

**Minutes of: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**Date of Meeting:** 12 September 2019

**Present:** Councillor R Caserta (in the Chair)  
Councillors T Cummings, N Jones, M Powell, L Smith,  
S Smith, Susan Southworth, R Walker and C Walsh

**Also in attendance:** Mrs M Wilde – Co-opted Member (Education)

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

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillor K Leach and Councillor B Mortenson

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#### **OSC.151 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Harris declared a personal interest in any item relating to Six Town Housing as she is a member of the Board.

Mrs Wilde – Co-opted Member declared a personal interest as a school governor.

#### **OSC.152 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

No members of the public were present

#### **OSC.153 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

##### **It was agreed:**

That the Minutes of the last meeting held on 16 July be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

#### **OSC.154 CORPORATE CORE UPDATE**

Councillor Jane Black, Cabinet Member Corporate Affairs and HR and Lynne Ridsdale, Deputy Chief Executive, presented a report updating Members on the progress made in establishing Corporate Core Services.

It was reported that since the last update to Overview and Scrutiny in July 2019 significant progress had been made as follows:

- All HR teams have been brought together into a single corporate service which will co-locate and deliver a 20% reduction in costs. The corporate structure is the first stage of a longer programme of improvement in people management. The corporate People Strategy will now be updated to reflect organisational priorities and in the first instance will be aligned with the GM Good Employment Charter across the following key areas of employment practice:
  - Secure work
  - Flexible work
  - A real living wage

- Workplace engagement and voice
- Excellent recruitment practices and progression
- Excellent people management
- A productive and healthy workplace

A fundamental review of all HR related policies, procedures, data and systems is now being planned, with input from managers, staff and in partnership with the Trades Unions.

- A programme managed approach to stabilising IT is underway; the roll out of new devices has been expedited and the telephony system upgrade delivered in September against plan
- The posts in scope of future single Core services as described in section 2.2 have been identified and included in a report to Cabinet seeking permission to consult on establishing the single teams. Subject to agreement, proposals will be the basis of a 90 day consultation period and implemented in early 2020
- Work is underway to strengthen the consistency in compliance and assurance of GDPR and data protection legislation, with workshops underway to refresh the skills and engagement of the network of Information Governance Champions; finalisation of the Council's ROPA (Record of Processing Activity); and a review of arrangements for the disposal of confidential waste
- A review of business support capacity has recently begun, starting with PA provision. Work to date has centred on understanding current activity (eg any variations across departments); benchmarking cost, capacity processes; and considering what elements of work could be addressed through self-service. This review will be subject to detailed stakeholder engagement and staff consultation around any changes
- The Chief Information Officer has taken up post to lead IT, Policy and Performance functions. The early priority for this post holder will be the programme management of the design of a new Bury Strategy. Work is underway at pace and will involve:
  - capturing the plans, priorities and strategies across all Team Bury partners
  - Baselining the associated outcomes and performance measures of partner plans against Borough issues and priorities
  - Hosting a big "conversation" across Bury residents to capture their strengths, concerns and aspirations for Bury over the next ten years
- The Deputy Chief Executive's office continue to lead the network of 'Change Agents' across the Council and CCG. This is a self-selected network of staff who want to drive and support change across the organisations, within and outside of their normal responsibilities. The network meet monthly and maintain a digital network. An opportunity for further development of the Change Agents in the area of

transformational leadership and managing change is being explored through resources available to the CCG. The Change Agents are receiving an early briefing on the Bury Strategy and invited to get involved in the consultation exercise with residents.

The strategic intention is for Council and CCG services to operate as one, in pursuit of efficiencies and shared good practice. The scale and complexity of such change is significant however and therefore the following pragmatic approach to implementation is proposed:

- All Council services to be brought together from former departmental teams into a single corporate service, as a first priority. The scope for ongoing co-provision with the CCG to then be explored. At this stage early priorities for integration are:
  - the communications team, which is already operating under a Joint Head of Service and;
  - the performance and intelligence teams who have worked closely for some time.
- Combined teams, once scoped, to operate under common leadership and to a consistent set of standards and accountabilities but the intention is to avoid Council staff providing any Core support to the CCG on the basis that VAT costs would apply to this arrangement. Further advice on this matter is being pursued by the Finance service.

