

Minutes of: CABINET

Date of Meeting: 16 February 2022

Present: Councillor E O'Brien (in the Chair)
Councillors R Gold, C Morris, T Rafiq, A Simpson and T Tariq

Also in attendance: Councillors N Jones, M Powell, R Bernstein, R Brown, J Harris, L McBriar and J Rydeheard

Public Attendance: Three members of the public were present at the meeting.

**Apologies for
Absence:** Councillor C Cummins, Councillor A Quinn and Councillor J Mason

CA.212 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Alan Quinn and Councillor Clare Cummins.

CA.213 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Nick Jones declared an interest as a Board Member of Six Town Housing.

CA.214 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The following question was submitted in advance of the meeting by a member of the public, Anton Slawycz:

The capital programme for the budget does not detail any schemes for the Whitefield township other than a line of £71k. Can the leader advise why this is the case?

Responding, Councillor Eamonn O'Brien reported that the capital programme is generally used to invest in Council-owned land and property: for historic reasons we own very little across Whitefield. Importantly though, the Council is working in partnership to deliver positive capital schemes across Whitefield, which can mean the budget lines don't appear in our capital programme but are nevertheless being spent to improve Whitefield. For instance, we remain committed to working with the NHS to deliver a new health facility at the Uplands – which is not in Council ownership – as well as supporting the delivery of a new special school in Unsworth on what was Council land, until the academisation was finalised. The Special Free School is fully approved and supported by the DfE with approved Trust sponsor being Shaw Education Trust (SET). The build is funded by the DfE, Bury has a capital allocation earmarked to cover any sundries that we require to fund. The Revenue place costs are factored into Bury's High Needs Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) expenditure profile taking into account the phased admissions from September 2023. All is on track for this essential additional capacity to open at September 2023.

We have also been progressing the Wheatfields site for new housing, delivering affordable housing, bungalows for the first time in decades and all on brownfield sites. We expect this investment to be millions of pounds but, again, this won't appear in our capital programme because of our proposed delivery model.

We have also been spending significant sums on improving highways and road safety across Whitefield and Unsworth, including a new pedestrian crossing on Croft Lane (£65k). Through the Highway Investment Strategy, during this financial year, we have spent £802k in Whitefield. We have completed resurfacing works on Thatch Leach Lane, Sunnybank Road, Oak Lane and Randale Drive (all complete as part of HiS2) – and we have West Avenue yet to come.

We already have agreement to spend £175,000 on 31 roads in Unsworth this summer to repair roads that are in a bad way. Next year's road safety programme also includes a 20mph zone on Rufford Drive and a safety scheme on Hollins Lane which will have pedestrian refuges. In addition to this, we have allocated £164,000 towards the landslip at Springwater Park in the budget and continue to lobby the Government to fund the rest of the works under the national flooding impact funds they have. And we recently awarded nearly £6000 to the Whitefield Environmental Forum for work in Springwater Park too.

I would be keen to see even more spent across Whitefield, which was why I was so disappointed that the Pilkington Park Councillors rejected a £800,000 road safety scheme around Higher Lane. This scheme would have put significant sums into Whitefield, but it was made clear that the local Councillors did not support the plans and therefore did not want to money to be spent. As I say, this was the wrong position in my view and something they will have to explain to their residents and the families of Higher Lane primary and Philips High in particular.

I'm glad I've been able to outline just some of the spend in our budget for Whitefield and thank Mr Slawycz for the opportunity to share that.

The following question was submitted in advance of the meeting by a member of the public, Andrew Luxton:

Can we be assured that the significant shortfall in parks provisional spending is now earmarked on ensuring the halt of the rapid riverside erosion at Burrs park in Elton ward. In particular to prevent further damage and have in place a longer term solution restoring the riverbank to what it was with attention to the existing pathway routes along the riverbank?

