

**Minutes of:** **CABINET**

**Date of Meeting:** 9 March 2022

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

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

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

**Apologies for Absence:** Councillor C Morris

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**CA.229 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Charlotte Morris.

**CA.230 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**CA.231 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

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

Following the work of the Pilkington Park Councillors and pressure from the community it is  
great to see Rye Croft is being removed from the Accelerated Land Disposal (ALD) Scheme.  
What assurances can you give to the community that Rye Croft will remain as is and will not  
be subject to an ALD in the near future?

Responding, Councillor Eamonn O'Brien reported that he had been invited for a site visit by  
the local community and, on the back of that and the objections received we thought it  
appropriate to withdraw it from the disposals programme. A Community Asset Transfer was  
looked at, but it was deemed simpler to withdraw it. I can confirm there is no intention to bring  
this site (or any other withdrawn sites) through any future phase of the land disposal  
programme. We are also more than happy to continue to work with the community there in  
how this site is used and protected in the future.

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

The cabinet report outlines the community asset transfer toolkit following the request of this  
from the Overview and Scrutiny committee last year. What will the council do to ensure this is  
widely known in the community, with community groups, as well as being accessible online for  
reference?

Responding, Councillor Eamonn O'Brien reported that following discussions and a request  
from the Overview and Scrutiny committee last year, an updated Community Asset Transfer

Policy and Toolkit have been prepared and are due to be approved by Cabinet today. This revised version aimed to be more accessible, in line with comments and feedback received. Following approval, officers from the Land & Property Team will engage with the Council's communications team to ensure that details of the revised community asset transfer policy and toolkit are communicated to the wider community and included on the Council's website, and that more use is made of the policy when future sites are identified. Officers will ensure that contact details are included and details on how the Council will assist community groups through the community asset transfer process, which was often quite complicated and time consuming. Encouraging and facilitating early conversations was key, and as such training for Councillors would be held to help them engage with local communities.

The following questions were submitted and answered in writing:

Muhammad Sajad Warraich:

It's clear to see that a lot of roads across Elton Ward and Bury have been left to ruin, with the council failing to spend its pothole budget to fill in the potholes in the roads. Please can the leader of the council provide an explanation for the systematic neglect of roads in Bury?

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien reported that more than 12,000 potholes were filled across Bury this last financial year – and a further 12,000 will be tackled in the coming 12 months. The council is about to invest a further £10 million into the borough's highways, taking the total to £30 million over nine years.

Latest figures also reveal that, under the previous phase of the highways strategy, around 112,000 sq m of surface dressing was put down on 91 streets, and 45 roads were resurfaced. In the pipeline for the coming year is a further 115,000 sq m of surface dressing on 82 streets, and 70,000 sq m of resurfacing on 15 streets. Around 5,000 sq m of patching was completed in 21/22, and any backlog caused by Covid delays will be reprogrammed over 22/23 and 23/24. Bury should receive £6m per annum for its 660km of road network. Since 2010 we have received a third of that amount. This council has had to borrow £30m to maintain the road network. If anyone is neglectful of Bury's roads, it's this government. I suggest Mr Warraich writes to his local MP to get Bury a better highways settlement.

Peter Liggins:

Will Bury Council listen to Sustrans &, the Senior Transport Planner at ARUP, when they say that Option 1 of the Heaton Park Active Travel Neighbourhood "will not work". Both bodies only recommend Option 2, so will the Council commit to only moving forward with that proposal & to disregard the unworkable Option 1 plan?

Sustrans are currently consulting over the Heaton Park Active Travel Neighbourhood. 2 Options are being proposed, but Sustrans & ARUP have told me that they only recommend Option 2 & did not wish to put forward any other proposals. They claim Bury Council insisted that an alternative proposal was created ( now known as Option 1) which Sustrans & ARUP have told me 'will not work'.

Councillor Alan Quinn reported that at the Active Neighbourhood drop-in event yesterday (Tuesday, 08 March 2022) which was attended by over 150 residents and businesses, the rationale for the two options was discussed.

