

BURY COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING –30 NOVEMBER 2016

NOTE FOR: COUNCILLOR WALMSLEY CABINET MEMBER FOR STRATEGIC HOUSING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

ITEM (6) – LEADER’S STATEMENT AND CABINET QUESTION TIME

(Note: A printed version of the question has been circulated around the Council Chamber at the back of the Order of Proceedings and therefore **the question should not be read out.**)

Suggested answer to written Question 1 submitted by Councillor Pickstone

- Q.** Is the Leader of the Council aware of a recent report by Age UK: “Aging in Squalor and Distress” concerning poor private rental sector housing for older people? The report calls for councils to adequately resource environmental health teams to reduce this unacceptable situation. Is this something we can take forward in Bury?
- A.** **Currently just one in ten of all those living in the private rented sector are currently over 65, but this is expected to rise significantly in future years. Around 200,000 older people have joined the rental market in the last four years alone, and estimates suggest that a third of over-60s could be living in private rented accommodation by 2040.**

Although the Age UK report concentrates on older people, we take the view that we need to tackle issues within the private rented sector in Bury for ALL residents.

Our of our fundamental aims in relation to the private rented sector is to improve the standard of properties and their management and we have a statutory duty to ensure rented properties meet the minimum standards required by law.

We also take steps to encourage the positive development of the sector and support good landlords to ensure as far as possible a sufficient and good quality supply of privately rented homes in the borough.

Whilst the majority of landlords are diligent and responsible, there are a small minority of landlords who ignore their obligations and knowingly rent out unsafe accommodation. These criminal landlords are exploiting vulnerable tenants, who just want a safe place to call home.

In the current climate, our staffing resources to deal with this area of work are inevitably stretched and whilst there is more risk of this going forward, given the scale of savings required, we will continue to be mindful of our statutory duties and the all too clear impacts of not tackling issues in this area.

Of course we would certainly support Age UKs call for more resources for local environmental health services, better access to aids and adaptations for older people, and much-needed improvements to local housing advice.

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COUNCIL MEETING –30 NOVEMBER 2016

NOTE FOR: COUNCILLOR SHORI LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

ITEM (6) – LEADER’S STATEMENT AND CABINET QUESTION TIME

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Suggested answer to written Question 2 submitted by Councillor J Walker

- Q.** Will the Leader join us in congratulating the ruling group on securing the building of the Country’s largest Lidl in Radcliffe?
- A.** **I am delighted to congratulate Members and officers for the excellent work that they have done to attract such a high quality development into Radcliffe.**

Lidl’s decision to invest in Radcliffe is a massive vote of confidence for the area and we are determined that this will be a catalyst for wider regeneration of Radcliffe and in particular the town centre.

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Suggested answer to written Question 3 submitted by Councillor Fitzgerald

- Q.** Can the Leader please help explain the GMSF process? Outlining this is a mandate from the Conservative Government and the financial penalties we would incur if we didn't put a robust plan forward
- A.** **The Government requires local authorities to produce statutory plans that identify development sites to meet local housing and employment needs. These needs are largely based on population and household projections produced by the current Government.**

Recent changes to national planning guidance implemented by the Government have made it difficult to deal with strategic planning issues at the local level so the proposed GMSF is a means by which the ten GM districts can work collectively to deal with cross boundary and strategic planning issues.

The draft GMSF is currently being consulted on until the 23rd December. There will be a further draft GMSF that is expected to be consulted on next year. The GMSF will then be submitted to the Government for Examination.

An Examination in public will be held where all the arguments for and against the GMSF will be heard, before a Government appointed planning Inspector gives their judgement on whether the plan is sound or unsound. If the plan is found sound, then it can be formally adopted by each of the ten Greater Manchester districts as part of their statutory development plan.

It is worth noting that a Government appointed planning inspector recently supported Birmingham Council's proposed release of Green Belt land to meet housing numbers. On 24 November this decision was upheld by Gavin Barwell, the Minister for Housing and Planning, who stated explicitly that the approach taken by Birmingham Council to release Green Belt land to meet development needs accorded with the Government's National Planning Policy Framework.

His letter clearly sets out the Government's position on Green Belt and will have implications for Green Belt right across the country and I am happy to provide a link to the letter to Members.

In terms of sanctions, the Government has previously threatened to put local authorities in 'special measures' if they are not progressing plans and have suggested that they will intervene and write the plans for authorities that are not doing so.

They have also threatened to impose financial penalties on authorities that are not progressing plans by removing New Homes Bonus payments. It is rumoured that the details of these penalties will be contained within an imminent White Paper on Housing that will follow last week's Autumn statement. This would cost Bury over half a million pounds a year.

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COUNCIL MEETING –30 NOVEMBER 2016

NOTE FOR: COUNCILLOR QUINN CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

ITEM (6) – LEADER’S STATEMENT AND CABINET QUESTION TIME

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Suggested answer to written Question 4 submitted by Councillor Gunther

- Q.** Considering that according to the national and local press some Bury Council Tax Payers are having to resort to paying £25 per month to a private refuse collector to have their general waste collected following the introduction of the three weekly bin collection, would he agree with me that this policy is a disaster and ought to be reviewed. Would he also agree with me that that the removal of domestic waste is the most fundamental function undertaken by a Local Authority?
- A.** **Bury was the first Council in England to introduce a 3 weekly refuse collection service and its introduction has been a huge success, so much so that 3 other Councils in GM namely Oldham, Salford and Rochdale have replicated this model and many others across the country are actively considering doing the same.**

Bury’s collected bin waste recycling rate has increased from 47% to 58% and well over £1,000,000 has been saved in avoided waste disposal costs since October 2014, helping to preserve vital front line jobs and services.

