



# State of the Borough 2024-2025

## Statement from Council Leader: Eamonn O'Brien

It feels like the words “unprecedented” and “challenging” have become overused in recent times however as I read through the fourth State of the Borough Report since I became Leader of Bury Council, it is clear that in some respects those words underplay the situation facing local government.

Our LET'S Vision for 2030 sets out two complementary ambitions, to deliver inclusive economic growth and reduce health inequalities. It is clear from the evidence in this report that whilst some of our outcome measures are improving, the impact of the cost-of living crisis and the legacy affects of the pandemic on our health and wellbeing have led to a worsening position which we must now work doubly hard to address.

Whilst I am proud of the way our Council staff and partners continue to support our communities, particularly those who are most vulnerable and in need of help, we are undoubtedly still responding to the consequences of Covid-19, the economic aftershocks that have followed and the impact of international conflicts that are felt in our borough.

There is much to celebrate in this report. As noted by the Local Government Association during their Corporate Peer Challenge visit to Bury last year, we are a Council that cares. We understand our vision for the borough and the role each need to play in achieving it. Overall, they concluded that **“People can see how Bury as a place is changing and are really positive about the difference this represents”**.

We must acknowledge we are facing into strong head winds and we will need to build on our strengths to continue to stay on course. Despite recent reductions in the rate of inflation, the Council is still addressing the impact of 11% inflation which has introduced over £11m of cost pressures since 2022. The increase in cost pressure has been exacerbated by ongoing increases in demand across all statutory services including social care for adult and children; special educational needs and support services; social housing and homelessness. This year, these pressures have collectively presented a 17% demand increase on the Council's budget, against an income increase of just 7%.

Bury Council is not alone in facing this., The Local Government Association has issued a response to the 2024-25 Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement stating that based on their analysis of the sector, Councils in England continue to face a funding gap of £4 billion across this year and next.

Working in these conditions is not easy. I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of our staff, partners, and volunteers for their hard work and dedication. Through embracing the LET'S values and behaviours this report shows how we are making a difference and achieving great things.

So, whilst the coming year will undoubtedly be another challenging one, we are proud of what we have achieved in 2023-24 and we will continue to work together to create share success for our borough.



**CLlr E O'Brien (Leader of Bury Council)**

## Introduction

In 2020, we launched our aspirational and ambitious LET'S Do It! Strategy, setting out a vision for the borough through to 2030:

***To stand out as a place that is achieving faster economic growth than the national average, with lower than national average levels of deprivation.***

Since then, both Bury Council and the wider Team Bury Partnership have worked together to transform our collective response to public service reform and to increase our focus on the seven high level outcomes:

1. Improved quality of life
2. Improved early years development
3. Improved educational attainment
4. Increased adult skill levels and employability
5. Inclusive economic growth
6. Carbon neutrality by 2038
7. Improved digital connectivity



There is now a much stronger “golden thread” that binds our collective endeavour with each partner playing their part in contributing to these outcomes and using them as a framework to guide decision making and joint working. Written before the Covid-19 pandemic, the LET'S Strategy requires a refresh to take stock of the impact of what has happened to our borough. However, instead of allowing these events derail us, we remain committed to using the LET'S principles to redouble our efforts and remain focused on our goals.

The Council is hugely ambitious for its residents and the future of our children but operates in a very challenging context. Financial resources continue to be stretched, with the ongoing effects of c11% inflation during 2023-24 increasing costs across all services and a £30m funding gap highlighted within the 2024-27 Medium Term Financial Strategy. The scale and complexity of demand has also increased across all services. Children's and adult's social care services have both seen demand increases of over 20% over the last year and the housing waiting list is the longest it has ever been. However, we continue to reform.

In December, the Local Government Association visited Bury Council to undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge in order to review our progress since their last visit in 2018. Based on more than 60 meetings involving over 150 people, in addition to further desk-based research and data analysis, they identified clear areas of good practice, including:

- **Local** – Launching our Neighbourhood Model to ensure residents are at the heart our decision making and delivery;
- **Enterprise** – Working creatively to become the only local authority to be awarded two Levelling-Up Grants to regenerate our most deprived areas;
- **Together** – Continuing to build a local health and care system within the GM ICS to maintain our focus on reducing health and inequalities;
- **Strengths** – Bury has a heritage of people looking after people. Our award winning community groups continue to inspire and energise us.

This report examines each of these four principle for reform in more detail and the impact on our seven LET'S Strategy Outcomes. There is an introduction to each of the principles at beginning of each section, an analysis of our key performance metrics and examples of LET's in action. The report will end with a summary of how this analysis has informed the Bury Council Corporate Plan for 2024-2025.

## Let's Principle: Local

We know that it is the relationships, not services, which truly make the difference to people's lives. We want to build on this through empowered local communities within each township where individuals, families and communities are in control and at the heart of decision making. We will bring our collective talents, energies and community power together for the greater good by:

- Engaging with people where and how they live
- Hearing all voices and learning from them
- Trusting and helping each other, always working together
- Listening when others talk, helping and enabling
- Supporting development and growth and removing barriers to collaboration

In support of this we will work to bring public services together as one team in each neighbourhood, in line with these principles.