Responding in Councillor Quinn's absence, Councillor Eamonn O'Brien reported that a recent assessment has taken place on all of the waterbodies in Burrs, which included the riverbank, and contact with the Environment Agency is now being made to check what license may be required ahead of any works. A funding bid for the infrastructure work at Burrs has been made and a planned programme of works will be produced if / when funding is secured. A scheme for Burrs park is included within the capital programme for 22/23.

A further supplementary question was submitted:

Could we also get in touch with the Canals and Rivers Trust, the local groups in relation to the canal maintenance and utilisation of the area, and will the Cabinet Member meet with the local groups, Cllr Rydeheard, and James Daly MP to assess

what can be done in terms of the canal and the riverbank maintenance and utilisation of the area?

Councillor O'Brien reported that he was sure Councillor Quinn, as Cabinet Member, would be happy to meet with interested parties and, if the MP could offer any assistance with delivering funding, they would be happy to work with him and the Canals and Rivers Trust. He advised that schemes like this should always be delivered in partnership where possible.

The following question was submitted at the meeting by a member of the public, Carol Bernstein:

In all the various budget schemes, I've noticed there's not many school playgrounds or children's playgrounds included in the budget. Are those an omission or are there plans afoot to have more children's playgrounds?

Responding, Councillor Eamonn O'Brien reported that there is a rolling programme of work on some of our play areas which the Council has been working on which are split over multiple years. The capital budget includes this 3 year rolling programme; once the budget has been confirmed we will be able to share which park and play areas will be done and in which years. So far a significant amount of investment had been made over the past year in parks across East Bury, as this area has not received as much investment through other means such as Section 106 agreements. Cllr O'Brien also credited the Parks Team and the Friends' Groups and volunteers for their continued work to maintain Green Flag status on Bury's Parks.

CA.215 MEMBER QUESTION TIME

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

Within item 9 what are the reasons as to why the level of JSA and UC claimants has reduced from 7185 to 6610?

Responding, Councillor Tahir Rafiq reported that The level of JSA and UC claimants almost doubled following the impact of COVID. Prior to April 2019 the count was around 4,000 – 4,300 for Bury. The figure has since fluctuated between 7,000 – 8,000 each month and began to steadily decrease from March 2021 to reach 6,610 by the end of quarter 2 and further reduce to 5,905 by the end of quarter 3 (this figure became available after the report presented was submitted). As the world has opened up again with the easing of lockdowns and restrictions, this has allowed for employment and training opportunities to become available again and reduced our resident's requirement for financial support due to unemployment.

A further supplementary question was submitted:

Will the Cabinet Member join me in welcoming the Government's initiatives to bring this down?

Councillor Rafiq advised he welcomed all initiatives to help out in this area, and the Leader reminded Members of the upcoming Employment and Training Fair.

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

On item 9, section 8.3, could we please have an explanation from the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Skills as to the reasons the number of children with EHCPs has fallen within Bury and the fall of EHCPs issued on time?

Responding, Councillor Tamoor Tariq reported that Bury currently holds 2116 EHC plans, this is a 30% increase over 3 years from the 1617 held in January 2019. There was a slight reduction in December 2021 due to plans being ceased after consultation with parents, particularly in relation to post 19. All of these ceased plans were done within the spirit of the 2014 SEND code of practice. The percentage of EHCPs being issued within 20 weeks fell in October, November and December as the team prioritised issuing historic plans to eliminate the backlog. Although the timeliness decreased, the number of plans issued increased with 152 EHC plans being issued between October and December compared with 63 plans in the three months prior. To demonstrate this impact, in January 2021 there were 258 EHC plans in progress; this has now reduced to 143 EHC plans being in progress currently. Now that the backlog has been cleared the team is focussing on improving the parental experience, co-production and the quality of the plans.

A further supplementary question was submitted:

I appreciate there is a backlog and the team is working on ensuring EHCPs are issued on time. In relation to this happening since the recent Ofsted report, what confidence do you have that we will get back on track with dealing with these issues on time?