Of course any household in the borough, of whatever size, has the opportunity to apply for additional residual waste capacity.

Any application is subject to a home visit and waste audit to determine the level of recycling being undertaken in the household. If it is demonstrated that all waste is being recycled using the range of bins that the Council provides then that household is allowed an additional bin.

Those Bury residents *choosing* to pay a private contractor to remove their waste are in a tiny minority. Given the assistance available to households it is clear that these residents are choosing to pay for an additional refuse collection rather than helping the environment by recycling.

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Suggested answer to written Question 5 submitted by Councillor Cummings.

- Q.** Would the Leader like to congratulate Manchester, City of Trees, and the Forestry Commission for laying down the foundations to create the City Forest Park in the North Manchester area, a People’s Park which will be the size of Central Park in New York and as well as being a huge Carbon Sink also a place for families and communities to share and enjoy just 15 minutes from our towns?
- A.** **Indeed, I would congratulate and thank City of Trees (formerly known as Red Rose Forest) for continuing to remind everyone of the value of the Lower Irwell Valley at Prestwich - and encouraging investment in it. The area is a fascinating mix of historic estates, ancient woodland and reclaimed land. It has huge value for recreation, biodiversity and carbon management.**

Bury Council has worked to improve the valley since the late 1980s. However, in 2009, City of Trees’ helped bring the Forestry Commission to the site and we are now able to announce that the Forestry Commission is funding a dedicated project manager, who was appointed last week. A project advisory group will be established in the new year which will include Bury and Salford Councils, the Environment Agency, United Utilities, City of Trees and the Forestry Commission.

We look forward to working with City of Trees and the other partners in the City Forest Park initiative over the next few years. The Irwell Valley is an important part of the city region's green infrastructure and its improvement will contribute greatly to the aims of the Greater Manchester Spatial Framework.

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Suggested answer to written Question 6 submitted by Councillor Bayley

Q. Could the Leader tell us anything about the drainage system to be used on the A56 Prestwich High Street?

A. **Flooding and pollution of our water courses is a major issue in the UK and the situation is no different in Bury. We have had significant flood events in Bury over the last 12 months and nine out of nine stretches of open water in the borough, all parts of the River Irwell, failed to meet the Government’s Water Framework Directive in 2015.**

Our engineered drainage system frequently fails to cope with the increasing volumes of surface water running off our roads, pavements and car parks and this is further being exacerbated by the loss of open space to new development. When water levels are too high Combined Sewer Overflows discharge into water courses to ensure that we don’t get water backing up on our streets. In Prestwich Clough for example the quality of water is very poor and there is CSO that discharges directly in to the brook there.

One of the solutions to the problem of flooding and poor water quality is to use natural measures such as green

space and trees as mechanisms for holding and cleaning water that runs off hard impermeable surfaces.

On Prestwich High Street we will be undertaking an innovative and unique project that will use trees to hold and clean surface water runoff before it eventually returns to the sewer system.

The plan is to plant 30 trees, subject to underground services, where rain water falling onto the road, pavement and adjacent buildings will be diverted into the pavement where the trees will be planted. The trees will utilise this water to help them grow and along with micro-organisms in the soil will be able to contain or transform many of the pollutants contained in the water into harmless inert compounds.

In addition to irrigating the trees and cleaning the water the trees and the soil will reduce the amount of water entering the sewer and delays its entry to reduce peak storm flows. If this approach was replicated at a wider scale it would have the potential to reduce the frequency at which CSO's discharge into neighbouring water courses such as the Brook in Prestwich Clough.

This project will form part of the LIFE IP Natural Courses programme and it has the financial backing of the Environment Agency and United Utilities. The EA and UU are very interested in the results that will be obtained by the University of Manchester who will be monitoring the amount of water entering and leaving the system and the time that this takes. Water samples at the point of entry and the point of exit back into the sewer will also be taken to quantify how water quality has been affected.

We hope that this pioneering project in Prestwich will lead to a mainstreaming of this approach and will provide an important natural solution to flooding and pollution of our water bodies.

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NOTE FOR: COUNCILLOR QUINN DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

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Suggested answer to written Question 7 submitted by Councillor R Walker

- Q.** Where are we up to with the delayed outcome of the promised Review of the Bus Lane in Bolton Road, Bury?
- A.** This bus lane was reviewed at the same time as the other town centre bus lanes and a report was submitted to Council in September last year. It was agreed that once the Lidl development was fully implemented and sufficient time had passed post implementation, we would assess its suitability. We are now at this point and Council Officers will be meeting in the near future to discuss. Once these discussions have taken place an updated report on the lanes suitability will be produced.

