structure changes will be revisited when progress has been made in the implementation of respective new service arrangements and if/when the strategic commissioning function extends beyond the people focus.

Commissioning of Alternative Education Provision in relation to special educational needs and disabilities is currently out of scope of the All-Age Commissioning approach and is being aligned to the recently published SEND strategy.

7. Benefits

The proposal to create an All-Age Commissioning Function will support delivery of:

Better Outcomes

- improved transitions between children's and adult services.
- stronger focus on prevention.
- more coordinated service pathways.
- improved resident experience.

Improved Market Management

- stronger provider engagement.
- improved understanding of future demand.
- greater market sustainability.
- enhanced sufficiency planning.

Financial Sustainability

- improved financial oversight.
- stronger commissioning capability.
- improved value for money.
- support for delivery of the saving opportunities identified through the IMPOWER review.

Stronger Partnership Working

- improved integration with health partners.
- greater alignment with Greater Manchester commissioning arrangements.
- improved opportunities for joint commissioning.

8. Implementation Plan

The Director of Adult Social Services and Community Commissioning currently holds corporate responsibility for strategic commissioning and market management activity across adult services.

To provide continuity and accelerate implementation, it is proposed that the postholder assumes responsibility for developing the new All Age Commissioning function. The arrangement would be time limited to 24 months effective from 01 September 2026 and would be subject to regular review.

During this period, the postholder would:

- develop the detailed operating model and longer-term all-age commissioning strategy.
- oversee implementation of the IMPOWER recommendations.
- establish governance arrangements and associated decision-making authorities.
- Propose and develop key performance indicators.
- Review related workforce changes and consult on new roles if applicable.
- lead engagement with partners.

To make best use of skills, build on previous achievements, avoid the need to establish and fund a new post, aide retention and minimise the cost to the council, it is proposed that the current Director of Adult Social Services and Community Commissioning post be enhanced and remunerated via an honoraria to implement the new All Age Commissioning Model. The post holder will be nominally referred to as the Strategic Director of Adult Social Services and All-Age Commissioning during this period.

To create capacity for the Director of Adult Social Services and Community Commissioning to fulfil their revised remit, some aspects of their current statutory duties will be delegated to the current Assistant Director of Adult Social Care. This arrangement will mirror the substantive arrangements already in place in Children's Services. Statutory accountability for these delegated functions will remain with the DASS.

Having established the required level of senior management capacity to shape the new function, there are two commissioning posts within Children's Social Care and a post with significant commissioning responsibility within Housing that may require consultation regarding the re-alignment of these posts into a new All-Age Commissioning Function. This is primarily because of the potential change in seniority in their line management arrangements, and the associated impact on their decision-making capacity, levels of operational support and spans of control. In the interim period and pending the outcome of consultation, these three staff will have a dotted line management arrangement to the interim Strategic Director of Adult Social Services and All-Age Commissioning.

There are no roles which exclusively undertake commissioning activity in public health. The professionals in other services who do commission services will, however, be required to take direction from and be supported by the new arrangements when they are undertaking commissioning work.

9. Governance and accountability

IMPOWER advice is clear that implementation of these proposals will require strong corporate oversight with clear accountability, multi-agency governance arrangements and performance frameworks that monitor outcomes, demand trends, and delivery of the projected financial benefits.

To achieve this, it is proposed that the Interim Strategic Director of Adult Social Services and All-Age Commissioning reports directly to the Chief Executive and become a member of the Executive Leadership team. These arrangements will ensure the post has a clear mandate and access to cross-cutting delivery opportunities and the enablers to deliver the programme of work.

Delivery against the demand trajectory forecasts by IMPOWER will be monitored by the Performance, Delivery and Transformation Board and reported within quarterly finance monitoring reports, with reference to the children's social care performance

framework and a set of defined KPIs, such as the numbers and unit cost of commissioned packages of care.

The proposed governance arrangements will be used to keep this arrangement under review. Quarterly review points will be considered and arrangements revised if the forecast benefits are not being achieved, and/or changes, such as RCC implementation, change the context.