Councillor Tariq reported that the recent Ofsted inspection was an ILACS (Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services) and there was a small reference to SEND. We know this is a significant area the department needs to give focus to and we are progressing with that; for example recruitment of SEND Caseworkers, SEND Casework Manager, and SEND Transformation Lead. We are also continuing with plans to engage and consult with parents to ensure their voice, and voices of young people, are heard through the SEND transformation. The Council still revisits the outcomes of the SEND Ofsted of 2017 and revisit in 2019 to ensure we're adhering to the action plan, and he advised there would also be work in response to the legislative changes taking place.

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

The Cabinet report outlines the 3 R's and the overview of priorities for each department of the Council. Can the Leader advise how these priorities will be tracked over the next year and what governance is in place to ensure the deliverables remain on track?

Responding, Councillor Tahir Rafiq reported that Delivery of the priorities is tracked and monitored through the production of monthly departmental highlight reports which are presented and discussed at Executive team meetings. These highlight reports are also used to brief the Cabinet Portfolio holders in order to challenge progress and discuss prioritisation. The outcomes of these meetings are then used to create the quarterly reports that are presented to cabinet and CCG governing body giving assurance on delivery. These reports are based on a combination of progress against delivery targets, key performance indicators and financial tracking data. Further development is being undertaken to include workforce data and feedback from residents and service users against the new Corporate Plan which will be presented to Cabinet and Full Council in February alongside the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

A further supplementary question was submitted:

With regards to potholes, the report states the number reported has increased and the number repaired has decreased. £2.95m has been allocated for potholes, but only £146,000 forecasted to be spent up to end of March 2022. When are you planning to spend this money?

Councillor Rafiq reported that he would find out the details of this and respond in writing outside of this meeting.

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

The budget papers include a proposal to reduce the External Placement Budget in order to increase recruitment of Bury Foster carers. Can the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Skills outline how the plans are progressing to increase the Bury Foster carers and explain what Good looks like?

Responding, Councillor Tamoor Tariq reported that during Covid the fostering recruitment community events have been cancelled; a Foster Care Recruitment Officer undertakes the marketing work and, due to covid, this work is undertaken predominantly through a social media presence. The recruitment officer responds to all telephone enquiries, processes applications, and undertakes initial home visits of any potential fostering applicants. The recruitment officer is responsible for the recruitment, marketing, training, support and development of Bury's foster carers and Supported Lodging hosts. This single point of contact and relationship building in the initial stages of the process is essential to maintain interest of potential carers in a very competitive market.

In 2019/20, seven mainstream foster carers were approved and 2020/21 six new mainstream Fostering households, we predict a total of seven carers will be approved in the 2021/22 reporting year. There are currently 11 potential fostering households in assessment, we have three potential carers going to panel in March, two in April, three in May and two in June, and one set of carers without an agreed panel date as at the early stages of the process. We have set a target for 12 households to be approved in 2022/23.

Currently we have we have 60 mainstream fostering households with 80 children in placement and, 48 Family & Friend foster carers (72 children in placement). Recruitment of foster carers continues to be a focus for the service with regular recruitment meetings being held to track progress and explore any challenges to recruitment, Covid has inevitably impacted on recruitment activity. Bury are part of a North West Leads group on recruitment to share practice. We have been part of collaborations with other local authorities to complete webinar information sessions and radio campaigns.

Bury are also part of the GMCA fostering workstream in response to placement sufficiency for children in care and the challenges this poses to all local authorities. Along with the GM authorities, Bury scoping is currently being undertaken with existing approved carers to ascertain if any additional space can be made within their homes to increase the number of children they can be approved to care for (Room Maker Scheme). We have held a targeted campaign over the Christmas and New Year period with social media activities and digital marketing, this will continue until March, a digital advertising board was displayed in Bury for four weeks (Jan – Feb).