Arguably, all of the LET'S outcomes are relevant to the Local principle. Neighbourhood profiles are produced each year to reflect and allow for targeted planning of services and support. These are available here: <https://theburydirectory.co.uk/neighbourhood-profiles>

The indicators which track progress against Carbon Neutrality and the impact of the environment on our neighbourhoods are particularly important and are outlined below. The impact of the pandemic led to an unusual decline due to people staying in their homes and not travelling. This had an impact on some of our monitoring such as the CO2 emissions (tonnes per capita) where we performed well but then saw an increase in emissions following the exit of various lockdowns and seeing people return to the workplace. However, our local initiatives and associated monitoring are showing positive changes with nearly 100% of our council vehicles changed to lower emissions, 69% of street lighting converted to LED and 45 electric vehicle charge points installed.

## LET'S KPIs

Measure	Outcome	Baseline	Previous Position	Latest Position	Trend
CO2 emissions (tonnes per capita)	Carbon	4.6 (2018)	3.8 (2020)	4.2 (2021)	↑
Number of air quality monitoring stations breaching nitrogen dioxide targets	Carbon	6 (Q4 2019/20)	1 (Q4 2021/22)	0 (Q4 2023/24)	↓
Total CO2 emissions produced within our borough	Carbon	925.8 (2019)	764.7 (2022)	878.1 (2023)	↑
Total CO2 emissions resulting from Council operations	Carbon	15,650 (Q4 2019/20)	11,007 (Q3 2021/22)	9,282 (Q4 2022/23)	↓
% of Council vehicles changed to lower emission versions	Carbon	33 (Q3 2020/21)	45 (Q3 2022/23)	98 (Q4 2023/24)	↑
Number of EV Charge Points	Carbon	23 (Q1 2022/23)	29 (Q1 2023/24)	45 (Q4 2023/24)	↑
% of street lighting converted to LED	Carbon	59.52 (Q2 2022/23)	61.77 (Q4 2022/23)	69 (Q2 2023/24)	↑

## LET'S in Action: Local - 'Places for Everyone' plan

Greater Manchester's (GM) long-term plan for jobs, new homes and sustainable growth was approved by Bury Council. The plan, which covers nine of the ten boroughs of Greater Manchester, has been through a long period of public consultations and assessments by planning experts. It now has been adopted by each Council for approval. Over half of Bury borough will still be classified as Green Belt.

Places for Everyone is not just about housing; it is vital for employment also. The Northern Gateway site within the wider Atom Valley corridor has the potential to bring many thousands of good quality jobs to the borough and allied to local town centre regeneration plans sets a course for Bury's future prosperity.

## Further Examples of our Local Principle in Action

### East Bury Family Hub



In October 2023, a new Family Hub was inaugurated. First of many to be launched across the borough, these are places where Council, health and

community services come together so that families can access the right support when it's needed. The event included activities for children and young people, including stay and play, crafts, a dedicated youth area, mindfulness sessions and taster sessions for young people and parents. There was also a marketplace of 25 different partner services.

### Affordable Housing Development

Work is continuing and set for completion in 2025 on the £17M affordable housing development at Green Street, Radcliffe. Part of the wider masterplan for Radcliffe Town Centre Great Places, Watson Homes is contracted to build 97 affordable homes and 35 homes for private rent. These homes will be equipped with leading technologies including air-source heat pumps and solar PV panels, ensuring they are environmentally friendly and helping residents save on energy costs.

### Independent Living Scheme for over 55s

In March 2024, plans were approved to create accommodation, comprising of 24 apartments on the site of The Elms, Whitefield. The old Victorian building on the long-term disused Council owned brownfield site was surveyed in October 2021 and

finally demolished in December 2023 after consultation.

### Going for green on Bury housing estates

Bury Housing Services worked with City of Trees, the community forest for Greater Manchester, to plant more trees in Chesham, Bury. These are to complement the solar panels which have been installed on several properties on the estate, to provide tenants with warmer, healthier and cheaper homes. The scheme resulted in some trees being removed. However, they have been replaced by 5 trees for every 1 that was lost. It is estimated that the solar panels and extra trees will cut carbon emissions by nearly 500 tonnes over the next 25 years. Tenant's homes are now better insulated, fuel bills will be reduced as well as reduction in greenhouse gases and more greenery in our local neighbourhoods.

### People and Communities Plans

All of our neighbourhoods have developed People and Communities Plans, co-designed by our PSLTs. These provide maps of community assets, names of key contacts including ward cllrs and key workers, as well as local demographic data. Importantly these profiles point to the needs of each neighbourhood and can be used when making funding decisions, applying for grants and importantly monitoring impact.

### LED street lighting

As part of the ongoing £7 million 6-year street lighting improvement programme, around 3,300 more street lanterns will be converted to LED between 2024-2025 to achieve the target of 90%

of the borough's street lighting being LED. This will save thousands of pounds on maintenance and the Council's energy bills.

### **Parklife Community Fund**

Community groups across Prestwich and nearby have been granted £22,000 funding from the Parklife concerts to organise activities. Some 22 groups have won money which sets aside some of the concert proceeds for local causes.

