

## **GENERAL REPORT OF THE MEETING HELD ON 17 NOVEMBER 2021**

### **COUNCIL TAX ON EMPTY PROPERTIES**

1. Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Growth, presented the report seeking approval to consult on a proposal to remove the Council Tax discount given to empty properties and the second homes discount with effect from 1 April 2022.
2. Members discussed the report, noting that home buyers were not being discouraged or penalised, but the Council had to prioritise where it spent budgets and, although flexibility would be retained, it couldn't necessarily offer this discount in the same way. It was noted that a higher tax rate was charged for long-term absences and this was not proposed to change.
3. In response to Members' questions it was noted that the consultation would be targeted to those who would be affected most, including letters to homes receiving the discount and an article in the VCFA newsletter to engage groups offering support to vulnerable people.
4. Cabinet approved the recommendations as set out in the report.

### **THE COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 30TH SEPTEMBER 2021**

5. Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Growth, presented the report outlining the forecast financial position of the Council at the end of 2021/22 based on the information known at the end of the second quarter, 30th September 2021, and providing the mid-year Treasury Management Update. The report outlined the write off of bad debt, set out the position for both revenue and capital, and provided an analysis of the variances, both under and overspending.
6. In response to Members' questions it was noted that investment into senior management was vital as identified through the LGA Peer Review to ensure the Council had the right vision and strategy for the borough and could bring staff along to improve services. The biggest risk was not finding the savings identified, and it was agreed that a strong focus was now on delivery, as aspects of the transformation plan not realising savings until the next financial year. Mitigations were being identified and brought forward as early as possible, for instance the empty properties report earlier in the agenda.
7. In terms of barriers to transformational change, it was noted that the organisation was very complex and wide-ranging, and some enablers of change were easier to fix than others. Cultural change, for example, took longer than IT improvements or management change. In response to Member's question regarding capital spending, it was noted that these works were slow to begin with, with specifications, design, and planning applications needed before delivery. Some funding was time sensitive and these projects were prioritised, though it was noted that some timescales were unrealistic (i.e. decarbonisation projects, where an extension had been secured).
8. Councillor Nick Jones requested that detail on how the BGI directorate was meeting its stretch targets be sent outside the meeting and voiced the Conservative Group's support for the Transformation Strategy. It was noted that full update would be brought to the next Cabinet meeting.
9. Cabinet approved the recommendations as set out in the report.

## **SUCCESS ON LEVELLING UP FUND BIDS AND CITY REGION SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT SETTLEMENT**

10. Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Growth, presented the report regarding the recent successful bids to the Government's Levelling Up Fund and the benefit to Bury from the recent submission by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) to the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement. The report also set out next steps on implementation of the schemes funded from these sources. Members expressed their thanks to all involved, including MPs and officers.
11. Cabinet approved the recommendations as set out in the report.

## **BURY TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN - PROGRESS AND EMERGING HEADLINES**

12. Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Growth, presented the report providing an update on the key concepts that have been developed from the work on the masterplan for Bury Town Centre so far. It was noted that a draft of this masterplan would be submitted to Cabinet at its meeting in December 2021 where details of the consultation process will be set out for approval.
13. In response to Members' questions it was noted that work to formalise governance arrangements was underway. This project, like others undertaken by the Council were ambitious and working with external partners helped officers to leverage their skills with outside expertise to ensure delivery to a high standard.
14. Cabinet approved the recommendations as set out in the report.

## **ACQUISITION OF THE MILLGATE ESTATE BURY - PART A**

15. Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Growth, presented the report which outlined the rationale for intervention and the exploration of a Joint Venture with Bruntwood to deliver the proposed project and sought the first stage approval for the acquisition of the Millgate estate. Members noted their cross-party support for regeneration in the Town Centre and the ambition to keep up with neighbouring boroughs and ensure a modern town centre suitable for the needs of local residents.
16. Cabinet approved the recommendations as set out in the report.

## **BROWNFIELD HOUSING DELIVERY STRATEGY: DISPOSAL OF LAND AT SEEDFIELD BURY AND WILLIAM KEMP HEATON BURY - PART A**

17. Councillor Clare Cummins, the Cabinet Member for Housing Services, presented the report which sought approval for the disposal of two Council-owned Brownfield sites in Bury that had the potential to be redeveloped to deliver much needed housing and generate a significant capital receipt. These two sites had the potential to deliver 129 new homes between them, including 60 affordable homes with provision for 15 supported living apartments for people with learning disabilities and/or autism.
18. Cabinet approved the recommendations as set out in the report.

