

# **COUNCIL MEETING 30 NOVEMBER 016**

## **LEADER'S STATEMENT**

Mr Mayor, these are incredibly turbulent times, times that are almost unprecedented in terms of uncertainty. The old norms have been cast out and politics and society are heading to places that we never thought possible.

### **AUTUMN STATEMENT**

Mr Mayor I must begin my speech by referring to the recent Autumn Statement, the outcome of which will have huge implications for this Council and our residents.

The only good thing about the Autumn Statement is that it was the last Autumn Statement.

For years now the Conservatives have been talking about jam tomorrow but its the JAMS of today that need our help.

[Just about managing if you don't know the acronym].

The Statement showed in the starkest possible detail that the Government's economic plan has failed.

We have had 6 wasted years, 6 long wasted years.

Austerity has failed the economy, it has failed public services and it has failed the people of this country.

The Statement delivered downgraded economic forecasts, downgraded growth rates, and downgraded living standards.

The only thing that will be going up as a result of the Statement is the national debt!

The percentage of debt as a share of GDP will be 90%. It was 53% under the last Labour Government.

The Chancellor announced that the Government was looking to borrow an additional, an additional £122 bn by 2020 – this Conservative Government has now borrowed more than every Labour Government in history combined.

And they are the party of economic competence – who initially were going to clear the deficit by 2015, and then by 2020 and now they've given up.

The most shocking thing from a Local Government Perspective was the failure to allow for any further funding to the Social Care System – a social care system in crisis.

This isn't a party political point.

Former Health Secretary Andrew Lansley (and there is no love of him on this side of the Chamber) has called the news incredible disappointing whilst the Tory Leader of Suffolk County Council Izzy Seccombe.

Tonight, the length and breadth of this country there will be elderly, frail and lonely people who will remain trapped in their homes or trapped in hospitals, isolated, and lacking the care they deserve because of continuing cuts to social care budgets.

Make no mistake Mr Mayor...social care in this country is in

crisis. Even NHS managers accepted that if there were to be any more funds then they should go to social care because you can't hit social care without hitting the NHS.

And yet there was nothing.

Of course it was good to see a rise in the National Wage but even that wasn't enough. If the Tories were serious about hitting their target for a minimum wage of £9 per hour by 2020 then the rise next year should have taken the level to £7.64 an hour. The fact that it didn't gives us a very big clue about the new Prime Minister's commitment to this policy.

Sadly whilst we welcome any rise, even one as paltry as this, the rise does have a downside for Councils. It represents a significant increase in the potential cost of care contracts and given that we will receive no help towards the costs then it places yet more pressure on social care budgets.

Add to this the increase in insurance tax then once again Councils are left picking up a tab that they simply cannot afford.

Mr Mayor the Autumn Statement was a bonfire of pledges and reputations. Economic promises and economic targets were tossed aside; the JAMs were ignored and vulnerable people were left fearful for their lives.

For the people of Bury this means that they are left facing lower living standards, lower wage growth, higher inflation.

Real wages will, remarkably, still be below their 2008 levels by the time we reach 2021. This means that the Tories have delivered more than a decade without real earnings growth.

And yet despite all this, here in Bury we are showing an astounding level of resilience and will continue to work as hard as we can to protect the most vulnerable in our communities whilst at the same time trying to make all parts of our borough more prosperous.

In that vein I am delighted that we have managed to secure investment in Radcliffe with Lidl having now submitted a planning application for their flagship store in Radcliffe and we look forward to welcoming it as a catalyst for our wider regeneration ambitions.

### **10k Run**

The recent 10K run showcased Bury town centre, and parts of Bury so often unseen, and not only did the run exceed all our expectations, it brought out the very best in our community.

I'd like to say a huge thank you to everyone involved in the organisation...it really was superb...and to congratulate all the runners who took part, especially Councillors and Bury officers.

The most often asked question at the end was 'are you doing this again' and I'm delighted to say that we are. The 2017 10K will take place on 17 September and places are up for grabs now...you know you want to!