Moving forward, the process of consulting and finalising scoping proposals for the establishment of corporate teams proposed will be a significant priority. A 90 day consultation period will apply during which staff briefings will be arranged and formal feedback considered through normal consultation procedure. At the end of this period a decision will be taken in relation to all corporate resources in the teams within the remit of the Deputy Chief Executive (Corporate Core)

The development of the Corporate Core is an important undertaking for the council both in terms of culture and effectiveness. Bringing disparate teams together both from within the council itself but also integrating with the CCG will allow for a collection of expertise and more integrated working, whilst removing duplication and inconsistencies.

Those present were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments and the following points were raised:

- Councillor L Smith referred to contractors that the Council employed being required to pay a living wage and asked where this was up to.

Lynne explained that proposals would have to be drawn up in relation to this and any decisions made would be Council decisions.

- Councillor L Smith referred to the Bury Strategy and asked how wide the consultation would be and whether it would reach the diverse communities across the borough.

It was reported that the consultation would be as far and wide as possible to ensure engagement across the borough and this includes posters and signage in areas with high traffic such as GPs surgeries, hospitals and at events such as Bury 10k. There was a social media campaign that had already begun. It was hoped that all age profiles would take part and engagement will be carried out with service user, partners and residents. There was a competition being held across the borough's primary schools asking young people to 'design Bury 2030'.

Councillor Black explained that Bury means different things to different people and if a resident wanted to comment on the area that they lived or worked rather than Bury as a whole that would be welcomed.

- Councillor S Smith stated that there had been a large consultation carried out across the borough around 10 years ago. Councillor Smith suggested that the results from that are reviewed as part of the process.
- Councillor Caserta referred to alignment with the GM Good Employment Charter and stated that some of the characteristics within the Charter were lacking in detail such as zero hour contracts and NDAs.

Lynne explained that this would be Bury's interpretation and the GM Charter will be a good starting point.

- Councillor Caserta referred to the issue with VAT that had been highlighted and asked whether there was something in place to solve this.

Lynne reported that advice would be sought to help decide how to take this forward.

**It was agreed:**

That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the good progress made since the last update.

**OSC.155 VOLUNTEERING**

Councillor Jane Black, Cabinet Member Corporate Affairs and HR presented a report giving details of the Council's employee volunteering scheme. Appended to the report was the Bury Council's Supported Volunteering Policy.

It was explained that the scheme has been developed jointly between Bury Council and Bury CCG and allows staff to volunteer up to 3 days' a year in work time.

The policy will operate in collaboration with the newly formed Bury Voluntary, Community and Faith Alliance (VCFA). The success of the scheme is dependent on the VCFA portal offering sufficient and suitable volunteering opportunities.

Those present were given the opportunity to make comments and ask questions and the following points were raised:

- Councillor Walker asked that the scheme wasn't over bureaucratized.

- Councillor Walsh stated that the scheme was very positive and would have good effects on mental health.
- Councillor Southworth referred to the VCFA helping to publicise the opportunities and asked that the big organisations offering volunteering opportunities be included.
- Councillor Caserta asked what the relationship was between the Council and CCG and the VCFA.

It was explained that the VCFA were a partner organisation who organise a lot of the voluntary sector work in Bury. The VCFA will hold a register that staff can look at when considering volunteering opportunities. It was explained that the register would have opportunities to consider but the volunteering opportunities did not have to come from there.

**It was agreed:**

That the contents of the report be noted.

**OSC.156 COMMUNITY SAFETY**

Councillor Sharon Briggs presented a report providing feedback from the Community Safety Partnership on crime statistics in Bury and progress in implementing priorities of the Community Safety Plan.

- Crime levels in Bury are at or below projected levels in 23 out of 26 areas.
- Bury is the second safest borough in GM in terms of Household crime.
- Bury has some of the lowest Juvenile reoffending rates in GM, well below national averages.
- Adult re-offending is also below National averages and Bury is in the top half of GM boroughs.
- Hate-crime levels are also below the GM average but in line with national trend have increased over the last couple of years.
- This report has been written with limited available Police data. However, the Police are in the process of implementing a new IT system which will ultimately enhance data quality and improve general efficiency.