## **DELIVERY OF A NEW SECONDARY SCHOOL IN RADCLIFFE: LAND PROPOSAL TO DFE & STAR ACADEMIES - PART A**

19. Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Growth, presented the report outlining the conclusions of a study to determine the extent of the site to be utilised for the school, and seeking approval of the proposal to lease the

identified land to the DfE and for occupation by Star Academy Trust. In response to Members' questions it was noted that the Council would use its influence on Star Academy Trust to aim for a zero carbon school, and it was noted that Transport for Greater Manchester were already engaged on the project.

20. Cabinet approved the recommendations as set out in the report.

#### **SIX TOWN HOUSING LIMITED OPERATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS**

21. Councillor Clare Cummins, the Cabinet Member for Housing Services, presented the report regarding changes to the operational arrangements for Six Town Housing Limited's meetings and its committees. Councillor Jones highlighted his interest as a board member for Six Town Housing.

22. Cabinet approved the recommendations as set out in the report.

#### **GREATER MANCHESTER COLLABORATIVE AGENCY CONTRACT**

23. Councillor Tahir Rafiq, the Cabinet Member for Corporate Affairs and HR, presented the report detailing the background and process followed for the retendering of the shared contract regarding agency staff. It was noted that there was no minimum level of spend and no obligations of exclusivity.

24. Cabinet approved the recommendations as set out in the report.

#### **BURY CORPORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE AND DELIVERY REPORT QUARTER TWO 2021-22**

25. Councillor Tahir Rafiq, the Cabinet Member for Corporate Affairs and HR, presented the report which provided a summary of key delivery and performance that occurred during quarter two 2021-22 aligned to the 3R priorities, and highlighted intelligence on waiting times for referral to treatment for consultant led services.

26. In response to Members' questions regarding how the Let's Do It strategy was understood by all Council staff, it was noted that staff briefings were going well. Early consultations demonstrated a low understanding, but this was being improved over time with engagement on how this strategy applied to Council services and regeneration projects. Staff and partners had helped write and develop the strategy, and the next stage was organisational development.

27. Cabinet approved the recommendations as set out in the report.

#### **GREATER MANCHESTER VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE SECTOR (VCSE) ACCORD**

28. Councillor Richard Gold, the Cabinet Member for Communities, presented the report regarding the new Greater Manchester Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise Accord (GM VCSE Accord), a tri-partite agreement between the Greater Manchester Combined Authority, Greater Manchester Health and Social Care Partnership and the Greater Manchester VCSE Leadership Group on behalf of the VCSE sector in the region, which works to develop collaborative working with VCSE organisations to improve outcomes for local communities.

29. In response to Members' questions it was noted that a lot of community groups were already involved but participation in listening events had varied, with some very poorly attended. Adjustments were being made to facilitate better engagement, such as changing the time or day of events, and Councillor Gold welcomed any feedback from Members into how their local residents could be best reached.

30. Cabinet approved the recommendations as set out in the report.

#### **UPDATE ON HIGHWAY INVESTMENT STRATEGY, TRANCHE 2 (HIS2)**

31. Councillor Alan Quinn, the Cabinet Member for Environment, Climate Change and Operations, presented the report which provided an update on the Highway Investment Strategy Tranche 2 initiatives. In response to Members' questions it was noted that a timeline could be provided outside the meeting.
32. Cabinet approved the recommendations as set out in the report.

### **GENERAL REPORT OF THE MEETING HELD ON 15 DECEMBER 2021**

#### **LEVELLING UP FUND APPROVAL OF EXPENDITURE - PART A:**

33. 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.
34. Cabinet approved the recommendations as set out in the report.

#### **RAMSBOTTOM TOWN CENTRE PLAN - CONSULTATION DRAFT:**

35. 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.
36. 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. Cabinet approved the recommendations.

#### **BURY BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT:**

37. 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. Cabinet approved the recommendations as set out in the report.

#### **BURY TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN - CONSULTATION DRAFT:**

38. 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.
39. 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.

40. 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.
41. Cabinet approved the recommendations as set out in the report.

#### **TRANSFORMATION UPDATE:**

42. 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.
43. 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.
44. Cabinet approved the recommendations as set out in the report.