

<b>Minutes of:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	15 December 2021
<b>Present:</b>	Councillor E O'Brien (in the Chair) Councillors C Cummins, R Gold, C Morris, A Quinn, T Rafiq, A Simpson and T Tariq
<b>Also in attendance:</b>	Councillors N Jones, M Powell, R Bernstein and J Harris
<b>Public Attendance:</b>	No members of the public were present at the meeting.

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**CA.185 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies received.

**CA.186 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Charlotte Morris declared a personal interest in respect of the Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan Consultation Draft, as her partner worked for a PR agency that had previously done work for Layer Studio who produced the plan.

**CA.187 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

There were no public questions.

**CA.188 MEMBER QUESTION TIME**

The following question was submitted in advance of the meeting by Councillor Russell Bernstein:

What reassurances can the Leader provide that there are sufficient organisational resources to deliver the Levelling-up bids, Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan and the Bury Town Centre Masterplan?

Responding, Councillor Eamonn O'Brien reported that the Council was actively taking steps in terms of providing assurance. He advised that a restructure of the Business, Growth and Infrastructure (BGI) department was due to take place in the new year to ensure the right skills, resources and people were in place to deliver on the large scale projects underway. This could be brought forward with a great deal of confidence as funding was in place (both Levelling up Fund and Council monies) to build capacity.

In addition, Councillor O'Brien advised that the Council had established a partnership model so it wouldn't have to have all the resources and skills in-house. Working with Bruntwood, Vinci, Muse, TfGM, GMCA, and others would ensure we had the confidence in our partnership organisational resources to deliver on projects. Finally, this was one of the Council's priorities, included in the '3 Rs' and was a significant ambition and as such would have particular focus from scrutiny and the executive.

A further supplementary question was submitted:

Please can you confirm that the BGI review will be in place early in the new year?

Councillor O'Brien reported that it was being worked on at the moment and should come back quite quickly with thoughts and ideas to establish the new structure and recruit the right people and skills. Chief Executive Geoff Little confirmed that some parts of the restructure could commence straight away while others would require staff consultation first. He offered to brief Councillor Bernstein on these details outside of the meeting.

The following question was submitted in advance of the meeting by Councillor Jackie Harris:

The Cabinet report on transformation states 'Takes around 75,000 calls per month through over 60 public-facing numbers, less than one third of which is routed through the Council's Contact Centre. Outside of the Contact Centre only around 65% of calls are answered compared to the Contact Centre performance rate of 85%.

Can the Cabinet Member advise the timeline on improve improving the Contact Centre and outline what good will look like for both members and the public?

Responding, Councillor Tahir Rafiq reported that the customer service performance of the Council's contact centre is reported through the quarterly corporate performance report and is largely delivered within the corporate Service Level Agreement (SLA) standards. The majority of telephone calls are answered within 10 minutes and customer contact emails are responded to within 48 hours. The contact centre monthly performance stats can be found on the Council's intranet.

The Council's contact channels shift strategy will, however, further improve the performance for other public facing numbers currently outside the corporate contact centre, this will include a review of the business processes taking account of the corporate customer care standards and offering the public a "digital first" approach which will allow 24/7 transactions with Council services and greater facility for user self-service.

A further supplementary question was submitted:

What are your views on the Council getting on with the wider programme without any pauses between phases so we don't lose momentum and deliver real benefits for residents and the Council?

Councillor Rafiq agreed that the Council does need to progress the wider programme and the process was underway with improvements coming on a regular basis and reported every quarter. He advised that wider system improvements would be made in addition to improving contact with residents and Members.

The following question was submitted in advance of the meeting by Councillor Luis McBriar:

The Cabinet report on Transformation refers to 'high standards of Customer Service'.

Can the Cabinet Member outline what these high standards are and how they will be monitored/appraised within the Council and how often will these standards be reviewed?

Responding, Councillor Tahir Rafiq reported that the Council's customer contact standards have just been reviewed as part of the development of the digital strategy and refreshed with staff. A briefing session and written Team Brief from the Executive Team has been delivered to all staff and a dedicated session held with senior managers, to set out the high standards expected of staff.

A summary of the standards is provided below; performance against these targets will be included in future quarterly corporate performance reports and this information will be used to keep the standards under regular review. We will review all public facing numbers with the service managers to reduce the use of voicemail. Monthly performance stats for public facing numbers will be reported on the intranet in the new year to monitor performance.