It was acknowledged that Option 1, if implemented, would require monitoring and evaluation on the surrounding streets to understand the impacts of any traffic displacement, as has been acknowledged during previous correspondence.

It is also acknowledged that the project team had recommended an approach like Option 2 through the workshop process, but also recognise that residents will have differing views and the presentation of two options would provide a way to understand what would or wouldn't be supported.

The whole purpose of such an engagement exercise as that undertaken for the Heaton Park Active Neighbourhood initiative is to understand what residents think of the proposals. No decision has yet been made as to which, if any, option would be taken forward and it may be that the results of the current feedback exercise would result in an alternative option being taken forward that could include a combination of measures from the two options.

## **CA.232 MEMBER QUESTION TIME**

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

How will the people of Bury know that the Community Safety Plan is being delivered?

Responding, Councillor Richard Gold reported that for each of the priorities within the Community Safety Plan there is a delivery lead who is a senior officer within the relevant partnership organisation. Each lead will produce frequent delivery reports against the plan, using data from the strategic assessment and updates on key activity. These updates will be presented to the Community Safety Partnership Board co-chaired by Chief Superintendent Chris Hill and the Council's Deputy Chief Exec Lynne Ridsdale on a quarterly basis. Information from these updates will be summarised in a six monthly review to Overview and Scrutiny to supplement the more detailed Annual Performance Plan. In addition the Community Safety Partnership has committed to more regular engagement with residents through our Community Hubs by sharing crime and disorder data at more granular level to allow for meaningful feedback and joint working.

A further supplementary question was submitted:

There was some discussion at Overview and Scrutiny Committee around the availability of hard data – will this be more available moving forwards?

Councillor Gold reported that the hard data is received every week but up until now was only allowed to be used internally. Subsequent to a meeting earlier today with the Chief Superintendent, data for residents is now allowed. Format of this was still being developed, but this would be available from around April and would be under the six priority areas identified in the Community Safety Plan being available by Ward. It was noted that narrative context would be provided when 'blips' skewed or distorted data, and hopefully this would offer reassurance to residents, calming the sense that crime was out of control and also allowing intervention of real hotspots.

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

Whitefield has been selected as the area of focus for the High Street task force with a visit due to take place in January 2023. What will the Council do over the next 9 months in engaging with Whitefield businesses ahead of the visit?

Responding, Councillor Eamonn O'Brien reported that the Council has selected Whitefield as it has unique set of circumstances and want to focus on the high street. The Council were not in charge of when the visit took place, but the 9 month lead in would give us time to begin devising and implementing a programme of engagement to ensure that existing businesses in Whitefield are fully conversed on the High Street Task Force agenda, identify what support and range of benefits will be on offer for local transformation work, identify complementary work around this, and inviting the businesses to be part of the project as key stakeholders.

The Council are currently working with businesses and the Whitefield Town Centre Business Group. The Council will continue to meet with this emerging group with a view to gaining their support for the visit and subsequent project, as well as discussing what the opportunities are for the town and how the above can help to support the developing objectives and ongoing activity. The community hub will be utilised in engagement, bringing together all the various users of the high street.

A further supplementary question was submitted:

Can we have updates as things progress? This is an ambitious programme and could provide a useful model for future developments.

Councillor O'Brien reported that yes, something could be brought back to Cabinet or another meeting later this year.

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

As part of the Homeless strategy, how will the Council work closely with partners such as Bury CCG over the next year?

Responding, Councillor Clare Cummins reported that the leadership and development of Partnership working to prevent homelessness is one of the seven principles of the proposed Bury homeless strategy.

This principle of the strategy sets out how the council will seek to proactively lead the homeless partnership to apply the borough-wide LET'S principles to its work (This means taking a Local and Enterprising approach which is delivered Together in a Strengths-based way). For example:

- Establishing proactive neighbour-hood based teams who work together on case work, to ensure multi agency support to complex lives and the prevention of and early intervention in issues that could result in homelessness
- Supporting the development of new housing supply, particularly affordable housing, to ensure there is enough supply to avert homelessness
- collaboration across the council, wider public service, community sector, private and social landlords and the co-design of ongoing policy work with people with lived experience and
- taking a person-centred approach to supporting people who are homeless or at risk of becoming so. This is about doing 'with' not 'to' through a "Keyworker" approach which empowers the client with the skills to lead an independent life within the community .

