

	Dept	Party	Question	Questioner
1	BGI/Ops	Radcliffe First	<p>On Wednesday 13th December 2023 a motion entitled “Pilsworth South Landfill operators”, put forward by Labour councillors at Rochdale Council was unanimously supported by councillors from all parties.</p> <p>This motion resolved to:</p> <p><i>“To recognise that the foul odours associated with the landfill site impact the quality of life for residents within the borough.</i></p> <p><i>To support the residents of the borough calling for the landfill to be closed and capped off as soon as practicable and before the expiration of the current permit and the operator to have enforcement action taken against them to resolve the concerns of residents.”</i></p> <p>Will Bury Council support residents in Bury MBC who are reporting similar “foul odours” via comments on a recent planning application and take similar action to that proposed in the Rochdale Labour motion?</p>	Cllr Birchmore
		Cllr Quinn	<p>Madam Mayor, the question refers to Rochdale Labour’s NoM. I would have thought that if Radcliffe First were so concerned about the Pilsworth landfill site they would have tabled a NoM themselves on this subject. However, this question seems to be tabled to benefit the Independent candidate in Unsworth.</p> <p>Regarding the question.</p> <p>Legislation governs the regulatory control of Landfill sites and the Pilsworth Site is authorised and operates under a permit issued by the Environment Agency. The Environmental Permit, issued by the Environment Agency means that Bury Council do not have any powers to take enforcement action in relation to this site. The Council advise complainants and Councillors to raise any concerns of complaints directly to the Environment Agency who have a formal reporting mechanism which includes referring complaints to the specific officer(s)/team(s) dealing with their Environmental Permit. To be clear, the Environment Agency have their own legal powers and sanctions in relation to the Environmental Permit which is required for the site to operate, which is part of a legal statutory and regulatory function governed by the Environment Agency and not the Council.</p> <p>An Officer from Bury Councils Environmental Health team has contacted the Environment Agency about the recent odour problems, and the Environment Agency have given assurance that they are aware and currently carrying out an investigation on the management of the site.</p>	

2	Finance	Labour	<p>Can the Leader provide an update on the Council's "Let's Fix It Together" campaign?</p> <p>Supplementary: With the lack of funding from the Autumn Statement, the proposal for deep spending cuts to continue in future and no commitment to fairer funding formulas, would the Leader agree with me that the last 14 years of the Conservatives has proven the only way to improve local services is a Labour Government?</p>	Cllr Moss
		Cllr O'Brien	<p>The campaign launched in November '23 calling for fairer funding for Bury but also setting out how we're managing budgets and stretching them as far as we can to support the most vulnerable. Alongside residents doing their bit by recycling more, spending money locally, fostering and adopting.</p> <p>Since the campaign was launched, over 810 people have signed up to the petition calling for fairer funding for Bury. This is growing every week as more and more residents read up about the massive disadvantage Bury is at when it comes to funding.</p> <p>As I mentioned earlier in my speech, our focus this month is about the delivery of our growth ambitions and how it can help contribute towards our financial stability. Those who seek to hold back new housing and regeneration sites will have to explain where they will find the vitally needed income that comes from these sites and what more they would cut as a result. Thankfully, we are taking the responsible and prudent approach for our borough's future.</p> <p>Supplementary With the lack of funding from the Autumn Statement, the proposal for deep spending cuts to continue in future and no commitment to fairer funding formulas, would the Leader agree with me that the last 14 years of the Conservatives has proven the only way to improve local services is a Labour Government?</p> <p>Response Cllr O'Brien to respond</p>	
3	Ops	Labour	<p>With serious flooding back in the national news, can the Cabinet Member for the Environment outline what steps are being taken to protect Bury's communities vulnerable to flooding?</p> <p>Supplementary: Have the recommendations around extra funding from the Environment Select Committee's report been taken up by the Government, or is this yet another example</p>	Cllr Pilkington