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COUNCIL MEETING –30 NOVEMBER 2016

NOTE FOR: COUNCILLOR HOLT FIRST DEPUTY AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

ITEM (6) – LEADER’S STATEMENT AND CABINET QUESTION TIME

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Suggested answer to written Question 8 submitted by Councillor Mallon

Q. Could the Leader give us an up-date on the progress of the Healthy Eating Voucher Scheme recently initiated by Bury Council?

A. **The Healthy Voucher Scheme was launched in October this year.**

The aim of the scheme is to help and encourage families to have a more healthy diet and to achieve the 5 A Day objective.

To take part in the scheme, families are invited to a short session to look at healthy eating options, particularly involving fruit and vegetables. Once the families have attended the session, if they are still interested, they are given £10 worth of vouchers to be exchanged for fruit and vegetables on Bury Market.

Although it is early days, I am very pleased with the uptake from families. They say that they have really enjoyed using the vouchers and that the stall holders have been really helpful. One mum said she had gone to one stall holder and he had encouraged her to buy a selection of vegetables, for example: carrots, parsnips,

sweet potatoes, which really helped all her children try and taste different vegetables.

Overall, in the first few weeks 54 families in Bury East are engaged in the project. And 188 vouchers have been issued. It is very encouraging.

I do want to thank The Revs and Bens team at Whittaker Street, Little Oaks Children's Centre, Bury schools St Pauls, St Johns and St Marks, East Ward and last but by no means last, Bury Markets Manager and all the fruit and vegetable stall holders on Bury Market, without the help and support of all these people the scheme would never have got off the ground.

BURY COUNCIL

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NOTE FOR: COUNCILLOR HOLT FIRST DEPUTY AND CABINET MEMBER FOR HEALTH AND WELLBEING

ITEM (6) – LEADER’S STATEMENT AND CABINET QUESTION TIME

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Suggested answer to written Question 9 submitted by Councillor Preston

- Q.** As with other councils and their NHS partners, Bury has been planning for the winter months, particularly in the area of adult social care. The coming months will be challenging, particularly with a long Bank Holiday weekend over Christmas. Could the leader tell us what arrangements Bury have made and what role does he see for families, friends and neighbours in facing this challenge?
- A.** **Every year the adult operations team plan cover for essential services over the Christmas period. Adult Operations also compile a list of staff willing to work as a contingency in the event of an unexpected situation such as bad weather.**

The Hospital social work team now work over 7 days on the Fairfield site to support timely discharges of patients. We have staff covering the service every day over the Christmas and New Year period with the exception of Christmas Day when it is not good practice to discharge people home.

The Rapid Response Service also work 365 days a year 9am – 8pm with the aim of supporting people in crisis to remain in their own homes and avoid hospital admission. The Emergency Duty Team also provide social work cover out of hours evenings, weekends and overnight over this period

All other essential services are covered by an on call manager out of hours, weekends and bank holidays so that key decisions can be made as appropriate.

For our customers who live at home with Reablement services, an exercise is completed in December with families to ascertain what informal support arrangements can be put in place over the festive period and staffing rota's are planned around this. Where ever possible families are encouraged to work with us to support their elderly relatives.

With bed based service such as Intermediate Care, staff work closely with families in early December and in the run up to Christmas to discharge people home and free up beds so they can be available as needed.

The council has commissioning arrangements in place with local providers of residential care, home care and supported living services. Providers are required to have a business continuity plan in place as part of their contractual obligations to ensure continuity of care for our customers during the winter period. Additional capacity will be commissioned should the need arise during this period to enable timely discharge of customers in hospital.

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NOTE FOR: COUNCILLOR BRIGGS CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

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Suggested answer to written Question 10 submitted by Councillor Daly

Q. Should they be required, who has statutory responsibility for the construction of new schools in the Bury metropolitan area?

A **The local authority no longer has the statutory power to establish a new school. If a new school is required, the LA is required to invite interest from providers, and it would be the successful applicant that would then be responsible for establishing the new school as a Free School.**

In terms of actual construction of school buildings, this will largely depend on the source of capital funding, as the LA will still receive capital funding for the provision of additional places, but Free Schools can also secure capital funding directly from the Government.

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NOTE FOR: COUNCILLOR QUINN CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

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Suggested answer to written Question 11 submitted by Councillor S Wright

- Q.** The Government has recently announced additional funding for road repairs which, according to the LGA, falls well short of the current ‘backlog’ of work. What is Bury’s current ‘backlog’ of road maintenance and how many multiples of this of our current road repairs budget(s)?
- A.** **There is currently no official definition of how a ‘backlog’ should be calculated, which would enable a consistent and comparable figure to be given.**

However thanks to constant Government cuts it is very clear that highway maintenance demands far outstrip the money that we have available.

In order to try and address this backlog of repairs Highway Operations employs innovative highway maintenance repair techniques, such as spray injection patching, highway inspector repairs and the use of special planning machines, which have increased the output and efficiency of the service.

However despite our very best efforts we are currently working on 1,725 maintenance jobs as of 25th November 2016.

We also take an innovative approach to defining the extent of works that we need to do on our highways by assessing a level of condition for the highway network that is acceptable and then considering how much investment would be required to keep it at that level i.e. in a steady acceptable state.

The models we are currently evaluating for our carriageway assets only suggest we would require immediate investment of approximately £73m to initially remove those worst parts of the network. Even with this investment we would then need an annual maintenance budget of approximately £8.5M to keep the network at the current standard.