We maintain a focus on keeping children in care in the Bury borough, close to families, friends and Schools. By increasing the numbers of Bury foster carers for our children in care then this will reduce the reliance on costlier Independent Fostering agencies (IFAs) and will reduce the external placement budget. It would be really helpful if everyone could champion the service to aid interest and recruitment, so please follow and promote the Bury Fostering Service.

A further supplementary question was submitted:

How many more Bury foster carers will there have to be in order to meet the £200,000 of savings?

Councillor Tariq reported that he would find out the details of this and respond in writing outside of this meeting.

The following question was submitted in advance of the meeting by Councillor Jack Rydeheard:

The Cabinet paper on the DSG explains that the schools block allocation has increased by £7.63m million. In this, up to 5% if the 3- and 4-year-old funding must be retained by the Council to contribute to the Early Years functions. Can the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Skills advise how this will be monitored throughout the year to ensure that the funding allocation is adequate given current pressures?

Responding, Councillor Tamoor Tariq reported that the Early Years retention of 5% is the maximum allowable under the statutory funding regulations. In order to maximise funding out to all Early Years providers Bury only retains up to 3% of the Early Years DSG to contribute to the costs incurred centrally in undertaking all operational aspects of Early Years support. This includes contribution to central teams supporting Early Years systems, eligibility checking, Early Years Single Funding Formula (EYSFF) requirements, information advice and guidance to all providers including Maintained,

Private Voluntary & Independent (PVI) or Childminder providers early education entitlements, as well as supporting the process and validations around Early Years SEND Inclusion.

The Early Years funding is monitored throughout the year and is updated on at least a termly basis in line with the Early Years headcount and participation assessments that result in revised Early Years DSG allocations to the Local Authority and to all providers where required. All Early Years' service budgets are monitored on a monthly basis.

The Cabinet paper specifies a reduction to the Early Years block funding for 2022/23 when compared to 2021/22 and it should be noted that this reduction is purely in respect to reducing demographics due to lower birth rates impacting on the current overall 2, 3, and 4 year old population. This reduction actually masks an increase to the hourly rates used to determine funding to all Early Years settings in 2022/23 which is welcomed and will assist providers in sustaining their budgets whilst facing increased cost pressures due to inflation.

A further supplementary question was submitted:

Is the Council in a position to react to optimise the use of the allocation if it's needed, and what changes do you think could be made in order to make these optimisations?

Councillor Tariq reported that we are committed to monitoring this on a regular basis and have mechanisms in place to respond to changing events and circumstances. This would be done in consultation with providers and within early years settings within the borough. Cllr Tariq advised he was confident the Council had the processes in place to monitor the situation and to respond effectively.

CA.216 MINUTES

It was agreed:

Minutes of the meeting held on 12 January 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

CA.217 THE COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL POSITION AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Growth, presented the report which outlined the forecast financial position of the Council at the end of 2021/22 based on the information known at the end of the third quarter, 31st December 2021. The report set out the position for both revenue and capital and provides an analysis of the variances, both under and overspending.

In response to Members' questions, it was noted that the day-to-day operational budgets for departments were overall on target and the £1.247m underspend was largely due to one-off funding received from the Government as well as vacancies or budget savings. There were ongoing challenges for the Council, particularly around Children's Services where investment was being made into early interventions, address high levels of casework, and reduce demand on out-of-borough placements. These needed to be achieved in a sustainable way to reduce pressures on the Council's reserves. It was noted that a corporate approach to recruitment and retention

of social workers was being developed which had been successful in other boroughs. With regards to civic venues, it was noted that the detail in the report reflected the outcome of the review carried out last year and that a consultation with Unions was currently underway with regards to possible redundancies.