			<p>of the Conservative Government ignoring local communities?</p>	
		<p>Cllr A Quinn</p>	<p>The cornerstone of our Council response to flood risk has been through our partnership with the Environment Agency on the £40 million+ scheme to provide flood defences in Radcliffe and Redvales. We are also in the preliminary stages of seeking further funding through EA Grant in Aid monies for a number of additional flood risk projects across the Borough.</p> <p>In addition, the Council are exploring partnerships with United Utilities on projects aimed at reducing flood risk and providing more sustainable drainage within the Borough and also working with Moors for the Future helping to facilitate natural flood management initiatives</p> <p>Supplementary:</p> <p>The report that you mention is the House of Commons Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Committee report from February 2021.</p> <p>The government have announced some extra money for flood defences, however, most flood schemes are still not fully funded and rely on partnership funding. For example, the Radcliffe & Redvales scheme had Grant in Aid of around £27m. Bury Council agreed to contribute £2m from reserves. The NW RFCC which I sat on at the time, contributed £3m from the Local Levy, however, not until I led the Parliamentary lobby in February 2018 to meet the environment minister and came back with £7m did we have the full amount in place to give us the scheme we needed. Any additional funding provided for flood resilience such as the Frequently Funded Allowance, which is from the £5.2 billion, will hopefully be used to help to reduce the amount of external contribution required and make it easier for schemes with slightly lower benefit ratings to receive financial support.</p> <p>Recommendations in the 2021 report with regard to planning legislation to promote SuDS is due to be implemented in 2024, including application of Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act which will require the set up of a separate SuDS approval body for all significant development. Although councils are aware of the imminent introduction, and are seeking advice from Welsh authorities who have already done this, there is currently no indication of a timeline, the finer details of what is required or whether additional funding will be provided for the additional resources required to implement.</p> <p>But, all of this needs extra resources at a LA level and the one main theme that came out of the report was that central government must fully fund the extra resource need by councils and indeed</p>	

			combined authorities. This has not happened yet.	
4	BGI/Ops	Conservative	In light of the recent motion passed by Rochdale Council in relation to the waste disposal site at Pilsworth South, in our Borough, what communication, if any, from Rochdale has been received and what is our response?	Cllr Vernon
		Cllr O'Brien/Cllr A Quinn	<p>The Council is aware of the Rochdale Council motion and officers have been in contact with Public Protection colleagues in Rochdale regarding the issues around odours from the regulated landfill site at Pilsworth operated by Valencia Waste Management.</p> <p>In light of my earlier answer, I would just encourage any residents who are experiencing problems from the site at Pilsworth to contact the EA's Incident Hotline directly on 0800 80 70 60 to report their concerns. They have advised that any reports received via their Incident Hotline are given a unique reference which is then passed to the relevant officers in a timely manner. It has been reported that this process helps them understand the severity, location and conditions at the time of the incident, and helps to facilitate their response.</p>	
5	CC	Radcliffe First	<p>Over the Christmas break, it became apparent that the level of cover offered by statutory agencies was insufficient. As such many cases were referred to the voluntary sector. Are we aware of the issues and is there a plan to improve this going forwards?</p>	Cllr M Smith
		Cllr Gold	<p>Firstly, I think it's important to highlight that a wide range of Council services worked across every day of the Christmas period. This included colleagues in Children's and Adults Social Care and many of our front-line service in Operations. Alongside this, 24 hour on-call arrangements were in place across a further range of areas, such as Housing Options.</p> <p>I'm sure I speak for all Members in thanking staff for their work over Christmas. The same, of course, will be true for our public service partners. I'd also want to recognise the tireless work of our voluntary sector in Bury who absolutely play a crucial role in supporting our residents all year round.</p> <p>I know that, in the current cost of living context, perhaps more of our residents than ever needed support this Christmas, and many of our services as well as those of our partners continued to experience significant demand throughout the festive period.</p>	

			<p>Over Christmas, we used our communication channels and networks to get messages out about the services available. The council's website was updated regularly to include details about service provision and signposting to other services, including those provided by our public service and voluntary sector partners. Our communications also included information about cost of living support specifically available during this period.</p> <p>Bury has an active Public Service Reform Steering Group which includes representation from the voluntary and community sector who works together to consider how best we deliver our services to support the lives of Bury people in the long term, but also how we address current operational challenges.</p>	
6	BGI	Labour	Can the Leader outline the latest progress on plans for Whitefield and the work around the High Streets Taskforce?	Cllr Fitzgerald
		Cllr O'Brien	<p>The High Street Taskforce (HST) led a Place Making Workshop that took place last week. There was good attendance and discussion from all those who attended, including local business owners, community leaders and elected members. It set out a variety of ways in which high streets can be given a much needed boost, rooted in a need for closer cooperation amongst local stakeholders and the community. In response to the many local, regional and international examples there were ideas shared from attendees and these will be compiled by the HST to contribute to their report.</p> <p>In addition to this, Councillors will be briefed on the latest work by Planit and the corresponding communication plan this Friday. With a public consultation to launch the following week for a 4 week period. Off the back of all this work, it is our intention to bring a report to Cabinet in March to pull all these threads together and set out what the next steps will be on this exciting project.</p>	
7	CC	Labour	Please could the Cabinet Member for Communities & Finance provide an update as the recent LET's Do It Community Fund and how this will benefit local neighbourhoods?	Cllr Staples-Jones
		Cllr Gold	58 local community groups in Bury have been awarded funding through the LET's Do It Community Fund. This equates to £100k of investment in community activity across all neighbourhoods in the Borough, funding activity for our local voluntary and community sector to target to support people in their communities. The fund allowed for groups to develop proposals specifically considering their local neighbourhood and how best this could help improve outcomes	