We currently have revenue budgets for structural/cyclical maintenance totalling £1.349 million.

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NOTE FOR: COUNCILLOR BRIGGS CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

ITEM (6) – LEADER’S STATEMENT AND CABINET QUESTION TIME

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Suggested answer to written Question 12 submitted by Councillor Preston

- Q.** In 2014, Bury was placed in the lowest 10 LAs in the country for attainment in phonics, judged through the statutory Y1 phonics check and received a warning notice from the DfE in November 2014. How has the Council responded to this and what is the position now?
- A.** **The Council funded a project through the School Improvement Service aimed at raising standards in phonics which was launched in January 2015. The main target of the project was to improve the percentage of pupils reaching the expected standard in the national Y1 phonics check. In 2014 percentage of pupils reaching the standard was 66%**

A target for 2015 was set at 70%, and a target for 2016 was set at 75% with the intention of being broadly in line with national average.

At the end of 2015, 70.3% of pupils reached the expected standard, which was just above the target.

Outcomes of the second year of the project showed that by the end of 2016, 82.6% of pupils reached the expected standard, which constituted a rise of 12%

This means that Bury is the most improved LA in the North West and is 1% above national average.

I would like to congratulate all our staff in primary schools and our LA staff who have supported this work on the outstanding improvement they have delivered.

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**NOTE FOR: COUNCILLOR QUINN
CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT
ITEM (6) – LEADER’S STATEMENT AND CABINET
QUESTION TIME**

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**Suggested answer to written Question 13 submitted by
Councillor Mallon .**

- Q.** As more and more people purchase electric and hybrid cars, would the Leader encourage more of these purchases by letting the owners of these vehicles be allowed to park for free in Bury Town Centre?
- A.** **As a Council we are keen to promote the use of electric and hybrid cars and as such we already allow these vehicles to park for free whilst parked in an electric charging bay.**

BURY COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING –30 NOVEMBER 2016

NOTE FOR: COUNCILLOR LEWIS DEPUTY LEADER AND CABINET MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND HR

ITEM (6) – LEADER’S STATEMENT AND CABINET QUESTION TIME

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Suggested answer to written Question 14 submitted by Councillor Gartside

- Q.** Can the Cabinet Member responsible for Finance please update Council on what remedial actions have been taken since the last Corporate Financial Monitor Report, which identified a projected budget overspend of 6.395 Million pounds for the end of this financial year?
- A.** **Firstly, I think it is important to provide some context to this question.**

Since 2010, this Council has been forced to make cuts to its budget totalling £65 million a year; all these have been achieved with the Council returning a balanced outturn each year, and maintaining a healthy balance sheet.

Going forward, we anticipate at least a further £32 million of cuts as funding continues to be slashed.

The nature of ongoing cuts is that they get progressively harder to source and deliver.

Our month 3 monitoring process highlighted pressure early in the year; this was possible as we closed our 2015/16 accounts well ahead of the statutory deadline.

The report outlined measures that were put in place to control spend, and ongoing monitoring from month 3 highlights that progress is being made.

We are now reporting a reduced forecast overspend; full details will be presented to cabinet on 14th December.

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NOTE FOR: COUNCILLOR TARIQ CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITIES

ITEM (6) – LEADER’S STATEMENT AND CABINET QUESTION TIME

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Suggested answer to written Question 15 submitted by Councillor Cathcart

- Q.** Please could the Cabinet Member update us on the progress of Neighbourhood working
- A.** **I am pleased to advise Council that excellent progress has been made on Neighbourhood working. This represents our response to improving the well-being of our residents so that demand on services reduces as we assist families, individuals and communities to become more resilient.**

There are a number of elements to neighbourhood working:

- **Firstly, the One Commissioning Organisation which sees us bring together commissioning for health and social care under the Council’s umbrella in April 2017.**
- **Secondly, the Local Care Organisation, which will be in place by April 2017, in shadow form, brings together Pennine Acute, Pennine Care, GP Federation, the Council and BARDOC. Discussions are well underway and working is becoming more closely aligned.**

- **Thirdly, neighbourhood working. I am pleased to advise Council that we have two Township Hubs that are operational and are working on community priorities and casework. In just 6 weeks I am pleased to advise that they are improving outcomes including working with drug users and addressing fly tipping on two of our estates. It's early days but we are seeing progress.**

I am sure you will agree our plans for Neighbourhood working involve massive service transformation and, whilst this is work in progress, residents are beginning to see the benefits

**BURY COUNCIL
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**NOTE FOR: COUNCILLOR O'BRIEN
DEPUTY CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND
FAMILIES
ITEM (6) – LEADER'S STATEMENT AND CABINET
QUESTION TIME**

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**Suggested answer to written Question 16 submitted by
Councillor J Walker**

- Q.** Can the Leader give an update on the number of Looked After Children and Care Leavers who have been recruited this year into the Council's "Backing Young Bury" apprenticeship scheme?
- A.** **We've recently recruited three looked after children/care leavers to our apprenticeship scheme; two are within Insurance and Admin Buildings and one is within Highways Maintenance.**

We're also in the process of establishing a traineeship scheme which will be specifically for looked after children and care leavers. The idea of the traineeship is to provide an opportunity for young people who aren't quite apprenticeship-ready to give them the skills necessary to succeed in one of our apprenticeships. The programme is expected to start in January and we will have places for between 5 and 8 young people.