### **Play areas refurbishment**

Since April 2023, Council invested £300K to refurbish six local play areas and will invest a further £280K in seven more starting in April 2024. The investment recognises the importance of quality, safe, accessible play facilities. A £30k trim trail has also been installed at Burrs Country Park. The Council maintains 14 Green Flag accredited parks, with most sites having retained the award for numerous years. Across the borough there are 62 play areas, 24 ball zones, 11 outdoor gyms and 24 tennis courts. Maintaining the standard of these fantastic public facilities is a priority for the Council, recognising the important part they play in improving lives.

### **Summerseat play area**

A new play area designed in consultation with the local community and with special input from children at Summerseat Methodist School was completed.

The new facilities at the play area were funded by FCC Recycling UK (£99,350), Suez (££49,589) and

Bury Council (£20,000). The Summerseat Collective and Proffitts worked in partnership to secure the external funding and consulted the community to establish the new design.

The previous play area, improved by the Council in 2014, was fully removed during October 2023. Construction of the new facility then continued throughout the winter despite the wet weather. Carried out by J & D Jenkinsons of Brandlesholme, work involved new tarmacked perimeter paths, new safety surfacing, and installation of new play equipment.

### **Clarence Park**

The £180,000 wheeled sports park at Clarence Park is complete and open to users. The park has been keeping its Green Flag award for quality for 18 years running now. Joint funded by Bury Council (£106k) and Veolia Environment Trust (£74k), the new wheeled park caters for skateboards, scooters, roller skates and BMX. The facility has been designed together with the local community and the Friends of Clarence Park to provide an amazing facility with an appeal to a wide age range and all abilities. The project is the latest to be completed in a £350k investment programme to bolster the park and secure its ongoing success. It was overseen on behalf of Bury Council by Proffitts – Investing in Communities and the site works were completed by CANVAS. The Council's grounds maintenance team also contributed by cutting back vegetation to open up the sightlines at Miss Walker's Field.

## **LET's Principle: Enterprise**

We are known for our spirit of enterprise and innovation and we will harness that spirit to raise aspirations to grow and develop our people and businesses. We will remove the barriers that prevent people from getting on and connect local people to opportunities through their skills, confidence and relationships by:

- Demonstrating pride in our collective and individual achievements in the place where we live
- Ensuring everyone has an equal voice and life chances by harnessing and nurturing all talents
- Championing innovation, always looking for ways to improve quality of life for all
- Being courageous and stepping out of our comfort zone to help ourselves and others
- Opening doors at every opportunity

The proportion of our economically active residents in employment has increased alongside a decrease in workless households which provides some resilience during the cost of living crisis. Despite this however we know that the initiatives within our Anti-Poverty strategy have continued to be vital to supporting our residents.

As part of our work towards an all-age skill strategy we have continue to focus on school improvement however over the last year the gap in school readiness between our children who are eligible for free school meals and those children overall has continued to grow, with those more vulnerable children being less ready for school than their peers. However, following recent work the take up of the 2 year old childcare offer is increasing which will provide further earlier intervention and support for this cohort. The proportion of our schools that are rated good or better by Ofsted has steadily been increasing providing a greater standard of education provision for our children and families.

## LET's KPIs

Measure	Outcome	Baseline	Previous Position	Latest Position	Trend
Median hourly earnings for residents (£)	Inclusive Economic Growth	13.8 (2019)	14.73 (2020)	14.55 (2022)	↓
% of employment in Bury within SOC major group 1-3 (Managers, Directors, Senior Officials)	Inclusive Economic Growth	49.0 (2022/23)			
Number of housing units completed in the borough which are affordable	Inclusive Economic Growth	184 (2018/19)	145 (2021/22)	92 (2022/23)	↓
Total employee jobs in Bury	Inclusive Economic Growth	72,000 (2019)	65,000 (2020)	69,000 (2021)	↑
Total business enterprises in Bury	Inclusive Economic Growth	8,535 (2019)	7,975 (2021)	8,060 (2022)	↑
% gap between school readiness of all pupils and those eligible for free school meals	Improve <i>Early Years Development</i>	11.6 (2019)	13.3 (2022)	17.2 (2023, provisional)	↑
% of children accessing 2 year take up of free childcare	Improve <i>E Early Years Development</i>	74.1 (2022)	69.9 (2023)	81.5 (2024)	↑
% gap in average attainment 8 scores for all pupils and those eligible for free school meals	Improve Educational Attainment	8.6 (2019)	11.5 (2021)	9.7 (2023)	↑
% pupils attending a good or better school in Bury	Improve Educational Attainment	71.5 (2020)	71.2 (2023)	79.1 (2024)	↑
% gap between KS2 attainment in reading, writing and maths of all pupils and those eligible for free school meals	Improve Educational Attainment	18.5 (2019)	16.4 (2022)	10.9 (2023, provisional)	↓
% gap between adults with no qualifications and those with NVQ Level 3+ qualifications	Improve Adult Skills & Employability	48.8 (2020)	57.2 (2022)	55.4 (2024)	↓
% economically active residents in employment	Improve ASLs & employability	74 (2019)	75 (2021)	83.3 (2023)	↑
% workless households	Improve ASLs & employability	15.1 (2019)	14.2 (2020)	12 (2021)	↓
Claimant Count (%)	Improve ASLs & employability	3.4 (Q3 2019/20)	6.8 (Q3 2020/21)	4.3 (Q1 2023/24)	↓



## LET's in Action: Enterprise - Bury Economic Strategy (2024-2034)

The beginning of the year saw the launch of Council's new economic strategy which sets-out a ten-year clear framework and priorities to guide a collaborative 'Team Bury' approach to delivering a more **sustainable, competitive, inclusive**, and **resilient** local economy. This will be delivered through focusing on priorities in three specific areas as below.