			<p>for local people. Successful applications include projects based around digital inclusion; sessions to increase confidence and ability in reading; upskilling isolated young people; a community café scheme; environmental improvements and civic pride initiatives.</p> <p>Over 80 applications were received in total and work is taking place with the Bury Voluntary & Community Faith Alliance to outline further opportunities for those who were unsuccessful.</p>	
8.	Ops/CC	Conservative	<p>Was the sickness levels which caused the “severe operational issues” within Waste Management consistent with sickness levels elsewhere in the organisation?</p>	Cllr LJ Dean
		Cllr Rafiq	<p>As I’m sure Members will recognise, sickness absence levels in the Council, like most other organisations, tend to increase over the winter months. – This year has been no different, with December and January in particular seeing many people, including our staff, affected by flu or indeed the latest strain of Covid.</p> <p>This winter peak in illness is absolutely felt most starkly in frontline services, including our Operations and Adult Social Care Departments where staff work in the most physically demanding roles. In comparison there tends to be more stability in other Departments. – December, for example, saw a small (7%) decrease in the number of days lost due to sickness across the Council overall in comparison to November, but increases of 5% and 3% respectively in our Health and Adult Social Care and Operations Departments. The level of absence in Services such as Waste and indeed areas like Choices for Living Well at Killalea are key drivers behind this trend.</p> <p>Specific communication was shared with Members in relation to the challenges faced within our Waste service in December and a particularly stark and unprecedented rise in incidents of short-term sickness within this service was absolutely a key factor here. – Officers in the Service, together with HR colleagues, are currently reviewing arrangements, including our overall workforce plans to strengthen the resilience of our operations in the future.</p>	
9	Finance	Labour	<p>There's national recognition that councils are severely underfunded. In the light of this are you surprised that the services grant has been cut in the annual settlement?</p>	Cllr Farooq
		Cllr Gold	<p>I should be surprised but seeing that the Government cares so little about the pressures that councils face with increased demand, inflationary pressures and a broken funding system, I am not surprised.</p>	

			<p>The Services grant has been cut from £1.5m to £0.2m</p> <p>Also Rolled up grants have been cut from £1.2m to £0</p> <p>What is disappointing is the distribution of the funding. This again doesn't take account of need. I can find no reason why Metropolitan Authorities, all labour controlled received a 6.5% increase compared to Counties which will receive a 7.8% increase. Any guesses as to which political party generally controls the Counties?</p> <p>The government are saying how they've increased funding to councils by an average of 6.5% but over half of this increase will be from Council Tax increases. The government say local councils must increase council tax as part of their allocation from government to get to the 6.5%.</p>	
10	CYP	Labour	<p>As Corporate Parents, we should all be engaged and involved in regular training around our duties. Can the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People outline what upcoming training there is on this important topic?</p> <p><u>Supplementary:</u> As well as training, is there anything more we can be doing as elected members to support our children and young people as their corporate parents?</p>	Cllr D Quinn
		Cllr L Smith		
11	BGI	Conservative	<p>Does the Council have any plans to invest and develop Tottington?</p>	Cllr L McBriar
		Cllr O'Brien	<p>It is worth highlighting a few aspects around our considerations on where we invest and develop when it comes to Tottington. As the smallest township in the Borough it has the lowest levels of deprivation in the Borough and well below the national average on this scale. In addition, the Council doesn't own much land or property to use as a starting point. All of this makes regeneration or development planning a challenge and as such, there are no current plans for anything of this nature.</p> <p>That said, the village has excellent community groups and spaces in operation and the Council was very pleased to work with the local community in the delivery of the Private Peachment VC Town Meadow which has undergone some significant investment in fitness equipment and tennis courts, along with the mural.</p> <p>We are also looking to improve transport routes and links to this part of the borough as part of our</p>	