Bury CCG is a member of the homeless partnership. Its role, together with all other partners, is clearly articulated within a delivery work plan for the next three years and includes mental health, substance misuse and developing new and existing pathways for the homeless community into health care.

A further supplementary question was submitted:

I understand some rough sleepers do not want to go into Council homes, is there a more informal route to help them?

Councillor Cummins reported that the Council reached out to entrenched rough sleepers during the Covid pandemic through the 'everyone in' initiative and encouraged them to reach out to the variety of existing services, and the CCG reached out to the homeless population to invite them for vaccinations. She assured Members that Bury Council was doing their utmost to help people in the borough and ensure services were in place and helping people. She advised everyone to speak to rough sleepers they see and advise them on the contact details of the homelessness team at Bury Council.

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

The Cabinet report on the Youth Zone states, "The Council will seek part of these costs from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Youth Investment Fund". What engagement has the Council had with the department to date and what are the parameters for the Council to qualify for the above-mentioned fund?

Responding, Councillor Eamonn O'Brien reported that DCMS used a set of metrics to define which Local Authorities would be invited to bid for YIF grants. Bury was not included in the list. We have made a request via our partners OnSide and Youth Focus NW that an application for Bury Youth Zone nevertheless be considered.

The parameters for the Council to qualify for the fund are as DCMS formula using:

- an index of Income Deprivation Affecting Children;
- Children and Young people Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET); and
- Data on the supply of statutory youth provision by local authorities.

OnSide are supportive of this approach, subject to the outcome of the proposed Viability Study and confirmation of site at September's Cabinet meeting. This ties in with the draft timetable of an announcement in Sept/Oct from DCMS about which are the successful bids. I will ensure that James Daly MP is asked to raise this with DCMS.

A further supplementary question was submitted:

With regards to the sites identified, has there been or will there be any consultation across the borough?

Councillor O'Brien reported that we are in the early days of looking at a viability study, and that relevant stakeholders would be involved.

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

What opportunities does the Council believe there are in Shared Services for Bury MBC and how will this deliver value for money for the Bury taxpayer?

Responding, Councillor Eamonn O'Brien reported that there were opportunities for shared services, but the practical realities were always trickier in practice. We can be comforted that

Bury's record of collaboration is quite strong, with an increasing degree of collaboration across Greater Manchester, and also with the CCG. Although not a panacea, there were prospects to go further. Opportunities existed across the Council and through the Transformation Programme we are looking at how we can share services better.

A number of services, both corporate and operational could be undertaken as a shared service but smaller services would also benefit from the resilience a shared service approach would bring. As part of the transformation programme and areas to be explored in order to put forward potential ideas to close the Councils 2023/24 financial gaps a number of areas for consideration are being explored across the Council.

A further supplementary question was submitted:

Do you have any idea of where services can be shared to achieve real savings?

Councillor O'Brien reported that some efficiencies were about savings and some were about improving workforce development and resiliency, for example recruitment and attracting key skills. Some of the bigger areas we can drive down costs include children's services, whether shared services or collaboration, achieving better value for money and better outcomes by keep services in the public sector. He advised that, as we come forward with the transformation programme, there will be prospects that come forward for scrutiny and further engagement.

The following question was submitted in advance of the meeting by Councillor Jo Lancaster:

On 17th November 2021 Cabinet meeting I asked 'What plan does Cllr. Tariq have regarding the public consultation for secondary school catchment areas' Cllr Tariq advised 'The timetable for that consultation will be established in the coming weeks. Consultation is likely to take place in early 2022, with the intention of implementing any changes for the academic year commencing September 2023. Councillor Tariq added that the last review was in 1980, and the borough had significantly changed since then. Every year parents rightly challenge why they are in the catchment area they are, and it was hoped that through this process issues could be discussed, debated and a solution identified to fit the borough for the 21st century. Why has the consultation still not taken place?