10. Statutory responsibility

The Executive Director (Health and Care) will continue to be accountable for the development and delivery of the demand and prevention strategy, drawing on the Public Service Reform network which he already leads. This role is a joint post with the GM ICB and is therefore well placed to lead the system reform work. They will also continue to hold overall accountabilities for all adult social care services in Bury.

The Interim Strategic Director of Adult Social Services and All-Age Commissioning will continue to fulfil the statutory obligations of Director of Adult Social Services (DASS) in relation to the Adult Social Care commissioning.

The Executive Director of Children and Young People will retain statutory accountability for the discharge of children's social care functions, including assurance regarding commissioned services, sufficiency arrangements and outcomes for children and young people. Strategic priorities and statutory assurance remain with the Executive Director of Children and Young People. The Interim Strategic Director of Adult Social Services and All-Age Commissioning will provide professional management and operational leadership of commissioning activity.

11. Financial Implications

To implement these arrangements, it is proposed that.

The Interim Strategic Director of Adult Social Services and All-Age Commissioning would receive an honorarium to the value of Band E, pay point 846 (£151,959). The post holder is already in receipt of a market supplement which would be adjusted retrospectively to mark the end of this arrangement, making the revised total additional cost £8,882 pa. This would be funded from existing budgets in HAC.

The Assistant Director (Adult Social Care) would also receive an honorarium whilst discharging some of the statutory obligations delegated to them by the Interim Strategic Director of Adult Social Services and All-Age Commissioning to Band D, pay point 833 (£118,157). The post holder is also in receipt of a market supplement which would end, making the total additional cost £8,729.00 also be funded from existing budgets in HAC.

There is the potential that other post holders who currently undertaken commissioning activity across the Council, and in Children's Social Care and

Housing, may also be impacted by this change in approach which may require consultation. The budgetary impact of this change will be explored via established job evaluation activity if applicable.

12. Risks and Mitigations

The proposed approach is not without risk.

Loss of specialist focus	Dedicated leadership capacity for children's and adult commissioning will be retained within the operating model.
Scope of role becomes too broad	Implementation will be phased and subject to quarterly review.
Benefits are not realised	A benefits realisation framework will be established and monitored through existing governance arrangements.
Unclear accountability	Clear reporting arrangements and decision-making responsibilities will be established from the outset.
Failure to follow internal HR processes	Phased approach to implementation proposed

13. Conclusion

The IMPOWER review presents a significant opportunity to strengthen commissioning capability, improve outcomes and support the long-term sustainability of services.

The proposed establishment of an All-Age Commissioning function provides the leadership capacity required to implement these recommendations and develop a modern commissioning model aligned to the Council's wider transformation ambitions.

The temporary nature of this arrangement allows the Council to move quickly to establish the foundations of a revised approach, whilst drawing upon the expertise of acknowledged in-house experts in this specialist area.

Classification
Open

Meeting:	Employment Panel
Meeting date:	23 September 2026
Title of report:	Proposal to Re-designate the Head of Legal Post as Assistant Director of Law & Governance
Report by:	Councillor Thorpe, Leader and Cabinet Member of Finance and Corporate Services
Decision Type:	For Decision
Purpose:	To brief Members on the proposal to redesignate the current vacant Head of Legal post to Assistant Director of Law & Governance, reflecting the strategic importance of the role, the breadth of responsibilities undertaken by senior legal leaders in comparable authorities, and current recruitment market conditions.

Background

The Deputy Monitoring Officer (DMO) is a critical statutory role supporting the Council's governance framework, constitutional compliance, ethical standards, decision-making processes and risk management arrangements.

The Council has experienced challenges in recruiting and retaining a suitably qualified and experienced legal professional for Deputy Monitoring Officer role. This is particularly evident across unitary authorities, where increasing governance complexity, legislative change, regulatory requirements and a limited supply of experienced candidates have created strong market competition.

The Council's Head of Legal post is currently vacant, providing an opportunity to review both the structure and remuneration associated with the role to ensure it remains competitive and attractive within the current employment market.