- Emails and informal complaints answered within 10 days, other correspondence within 20 days (Letters, Freedom of Information requests and stage one formal complaints)
- Public-facing phone lines and contact centres answered 9-5 Monday to Friday with messaging outside these hours. Emergency procedures (including bank holidays) for priority 1 services. Voicemail should not normally be used.
- Personal extension numbers, including mobiles, should be answered in 9 – 5 Monday to Friday and in 6 rings. Voicemail will only be used as a last resort.
- Council reception points will be reduced and remodelled as self-service points. Face to face appointments may be booked

The following question was submitted in advance of the meeting by Councillor Roger Brown:

The Cabinet report on transformation states that 'correspondence will normally be answered within 20 days and e-mails will be answered within 10 days.

How will these SLAs be adhered to and reported within the Council to assure members that the public are receiving the standard of service outlined above?

Responding, Councillor Tahir Rafiq reported that the Council's customer care standards have recently been refreshed and re-launched with all managers and staff. The Executive team has been clear about the high standards of customer service expected from all staff.

The standards are published on the internet and compliance with telephony standards will be included within the quarterly corporate performance report. Any exceptions in meeting the standards may be raised as a complaint by the public.

**CA.189 MINUTES**

**It was agreed:**

Minutes of the meeting held on 17 November be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**CA.190 LEVELLING UP FUND APPROVAL OF EXPENDITURE - PART A**

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Growth, presented the report which detailed the proposed expenditure required to complete the prescribed design development and technical works for the Radcliffe Hub and Bury Flexi Hall projects. Full detailed breakdown of the costs and programme were in Part B of this report. In response to Members' questions, it was noted governance proposals for the projects were anticipated to come to Cabinet in January 2022.

**Decision:**

Cabinet:

1. Approved entering into Pre Construction Service Agreements with Vinci Construction for the design and technical development of the Radcliffe Hub and Bury Flexi Hall projects, in accordance with the delivery strategy submitted as part of the Levelling Up applications and detailed in Part B of this report; and
2. Approved the additional expenditure to support the delivery of both Levelling Up funded projects as detailed in the capital expenditure forecast submitted as part of the Levelling Up applications and detailed in part B of this report.

**Reasons for the decision:**

To support the delivery of both Levelling Up funded projects.

**Other options considered and rejected:**

None.

**CA.191 RAMSBOTTOM TOWN CENTRE PLAN - CONSULTATION DRAFT**

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Growth, presented the report which set out the draft Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan and detailed the six-week consultation period.

Members discussed the report, noting the positive reception from local residents so far and welcoming the consultation. In response to questions, it was noted that it was hoped targeted social media ads would run for the full consultation period though this wasn't guaranteed, and it was agreed that hard copies would be available in all partner buildings. Councillor O'Brien advised that he welcomed funding from the government but recognised the hard work from Councillors and Officers to achieve this.

**Decision:**

Cabinet:

1. Endorsed the draft Ramsbottom Town Centre Masterplan attached as Appendix 1 as the basis for a six-week public consultation commencing on 4th January 2022; and
2. Delegated approval to the Executive Director of Place and the Chief Executive to make minor modifications to the draft Bury Town Centre Masterplan before consultation commences.

**Reasons for the decision:**

To ensure that all stakeholders have the opportunity to have their say on the draft Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan and its vision for the centre and the series of physical proposals that have been identified to enhance the town centre.

**Other options considered and rejected:**

None. It is important that stakeholder engagement continues in order to seek the views and inputs from the wider public, key businesses and other key partners to ensure that the final Town Plan is fit for purpose.

**CA.192 BURY BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT**

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Growth, presented the report regarding the proposal to develop a Business Improvement district (BID). Councillors agreed this was an exciting opportunity to strengthen business partnerships in Bury.

**Decision:**

Cabinet:

1. Approved a 'Yes' vote in the Business Improvement District (BID) ballot; and
2. Delegated the exercising of the Council's vote to the Monitoring Officer.

That, in the event of an overall 'Yes' vote in the BID Ballot, Cabinet:

1. Note the Council's role in the collection of the annual BID levy on behalf of the BID Company;
2. Instruct the Monitoring Officer to undertake the legal arrangements for the Council to entering into the Operating Agreement between Bury Council and the Bury BID Company; and
3. Approve the intention for the Council to be represented on the Bury BID Board of Directors by the Executive Director of Place.

**Reasons for the decision:**

The benefits that a BID would bring to the town centre include:

- Helping to enhance and promote the town centre to visitors, residents and investors by generating additional resources to support activity that would otherwise not be delivered and which would work alongside the Council's own investment in the regeneration programme.
- Helping to deliver key Council ambitions, such as those expressed through the 'Let's Do It' Strategy and the emerging Bury Town Centre Masterplan.
- The establishment of a Town Centre Management function, including a BID Manager and associated staff to provide an onsite resource for businesses and town centre users.