Responding, Councillor Tamoor Tariq reported that all admission authorities have a statutory duty to act in accordance with the relevant provisions of The School Admission Code 2021, issued under Section 84 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Code imposes mandatory requirements and provides guidelines setting out aims, objectives and other matters in relation to the discharge of functions relating to admissions by all maintained bodies. Academies are required by their funding agreements to comply with the Code and the law relating to admissions.

In accordance with the School Admissions Code, when changes are proposed to admission arrangements all admission authorities must consult on their admission arrangements that will apply for admission applications the following school year. Consultation must last for a minimum of 6 weeks and must take place between 1 October and 31 January in the determination year. All admission authorities must determine admission arrangements by 28 February for entry in September the following calendar year.

The LA has reviewed its current admission arrangements and proposes to consult on changes to those arrangements for Community secondary schools. It is proposed that consultation will be from October to December 2022, with a report to Cabinet early 2023 regarding the determination of admission arrangements for September 2024. This is the earliest opportunity

to implement changes to admission arrangements and will align with the opening of the new secondary school in Radcliffe. Whilst the formal consultation cannot commence prior to October 2022, the LA can provide advance publicity so that parents and other stakeholders are aware of the intentions to make changes to current arrangements.

A further supplementary question was submitted:

What assurances do we have that this will take place?

Councillor Tariq reported that his previous advice was based on what he knew at the time but now the legal situation has been researched this was the timeframe. He advised that he was very familiar with the issues in admission arrangements and the problems caused for families. He agreed the current arrangements were not fit for purpose and assured Members we would be moving forwards with the timelines identified.

### **CA.233 MINUTES**

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

Minutes of the meeting held on 16 February 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **CA.234 RAMSBOTTOM TOWN CENTRE PLAN**

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Growth, presented the report which detailed the results of the draft Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan consultation and sought approval for the final Plan to become a material planning consideration, which will be used as a tool to guide investment and development in Ramsbottom Town Centre.

In response to Members' questions, it was noted that there was a focus on ensuring capacity was in place to ensure deliver and that the Project Management Office would be similar in scope to that of Radcliffe's, but the scale would be smaller.

#### **Decision:**

Cabinet:

1. Noted the key themes raised in response to the consultation on the draft Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan;
2. Accepted the post consultation amendments to the document; and
3. Approved the revised Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan as the final version and Council's policy document for the future of the town – to become a material planning consideration and guide future investment opportunities.

#### **Reasons for the decision:**

The Ramsbottom Town Centre Plan provides a vision to guide the future investment of the town centre in the short, medium and long term.

#### **Other options considered and rejected:**

No other options were considered/were applicable.

### **CA.235 BURY TOWN CENTRE MASTERPLAN**

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Growth, presented the report which detailed the results of the draft Bury Town Centre

Masterplan consultation and sought approval for the final Bury Town Centre Masterplan to become a material planning consideration and a document that will guide and support the development and future regeneration of Bury Town Centre.

In response to Members' questions, it was noted that partnership working was key for Bury to ensure quality businesses were attracted to the area and also work with colleges and cultural institutions to improve the educational and cultural offer of the borough. Development of Town Centres was key in ensuring Bury remained ahead of the curve in being an attractive destination.

**Decision:**

Cabinet:

1. Noted the key themes raised in response to the consultation on the draft Bury Town Centre Masterplan;
2. Approved the post-consultation amendments; and
3. Approved the revised Bury Town Centre Masterplan as the final version and Council's policy document for the future of the town – to become a material planning consideration and guide future regeneration and investment opportunities.

**Reasons for the decision:**

The Bury Town Centre Masterplan will provide a commercial, market facing and deliverable vision to guide the development and regeneration of Bury Town Centre over the next 15-20 years.

**Other options considered and rejected:**

No other options were considered/were applicable.