A session has already been run with young people to promote this scheme and joint work is now being undertaken to ensure that people on the scheme have a smooth transition into preparation for starting and securing a Traineeship with the Council. We are positive that we will utilise all the places available for the start of the scheme in January.

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Suggested answer to written Question 17 submitted by Councillor Hussain.

- Q.** Does this council have a strategy to ensure developers build on brownfield sites before areas presently in the greenbelt?
- A.** **This Council, along with the other nine Greater Manchester authorities, is seeking to prioritise brownfield land first within the draft Spatial Framework that is currently out for consultation.**

The supporting evidence for the GMSF shows that around 72% of the Government’s housing target can be accommodated within the existing urban area. Likewise, the vast majority of employment growth is earmarked to be developed on brownfield land within the urban area.

In Bury, there are planning permissions in place for around 2,200 new homes and most of these sites are under construction or have developers that are looking to take them forward in the near future.

However, there are a handful of sites that have stalled, without any signs of these being progressed and the Council is working hard to get these sites developed. Officers are currently updating the Local Brownfield Strategy which was last published in 2010.

However, despite the Council's best intentions, we are restricted in our ability to force landowners and developers to take brownfield sites forward. What we need is new powers from Government that stops developers from land banking sites and extra powers to force landowners to sell their land if they are showing no interest in getting the site developed. We have recently written to Government to this effect and have yet to receive a reply.

We also need a change to national planning guidance. As I stated, the GMSF does seek to prioritise brownfield land first but because of national policy requiring a continuous five year supply of housing land it will be difficult to prevent Green Belt release despite having significant amounts of brownfield land. Whilst we are restricted by the Government's national policy, we will continue to explore if and how the GMSF can force brownfield development and this Council will continue to lobby Government for the changes and extra powers to make this happen.

So, in answer to the question, we do have a strategy in place to get brownfield land developed in the Borough and this has been successful in recent years – over 95% of the homes built in Bury in the past decade has been on brownfield sites.

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Suggested answer to written Question 18 submitted by Councillor Adams

- Q.** This Christmas more than 120,000 children will be homeless, the highest figure for 9 years. Does the Leader think that this is down to incompetence by the Government or the fact that they simply don't care?
- A.** **The Council will be aware that homelessness is on the rise nationally just over 15,170 households were accepted as homeless between April to June an increase of 3%. However the numbers of households 73,120 in temporary accommodation has gone up by 9% and is 52% higher than 2010 figures. This is driven by a number of factors such as welfare Reform changes, lifestyle choices, landlords and other life pressures.**

Children are badly affected by homelessness it can affect their friendships, schooling, emotional well-being and life chances.

The Government is responding to the homeless pressures and a Bill is proceeding through the parliamentary process that will change how we approach homelessness and the allocation of social housing. The Government are responding to a pilot in Wales and I am pleased to report to Council that AGMA are working

together and are submitting a bid to the funding that Government recently announced.

Bury has transformed its homeless services over the last few years and I am proud that we do not place children in hostels or in Bed and Breakfast. Members will remember last year that the press picked up how well our homeless services were doing and I am pleased to report that Homeless preventions are this year are the highest (almost 1000- actual 988) they have ever been. We have beaten last year's figure and we still have 5 months remaining.

Families have a dedicated worker during their stay in our temporary accommodation and this includes supporting children. They are assisted to remain in school. Our focus is to move families on to more permanent accommodation which is in the best interest of the children

We currently only have 10 households (families) in temporary accommodation and 30 children this includes some large families. The length of stay of households in temporary accommodation is just over 7 weeks compared with some authorities where the stay is over 5 years.

We are currently working on developing a model for care leavers and other young people that are currently unable to return home.

I will report back to Council as the changes in our response to homelessness develop.

BURY COUNCIL

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NOTE FOR: COUNCILLOR SHORI LEADER OF THE COUNCIL ITEM (6) – LEADER’S STATEMENT AND CABINET QUESTION TIME

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Suggested answer to written Question 19 submitted by Councillor James

- Q.** Does the Leader think that the UK should have an independent judiciary?
- A.** **Judicial independence is the vital means which ensures the separation of powers between Government and the Courts. It is of paramount importance in a functioning democracy that Courts are not subject to improper influence from branches of Government or from private partisan interests.**

BURY COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING –30 NOVEMBER 2016

NOTE FOR: COUNCILLOR QUINN CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

ITEM (6) – LEADER’S STATEMENT AND CABINET QUESTION TIME

(Note: A printed version of the question has been circulated around the Council Chamber at the back of the Order of Proceedings and therefore **the question should not be read out.**)

Suggested answer to written Question 20 submitted by Councillor Keeley.

- Q.** Throughout the Borough drains and culverts are blocked, many have not been cleaned for many years. What steps are the Council taking to address this situation, especially in areas where there is a high risk of flooding?
- A.** **Our Highway Operations team operate a cyclic gully cleansing regime where all gullies within the adopted highway network are checked annually. In addition to this gullies are attended to on an ad-hoc basis that have either been reported or identified through our routine inspections as being blocked. However, sometimes this work can be problematic due to the presence of parked vehicles.**

As you will no doubt be aware additional monies for gully cleansing were announced at our 2015/16 budget which has enabled us to maintain two operational gully crews. All areas that were affected by last winters floods had an extra gully clean within 2 months of the floods.