- Enabling formal partnership working between stakeholders in the BID area to support the more effective use of these additional resources.

It is considered that the benefits that the BID will bring to Bury town centre will outweigh the financial cost to the Council.

**Other options considered and rejected:**

For the Council not to vote in favour of the BID. However, this option has been discounted on the basis that it would not deliver the considerable benefits identified above.

**CA.193 BURY TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN - CONSULTATION DRAFT**

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Growth, presented the report which presented the report which set out the draft Bury Town Centre Plan and detailed the six-week consultation period.

Members discussed the report, noting the importance of being in control of changes to Bury and remaining forward-looking. With regards to "minor modifications" to the masterplan, these would be typos or factual errors. In response to questions it was noted that numbers couldn't be estimated at this point, but the ambition was to secure as much housing as possible on brownfield land in line with the brownfield first policy. This would hopefully provide the basis for a strong argument to the government and planning inspectorate to protect as much green space as possible.

With regards to a recent petition, the Leader advised that exiting the Places for Everyone (Pfe) plan would remove the Council's control over the type and quality of houses being built and leave the Council exposed to government action, potentially tripling the housing requirement, as well as negating the 2000 units that had been displaced through the Pfe plan. Instead, this plan and the hard work to identify and create further brownfield sites was the best way forward to protect as much green space as possible.

**Decision:**

Cabinet:

1. Endorsed the draft Bury Town Centre Masterplan attached as Appendix 1 as the basis for a six-week public consultation commencing on 4th January 2022; and
2. Delegated approval to the Executive Director of Place and the Chief Executive to make minor modifications to the draft Bury Town Centre Masterplan before consultation commences.

**Reasons for the decision:**

To ensure that all stakeholders have the opportunity to have their say on the draft Bury Town Centre Masterplan and its proposals to guide the role, function and physical development and regeneration of Bury town centre and its peripheral areas over the next 15 to 20 years.

**Other options considered and rejected:**

None. It is important that stakeholder engagement continues in order to seek the views and inputs from the wider public, key businesses and other key partners to ensure that the final Masterplan is fit for purpose.

**CA.194 TRANSFORMATION UPDATE**

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Growth, presented the report which provided an update of progress against the strategy including some revision to the forecast financial savings.

In response to Members' questions, it was noted that the risk register reflected an increase in severity of risk as well as an increase in likelihood. Red ratings for digital services had been flagged at Audit Committee and work was underway with external partners to minimise the risks, with follow up actions for PSN accreditation being reported to Audit Committee in the new year. With regards to budget implications from the reduction in expected savings, it was noted that targets were now in line with original estimates and still delivered what was set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. Savings were still able to be delivered, it was the timescales that were changing and mitigations were being explored.

**Decision:**

Cabinet:

1. Approved the "digital-first" contact strategy, roadmap and associated IT operating principles;
2. Noted that alternative options have been considered and rejected;
3. Approved the proposed digital-first customer service standards;
4. Agreed access to agreed investment funding as described in section 6.2;
5. Noted the revised financial forecast including two new proposals to mitigate some slippage in savings delivery; and
6. Agreed that the recommendations achieve the savings requirement within the MTFs in accordance with available resources and wider corporate strategy and reasons for recommendation(s).

**Reasons for the decision:**

The multi-year internal transformation programme has the objectives of both improving the quality of provision and delivering financial savings by reducing costs and driving digital.

**Other options considered and rejected:**

None.

**CA.195 MINUTES OF ASSOCIATION OF GREATER MANCHESTER AUTHORITIES / GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY**

**It was agreed:**

That the minutes of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority meeting held on 29 October 2021 be noted.

**CA.196 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

**Decision:**

That the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100 (A)(4), Schedule 12(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, for the reason that the following business involves the disclosure of exempt information as detailed against the item.

**CA.197      LEVELLING UP FUND APPROVAL OF EXPENDITURE - PART B**

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Growth, presented the Part B report which set out a detailed breakdown of the costs and programme.

**Decision:**

Cabinet:

1. Approved entering into Pre Construction Service Agreements with Vinci Construction for the design and technical development of the Radcliffe Hub and Bury Flexi Hall projects, in accordance with the delivery strategy submitted as part of the Levelling Up applications and detailed in Part B of this report; and
2. Approved the additional expenditure to support the delivery of both Levelling Up funded projects as detailed in the capital expenditure forecast submitted as part of the Levelling Up applications and detailed in part B of this report.

**Reasons for the decision:**

As set out for the Part A report.

**Other options considered and rejected:**

As set out for the Part A report.

**COUNCILLOR E O'BRIEN**

**Chair**

**(Note: The meeting started at 6.05 pm and ended at 7.10 pm)**