On the very same day we had the hugely successful Ramsbottom Festival and the Battle of Britain Commemoration and thanks to the efforts of all involved the borough pulled off these events without a hitch.

Linked to this, we recently celebrated the success of the I Will If You Will campaign. Since becoming the national pilot back in 2013 I Will If You Will now holds 300 fitness sessions a week and has helped over xxx women get back into sport and physical exercise.

Not only has this been great for Bury's women it has also boosted local businesses and put Bury in the media spotlight.

I want to say a big thank you to all the Members and staff who had the vision to develop this campaign and who have put Bury at the forefront of the development of national policy for improving women's health and fitness.

Staying on the theme of sport, Bury featured strongly at the recent Greater Manchester Sports Awards and I'm sure that

Council will join with me in congratulating all Bury's finalists...Mark O'Brien, Alex Evans, Thomas Gleaves, Isaac Taylor Green, Ryan Lewis, Karen Nichols and last but definitely not least the YWCA Bury Netball Club. Well done to all of you, we're very proud of you.

Mr Mayor I was also recently privileged to present an award at the recent Pride of Bury Awards where I saw and heard first hand stories of incredible courage and selfless dedication from Bury people of all ages and backgrounds.

Truly Mr Mayor, it made me proud beyond words to be part of this amazing borough of ours.

Finally Mr Mayor, one of the privileges of being Council Leader is the opportunity to work on vital matters at a Greater Manchester wide level. As the lead leader for Police, Crime and Civil Contingencies I was delighted to be involved in the launch of the 'Does it sit right with you' campaign to encourage people to talk about domestic abuse. The big yellow sofa visited Bury

on 19 November and got a brilliant reception with plenty of visitors sitting down to talk.

This week I was also particularly pleased to host a meeting of resilience experts from across the world who met to help plan how to make the best of GM's membership of the Rockefeller Foundation's 100 Resilient Cities.

Our bid to join the 100RC will bring a large scale investment that will help to develop GM's resilience, not only in terms of tackling disasters and emergencies but also addressing the long term stresses that affect growing conurbation.

### **Work of the Cabinet**

Moving on to the work of the Cabinet

Turning now to the work of the Cabinet...there has been one meeting of the Cabinet since the last Council and we discussed three key items.

Firstly we considered a report outlining the results of the public consultation exercise around the key principles that should be adopted to guide the Library Service review.

The Council has now concluded two separate initial consultations.

Mr Mayor, let me say right now, this Council remains fully committed to retaining a high quality Library Service in the borough but we all know that there will have to be changes. The Council will continue to provide a service that meets its legal duties and supports the aspirations of residents of all ages.

We also considered a report around the provision of assistance in support of home to school and college travel for children and young people with Special Educational Needs.

Mr Mayor the Children & Families Act 2014 introduced by the Government brought about significant reforms to the way in which services for children and young people with Special

Educational Needs or Disability are provided, commissioned or delivered.

Clearly Home to school transport, or financial assistance to support travel to school by children and young people with Special Educational Needs is an important element of that provision and it was clear that our existing policy framework did not meet the expectations set out in the Act.

Following a very lengthy and detailed consultation process Cabinet agreed to implement a new policy framework that meets the requirement of the Act.

I would like to place on record my appreciation of the positive and constructive way that parents contributed to the consultation exercise.

Finally we approved for consultation a draft Growth Plan.

The Plan recognises that Bury's population is growing and that more jobs and homes are needed in the Borough to accommodate this growth. The Plan is a high level strategy

setting out how, through collaborative working, we can achieve our ambitions for healthy, inclusive, sustainable and managed growth and increased resilience.

The Growth Plan is not just about physical development though. It also recognises the need to support social and economic growth to help create thriving, healthy and equitable communities and it recognises the need for infrastructure and public service changes to support growth.

At the same time, the Plan stresses that growth will require interventions to mitigate against negative environmental impacts and to support a low carbon economy.

Thank you Mr Mayor