

**Minutes of: JOINT CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE FOR TEACHERS**

**Date of Meeting:** 11 February 2021

**Present: Representing Bury Council**

Councillor T Tariq (in the Chair)  
Councillors G Keeley, G McGill  
The Leader E O'Brien

**Representing the Teacher' Side**

A Durack - NASUWT, G P Hirst - NAHT, D Quayle - NASUWT,  
H Thom - NEU, J Proctor - NASUWT, K Hopwood - NASUWT,  
L Shelmerdine - NEU, P Evans - NEU

**Also in attendance:**

Simon Bagley - Head of Personnel, Children's Services,  
Michael Cunliffe – Democratic Services, Sheila Durr -  
Director of Children's Service, Steven Goodwin - Head of  
Strategic Business & Finance Children, Young People &  
Culture, Julien Kramer - Interim Assistant Director for  
Education & Inclusion, Kelly Barnett – Democratic Services

- 1 Apologies for Absence:** Councillor S Briggs and Councillor R. Cathcart, L Kitto –  
Interim Director of Financial Transformation, N Shears -  
NEU
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**2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor McGill declared a personal interest in all matters under consideration in view of his wife holding a role as an NEU Trade Union representative in Rochdale.

**3 THE COUNCIL'S BUDGET 2021/22 AND THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2021/22 - 2024/25**

The Leader of the Council gave an overview of Bury Council's 2021/22 budget proposals and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2021-2025.

It was explained that the Council is facing challenging circumstances. The budget last year was difficult, and cuts had to be made but the Council projected a balanced budget, there was a plan, and the Council was contributing back into its reserves. The budget report explains that the Council has had to rely on the reserves more than predicted to get through the difficult times that the last year has presented. It was explained that money had been put aside in terms of capital expenditure as the Council had ambitions for growth. There would be more demand on services, especially on Social Care, at a time of less resources.

The budget proposal suggests savings by efficiencies and cuts to services. There will be savings proposed which are attached to transformation; over the coming year there will be clearer plans around transformation with a chance for scrutiny. The Council is not in section 114 yet but are relying on reserves for the next 2 years. The Council needs to be resilient, with good quality services and invest in

staff, services and buildings. The Council will be leaner and will do less than it does currently.

Questions and comments were invited from Members of the Committee and the following issues were raised?

- There is a plot of land earmarked for the Radcliffe High School at the old Paper Mill site, has the site been sold?

The Leader explained that the land is still owned by the Council. The Council is working with Homes England on a joint project for affordable housing. Outline planning permission has been put through but there is still a while to go with planning permission and other issues. It was explained that a bid for a new school in Radcliffe had been approved by the government and it is proposed that the new facility will be on the former school site.

- During first lockdown car parks were not receiving revenue, commercial car parks were still charging, this lasted for some time after the shops re-opened. Was that good planning on behalf of the Council?

It was explained that many Councils decided to introduce free parking during the first lockdown although Bury Council were later than other councils to end the free parking. This decision was made with a view of bringing people back into the borough. It was felt that the Council could offer free parking as there was a government scheme that covered 75% of the costs. It was felt that it was the right thing to do to support the economic recovery for The Rock, Mill Gate and Bury Market.

- What are your plans to attract more people to Bury, as you walk around the centre there are more shops closing, with a large number of empty units?

It was explained that people are now drifting away from the traditional high street retailers, this was both pre-pandemic but more so post-pandemic, it is thought that the types of shops and the shopping experience will change. The Council is pulling together a Bury Town Centre master plan working with the Mill Gate and The Rock as an opportunity to change the shape of what town centres look like. It was suggested that culture, night life, leisure and work/live spaces will be considered.

#### **4 THE DEDICATED SCHOOLS GRANT AND SETTING THE SCHOOLS BUDGET 2021-22**

S Goodwin, Head of Strategic Business & Finance gave an overview of the Dedicated Schools Grant and setting the schools budget for 2021-22.

It was explained that the Dedicated Schools Grant has increased by £13.281m. It is proposed that the Schools Blocks will receive £9.659m and a proportion of this fund will be used for the Teachers Pay and Pensions Grant, as from 1st April 2021 the Teachers Pay and Pensions Grant will be allocated through the funding formula. All the allocations have been agreed unanimously with the Schools Forum.

There was an issue in relation to the Early Years Block, where a 1.5% increase was given, but this doesn't represent inflation. This has been raised with the DfE and Treasury who are undertaking an assessment of the Early Years Block.

The Census in January 2021 was severely affected due to lockdown which impacts on Spring term funding. Further details of a DfE 85% protected funding model is awaited and will be factored into the affected head count funding in due course.

The High Needs Block is currently the biggest concern due to the high levels of spend and the cumulative deficit. The Council is working with the DfE around how we can recover the deficit, this 'Safety Valve' project plan is being agreed in consultation with the Secretary of State. It was noted that the Council has received good support from the DfE.

It was explained that High Needs priority is to sustain the developments in local provision rather than see high cost out of borough placements. Investments have been made within the inclusion agenda and through increasing the capacity of special schools and resourced provision specialist units within the local area.

It was explained that there is a very positive outlook in terms of the DSG funding increases as part of the three-year £14.5 billion investment into Education nationally, with Bury's DSG funding expected to increase again for 2022/23.

J Kramer, Interim Assistant Director for Education & Inclusion explained that the IDACI data shows that Bury is in a significant level of deprivation and disadvantage but feels that this can improve. J Kramer has received positive feedback from head teachers about the way the budget allocation had been presented to them.

Questions and comments were invited from Members of the Committee and the following issues were raised.

- Would you know of any schools that are have difficulties in regard to redundancies?

It was explained that in terms of schools in difficulty, there are 60% of primary schools facing reduced numbers of pupils, some that may be significant enough to redevelop a staffing structure. Rather than redundancies, the focus will be to consider natural wastage, vacant posts will not be filled, agency workers and temporary positions will be looked at to make sure the schools can sustain a balanced budget. There have been issues with schools not being able to furlough due to the HMRC restrictions. There were 13 schools that had a deficit last year and most of them have been working on a plan and have managed to balance their budgets. The Council will be working with schools to ensure that they are receiving and using all the available grants. The eligibility for Pupil Premium is changing and additional funding will be available, although the exact amount hasn't been specified yet.

- It was noted that it was a concern that more schools were turning into academy schools as the Local Authority cannot provide in-house services. It was thought that a strategy should be approved for in-house services to keep schools in the Local Authority.

J Kramer, Interim Assistant Director for Education & Inclusion explained that Bury was one of the highest performing boroughs in the North in terms of education and Bury is working on getting back to that. No matter whether schools are academies, free schools or voluntary aided, all Bury schools are funded by the Government to educate and train children. All schools need to focus on education and training children well.

It was explained that there is a lot of lost CPD due to Bury Council not having any in-house training. It was felt that a strategy should be developed around CPD and training. It was a concern that the quality of the external training that schools are buying, is not acceptable. It was suggested that there should be a bank of approved trainers for schools to use.

It was agreed:

1. S Goodwin, Head of Strategic Business & Finance will provide any necessary reports to the HR Group. These reports will also be sent to the Schools Forum.
2. J Kramer, Interim Assistant Director for Education & Inclusion would take on board the points around CPD, training and Quality Assurance.
3. S Durr, Director of Children's Service, J Kramer, Interim Assistant Director for Education & Inclusion and S Goodwin, Head of Strategic Business & Finance to be thanked for the extensive work that they have done with the DfE.

## **5 URGENT BUSINESS**

No urgent business.

**COUNCILLOR T TARIQ**  
**Chair**

**(Note: The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 6.45 pm)**