Pillar	Ambition
Bury's Place	To create an inclusive, sustainable and prosperous place, where people choose to love, work, invest and visit.
Bury's People	To build the capabilities of people to find, sustain and progress in employment and achieve economic security.
Bury's Economy & Business Base	To create the conditions for business to prosper and accelerate the transition to a fairer, greener and more resilient economy.

## Further Examples of our Enterprise Principle in Action

### Bury Regeneration Expo

In February 2024, Business leaders, investors and stakeholders gathered to hear how the borough is being transformed over the next decade and beyond. Greater Manchester Mayor Andy Burnham was among the speakers at the first Bury Regeneration Expo, held in Ramsbottom. Organised by Bury Council, in partnership with the Greater Manchester Business Growth Hub, the event showcased the many game-changing developments coming to our borough and included our Joint Venture partners and regeneration developers discussing how these transformative regeneration plans will ensure Bury's success. The meeting highlighted the major developments coming to the borough including: Building a new £40M Civic Hub in Radcliffe; Regeneration of the Longfield Centre in Prestwich; a redeveloped Mill Gate shopping centre in Bury; and a modernised transport interchange in Bury. It also focused on the Northern Gateway/Atom Valley initiative, part of the wider Mayoral development zone, which has the potential to bring thousands of quality jobs to the area as a major regional and national hub.

### Preserving our heritage

Bury Art Museum and Sculpture Centre has won £589,545 to carry out essential building works which will help to protect its many artworks. The money, awarded under the government's Cultural

Investment Fund, will pay to repair and renew rooflights, guttering and rainwater pipes, as well as internal repairs to plasterwork. The works will enable the reopening of some currently closed gallery spaces.

### Bury Flexi Hall

Bury Council has been awarded £20 million from the Government's Levelling Up Fund to build a new multi-functional flexi-hall and construct new roof canopies to protect the outdoor market stalls. Work on this is expected to begin by summer 2024.

### Highway Investment Programme

Bury Council's £30 million programme over 9 years will continue with more than 100 more roads to be resurfaced or receive preventative treatments. In the last 12 months around 100,000 m2 of surface dressing and micro asphalt was applied to over 75 streets across the borough and 85,000 m2 of road surface was fully replaced. There will be a further £3.2m of improvements to more than 140,000 m2 of road surface across the Bury borough. Some roads will be fully resurfaced while others will benefit from preventative prolonging their life.

## Radcliffe Regeneration

Multi-million pound regeneration of Radcliffe town centre is to take place over 2024-2025. The old buildings on the site of the £40M Radcliffe Hub have been demolished and the site has been cleared, ready for foundation works to begin and for the Radcliffe Hub to open in 2026.

- Enabling works are being undertaken in the Radcliffe Market basement and a new gable wall has been built.
- At Market Chambers, scaffolding is in place to allow for internal and external repair work.
- Spring Lane is the location of Radcliffe's new secondary school, Star Radcliffe Academy, work has started and the first intake of Year 7 pupils will be welcomed in September 2024.
- At Redbank Playing Fields a new 3G football pitch is complete with a new pavilion and car park to be finished by July 2024. £1.8M funding has been obtained from The Football Foundation (Premier League, The FA and Government's Football Foundation) plus a further £600K from the Council itself.

Under the Council's new transport strategy, plans for Radcliffe include better pedestrian and cycle routes to the Metrolink, improved bus services through the Bee Network, a new bridge from Rectory Lane to Milltown Street, along with more public EV charging points, road safety schemes and repairs.

## Mill Gate Regeneration



In March 2024, a seven-figure transformational Regeneration Framework for the shopping centre

and surrounding areas was approved. The framework, developed jointly by property developer Bruntwood and Bury Council, in consultation with the community, outlines ambitious redevelopment plans as part of the wider town centre masterplan to strengthen the Bury town centre as a leading retail destination within Greater Manchester. The nine-year development will create jobs, deliver new homes, provide high quality public spaces and improve connectivity.

1. Phase 1 – 'Residential Quarter', 2024-2028, construction of residential developments;
2. Phase 2 – 'Retail Quarter', 2025-2029, construction of further residential developments and new public areas;
3. Phase 3 – 'Residential Quarter', 2026-2031, construction of further residential developments, plus commercial spaces;
4. Phase 4 – 'Leisure Quarter', 2028-2033, construction of further residential and commercial developments plus a hotel development.

## Bury Council Housing Services



In February 2024, the Council formally took over again the responsibility for managing and maintaining its 7000 plus homes across the borough, following a

transfer of staff and services from Six Town Housing. The reason behind this initiative was to provide a more joined-up service, linking housing and other Council services that residents rely on. The Council will work with tenant associations and other groups to improve estates and communal areas, and tackling anti-social behaviour.