The Community Safety Plan was agreed at Full Council in November 2018.

The priorities identified in the plan link directly to the outcomes identified in the GM Standing Together Police & Crime Plan, which forms the bedrock of all Community Safety Plans across Greater Manchester.

The current issues were set out within the report:

- Domestic Violence and Abuse
- Youth Violent Crime
- Channel/Prevent
- Impact of Brexit

Members were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments and the following points were raised:

- Councillor Nick Jones referred to the Channel/Prevent and asked what the timescales were around this work.

Tom Hoghton, Community Safety Manager explained that this was currently being negotiated and work was being undertaken on the best way to deliver.

- Councillor Caserta referred to the impact of Brexit and asked how the Council would use the money it had received in relation to this.

It was explained that it is up to each Council to invest in the areas it thinks would be relevant. It was anticipated that this would be food and medicines, investment in the VCFA for communication, working with community groups.

An economic impact assessment will be carried out working with local businesses.

Work will be carried out in relation to civil unrest alongside community safety.

It was explained that the main area of work would be around communication and particularly vulnerable people.

- Councillor N Jones referred to Bury being a safe borough and the statistics provided within the report. Councillor Jones asked whether this information was provided through the new Greater Manchester Police IT system which had been having issues since its introduction in August.

Tom explained that the figures set out in the report was from data collated in July, before the introduction of the new systems.

- Councillor L Smith referred to the Brexit planning and the small retailers within her ward of Besses. Councillor Smith asked that all small businesses were considered when undertaking planning.

**It was agreed:**

That the contents of the report be noted.

**OSC.157 CORPORATE FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT (APRIL TO JUNE)**

Councillor O'Brien, Cabinet Member for Finance and Housing presented a report informing Members of the Council's financial position for the period April 2019 to June 2019 and projects the estimated outturn at the end of 2019/2020.

Those present were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments and the following points were raised:-

- Councillor Walker referred to 4.1.3 of the report and the use of the term 'Demographic Pressures', Councillor Walker asked for this to be explained.

Councillor O'Brien explained that there were a larger number of older people in Bury than was average and a larger number of younger people in Bury than was average as well as a high proportion of people with disabilities.

Mike Woodhead explained that the locality plan that was produced jointly between the Council and the CCG showed in the service user level that 80% of the costs related to 20% of users.

- Councillor N Jones referred to the Council Tax Recovery Team and asked what the level of recovery was.

Councillor O'Brien reported that the team had an additional 2 staff members which had seen a return of seven times their salaries which equated to £5000 per hour worked. In total the amount collected was £800,000.

Councillor O'Brien explained that the Council were currently reviewing the potential for further staff within the team, although pointed out that there would be a critical point when increased staffing would not generate the same proportion of return.

Councillor N Jones asked that it be recorded that the work of the team be commended.

- Councillor Caserta referred to the announcement that TfGM would be charging for travel passes for older people and asked how this scheme would work.

Councillor O'Brien stated that he wasn't sure of the details but it was felt to be the most equitable way forward.

- Councillor Walker stated that he hadn't received any information in relation to the question he had asked about Capital receipts from the sale of assets and asked that this information be provided.
- Councillor N Jones explained that he had asked a question relating to a breakdown of the Council's investment properties and asked that this information also be provided.

**It was agreed:**

That the contents of the report be noted and information provided to Cllr Walker and Cllr Jones as previously agreed.

**OSC.158 TRADED SERVICES UPDATE**

Mike Woodhead, Joint Chief Finance Officer presented the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with the Schools Traded Services Year on Year Review.

Those present were given the opportunity to ask questions and the following points were raised:

- Councillor L Smith asked whether the Council was making a profit in relation to the services provided to schools.

Mike explained that the profit made had improved in the last year. There was no financial drain on the Council but it was becoming more challenging.

Mike explained that the caretaking service was one area where more work was required and this was ongoing.

- Councillor Jones stated that all schools were able to consider other options not just academies. The service offered needs to be of a standard that can compete with the private providers.
- Councillor Southworth explained that schools are going to look for better value for money and as such the Council needs to offer different options.

**It was agreed:**

That the contents of the report be noted.