			transport strategy.	
12	CC	Labour	<p>How is the Council supporting efforts to get residents back into work, in particular, those who have additional health needs?</p> <p><u>Supplementary</u> – Does Cllr Morris agree with the Conservative Government that cutting benefits and pushing people into even greater depths of poverty is the solution to long term unemployment, or is there a better way?</p>	Cllr Hayes
		Cllr Morris	<p>Bury Council recognises that supporting residents into employment is a wider determinant of good health.</p> <p>The wider Working Well offer extends to supporting residents with a physical or mental health disability, whereby referrals are made by health professionals within Primary Care.</p> <p>More recently through UKSPF the Support to Succeed programme we can support those residents who are economically inactive and not accessing support through the Jobcentre.</p> <p>At a local level our role is to actively promote and support the funded programmes to reach the right cohorts and make a difference to their lives and reduce demand on public services. Bury has recently launched the Bury Works Neighbour hub in the Millgate, an easy to access location where residents can access multiple wrap around support and guidance in one place.</p> <p>Working with our partners at Jobcentre Plus our teams are planning a large-scale Work and Skills Fair in May 24 at the Castle Leisure Centre.</p> <p>March 2024 will see the Meet the Providers Event bringing together all local work, health and skills offers to one place, allowing a diverse range of teams that interact with the public on a day-to-day basis to speak to the services that can help their customers.</p> <p>Our Live Well service is also part of the local offer, getting out there in communities, encouraging exercise and self-care and the benefits this can bring.</p> <p>Further to this, to enable the Council to help meet the challenges our residents face, a new Supportive Collection Pathway has been created for Council Tax – based on the tenets Let’s Engage, Let’s Enable, Let’s Support.</p> <p><u>Supplementary</u></p>	

			<p>Does Cllr Morris agree with the Conservative Government that cutting benefits and pushing people into even greater depths of poverty is the solution to long term unemployment, or is there a better way?</p> <p>Response Long term unemployment is a growing issue locally and there can be multiple reasons for this. We recognise that long term unemployment is not healthy for individuals, their families and wider community. Our focus should be on supporting this cohort and encouraging them to see a better future through good work and the benefits it can bring to their overall health & wellbeing. Support a cohort with the confidence to approach returning to work with the wrap around support that is often needed would be a kinder option. In GM we have designed, tested, and led the way across the UK to deliver integrated support systems. We should build on the evidence of what works and deliver local solutions to improves lives.</p>	
13	H&ASC	Labour	<p>Can the Cabinet Member for Health provide an update on dentistry performance and access in the borough?</p>	Cllr Grimshaw
		Cllr Boroda	<p>Access to NHS dental services remains a key issue for us and we are working with local dentists to enable practices to take on an increased number of both urgent and routine NHS patients during 2023 / 2024. In June 2023 NHS Greater Manchester launched the Greater Manchester Patient Dental Access Scheme. 16 practices in the Bury locality have signed up to the scheme, committing to seeing new patients. This has already resulted in 6,458 new patients being seen by Bury dental practices) and 5,555 appointments in Bury for patients who needed urgent dental care. Unfortunately, the Bury practices involved in the scheme report that there have been 941 appointments where patients failed to attend, which has prevented other patients being able to access NHS dental care.</p>	
14	Ops	Conservative	<p>Could the Cabinet Member advise why so many drains remain blocked in the Borough. Many residents have advised when they have reported block drains on the Council website, their enquiries have been ignored and no action has been taken regarding the drains they have complained about?</p>	Cllr Lancaster
		Cllr A Quinn	<p>I can assure you that officers do not intentionally ignore reports of block highway gullies. However, it is important to note that in order to maximise efficiency our gully cleaning crews do not deviate from the cyclic regime to attend to blocked gullies unless there is a risk of flooding to adjacent properties or to the highway in a manner that endangers road users. Gullies are attended to annually, however park vehicles do sometimes prevent access.</p>	

15	Ops	Conservative	Is there any indication as to when the indoor market will reopen?	Cllr R Brown
		Cllr Morris	<p>At the present time we are unable to confirm when the indoor market will reopen. Following the identification of the RAACs issue, in the roof, the Council has commissioned a full building survey which will evaluate the condition of the whole building from a fabric, structural, mechanical and electrical perspective. The main survey has now been completed and is in draft and concrete testing and laboratory analysis is taking place over the next few weeks.</p> <p>Once the concrete testing and analysis is completed the council will receive a full building condition report (mid-February) that will highlight any defects and maintenance requirements within an itemised schedule of work. This will be accompanied by details of the approximate costs and timelines associated with a temporary option to make the roof safe, compared to the option of carrying out the long-term works required to the building. Once this level of detail is understood the Council will be in a position to make a decision on the best approach to support traders, whilst minimising further disruption. Timescales will then be understood.</p>	
16	CC	Conservative	What is the Cabinet Member for Housing's opinion on the overall performance of Six Town Housing?	Cllr Gartside
		Cllr O'Brien	<p>A Strategic Housing Review was undertaken in 2023 and the outcomes reported to Cabinet on 7th June 2023. A key recommendation from that review was to explore the option of returning Six Town Housing to direct Council Control which was approved by Cabinet in November 2023.</p> <p>Over the summer the Council was notified of some serious breaches of the Management Agreement by the interim Chief Executive of Six Town Housing, who commissioned a contracting and compliance review. Over 4,000 outstanding actions were highlighted against a number of tenancy management standards and fire risk assessments. The serious and sustained breaches of agreed Key Performance Indicators were not acceptable and therefore, in accordance with the Management Agreement, an urgent improvement plan was requested.</p> <p>The Improvement Plan submitted to the Council provided assurance that all severe actions were being responded to as soon as they were identified by the surveying team and that all outstanding serious actions, rated as Category 1 and Category 2 would be resolved by the end of this financial year. No tenants have sustained, or are at risk of sustaining, "serious harm".</p>	