Decision:

Cabinet:

1. Noted the forecast underspend of £1.247m within the revenue budgets at quarter 3 and the need for Directorates to continue to work with their finance managers to maintain tight budgetary control and to ensure services work within their budgets;
2. Approved the establishment of a £3m Children and Young People's reserve to support the funding requirements identified as a consequence of the actions required following the OFSTED report and a £1m reserve for the balance required to meet the employers pay award offer of 1.75%;
3. Noted the use of the Covid Outbreak Management Fund and departmental reserves in line with the criteria and one off departmental priorities;
4. Noted the position on the Dedicated Schools Grant, Collection Fund and the Housing Revenue Account;
5. Noted the underspend of £0.457m on the capital programme;
6. Approved a reduction in the capital programme of £6.209m due to timing of grant conditions and additional external funding being secured;
7. Approved re-phasing of the capital programmes into 2022/23 financial year of £57.734m from the current programme;
8. Approved a contribution of £567k to reserves for free school meals during school holidays which wasn't required in 2021/22;

Reasons for the decision:

To ensure the Council's budgetary targets are achieved.

Other options considered and rejected:

None.

CA.218 HOUSING REVENUE REPORT

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Growth, presented the report which formed part of a suite of documents relating to the Council's budget setting process for 2022/23 and set out the proposed Housing Revenue Account for 2022/23 and proposals for Dwelling and Garage rents, Sheltered Support, Management, Amenities and Heating charges, Furnished Tenancy charges and Fernhill Caravan site tenancy charges. The report also established the Management Fee paid to Six Town Housing for 2022/23. It was noted that this increase would be challenging for some families and plans were in place to support those most affected.

Decision:

Cabinet:

1. Approved the forecast outturn for the Housing revenue Account budget;
2. Approved an increase in rents for all HRA social rent formula and affordable rent dwellings by 4.1% as set out in paragraph 2.8 of the report;

3. Approved an increase Garage rents by 4.1% as set out in paragraph 2.13 of the report;
4. Approved an increase Sheltered Management and Amenity Charges by 4.1% as set out in paragraph 3.5 of the report;
5. Noted that sheltered support and heating charges remain unchanged;
6. Noted that Furnished Tenancy charges will remain unchanged; and
7. Approved the Management Fee to o Six Town Housing for 2022/23 as set out in paragraph 1.5 of the report.

Reasons for the decision:

To progress the Council's 2019/20 budget setting process to achieve an approved and balanced budget.

Other options considered and rejected:

None, setting the budget is a statutory responsibility.

CA.219 2022/23 BUDGET REPORTS

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Growth, presented the suite of budget papers with comprised:

- The Council's Budget 2022/23 and the Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 - 2025/26
- The Dedicated Schools Grant and setting the Schools Budget 2022-23
- Capital Strategy and Capital programme 2022/23
- Flexible use of Capital Receipts Strategy 2022/23
- Treasury Management Strategy and Prudential Indicators 2022/23

The Leader advised that Overview and Scrutiny Committee had made two recommendations:

1. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee put forward to Cabinet that a Reserves Strategy be reviewed to look at setting out guidance for the use of the reserves within Services; and
2. That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee put forward to Cabinet that the impact of budget saving OPS 007 regarding food waste caddy liners is closely monitored and Cabinet Member Portfolio meetings and if recycling rates drop due to the changes a review takes place on the budget saving proposal.

Both these recommendations were noted and would be taken forwards.

The Leader reported that the Council still faced a number of challenges which would continue in future years. A £3m smoothing fund was proposed in light of these future pressures, as was a 1.94% increase in Council Tax. He advised this was the lowest in Greater Manchester but would still be difficult for residents, however an increase in Council Tax was included in Government funding assumptions and as such this increase was necessary to balance budgets.

The suite of documents set out all proposed cuts and efficiency savings, as well as ambitious capital targets including historic investment in Bury's towns and highways. The papers also set out flexible use of capital receipts, and the welcome increase in

schools' budgets. In response to Members' questions, it was noted that despite filling posts as soon as possible, in an organisation of this size there would always be some vacancies at any given point which was represented in the vacancy factor. With regards to trading services, a more commercial relationship was being pursued with schools, seeing them as customers to encourage uptake. The Chief Executive advised that the effects of Covid might increase this, but the savings identified were mostly from IT efficiencies which he was confident could be achieved.