Weather forecasts are monitored by Emergency Services as well as by operational teams with response teams put on stand-by as appropriate.

**BURY COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING –30 NOVEMBER 2016**

**NOTE FOR: COUNCILLOR QUINN
CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT
ITEM (6) – LEADER’S STATEMENT AND CABINET
QUESTION TIME**

(Note: A printed version of the question has been circulated around the Council Chamber at the back of the Order of Proceedings and therefore **the question should not be read out.**)

Suggested answer to written Question 21 submitted by Councillor D’Albert.

- Q.** With the Christmas holiday approaching could the Leader inform members what measures the council has in place to deal with possible fly tipping after Christmas and the need for additional recycling around Christmas?
- A.** **There is no disruption to waste collections over the forthcoming festive period, in that all collections will be made on the scheduled day. No residents will therefore go an extended period of time between bin collections.**

The service experienced no problems with collections over the two previous Christmases, following the introduction of 3 weekly refuse collections in October 2014. It should be remembered that at the same time, collections of the blue and green bins were increased to 3 weekly, thereby creating more recycling capacity and much of any additional waste generated over the festive period is recyclable.

At any time of the year, bulky and excess household waste (including recycling) can be taken to a local Household Waste Recycling Centre at Cemetery Road in Radcliffe or Every Street, Fernhill. These sites are open every day except Christmas and New Years Day, from 08.00 to 18.00. There is a network of 20 such facilities across Greater Manchester, any of which Bury residents can use.

There is no evidence to suggest that there will be any increase in fly tipping after Christmas. However, the Street Cleansing service will be geared up to respond to any complaints promptly, as they are at any other time of the year.

BURY COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING –30 NOVEMBER 2016

NOTE FOR: COUNCILLOR PARNELL DEPUTY CABINET MEMBER FOR STRATEGIC HOUSING AND SUPPORT SERVICES

ITEM (6) – LEADER’S STATEMENT AND CABINET QUESTION TIME

(Note: A printed version of the question has been circulated around the Council Chamber at the back of the Order of Proceedings and therefore **the question should not be read out.**)

Suggested answer to written Question 22 submitted by Councillor Kerrison

- Q.** Can the Leader report back on the success of the new Transition Festival? Are there any lessons from the new format and how does the Council propose to continue with this event in the financial constraints it faces?
- A.** **It is very early days to be drawing firm conclusions as the full evaluation and data gathering will take a few weeks. However, in terms of the format, the expansion from one night to two had the desired effect of making the event less vulnerable to weather disrupting the whole thing. The first day/night was very cold and wet and the audiences were therefore obviously reduced. The event was primarily moved into November to allow staff more time to organise it. Previous Light Nights have taken place in October and therefore have enjoyed a planning period of up to 25 weeks; whereas the Transition event only had around 11 weeks due to pressured timing issues related to budget commitment earlier in the year. In that context, I think the team involved did a remarkable job. The event aimed to be different to Light Night with a focus on family activities in the day and a more scheduled programme of performance and projection in the evening - thus allowing reducing the previous issues of public safety.**

Of course with such a short time to organise, there were new issues for the event which will have to be resolved going forward. For instance, it was difficult to get active participation from the range of local organisations which would normally be involved. The overrun of the capital works at the Met meant it couldn't open, and the withdrawal of the Drill Hall, the only indoor option was the Art Museum – which had a full programme.

We haven't got an estimate of visitors yet; and with the Rock and Millgate not participating their digital counting systems won't give us the same level of information. The Friday was really badly effected by the weather – which at one point was thundersnow! There were brave souls on the streets and the feedback despite the weather was positive.

Overall a high quality event was delivered to plan. Levels of marketing and publicity were carried forward building on Light Night practice. There was good media coverage. Social media penetration was high too. In November alone, on Facebook we reached more than 46,000 and on twitter we had more than 28,000 impressions. Social Media tends to be the first place you get a feel for the success or otherwise of an event; the last Light Night had received a volume of criticism online. So it's gratifying that we received absolutely no negative comment and all online response were positive. Even the people in the pouring rain on Friday had a good time. A much more detailed picture will be available when the evaluation is complete.

On the second part of the Member's question, managers are aware of the continuous constraints we face and will start work immediately on building joint commissioning partnership with other regional festivals to reduce costs and prioritise pursuit of external funding sources, with the policy expectation that the event should become self-sustaining financially. The second lesson is definitely return to October! Officers will start working on a development plan and fundraising strategy as soon as the evaluation of this one is complete.