			<p>Following receipt of the Improvement Plan, agreed weekly reporting in relation to compliance issues is now in place and a full stock condition survey will also be completed by March 2024.</p> <p>Whilst it is important to recognise the work that has been done by Six Town Housing staff to improve the condition of our social housing, we recognise there is more to do. Following the transfer of staff and housing stock on the 1st February 2024 a new Housing Advisory Board will be created to monitor the continued improvement of our housing function. This Board will include cross-party representation, tenants and independent experts to ensure we are ready for the new Social Housing Regulations which come in to force from the 1st April 2024.</p>	
17	Ops	Conservative	How many fly tipping prosecutions have taken place during the last calendar year?	Cllr S Arif
		Cllr A Quinn	<p>Bury Council are committed to tackling fly tipping and holding offenders to account. Complaints regarding fly tipping in Bury are reviewed and investigated which can lead to offenders being interviewed under caution and further action being taken including fixed penalty notices being issued, formal cautions and/or prosecutions. During the last calendar year there have been 3 prosecutions with a further 5 cases pending and awaiting hearing dates to be set by the Magistrates Court.</p> <p>The three cases have led to fines of £940, Victim Surcharges of £360 and awards of costs of £750. Once a prosecution file is completed and submitted to the Magistrates Court, the Council must await a Court issued date and time for cases to be heard. Cases often have preliminary hearings prior to the main hearings, the dates of which, are outside the Control of the Council.</p>	
18	CC	Conservative	Why does the Cabinet Member think the level of Ombudsman Complaints against the Council have begun to rise?	Cllr Hussain
		Cllr Rafiq	<p>The Local Government Ombudsman have advised when comparing statistics against previous data, in the last reporting year for 2022-23 that the LGO changed their investigation processes. This contributed towards an increase in the average uphold rate in complaints across all Councils. Members should consider comparing individual Council uphold rates against the national average rate rather than against data from previous years.</p> <p>In relation to Education and Childrens Services complaints, the LGO continue to find in local authorities the highest proportion of fault in complaints about Education and Children's Services, particularly with regards to complaints concerning children with special educational needs. SEND cases, alongside adult social care and homelessness cases, make up the majority of the Ombudsman casework nationally.</p>	

			<p>LGO complaints are monitored and administered by the Council's link Officer and a quarterly report is produced for the Executive Team with a full Annual Report containing a summary of statistics submitted and scrutinised at the Standards Committee. It is intended that the information provided by the Ombudsman, alongside the data the Council records about local complaints, will assist in assessing the Council's performance.</p> <p>It's worth noting that the LGO like many organisations have been focussed on doing the most they can with their resources, prioritising cases where it is in the public interest to investigate. As a result, they are less likely to carry out investigations into 'borderline' issues and are therefore finding a higher proportion of fault. While allowing a more sustainable way for the LGO to work, the change meant that their uphold rate increased by 8% to 74% in the past reporting year.</p>	
19	Ops	Independent	<p>TOTTINGTON Residents are aware of the pressures on the Council with 324 Grit Bins to fill but request their bins are replenished with grit in TOTTINGTON especially on the many incline locations on estate roads</p>	Cllr Y Wright
		Cllr A Quinn	<p>The grit bins on Wellbank Street, Moorside Road, Meadow Way, Brammay Drive, Tottington were replenished in December. Any remaining grit bins on the refill list will be completed when resource permits.</p> <p>For context, several Greater Manchester authorities do not provide any grit bins on their highway networks. However, Bury Council has in excess of 300 grit bins located throughout the borough at known trouble spots, such as where there are sharp bends or steep inclines and where historically snow and ice have caused serious problems. It is important to recognise that there is no statutory duty requiring councils to provide grit bins on the network, yet Bury still provide over 300.</p>	