Decision:

Cabinet:

1. Approved the Medium Term Financial Strategy and the assumptions regarding resources and spending requirements;
2. Noted the Council Tax base of the equivalent of 55,611 band D equivalent dwellings on which the Council Tax funding has been calculated;
3. Approved the net revenue budget of £177.483m for 2022/23;
4. Approved the increase in Council Tax of 1.94% and the inclusion of a 1% social care levy;
5. Approved the recurrent changes to expenditure or reductions in income of £17.191m in 2022/23;
6. Approved the budget reductions and additional income of £5.892m for the 2022/23 financial year;
7. Approved the use of reserves of £14.355m in 2022/23;
8. Approved the transfer of £0.683m into reserves with regards to the funding of social care reforms;
9. Delegated authority to the Executive Director of Finance and the Chief Executive to agree the use of the social care reserve and the Children and Young Peoples Reserve established in 2021/22 in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Finance;
10. Approved the transfer of £2.996m into a smoothing reserve;
11. Approved the transfer of £1.388m into a Business Rates Risk;
12. Noted the forecast position on reserves as set out in section 6 of this report;
13. Noted the Departmental cash limits as set out at Appendix 5;
14. Noted the significant financial risks for funding, income and demand pressures in future years and for the continued impact of Covid-19 on the strategy; and
15. Recommends Council to approve and adopt the budget for 2022/23.

Reasons for the decision:

To progress the Council's 2019/20 budget setting process to achieve an approved and balanced budget.

Other options considered and rejected:

None, setting the budget is a statutory responsibility.

CA.220

BURY CORPORATE PLAN PERFORMANCE AND DELIVERY REPORT QUARTER THREE 2021-22

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 three 2021-22 aligned to the 3R priorities. The report also highlighted intelligence on customer contact services.

In response to Members' questions, it was noted that detail on the apprenticeship and skills strategies could be provided to Councillor Jones outside of the meeting, and that green rated targets were on track while amber targets were waiting on the resolution of an issue before being brought back on track. With regards to potholes, five times as many potholes were being fixed than reported during the last quarter as staff had been released from Covid-related redeployments, and as such the next quarterly report would see this spend increase. Details of this and on how the decrease in recycling rates was being mitigated would be provided to Councillor Powell outside of the meeting, and the guide price of one of the assets sold could be clarified.

Decision:

Cabinet:

1. Noted the performance and delivery against the 3R priorities and the 2021/22 Corporate Plan delivery objectives;
2. Noted the spotlight on our intelligence on customer contact services; and
3. Noted the ongoing developments to strengthen and improve this reporting process and functionality.

Reasons for the decision:

To measure and acknowledge progress towards the 2021/22 Corporate Plan delivery objectives.

Other Options considered and rejected:

N/A.

CA.221 BURY COUNCIL AND CCG CORPORATE PLAN 2022/23

Councillor Tahir Rafiq, the Cabinet Member for Corporate Affairs and HR, presented the report which summarised the progress made in 2021/22 and includes new priorities that have been agreed with Cabinet Members based on consultation with ward members, residents and other stakeholders. In response to a Member's question regarding the impact on staff numbers, it was noted that consultations were currently ongoing. Once those had been completed further detail could be provided. The Chief Executive added that the workforce assessment included in the papers identified that circa 10 posts across the Council were directly affected, the impact of which would be mitigated through redeployment where possible, but he advised that future years might have a larger impact on staff numbers.

Decision:

Cabinet approved the Corporate Plan so that it can be presented to Full Council alongside the budget options for 2022/23 and the longer-term Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Reasons for the decision:

This continues our commitment to "strengthening the basics" by embedding the corporate business planning process across all the work of the Council and CCG. This will allow for more effective performance management at organisation, departmental and officer level.