**CA.236 EAST LANCASHIRE PAPER MILL SITE UPDATE - 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 progress made to de-risk the site and pursue a delivery strategy to bring the site forward for redevelopment for housing, together with open space and replacement cricket facilities. The report included the procurement and selection of a preferred development partner for comprehensive delivery of the ELPM site, details of which were contained in the Part B report later in the agenda.

In response to Members' questions, it was noted that a 'fabric first' building approach for homes was a part of the Housing Strategy, as passive/low energy homes would be crucial in securing future residents against rising utility prices as well as being positive for the environmental situation. It was noted that this report focussed on the development partner, but a future report would set out detail on viability of what could be built on the site and how we meet our objectives on zero carbon homes.

**Decision:**

Cabinet:

1. Noted the collaborative approach with Homes England that has been pursued, including the entering into of a legally binding Collaboration Agreement with Homes England to comprehensively deliver the ELPM site for housing, open space and replacement cricket facilities;
2. Agreed to the appointment of a preferred developer and under bidder developer as set out in the part B report; and
3. Agreed to the financial payment arrangement for the capital receipt, based on the terms set out in the Part B report.

**Reasons for the decision:**



- To ensure that Cabinet are kept fully informed on progress regarding the delivery of the East Lancashire Paper Mill site working in collaboration with Homes England.
- To report on the outcome of the developer procurement process, which has resulted in approval of a preferred development partner for the site, which will enable the delivery of much needed new homes and ensure the site is comprehensively developed to high design and sustainability standards.
- To secure a capital receipt payment arrangement which offers the Council the most attractive financial proposition.
- To facilitate the Council's Brownfield first approach to housing delivery.

**Other options considered and rejected:**

The other option considered and rejected was set out in the Part B report.

**CA.237 ESTABLISHING AN ONSIDE YOUTH ZONE IN BURY**

Councillor Tamoor Tariq, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Skills, presented the report which proposed the development of a partnership with the charity Onside to develop a Youth Zone, providing facilities and programmed activities for young people.

This opportunity was widely welcomed as was the opportunity to link into wellbeing services and, in response to Members' questions, it was noted that case studies from similar developments in other localities would be explored. It was also agreed that partnership working with healthcare colleagues as well as charities and volunteer bodies would be key in ensuring this opportunity was fully utilised to provide the best service to the borough's youth.

**Decision:**

Cabinet:

1. Approved the principle of developing the Youth Zone including a proposed launch in April 2025.
2. Noted that the Chief Executive will submit a further report to Cabinet in September 2022 on the outcome of the Viability Study to determine the most appropriate site.

**Reasons for the decision:**

To deliver a new youth facility in Bury or Radcliffe.

**Other options considered and rejected:**

None; Onside is developing Youth Zones around the Country and can bring additional private sector financing into Bury.

**CA.238 BURY HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2022 TO 2025**

Councillor Clare Cummins, Cabinet Member for Housing Services, presented the report which set out the Homelessness strategy from 2022 to 2025, detailing how we will deliver services and meet homeless and rough sleeping demands over the next 3 years to provide the best support and accommodation within the Borough.

In response to Members' questions, it was noted that the website was being refreshed to be more user-friendly. In terms of Councillors' roles, this was an issue all should take ownership of. Councillor Cummins encouraged Members to reach out to rough sleepers and offered to talk with Councillors about what we were trying to achieve.

**Decision:**

Cabinet approved the strategy to formally implement and deliver with clear objectives and timescales.

**Reasons for the decision:**

The Council has a statutory duty to support people that are homeless in the Borough as determined through legislation described in the Homelessness strategy document. Therefore, the Council must have an updated and robust Homelessness Strategy to clearly demonstrate how we will meet the required statutory duties and obligations for homelessness in the Borough.

**Other options considered and rejected:**

None.

**CA.239 UPDATE ON THE ACCELERATED LAND AND PROPERTY DISPOSALS PROGRAMME (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 Council's disposals successes to date, identified property assets that require withdrawal from the ALPDP following community consultation (and one that has been subject to an objection through the Public Open Space advertising process), noted that some assets will be used for short term occupation under licence, and provided an overview of the reviewed 2018 Community Asset Transfer (CAT) policy and toolkit.