**OSC.159 BUSINESS GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT**

Paul Lakin, Director of Economic Regeneration and Capital Growth gave a presentation setting out the implementation of the growth strategy, the key objectives, streamlining and funding of the Directorate, the 2019/2020 early priorities, including the early priorities in relation to Bury Market.

Those present were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments and the following points were raised:

- Councillor Lucy Smith referred to 5G in public sector buildings and asked how the public sector buildings were being included in the roll out of 5G.

Paul explained that there would have to be a more considered paper presented to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to 5G roll out across the borough.

- Councillor Powell referred to the development of Prestwich Village and asked where it was up to and whether the 9 Prestwich Councillors will be briefed on future developments.

Paul explained that a Cabinet Paper was in the process of being produced and Councillors will be briefed. This would then lead to public consultation.

- Councillor Southworth reiterated the need for involving local Councillors in all consultations relating to their wards.
- Councillor N Jones referred to early priorities across the borough in general and the big sites that were set out with the presentation including; the former fire station in Bury Town Centre; Chamberhall; Bradley Fold Industrial Estate; Market Chambers and Radcliffe Leisure Centre site.

Councillor Jones asked for information showing actual progress made at the sites.

- Councillor Jones asked how the footfall at Bury Market was monitored.

Paul explained that there were movement monitors attached to the entrances that counted people in. The margin for error was always built into these statistics and the staffing numbers within the markets were also accounted for.

- Councillor Harris referred to Chamberhall and the statement that 50% was already let. Councillor Harris asked what this actually meant.

Paul explained that this referred to the gross floor space available and the fact that a pre let agreement had been signed for 50% of this space. Paul reported that he would provide an update on these figures at a future meeting.

- Councillor Stella Smith referred to the old Police Station site at Irwell Street in Bury Town Centre and what was happening at the site.

Paul explained that the old Fire Station site was in the process of being reviewed. The Council were looking for a very specific type of investor that would enhance the site and would not just accept the highest bid. It was anticipated that this work would inform the decision on the old Police Station site on Irwell Street site also.

- Councillor Stella Smith referred to Bury Market and the reduction in footfall and asked whether there was any demographic information in relation to this.

Paul explained that the Market didn't attract as many young people as it would like.

- Councillor Stella Smith suggested that all social media and other tactics needed to be employed.

Paul explained that following recent dialogue between the Council and market traders it had been agreed to review the current business model. A cross party working group will be set up to oversee the future development of the market.

**It was agreed:**

1. That the contents of the update be noted.
2. That a report setting out the work of the Bury Market Working Group be brought to a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

**OSC.160 LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN - EARLY INTERVENTION REPORT**

Tony Decrop, Assistant Director – Social Care and Safeguarding and Karen Dolton, Executive Director – Children and Young People presented a report providing an overview of Bury's Looked After Children and Early Help provision and service development/transformation linked to those workstreams.

The report set out the principles and values of Bury Council's commitment to children in care, gave information in relation to the numbers of children and details of sex, age, ethnicity and where those children had been placed.

The report also gave information in relation to Corporate Parents, Children in Care Council, Bury Children's Rights, the role of the Independent Reviewing Officers, Monitoring and Governance, the Virtual School, Health of Looked After Children, Permanence, the Regional Adoption Agency and Special Guardianship Orders.

Future actions were reported including improving foster care recruitment, the Council and CCG becoming foster friendly employers, developing Corporate Parenting Champions across the Council and the CCG and having a robust Early Help offer.

It was reported that a three month consultation had been carried out which outlined a new proposed Early Help Division which would bring together staff from Team Oasis, Children's Centres – including outreach services, Reaching Children, Families and Parenting workers and the Reach Out Project into a unified early help management structure. Within the consultation existing teams/roles moved to the Early Help and School Readiness division; Integrated Youth Support Services, Connexions, School Attendance Service, Emotional Wellbeing practitioner, Early Years Advisors, Portage, Early Help Youth Offending Practitioners and Domestic Abuse Project. A new role has been developed for School Readiness Lead Officer and Service Manager. In order to strengthen and provide accountability and focus for Early Help and School Readiness, a role of Assistant Director Early Help and School Readiness has been developed; this will help to drive forward changes at pace to have the impact needed to reduce demand on the system.