Alternative options considered and rejected

No alternative option considered.

CA.222 APPOINTMENT OF A DEVELOPMENT PARTNER FOR PHASE 2 OF CHAMBERHALL BUSINESS PARK, BURY - PART A

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Growth, presented the report which sought approval regarding the results of the recent tender exercise to bring forward the development of Phase 2 of Chamberhall Business Park. The site forms part of the larger Chamberhall business park. Phase 1 which consisted of 130,000 sqft has been successfully developed by St Modwen's. The phase 2 land comprises of circa 7 acres of serviced employment land. The appointment of a development partner will ensure that a high-quality sustainable development is brought forward as well as ensuring best value is achieved for the site.

Decision:

Cabinet:

1. Noted the results of the tender exercise for the development of the Phase 2 land as set out within Part B of this report;
2. Approved the grant of a long lease of the Phase 2 site to the selected developer;
3. Delegated agreement to the final land price and the detailed terms of the long lease to the Director of Regeneration & Capital Growth in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer and the Executive Member for finance, the final price must have regard to the financial offers as set out in the part B report; and
4. Delegated the signing of all contracts required to complete the sale to the
5. Director of Law and Democratic Services.

Reasons for the decision:

To bring the Chamberhall Phase 2 land forward for development.

Other options considered and rejected

Option 1 - Do Nothing

- In this scenario the site will be left vacant.
- This option has been dismissed as the Council is prioritising its redevelopment so as to bring forward new employment land to meet the needs of businesses.
- There is also an opportunity cost for not seeking new development in that the ability to secure a sustainable income flow through new business rates will be lost.
- As such, this option has been discounted.

Option 2 - Accept tender from the highest ranked bidder

- This option would see the Phase 2 site being brought forward for the development of a modern high-quality scheme within the next 12 months.
- Bring in a significant capital receipt to the Council in the 2022/23 financial year.
- Provide a sustainable income flow through new business rate revenue.
- Create new jobs and secure existing ones.

CA.223 GREATER MANCHESTER ONE (GMONE) ICT NETWORK - PART A

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Growth, presented the report which set out the process for a joint procurement of ICT network services across several councils (Bury, Rochdale, Oldham, and Stockport), Greater Manchester Combined Authority including Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service and Transport for Greater Manchester. In response to comments from Members, it was noted that this proposal focussed on linking up public estates but might provide opportunities in the future to expand on private ones.

Decision:

Cabinet:

1. Agreed that Bury enters contracts via GMCA to connect Bury assets to the preferred provider; and
2. Agreed to Bury entering the GMOne Network Collaboration Agreement with the GMCA, TfGM, and Stockport, Rochdale and Oldham councils.

Reasons for the decision:

Greater Manchester's Digital Blueprint launched in February 2020 included a specific ambition to Extend Our World Class Digital Infrastructure as a cross cutting enabler to underpin the city regions economic and social ambitions.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Do Nothing – including not lighting the fibre delivered under the LFFN programme. This option is discounted as each organisation needs effective network services and wishes to leverage the infrastructure. This option could also require repayment of the DCMS funding for LFFN as a condition of the grant funding is to use the fibre.

DIY – involving each organisation procuring network services separately across the LFFN infrastructure. It was felt that this would result in a missed opportunity to provide network services with higher resilience, capabilities and bandwidth at lower cost.

Collaboratively light the fibre with other LFFN partners - this option was preferred on the basis that a joint approach could generate savings and service improvements plus wider strategic benefits with potential further gains as other organisations join at a later stage. In addition it would avoid duplicate procurements. The network design would still enable each organisation to manage its services across this shared network. The benefits of this approach are described further below.