## **LET's Principle: Delivering Together**

Our strategy represents a completely new relationship between public services, communities and businesses which is based on co-design and accountability for shared decision making. It is about doing "with" not "to" by bringing a greater focus on wellbeing, prevention and early intervention. We will all take responsibility for making a difference by:

- Committing to making a positive, practical difference in addressing and tackling our challenges
- Valuing and developing the role and voices of people and communities to shape and deliver, wherever we can
- Empowering residents and groups to take decisions and harness resources
- Strength through cultural diversity
- Growing relationships and new connections across boundaries
- Demonstrating dignity, kindness and respect in everything we do

Whilst the gap in life years between our most and least vulnerable areas has decreased this has only decreased due to the overall life expectancy reducing since the pandemic. However, our services to support people to live well have continued to perform better with increasing referrals to our Live Well services and an increase in our good or outstanding adult social care providers.

In terms of crime and anti social behaviour, the monitoring of this does fluctuate – however we have seen an increase in the rate of anti social behaviour and also an increase in the rate of crimes which has only slightly reduced in the last reporting period. However, the proportion of our residents who feel safe in their local area has remained relatively consistent.

## LET's KPIs

Measure	Outcome	Baseline	Previous Position	Latest Position	Trend
Digital start courses (GM)	Digital	4,875 (2019/20)	8,266 (2020/21)	6,348 (2021/22)	↓
% residents experiencing digital exclusion (GM)	Digital	35.3 (2023)	NA		
% disabled residents experiencing digital exclusion (GM)	Digital	46.1 (2023)	NA		
% under 25s residents experiencing digital exclusion (GM)	Digital	32.6 (2023)	NA		
% over 65% experiencing digital exclusion (GM)	Digital	67.4 (2023)	NA		
Gap between the worst and best performing Medium Super Output Areas (years)	Quality of Life	M:16.7 F: 11.7 (2015-19)	NA	M: 12.3 F: 10.4 (2016-2020)	↓
Rate of ASB offences per 1,000 population	Quality of Life	1.36 (Q1 2020/21)	0.87 (Q4 2021/22)	1.26 (Q4 2022/23)	↑
Rate of crimes per 1,000 population	Quality of Life	6.4 (2019)	9.8 (2021)	9.4 (2022)	↓
% of Bury residents who responded Very or Fairly Safe to 'How Safe do you feel in your local area?'	Quality of Life	88 (Q1 2022/23)	91 (Q3 2022/23)	90 (Q1 2023/24)	↓

## LET's in Action: Together: Bury NeighbourHub

In January 2024, Funded by the Community Investment Fund (CIF), in a joint venture, Ingeus joined Bury Council in celebrating the launch of the Bury NeighbourHub in Mill Gate Shopping Centre. The new community hub provides a relaxed environment where local people can go to seek help and advice on issues including housing, employment, money management and health.

Ingeus will provide information on the Working Well Work and Health Programme, including the new Pioneer support programme, commissioned by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) to help people on out of work benefits or who are economically inactive secure sustainable employment. The hub will also provide space for local people from different backgrounds to come together and connect, get involved in community projects, and learn how their skills and ideas can help Bury to become an even better place to live.

## Further Examples of our Together Principle in Action

### 'Take a Seat' scheme



Bury Council has joined hands with the UK Network of Age Friendly Communities to create an inclusive and age-friendly community for its residents. This will be achieved via working with local businesses to launch the 'Take a seat' scheme where they will be required to have a seat available in case an older person needs to catch their breath and rest. The participating businesses will be identifiable by 'We Are Age Friendly' sticker displayed in their window. Being part of the framework marks a significant stage in borough's commitment to building a more inclusive community for all its residents and sending a clear message that older adults are valued and supported.

### Mockingbird Family Model project



In March 2024, during Social Work Week, the Council's Fostering Team launched its innovative Mockingbird Family Model project, which is to create a family network community to afford improved opportunities and support to foster carers and cared for children. This is a global award-winning and pioneering programme led by The Fostering Network in the UK. Foster carers become part of a large family community of 6-10 fostering families, called 'constellations', led by a

home carer and supported by an experienced worker. They help each other and provide support as a community with guidance alongside social activities, planned and emergency care to promote family stability, sleepovers, and training.

### Partners in Bury: People with learning disabilities

Partners in Bury created two videos to raise awareness of the fact that people with a learning disability are more likely to experience poor mental wellbeing than the general population. The videos are there to promote help for people with a learning disability to improve their mental wellbeing, and to share ideas with carers and support workers about how they can improve someone's mental wellbeing. The videos have been produced by the NHS, Bury Council's Public Health team and The Bury People First Group using funding from NHS Greater Manchester ICB in collaboration with Bury's NHS/ICB team and the Public Health Team.

### Winter Packs

More than 400 residents were kept safe and well during the winter of 2023 by a collaboration between Bury Council and Public Health, GM Fire Service, Six Town Housing (now part of Bury Council), Morrisons and Co-op in Whitefield. The packs were targeted towards those most vulnerable because of the cold weather and due to the cost-of-living crisis. Two different packs, The Winter Warmer Pack and the Mindfulness Pack, were distributed through Bury and

Prestwich libraries, the Council's Staying Well team, Fairfield General Hospital and Pennine Care, community mental health groups, and local food banks and food pantries. Funding of £3m for this came through the government's Household Support Fund. The Council also distributed food and fuel vouchers, emergency help towards rent and Council Tax and other support.

