

**COUNCIL MEETING**  
**11 DECEMBER 2013**  
**LEADER'S STATEMENT**

Madam Mayor, Members and Officers of the Council, there has been two meetings of the Cabinet since the last meeting of the Council.

**Broad Band**

The Cabinet were pleased to agree Bury's share in a £14m investment across Greater Manchester which ensures nearly 100% broadband coverage across a number of key areas in the Borough, notably:

- Bradley Fold
- Bury Freetown
- Bury Town Centre (Chamberhall)
- Pilsworth
- Radcliffe Town Centre
- Affetside
- Ainsworth

Greater Manchester's ambition is to become one of the world's top 20 digital cities by 2020. To meet this ambition all of the AGMA Leaders have signed up and provided financial support to ensure both residents and business are connected to the world wide web with access to superfast download speeds of up to (30 Mega bits per second) not sure that all that means other than it good news all round. Eight of the 10 Districts are contributing £312,000 which will assist in creating new jobs and provide a support framework for mature and start up businesses both in rural and inner urban areas. Manchester and Salford have a separate scheme via a different funding route.

### **Tobacco Control Strategy**

I would ask Members to note this statistic. Each year in Bury it is estimated that smoking costs our local public services over £50m in costs through littering; domestic fires; medical treatments; sickness absence days; the effects of passive smoking and so on.

The purpose of the strategy is to engage with our partners to drive down tobacco use and therefore reduce health inequalities and poverty amongst the population of Bury.

With limited resources available, the strategy aims to ensure that our tobacco crusade is a priority for everyone in Bury.

Our three priorities are:

1. Enabling smokers in Bury who want to quit, to be able to quit with the right support.
2. Tackling the accessibility of tobacco products for young people, particularly in relation to illegal and illicit tobacco, underage sales and niche products.
3. Protecting children, families and communities from the effects of second-hand smoke.

## **Month 6 Financial Monitoring Report**

I was pleased to see the level of overspending is coming down and let's not forget the context of this in so far as we have already cut budgets by £28 m. The position at month 6 compared with the same period last shows that the current projection is for an overspend of £0.696m on the General Fund (compared to £1.266m at the same time last year).

We of course remain vigilant and determined to manage the overspend in the face of severe demand pressures in Childrens and Adult Services.

### **Best of Bury Business Awards**

Remember the date 22 November 2013 folks, it was the date of the first ever Bury Business Awards ceremony to celebrate and showcase the important contribution local businesses make in the life and well-being of residents in our Borough.

I, along with the Mayor were very proud to be there to spend a most marvellous and inspiring afternoon as award after award was presented to 17 businesses and where lots of Highly Commended and Commended certificated also were awarded.

The buzz in the room was electric, the praise the Council received for making these awards a reality proves we really are walking the walk to build a strong economy here in Bury.

## **Grace's Place**

It was my privilege along with the Mayor to attend the Launch of a £1m funding appeal to create Bury's first ever Children's Hospice, which would see children from not only from Bury but Rochdale, Heywood and Oldham being able to access services, many at a time of great need or crisis.

I hope we all do what we can to promote this appeal and we have placed links on our web site to encourage visitors to the web site to make a donation.

## **LGA Peer Review**

As Members will know, I agreed to a Peer Review Challenge of the Council conducted by the Local Government Association.

I wanted to do this in the spirit of our commitment to openness and transparency. When I announced this review at the Council meeting in September I promised the report would be published for all to see. Whilst I await the full report I am pleased to give Members some headlines:

The review found there is strong and effective Leader and Chief Executive, working in partnership and the Council appreciates and recognises the scale of the political and financial challenges.

The Council's senior partners in Team Bury value and actively support the Wider Leadership Board and are engaged in leadership and governance of Greater Manchester combined authority (AGMA);

The group were impressed with Dual mandate for Executive Directors which works well and is suited to Bury's circumstances along with political structures that allow wider engagement of frontline members in cabinet portfolio and budget setting processes;

The Council are clear about key priorities, arising from public consultation and widely known amongst frontline staff and partners; and have been successful at protecting frontline services from budget reduction to date and where Bury widely regarded by residents, partners and regionally as well cared for;

On finance the Council has a good level of general balances; substantial earmarked reserves and significant provisions; history of delivering on budget overall where the devolved financial model works well; creating ownership; strong sense of autonomy to manage budgets; encourages managed risk taking and where Star chamber process provides wider visibility and moderation of departments

There are, of course, areas where we can do better and an action plan will be brought to Cabinet in due course.

## **Increments**

Madam Mayor, just recently I was pleased to announce the re-instatement of increments for affected staff which is a small gesture after a period of unprecedented changes to their terms and conditions.

All Members need to be aware, one of the 'stand out' comments from the LGA Peer Review was the commitment from our staff and their loyalty to Bury despite the very many challenges they have faced.

I have to say I wasn't surprised to hear these positive comments because on this side of the Chamber we have always valued our staff and know what important and valuable jobs they do day in day out for our residents. Its shame all local councillors don't share those sentiments.

## **New Housing Office**

On Monday I was pleased to attend with the Mayor the formal opening of the new Housing Reception facility at the Town Hall. In customer care terms it's a vision of the future. I would strongly recommend all Members to pop in to see and experience the new facilities. Anyone who has visited previously will not recognise it. It is a splendid example of a listening council where many of the new features have come from what customers have told us they want.

It's a bright and user friendly space with an area set aside for children and subtle colours and even a bubble feature to create a calming atmosphere. A new web site called 'Ask B' has been created as a one stop shop for new applicants and those that simply what information has also been launched.

## **Bury College**

We all know how good the College is in looking after its many thousands of students. In particular the challenges in providing many hundreds of meals from their four restaurants all staffed by Catering students

Well, all that hard work has paid with Bury College being the first college in Greater Manchester to receive a Commitment Award an Achievement Award and Excellence Award for their catering services. To win this top prize the judges were impressed to see that the College provides snacks that are low in sugar and salt, reduces total salt used, markets healthier options and shows a commitment to recycling.

## **Children and Young People Now Awards.**

I want to congratulate Early Break, one our leading voluntary groups, where they were recently shortlisted for three national awards. I have just heard that Early Break have done very well by winning the Health and Well Being Award. In addition, the team were highly commended in the Early Intervention Programme category.

## **Adult Learning**

I am sure all Members will join me in congratulating Gill Hughes and her wonderful Adult Learning Service Team who have recently be audited as part of the work the service undertakes for Open Awards.

The Auditor heaped praise on the work of the team in which he highlighted the "Excellent management and quality assurance of course programmes" and that " the overall management, administration and quality assurance/improvement of Open Awards course programmes is outstanding".

Furthermore, at the end of his visit, the Auditor said that he intends to invite other centres to contact Bury regarding good practice as we are in the **top five** of the hundreds of providers he is responsible for.

**Madam Mayor that concludes my statement.**

**End**