CA.224 CHILDREN'S SERVICES IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

Geoff Little, Chief Executive of Bury Council, provided an update on the progress of the Children's Services Improvement Programme. Following the Ofsted's judgement, the Council's Children's Services were said to be Inadequate and the Department for Education (DfE) published an improvement notice. This requires the Council to submit an improvement plan by 31 March 2022 and to establish an Improvement Board with an Independent Chair. The Council had already met that requirement following the earlier Local Government Peer Review and it will now meet monthly.

Also in accordance with the improvement notice, the DfE had now appointed a case officer and an independent advisor to support the Council and report to the Secretary of State on progress. Linda Clegg has been appointed to this role and as Independent Chair of the Improvement Board. She also led the Peer Challenge last year and so this appointment established consistency and continuity. It was noted that fortnightly meetings have been established between the DfE case officer and the Executive Director of Children's Services to monitor progress and to agree and establish additional support to the department via sector-led improvement partners.

The Improvement Board first met on 25 January 2022 and approved its Terms of Reference and membership. It also received a report setting out the work progressing the improvement plan. This was organised around 3 key themes: leadership and management, quality and impact of practice on the outcomes for children, and workforce. It was noted that a workforce board has been established to provide input from staff to the Improvement Board.

Immediate actions have already commenced and progress was being tracked and would be reported to future meetings of the Improvement Board. That immediate action included: action to reset the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub following Covid, a new approach to quality assurance enabling a more qualitative approach, and a new audit framework to provide more space and time for learning, and crucially a comprehensive review of staffing with the aim of one manager to six social workers and an average caseload of 15 cases per social worker. To that end, recruitment and retention procedures have been revised and additional staff have begun to be recruited.

The Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee on 20 January 2022 considered the Ofsted report and the report on the Council's response and will meet again in March to discuss the draft improvement plan. This plan will be submitted to Ofsted by 31 March, and feedback then brought to the Improvement Board. The first monitoring visit from Ofsted is expected in the summer; this first report will not be published but all subsequent reports will be.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Skills added that an ask would shortly go out to Opposition Members for a cross-party group to recruit an Assistant Director for Children Social Care. This post was important to improve capacity and to strengthen the leadership team.

It was noted that future updates will be provided to future meetings of Cabinet and the Chief Executive was thanked for his weekly briefings for Opposition Group Leaders.

Decision:

Cabinet noted the update.

Reasons for the decision:

This update was provided in response to a resolution of Council at the meeting held on 19 January 2022.

Other options considered and rejected:

N/A

CA.225 MINUTES OF ASSOCIATION OF GREATER MANCHESTER AUTHORITIES / GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY

It was agreed:

That the minutes of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority meetings held on 26 November 2021, 17 December 2021, and 28 January 2022 be noted.

CA.226 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.227 APPOINTMENT OF A DEVELOPMENT PARTNER FOR PHASE 2 OF CHAMBERHALL BUSINESS PARK, BURY - PART B

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Growth, presented the Part B report which contained the full details of the preferred development partner.

Decision:

Cabinet:

1. Noted the results of the tender exercise for the development of the Phase 2 land as set out in this report;
2. Approved the grant of a long lease of the Phase 2 site to the selected developer;
3. Delegated agreement to the final land price and the detailed terms of the long lease to the Director of Regeneration & Capital Growth in consultation with the Monitoring Officer, Section 151 Officer and the Executive Member for finance, the final price must have regard to the financial offers as set out in the part B report; and
4. Delegated the signing of all contracts required to complete the sale to the Director of Law and Democratic Services.

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.

CA.228 GREATER MANCHESTER ONE (GMONE) ICT NETWORK - PART B

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Growth, presented the Part B report which contained the full financial details.

Decision:

Cabinet:

1. Approved the financial modelling approach;

2. Approve the apportionment of the ten-year total cost of ownership;
3. Contract GMCA to deliver GM One Network for WAN Services across Bury Council;
4. Delegated Authority to sign the collaboration agreement; and
5. Approved the preferred provider.

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 6.00 pm and ended at 7.35 pm)