The SCIL line management has transferred from Communities and Wellbeing and is positioned within Early Help and School Readiness.

It was explained that the Early Help delivery model will be locality based and support communities.

A new early help assessment has been developed through multi-agency consultation. The assessment is called the "Story So Far" and developed with the intention for it to be a live document where a family's story can be captured and added to as their circumstances change stopping them having to re-tell it to different agencies.

Those present were given the opportunity to ask questions and make comments and the following points were raised:

- Councillor Susan Southworth referred to the role of advisor to the Foster Panel and rate of staff turnover in this role. There had been 3 or 4 different people in this post in the past 18 months.

Karen Dolton explained that she was aware of the situation and there had been some performance issues as well as staff leaving if they received a better offer. There had been a programme of improvement and enhanced capacity within the team.

- Councillor Southworth stated that there were an increasing number of family and friends coming forward as carers for looked after children, sometimes with very tenuous links and asked what was done about this.

Karen explained that anybody that wanted to become a foster carer would have to go through the full training process and go through to the foster panel for approval no matter if they were family or friends. It was also explained that the courts expect that all family options are exhausted before permanency and adoption. It was stated that these placements were often the best outcome as the child could still live within their family network and there were fewer breakdowns.

- Councillor Walsh asked what the Council and CCG offered to employees as a Foster Friendly Employer.

It was explained that this would include time away from work to attend training and other appointments associated with fostering.

- Councillor Lucy Smith asked whether being a Foster Friendly Employee was an accredited award.

It was explained that, yes this was the case.

**It was agreed:**

That the contents of the report be noted.

**OSC.161 SEND UPDATE**

Karen Dolton and Councillor Tamoor Tariq presented a report giving an update on Special Educational Needs and Disability.

It was explained that the SEND Ofsted revisit in May 2019 found that Bury Local area had made sufficient progress in 5 of the 8 areas and the three other areas had not made sufficient progress as follows:

- Sharing of health information and contribution to Education Health and Care plans (EHCP).
- Health Practitioners were unaware of Children's EHCPs.
- Joint Commissioning Arrangements

The actions that had been carried out to date were set out within the report and it was reported that there is a comprehensive action plan in place to accelerate the pace of change in relation to SEND to ensure that all aspects of the local area offer are effective, joined up and improve the outcomes for all Bury children with SEN.

It was explained that an action plan had been submitted by the CCG and a meeting to go through this was due to be held on 23 September. There were no more planned visits from Ofsted.

The following points were raised:

- Councillor Caserta asked who would be checking on the progress made with regards to the Action Plan.

Karen explained that more would be known around this following the planned meeting on the 23 September. Karen stated that she would report back to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update following the meeting.

- Councillor Walsh referred to Education Health Care Plans and the auditing of these and asked who was involved and whether this could be brought to a future meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny.

Karen reported that additional capacity had been brought in to undertake independent multi agency reviews for each plan.

**It was agreed:**

That the contents of the report be noted.

**OSC.162 UPDATE ON PERFORMANCE IN SCHOOLS/SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT WORKING GROUP**

Councillor Tamoor Tariq, Cabinet Member for Children and Families and Julien Kramer, Interim Assistant Director, Education and Inclusion presented a report giving the Overview and Scrutiny Committee an update on the work being undertaken in relation to School Improvement.

It was reported that the initial meeting of the Performance in Schools working Group had met. The next meeting of the group was due to be held on 11 November and would receive the following information:

- The vision for School Improvement Strategy
- Performance profile of schools
- Single page Summary
- Associate Heads School-led service

Councillor Tariq reported that one school in the borough had received a formal warning notice and Officers had had an informal conversation with the school head and the Chair of Governors. The school had 15 working days to respond to the notice and would then be invited to a meeting for a presentation of findings judgement which will determine the next steps.

It was explained that there was one more school that would be issued with a warning and go through the same process.

It was reported that the intervention powers were used carefully and that everything was done to protect the children and staff within the schools.

**It was agreed:**

That the update be noted.

**COUNCILLOR R CASERTA**  
**Chair**

**(Note: The meeting started at 7.00 pm and ended at 9.40 pm)**