Current Position

The current Head of Legal/Deputy Monitoring Officer role is evaluated within Chief Officer Band B, with a salary range of approximately £75,000 to £81,000 per annum. The role was advertised early 2026, however candidates could not demonstrate the required skills and experience.

Market benchmarking demonstrates that this salary range is now below prevailing rates for equivalent senior legal leadership positions within comparable unitary authorities.

There is therefore a material risk that the Council will encounter difficulties in recruiting a suitably qualified candidate if the role continues to be advertised at the current grade and salary level.

Market Benchmarking

A review of current recruitment activity within comparable local authorities highlights a significant upward movement in salaries for Deputy Monitoring Officer and senior legal leadership posts.

Comparator Authorities

Westmorland & Furness Council

- Deputy Chief Legal & Monitoring Officer
- Original salary range: £78,536 to £81,330
- Initial recruitment campaign unsuccessful
- Members approved a £10,000 market supplement
- Revised salary package: £81,049 to £83,933 plus £10,000 market supplement
- Effective remuneration: approximately £91,000 to £94,000

Peterborough City Council

- Head of Service, Legal Services (Deputy Monitoring Officer)
- Advertised salary range: £80,217 to £97,576

Flintshire County Council

- Legal Services Manager & Deputy Monitoring Officer
- Remuneration aligned to upper unitary authority legal leadership markets of approximately £80,000 to £90,000+

Southend City Council

- Head of Legal Services & Deputy Monitoring Officer
- Advertised salary range: £79,807 to £89,823

Market Position Summary

Market Position	Salary Range
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Lower quartile unitary DMO roles	£78,500 - £81,000
Median unitary DMO roles	£81,000 - £85,000
Roles with market supplements	£90,000 - £95,000
Upper quartile/combined leadership roles	£95,000 - £97,500+

The evidence demonstrates that £80,000 now represents the effective minimum entry point for Deputy Monitoring Officer-level appointments within comparable authorities. Authorities seeking to recruit below this level have frequently required market supplements or have experienced unsuccessful recruitment campaigns.

Case for an Assistant Director of Law & Governance

A number of comparator authorities have broadened the responsibilities of their senior legal leadership roles beyond traditional legal services management to include wider corporate governance functions, democratic services, standards, information governance and constitutional oversight.

Given the strategic importance of governance within Bury Council and the increasing complexity of the Council's operating environment, there is a strong case for redesignating the role as Assistant Director of Law & Governance.

This approach would:

- Better reflect the strategic and corporate leadership responsibilities associated with the role.
- Align Bury Council's organisational structure with comparable authorities.
- Strengthen the Council's ability to attract high-calibre candidates.
- Recognise the significant statutory responsibilities carried by the Deputy Monitoring Officer.
- Provide greater resilience and leadership capacity across governance functions.

A role at Assistant Director level would generally attract a salary range of approximately £91,000 to £99,000, placing the Council in a more competitive position within the current market.

Financial Implications

The creation of an Assistant Director role would result in additional employment costs. However, these should be considered against:

- The risks associated with prolonged vacancies in statutory governance posts.
- Potential expenditure on interim appointments and agency support.
- Further recruitment campaign costs arising from unsuccessful appointments.
- The importance of maintaining effective governance and legal oversight.

Recommendation

Members are asked to:

1. Approve the redesignation of the vacant Head of Legal post to Assistant Director of Law & Governance, reflecting the strategic breadth of responsibilities and market expectations for senior legal leadership roles.

Conclusion

The current salary range attached to the vacant Head of Legal post is below the prevailing market rate for Deputy Monitoring Officer appointments in comparable unitary authorities. Evidence indicates that councils advertising below market median rates increasingly rely on market supplements and, in some cases, experience failed recruitment exercises.

Redesignating the role as Assistant Director of Law & Governance, would better reflect the strategic significance of the post, improve the Council's ability to attract and retain suitably qualified candidates and support the effective discharge of the Council's statutory governance responsibilities.