Members were happy Rye Croft had been withdrawn and queried the revised CAT toolkit and policy. It was noted that this had been made more accessible and user-friendly to encourage engagement and be more intelligible to the average person. Members noted issues with capacity prevented officers from dealing with CAT requests as quickly as we'd like, with the process being quite involved to ensure the sustainability of sites, and that the new policy and toolkit would also empower Ward Members to support their local communities.

**Decision:**

Cabinet:

1. Noted the success of the disposals to date;
2. Gave approval to withdraw property assets from the ALPDP (as set out in Appendix A);
3. Accepted the officer recommendation that, following consultation, the land known as Barratt Estate Limefield (land to the west of Wheatfield Close) remains in the ADLP;
4. Noted that in order to ensure that assets do not remain sterile officers will give consideration to use of short term licences where appropriate (as set out in the report); and
5. Approved amendments to the policy community asset transfer policy (as set out in Appendices C & D).

**Reasons for the decision:**

- To share the success of the ALPDP to date with members and residents of the borough.
- To allow residents to continue to enjoy the benefits (including health and wellbeing benefits) open space land provides to local communities.
- To make best use of the Council's property assets, where a short-term use has been identified to support wider Council policies or strategies or provide economic benefits.
- To enable the Council to continue to generate capital receipts that can enable other Council projects to be supported.
- To be clear to the local community on how the 2022 CAT policy and toolkit will support the ALPDP.

**Other options considered and rejected:**

No other options were considered/were applicable.

## **CA.240 PROPOSED REDEVELOPMENT OF FLETCHER FOLD BURY TO DELIVER AFFORDABLE LOW CARBON HOMES**

Councillor Clare Cummins, Cabinet Member for Housing Services, presented the report which proposed arrangements for delivery of a housing scheme at Fletcher Fold, Bury in partnership with Six Town Housing. The scheme for 26 affordable homes was approved in principle by Cabinet on 11th November 2020. Since then, the Council had successfully bid for Brownfield Land Funding to undertake land remediation works at the site, which were now complete.

### **Decision:**

Cabinet:

1. Approved the principle of the Fletcher Fold housing scheme being developed by Six Town Housing, on the basis of the financial and governance arrangements set out in the report;
2. Noted that provision of £4m has been made for this scheme in the Council's approved Capital Programme; and
3. Delegated authority to the Director of Housing after consultation with the Chief Executive, the Executive Director of Finance, the Director of Law and Governance and the Cabinet Member for Housing Services to approve the detailed proposals to be submitted by Six Town Housing.

### **Reasons for the decision:**

- To facilitate the Council's brownfield first approach to housing delivery and reduce the Council's revenue costs for holding, maintaining and securing long-term disused sites.
- Delivery of the priorities of the Council's Housing Strategy to increase the supply of new housing and the delivery of affordable homes.
- Delivery of low carbon sustainable homes.

### **Other options considered and rejected:**

1. Do nothing: Bury has high levels of need for affordable housing and supply is required in the marketplace. This is a brownfield site suitable for housing in an area of high demand, to do nothing would not be an option.
2. Market the site: The proposed scheme would not be delivered in the current housebuilding marketplace and, there are overage and clawback mechanisms in the Brownfield Housing Grant contract that would negate any capital receipt to the Council.
3. Dispose of the site to a Registered Housing Provider to deliver a similar scheme. This would take away a degree of control but would reduce the Council's risk. It would not support provide any financial support to the Housing Revenue Account.

## **CA.241 FINANCE RESTRUCTURE**

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Growth, presented the report which set out a new proposed staffing structure for the finance team. Members noted the challenges to staff, and that this proposal sought to reduce the risk of redundancy to the absolute minimum. In response to Members' questions, it was noted that there were 15 agency staff included in the restructure; some of these were 'career agency' but some would apply for permanent positions.