BURY COUNCIL

**COUNCIL MEETING –30 NOVEMBER 2016
NOTE FOR: COUNCILLOR WALMSLEY
CABINET MEMBER STRATEGIC HOUSING AND SUPPORT
SERVICES
ITEM (6) – LEADER’S STATEMENT AND CABINET
QUESTION TIME**

(Note: A printed version of the question has been circulated around the Council Chamber at the back of the Order of Proceedings and therefore **the question should not be read out.**)

Suggested answer to written Question 23 submitted by Councillor Kersh

- Q.** Can the Leader of the Council or relevant Cabinet Member tell us why residents do not have the right to anonymity when commenting on pending planning applications?
- A.** **A planning application is part of a public register under the Planning Act 1990 and these provisions ensure that all material submitted in relation to an application is available so that a decision can be made in accordance with the development plan and all relevant material planning considerations, which includes objections. Opposition to a particular proposal is a common feature of the planning process and under Article 33 of the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 the local planning authority must also give notice of their decision to every person who has made a representation. Whilst there is flexibility upon how such notice is given, the fact remains that anonymity would not pass this test.**

Part VA of the Local Government Act 1972, as amended in part by the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985, provides that, in addition to agendas and reports, a list of background papers relative to a report for a council committee shall be made available, and that papers so listed may be open for inspection and copied by members of the public.

Access to planning documents is allowed provided the documents do not contain confidential information within the meaning of sec. 100A (3) of the Act, which deals with restricted information furnished by a government department or subject to a court order, nor are exempt by virtue of sec.100, which seeks to protect the identity of informants in cases of the breach of planning control.

BURY COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING –30 NOVEMBER 2016 NOTE FOR: COUNCILLOR QUINN CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

ITEM (6) – LEADER’S STATEMENT AND CABINET QUESTION TIME

(Note: A printed version of the question has been circulated around the Council Chamber at the back of the Order of Proceedings and therefore **the question should not be read out.**)

Suggested answer to written Question 24 submitted by Councillor Gunther

- Q.** Could the Leader or relevant Cabinet member give an update on what work has been undertaken in partnership with the Environment Agency to ensure debris from last year’s floods has been cleared from the Irwell at Summerseat and other affected parts of the Borough?
- A.** **It is understood that the Environment Agency has cleared river bed debris at Ramsbottom and Hardy’s Gate, Radcliffe, plus some large obstructions such as motor vehicles, from other places. However, in general the Environment Agency will only remove debris if it’s causing a flood risk. Otherwise it’s the problem of the owner of the river bank. At Summerseat the Council owns some sections of riverbank but most of it is in private ownership.**

**BURY COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING –30 NOVEMBER 2016**

**NOTE FOR: COUNCILLOR WALMSLEY
CABINET MEMBER FOR STRATEGIC HOUSING AND
SUPPORT SERVICES**

**ITEM (6) – LEADER’S STATEMENT AND CABINET
QUESTION TIME**

(Note: A printed version of the question has been circulated around the Council Chamber at the back of the Order of Proceedings and therefore **the question should not be read out.**)

**Suggested answer to written Question 25 submitted by
Councillor Pickstone**

- Q.** Could the Leader of the Council inform members of how many empty properties there are in the Borough at present, how this compares with recent years and what measure we are using to determine these figures?
- A.** **The total number of empty properties in the borough has been decreasing slightly over the last four years and stands at around 2500. However, the number of long term empty properties (i.e. empty for six months or more) has been more variable and have increased from 2015 to 2016 from just over 900 properties to 1050.**

The figures from 2013 to October 2016 can be broken down as follows:

Year (figures as at October)	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total number of empty properties	2854	2639	2552	2457
Number of empty properties over 6 months	991	887	907	1050

These figures are put together through Council Tax data and are based on Council Tax discounts and exemptions for empty properties. The information is submitted to DCLG annually and is the source of the figures stated.

The Urban Renewal section, within Communities and Wellbeing, track the number and distribution of empty properties and have several approaches to tackle the issue and bring empty properties back into use. It should be noted that there are many different factors involved in properties being empty, there are limitations on the influence the Council can have in relation to privately owned empty properties, demands on resources are often high in individual cases and there are inevitable limitations on the resources the Council has to tackle the issue. However, I can assure members that the issue of empty properties are taken seriously and remain a priority and, within the constraints mentioned, resources continue to be provided and used as efficiently and effectively as possible to tackle the issues.

BURY COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING –30 NOVEMBER 2016

**NOTE FOR: COUNCILLOR LEWIS
DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND CABINET
MEMBER FOR FINANCE AND HR**

ITEM (6) – LEADER’S STATEMENT AND CABINET QUESTION TIME

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Suggested answer to written Question 26 submitted by Councillor Daly .

Q. What services presently provided by Bury MBC does the council consider to be under threat of being reduced or stopped completely to ensure a balanced budget for financial year 2017/18, and what steps are being taken now to investigate other service delivery methods?

A. **Given the continuing reductions to funding; which Bury still seems to suffering to a much greater degree than other neighbouring Authorities – the honest answer is that all services are under threat.**

Over the last few months, we have been examining all service areas, and our budget proposals for 2017 to 2020 will be launched for public consultation on 8th December.

Part of the work we have been doing has been to examine alternative service delivery models – building on the success of Persona which went live in October last year.

I hope the party opposite engage with our consultation process, and join us in lobbying Government for a fair funding deal for Bury.

BURY COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING –30 NOVEMBER 2016

NOTE FOR: COUNCILLOR SHORI LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

ITEM (6) – LEADER’S STATEMENT AND CABINET QUESTION TIME

(Note: A printed version of the question has been circulated around the Council Chamber at the back of the Order of Proceedings and therefore **the question should not be read out.**)

Suggested answer to written Question 27 submitted by Councillor Hussain.