### **Bury's plan for safer streets and venues**

Safer streets for everyone and safer spaces for women and girls at night are the aims of two new initiatives. Bury's Community Safety Partnership has been successful in applying for £368,579 from the government's Safer Streets Fund to reduce and prevent neighbourhood crime, antisocial behaviour and violence against women and girls in public spaces, and for everyone to feel safe. As part of our wider community safety programme, the Council has worked with businesses and the partnership to develop the Women's Night-time Safety Charter for licensed bars and clubs open during the night. The partnership includes GMP, Bury Council, local community and voluntary groups represented through Bury VCFA, Greater Manchester Fire & Rescue Service, Probation Service and others.

The Safer Streets money is being used to:

- invest in 32 new CCTV cameras,
- upgrade radios for safety and security officers,
- increase work with the Street Pastors,
- develop environmental improvements to reduce antisocial behaviour,
- work with young people through services and groups to reduce antisocial behaviour on the Metrolink network,
- training for those working to reduce violence against women and girls.

The Women and Girl's charter aims to make it safer for women including those with trans and

non-binary identities throughout our borough. Businesses that sign up to the charter commit themselves to make their spaces safer for women and to be active in promoting women's safety. It includes training for staff and adopting the 'Ask for Angela' scheme.

### **Operation Avro**

Trading standards and licensing officers seized £12,000 of illegal goods when they joined Greater Manchester Police in Operation Avro. They visited 12 shops across the borough and discovered various concealed items including 4,240 illicit cigarettes, 1.1kg of hand rolling tobacco and 912 vapes.

### **The Bee Network**

Over the past year we have made great strides towards delivering our 'London-style' bus network across Greater Manchester. This began in September 2023, when franchised services started running in Bolton and Wigan, and parts of Bury, Salford and Manchester. The rest of Bury's bus services, along with services in Oldham, Rochdale and parts of Salford and North Manchester, became part of the Bee Network in March 2024.

All Bee Network buses are yellow, and at least 50 are new electric vehicles with improved disability access, audio-visual announcements and the full branding of the Bee Network – the name of the new public transport system.

By 2025, when all services across the city-region are under public control, buses, trams and rental bikes will use the same ticket system with a daily cap. Bus fares across Greater Manchester have already been capped at £2 for single journeys, £5 for day tickets and £21 for weeklies making travel more affordable and open to all.

# Strengths

## **LET'S Principle: A Strengths-based approach**

Our vision is for a place in which people are helped to make the best of themselves, by recognising and building on the strengths not deficits of all our children, families and our communities and taking an evidence-led understanding of risk and impact to ensure the right intervention at the right time. We will do this by:

- Really listening to understand each other and our shared potential
- Being flexible and putting our energies into where we can make the most positive difference; asking 'what matters to you?'
- Being open to trying new things and doing things differently
- Valuing the skills, strengths and successes of individuals and communities

Against a difficult year in terms of balancing demand and delivery, the Council has achieved many of the objectives set out the Corporate Plan, building on our strengths of a committed workforce and supportive partnership environment. Some examples of building on our strengths are included below however it is right to acknowledge that none of this would have been achieved without the support of our **Award Winning Voluntary and Community Sector!**

As a Council we are incredibly proud of our award winning voluntary sector. In 2022 five local organisations won the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service were given a mayoral reception at Bury Town Hall. Equivalent to an MBE, QAVS are the highest awards given to local voluntary groups in the UK, and they are awarded for life. Corrie Gardeners, Greater Manchester Army Cadet Force (Hawkshaw), The Attic Project, Bury2gether and Rammy Men have also won the award. Every day of the week, organisations like these are supporting people at neighbourhood level. A recent survey estimates that there are more than 26,000 people in our borough who volunteer a total of 130,000 hours per week, and they deserve all our thanks.

# Strengths

## LET'S in Action: Strengths: Armed Forces Covenant

At the end of last year Bury Council received a Gold award in the Defence Employer Recognition Scheme. The highest level achievable, the award is in recognition of the Council being a signatory of the Armed Forces Covenant and demonstrating its commitment to supporting military veterans and reservists in society and in employment with the Council. This includes:

- Recognising military veterans as a protected characteristic and giving this group the same as those for all protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010;
- Marking events and raising awareness relating to military veterans and reservists throughout the year, including the recent Gallipoli commemorations;
- Providing special leave for our colleagues who are reservists to attend military training;
- A commitment to holding open the job of colleagues who are reservists and have been called up to serve in military action;
- Working with the armed forces career transition partnership to advertise our vacant roles with military veterans due to leave military service;
- Offering a guaranteed interview to military veterans who meet the full essential criteria for roles they apply for;
- Providing a Veterans and Cadet Community fund to support intergenerational activity and Armed Forces week activity.

The Council also paid tribute to beloved armed forces campaigner, Colonel Eric Davidson, renaming a street in Hawkshaw in his name.