### **Decision:**

Cabinet:

1. Agreed the overall proposed structure set out in Appendix A as a basis for a 90 day period of consultation with staff and the recognised Trade Unions; and
2. Delegated authority to the Executive Director of Finance and the Cabinet Members for Finance and Corporate Affairs and Human Resources in consultation with the Director of People and Inclusion to consider responses received from the consultation, produce

a final version of the structure and to determine whether the final version is to be implemented or returned to Cabinet for approval prior to implementation.

**Reasons for the decision:**

The Council needs to create and develop a high performing team which supports all budget holders and activities within the Council to ensure financial discipline, grip and control is achieved. The current structure has been in place a number of years and has evolved over time with the addition and deletion of posts. The Local Government landscape has changed significantly in recent years and new challenges and ways of working have left finance unable to fully support some of the Council's core activity and aspirations. The current structure and grades are inconsistent amongst sections, exacerbates silo working and reduces departmental wide communication.

**Other options considered and rejected:**

The service could continue as current, but this is deemed inappropriate due to older style job descriptions which no longer cover the requirements by the Council. The Council could adopt a different structure following a 90 day consultation with all staff.

**CA.242 COMMUNITY SAFETY PLAN 2022-25**

Councillor Richard Gold, Cabinet Member for Communities, presented the report which set out the new Community Safety Plan for the borough. This had been designed through extensive consultation with our communities, partners and stakeholders and had been reviewed by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

**Decision:**

Cabinet approved the Community Safety Plan for Bury 2022-2025 and agreed for it to be presented to Full Council for sign-off in March 2022.

**Reasons for the decision:**

- This plan builds on the previous Community Safety Plan which covered 2019-2021. The report contains the key achievements that have been made against the five priorities and how these now need to be developed to meet current demands.
- The new plan has been developed through a strategic review of crime and safety performance, consultation with residents via our Community Hubs and wider community engagement network and feedback from our partners across private, public and the voluntary sector.

**Other options considered and rejected:**

This Plan has been subject to formal consultation and scrutiny by the Council. Alternative priorities have been considered and the priorities within the Plan have been amended to include this feedback and the develop the detailed delivery plans which will underpin the high-level commitments in this plan.

**CA.243 HIGH STREETS TASK FORCE SUPPORT FOR BURY**

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Growth, presented the report which advised that Bury, as one of 68 local authorities, has been selected for the newly announced support from the High Streets Task Force to provide a package of direct expert advice and support to local authorities, communities and businesses to deliver long-term transformation to towns and cities in England. It was proposed that Whitefield centre should be selected as the focus for this support but that this could be part of a wider project to support surrounding areas as well.

In response to Members' questions, it was noted that Ward Councillor engagement was crucial to bolster engagement with local businesses. Residents were passionate about Whitefield and lots could be done with the right strategy to address the identified issues around access etc. With regards to encompassing wider communities, it was noted that the Taskforce would be one aspect of the wider plan for Whitefield and Unsworth. The experience of the Taskforce could be used to build strategies tailored to other communities, and the next nine months would be used to identify how best to use this opportunity to regenerate the physical landscape and also improve people's quality of life and opportunities.

**Decision:**

Cabinet agreed to the selection of Whitefield centre as the focus for the receipt of support and to inform the High Streets Task Force accordingly.

**Reasons for the decision:**

The Task Force has already been informed that the Council would like to accept their offer of support and they are now asking the Council to select a high street, town or city centre area to receive direct Task Force support aimed at overcoming specific challenges and unlocking potential. Whitefield is in relatively close proximity and is well connected to the larger town centres of Prestwich and Radcliffe – including connectivity via Metrolink. As such, Radcliffe and Prestwich represent reasonable alternatives for Whitefield residents wishing to access town centre shops, services and other facilities and the attractiveness of these centres will be likely to increase once regeneration plans are implemented.