Q. What measures are the Council taking to support business, encourage new business into the Borough and increase footfall in our town centres?

A. **Supporting inward investment, business start up and business growth is a priority for Bury Council.**

This Council is committed to ensuring that all our policies and plans support Bury’s economy. It is recognised that a strong local economy is good for people, good for communities and good for business.

At the beginning of the recession this Council understood that it was our business leaders from sectors all across the borough that would drive growth and prosperity for the benefit of all.

Over the last 5 years the Chief Executive and the Leader of Bury Council have visited numerous local businesses. These visits broker a good relationship between Council departments and the local business base. By understanding our local economy we are able to ensure that our policies and plan are business friendly.

In addition we have a dedicated Business Engagement Team. These are not new posts; these are officers from

across the Council work streams who oversee our Bury Means Business Strategy.

The annual Made in Bury Business Awards are firmly established. This is Bury's first dedicated business awards recognising and celebrating our diverse business base.

In addition the Council part funds a Bury Business Growth Advisor. Employed by the Greater Manchester Growth Hub this officer has a wealth of knowledge and is totally dedicated to assisting Bury business with growth potential. To date this investment has supported over one hundred businesses bringing access to finance, grant funding, specialist business support, free training and has safeguarded and created new jobs.

Working in partnership with the Growth Hub ensures our businesses large and small are signposting to the right support. The Council hosts business breakfast events throughout the year. This month we hosted an event attracting over 70 business leaders.

Plans are underway to schedule more events for 2017. We kick off in January with the Bury Means Business Meet the Provider Event. This will bring together businesses and the organisations and services that can support them to reduce sickness absence and support the health and well being of their employees. Bury Council is supporting businesses to work towards the national Healthy Workforce Charter; this is part of our wider support offer to businesses.

Supporting our priority of a stronger economy this Council has established a Bury Business Leadership Group. This group is business led and includes members from large, small and medium enterprises. The Chief Executive and myself represent Bury Council on this group, which seeks to support businesses and act as a check and measure for our business friendly policies.

Land availability for large inward investment options has been a barrier. The Council receives multiple enquiries for employment land and expansion options. Feedback from business engagement has demonstrated that

creating new expansion and inward investment opportunities is crucial to this Council's Growth Plan. Our Growth Plan sets out how we intend to grow our borough, ensuring any growth in terms of housing and employment land is carefully considered and inclusive. The Greater Manchester Spatial Framework sets out the collective growth proposals across Greater Manchester.

Recognising that Bury is an integral part of the City region, this Council alongside all the other districts across Greater Manchester supports MIDAS.

MIDAS is our inward investment organisation that projects the Manchester brand across the world, inviting and welcoming worldwide businesses to invest in Greater Manchester.

Bury is a great place to live, work and study. We have a skilled workforce, excellent housing stock, fantastic town centres, a vibrant cultural offer and connectivity into the city and centre and beyond. We need to ensure we look after everything that is great about Bury because our excellent assets, our place and our people will attract inward investment, support start up, entrepreneurialism and innovation.

Our town centres are hugely successful already. Bury Town Centre sits behind only Manchester City Centre and the Trafford Centre as a retail destination. It is also the only Greater Manchester authority with Purple Flag status. We aim to build on this success and will continue to explore development opportunities in and around the Town centre to increase footfall. Likewise, the Council is looking at other town centres in the Borough including Radcliffe, Prestwich and Ramsbottom to explore opportunities to improve the offer of these centres.

**BURY COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING –30 NOVEMBER 2016
NOTE FOR: COUNCILLOR WALMSLEY
CABINET MEMBER FOR STRATEGIC HOUSING AND
SUPPORT SERVICES
ITEM (6) – LEADER’S STATEMENT AND CABINET
QUESTION TIME**

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Suggested answer to written Question 28 submitted by Councillor S Wright.

Q. Could the leader of the Council what proportion of greenbelt land is proposed to reclassified in the current proposals of the Greater Manchester Strategic Framework, by Township Forum area?

A. **It is proposed that the following percentages of Green Belt will be reclassified:**

3.6% in Ramsbotton, Tottington and North Manor Township;

23.4% in Bury West Township;

0.7% in Bury East Township;

21% in Radcliffe Township;

49.1% in Whitefield and Unsworth Township; and

46.7% in Prestwich Township.

Across the Borough, it is proposed that 20% of the Green Belt is re-designated to meet the Government’s targets.

However, it is important to note that whilst it is proposed to take large areas of land out of the Green Belt, it will not all be developed on. Much of the land will be left untouched as it is not developable and large areas will be protected under other planning policies.

BURY COUNCIL

COUNCIL MEETING –30 NOVEMBER 2016

NOTE FOR: COUNCILLOR QUINN CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT

ITEM (6) – LEADER’S STATEMENT AND CABINET QUESTION TIME

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Suggested answer to written Question 29 submitted by Councillor D’Albert

- Q.** Could the Leader of the Council inform members which of the remaining Street Safe schemes will be completed as consulted with physical speed prevention measures, and which will not?
- A.** **We are more than happy to make a comprehensive list of schemes available to Cllr D’Albert after the meeting.**