## Further Examples of our Strengths Principle in Action

### Building Community Capacity

Bury Council has continued to meet its commitment through the Greater Manchester Voluntary and Community Sector Accord, investing in Bury's voluntary sector and recognising the sector as a central partner to the delivery of LET's Do It. Work with the Bury Voluntary and Community Faith Alliance has included the Sustain programme with foodbanks, pantries and clubs, to increase partnership working and resilience and activity to enhance volunteering opportunities.

Over the past 12 months investment by and through the Council has included over £600k being awarded to voluntary, community and social enterprise groups across the Borough – from activity to support cost of living pressures, to promoting healthy lifestyles, community safety initiatives and activity to increase digital inclusion.

### New Mental Health Resources for Children and Young People

Listening to our children and young people it is clear that many are struggling with their mental

health and wellbeing post Covid-19. This has been one of the top issues identified by our Youth Cabinet and through our Childrens Voice Projects. In March 2023 NHS GM and Bury Council worked with our young people to launch Thriving in Bury, a new mental health campaign based on the creation of a children and young people's mental health service directory. The directory has been developed with children and young people to help them find the best ways to support their emotional health and wellbeing. As part of our Public Sector Reform work our schools, colleges and wider support services have wrapped around this service with the aim of providing early help to reduce the number of referral through to specialist care and support meaning children get support sooner and in a format that they are comfortable with.

### Bury Running Festival

In October 2023, Run for all and Bury Council once again organised and hosted successfully the Bury 10K and the Mini and Junior runs to raise thousands of pounds for local and national charities. The event will return in September 2024



# Strengths

with the Bury Mini and Junior runs sponsored by Xerox Business Solutions offering 150 free entries to local schools in Bury. The festival is all about inclusivity, building confidence and having a great day out with family and friends.

## **Building on our success as Town of Culture**

In a year-long celebration of local initiatives funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to expand the Culture Strategy of Bury series of cultural events involving and encouraging local artistic talents took place in Bury 2023 and are to continue in 2024. In 2023, events such as launch of Bury's Culture Strategy, Burrs Live and Winter Festival Parade took place where families as a whole had opportunity to take part in various activities. Beginning of 2024 marked the LGBT history month and Many Hands Parade (below). Storytelling Festival took place in many schools. Cultural grants (up to £10,000) have been awarded to organisations and individuals to run cultural events across the borough, working with Bury's Voluntary Community and Faith Alliance (VCFA).

## **Many Hands Parade**



In March 2024, a vibrant parade celebrating the power of communication took place at The Rock, Bury. Many Hands is working in partnership with Bury Council and funded by the UKSPF (UK Government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund) to invest in local communities to unlock extra opportunities for people to get involved in arts, culture and local heritage in Bury. The professionals collaborated with Bury community groups, including MAD theatre and Elms Bank School to formulate this.

## **LET'S ... Live Well!**

The launch of our Health Improvement Fund demonstrated our commitment to build on the strengths of our VCSE to make a difference to the health and wellbeing.

In total, 114 groups supported over 12,000 people to increase physical activity levels, tackle social isolation and support people with long term health conditions. Nearly 4,000 people were supported in the most deprived areas of Bury.

## **Increasing Workforce Representation**

Bury has received funding from NHS GM as the lead organisation for a two year project focused on developing a more inclusive public service workforce. This project includes four GM boroughs in a cross-organisational mutual mentoring programme and work to strengthen the way organisations attract staff informed directly by community engagement. In addition, Bury is leading wider work across GM to strengthen workforce inclusion which is just commencing and has received around a £0.4m financial commitment from the GMCA to support.

## Summary and Next Steps

As reflected in the introduction to this document, the Council is hugely ambitious for its residents and the future of our children but operates in a very challenging context. In addition to the financial challenge set out above and the increases in demand, we also face additional regulatory demands through Ofsted for Children's Services, Education and Adult Learning, the Care Quality Commission for Adult Social Care and a new Regulatory Framework for Social Housing.

The Council's children's services remain in intervention from Ofsted and Department for Education. The delivery of improvement plans for children's services will continue to be a major area of focus, including improvement of services to children who have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) and progression of the "Project Safety Valve" plan for recovery of a significant financial deficit on the Dedicated Schools Grant High Needs Block. The sub regional operating context creates some opportunities, however. The GM Integrated Care Board (ICB) operating model has the potential to better manage demand through the ongoing integration of health and care services. The Places for Everyone framework provides access to significant housing and industrial land to support growth within the borough, including Northern Gateway - once of the biggest industrial sites in the UK, which has also been designated an Investment Zone and should attract additional funding and fiscal flexibilities.

In their report back to the Council the Local Government Association Peer Review Team recognised that the borough of Bury is changing and that the Council's focus on inclusive growth and reducing inequality is well recognised by those inside and outside. The ambitious delivery programme behind the LET'S Do It! Vision was endorsed, but a range of recommendations made to ensure that the ambitions of the Council and wider Partnership are delivered through appropriate resource, resilience and relentless focus.

Previous Corporate Plans have attempted to identify the many priorities that must be addressed within this complex operating environment. Further reflections on our outcome data and delivery show the need to retain a focus on our core ambitions and ensure that we even more targeted in our work and support to communities. On this basis, three core strategic priorities for 2024-25 are proposed, delivery of which will also secure financial stability. The priorities overlay the "business as usual" departmental functions which are described separately in service planning documents.