**Other options considered and rejected:**

The Borough's other key centres of Bury, Radcliffe, Prestwich, Ramsbottom and Tottington were also considered and rejected. Significant work and expertise have already been focused on the planning and regeneration of other key centres on the Borough or, in the case of Tottington, function on a more self-contained basis, rather than the level of connectivity to larger, alternative centres, as is the case with Whitefield.

**CA.244 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. Members noted that good progress was being made on developing the improvement plan which was due to be submitted by 31 March. The detail of this plan was currently being drafted and would be considered by the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee at its meeting next week.

The plan was aligned to seven principles – listening to children and young people, supporting children to stay within their families when it's safe to do so, taking a whole family approach, building positive relationships, early intervention, taking a place-based approach, and striving to do 'with' children and families not 'to' them. The plan would also have three priorities to improve the quality of practice (improving how we identify and support children and families in need of help and protection, more purposeful and timely care planning, and better support for care leavers) and four underpinning conditions to support these: better partnership governance, more stable and effective management, skilled and experienced workforce, and improvement of performance management and quality assurance metrics.

With regards to the three areas identified for immediate action, it was noted that the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) had introduced monthly tracking and monitoring of cases feeding into performance monitoring meetings; a number of permanent management positions had been made to secure stability in the team and improve decision making; and the MASH steering group was working well and had started to refresh all policies.

With regards to quality assurance, independent auditors had been commissioned to undertake a baseline assessment of quality activity which would help us ensure quality assurance and auditing was focussed on issues raised by Ofsted. In addition, more moderation was being added into the process to lead to improvements in practice and give an evidence base for the next inspection.

With regards to workforce, management of initial response and safeguarding teams had been strengthened. Caseloads had reduced but this needed to go further. Rolling recruitment was being implemented to prevent vacancies, a recruitment taskforce was in place, and temporary support was being brought in to reduce caseloads in the immediate term.

Councillor O'Brien advised that he and Councillor Tariq had been for a walkaround with the teams to speak with them directly about the improvements and remaining challenges and advised that this had been enormously helpful in understanding the situation beyond the written reports. This experience was also being offered out to Members of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Tariq advised the council was reaching out directly to schools and headteachers to ask for their views and to improve the relationship with the Council. He also advised that Social Work Week was coming up and advised Members to look out for communications around that.

**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.245 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.246 EAST LANCASHIRE PAPER MILL SITE UPDATE - PART B**

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien, the Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Finance and Growth, presented the report which set out the details regarding the procurement and selection of a preferred development partner for comprehensive delivery of the ELPM site.

**Decision:**

Cabinet:

1. Noted the collaborative approach with Homes England that has been pursued, including the entering into of a legally binding Collaboration Agreement with Homes England to comprehensively deliver the ELPM site for housing, open space and replacement cricket facilities;
2. Noted the outcome of the development procurement exercise and confirmed the officer recommendation to appoint the preferred development partner and underbidder developer; and

3. Agreed to the financial payment arrangement for the capital receipt, based on the terms as set out in the Part B report.

**Reasons for the decision:**

As set out for the Part A report.

**Other options considered and rejected:**

- To not proceed with appointing a developer partner for the delivery of the ELPM site. This is rejected as it would mean abandoning the procurement and be open to challenge. It would seriously undermine our shared key objective with our partner of delivering the comprehensive redevelopment of this major brownfield site for housing and present a reputational risk.
- To agree an alternative option with regard to the payment structure which has been rejected as it does not present an attractive financial proposition.

**CA.247 UPDATE ON THE ACCELERATED LAND AND PROPERTY DISPOSALS PROGRAMME (PART B)**

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

**Decision:**

Cabinet:

1. Noted the success of the disposals to date;
2. Gave approval to withdraw property assets from the ALPDP (as set out in Appendix A);
3. Accepted the officer recommendation that, following consultation, the land known as Barratt Estate Limefield (land to the west of Wheatfield Close) remains in the ADLP;
4. Noted that in order to ensure that assets do not remain sterile officers will give consideration to use of short term licences where appropriate (as set out in the report); and
5. Approved amendments to the policy community asset transfer policy (as set out in Appendices C & D).

**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 8.07 pm)**