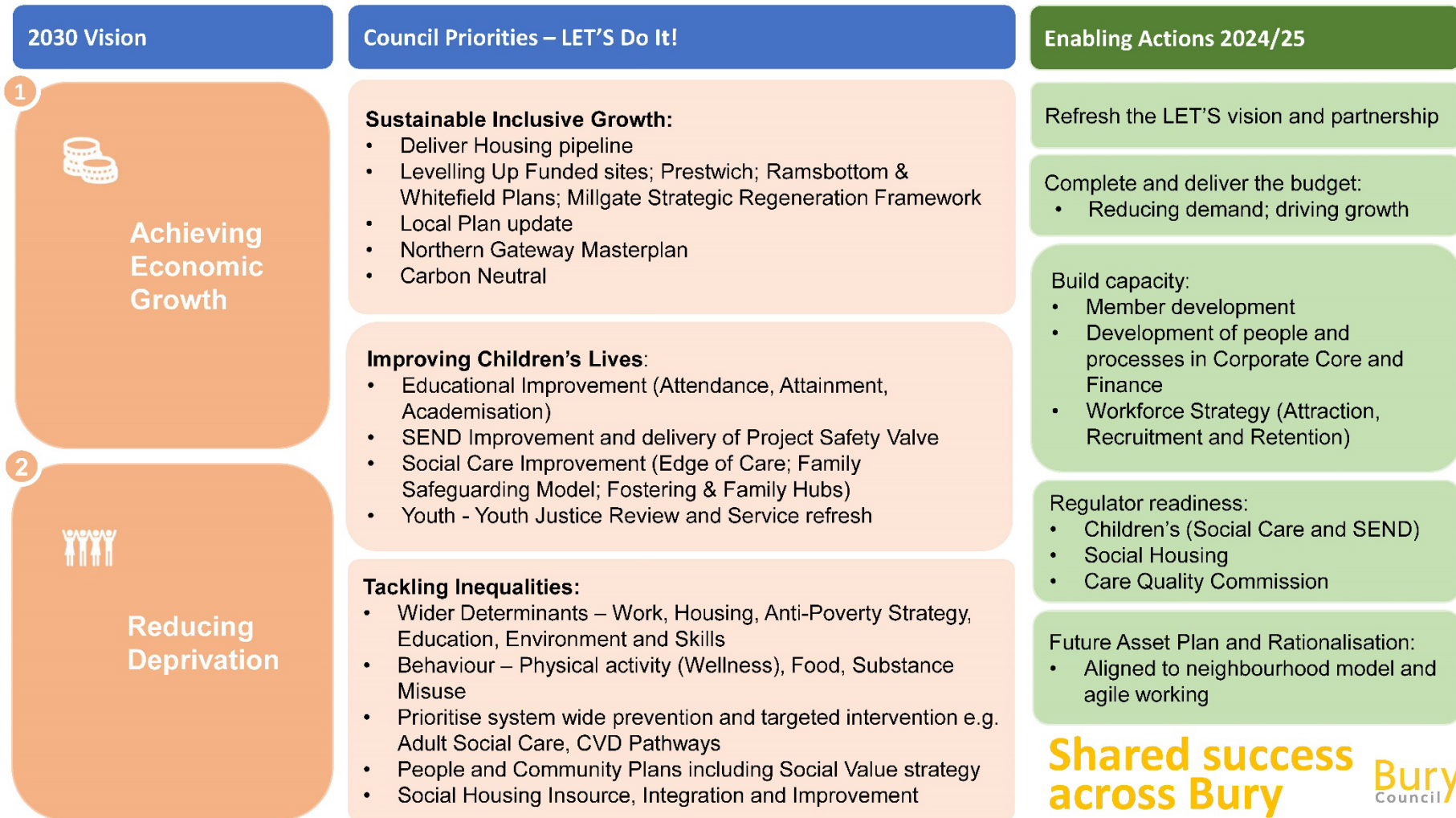
The core priorities are defined as follows:

- Sustainable Inclusive Growth – Further delivery of sustainable housing, the levelling up programmes, strategic regeneration along with the Local Plan, Northern Gateway Masterplan and our continued commitment to carbon neutrality.
- Improving Children's Lives – This priority details Educational Improvement including the three A's (Attainment, Attendance and Academisation) and the continued delivery of the SEND and Social Care improvement plans as well as a review of the Youth Justice service.
- Tackling Inequalities – Since the pandemic our inequalities have widened and therefore this continues to be a key priority in 2024-25 including a review of the wider determinants of health: work, housing anti-poverty, tackling behaviours that lead to poor outcomes, system wide prevention and targeted interventions within our neighbourhoods.

A summary of the 2024-25 Corporate Plan is provided below.

## Corporate Plan 2024-2025

The Corporate Plan for 2024-2025 is linked to the key objectives in the LET'S 2030 Vision: Achieving Economic Growth and Reducing Deprivation. The three priorities (summary below) over the next year are Sustainable Inclusive Growth, Improving Children's Lives and Tackling Inequalities.



**Shared success across Bury** 

**Bury**  
Council