


Meeting:	The Council
Meeting date:	17 July 2024
Title of report:	Leader's Report
	
Report by:	Leader of the Council
Decision type:	Non key decision
Ward(s) to which the report relates:	All
Summary:	To provide a summary of the work of the Cabinet and update on progress against the corporate plan. The information in the report will aid the statement from the Leader of the Council.

Executive Summary

To provide a summary of the work of the Cabinet and update on progress against the corporate plan.

Recommendations:

Members of Council are asked to note the content of the report.



Council Leader's Report

Councillor Eamonn O'Brien

2024

Bury
Council

As this is my first Leaders report of this municipal year, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome all new and returning Members.

Following the calling of a snap general election and subsequent Labour victory, I look forward to working with the Labour Prime Minister and Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham in delivering locally, the Labour Manifesto pledges.



Since the last Council meeting, Councillors have gathered to commemorate the **80th anniversary of D-Day** with a series of poignant events. The commemorations paid tribute to the bravery and sacrifice of those who participated in the historic World War II operation. Among the honourees was Lance Corporal Fred Greenhalgh, a distinguished veteran whose contributions were highlighted during the ceremonies.

In addition, Ramsbottom enthusiastically welcomed some of the world's top women cyclists for the prestigious **Tour of Britain** competition; the Borough celebrated **Bury Pride 2024** and lit up the town with a spectacular celebration of diversity and inclusion. The event, spearheaded by founding member Cllr. Walmsley, brought together thousands of attendees to honour the LGBTQ+ community.



At the July Cabinet meeting, Members of the Executive considered 14 reports covering a wide range of issues, illustrating the huge amount of progress we've made as a Council over the last 12 months, proving that we can continue to improve core services while also delivering on our long-term ambitions.

One such report is the Quarter Four Corporate Plan Performance Report which provides details of the full year performance and delivery monitoring report up for the **Corporate Plan for 2023/24**. It contains updates against the delivery of the priorities set out in the Plan and associated key performance indicators.

- **Corporate Plan for 2023/24**

The Corporate Plan for 2023/24 set out nine priorities, with three key objectives to reflect the ambition of the organisation and acknowledgement of the targeted work required to continue to deliver the Council's contribution to the LET's vision.

The three key priorities are:

- Sustainable Inclusive Growth
- Improving Children's Lives
- Tackling Inequalities

At year end it is clear, a significant amount of work has been undertaken to achieve the targets set out in the plan.

Progress against the Top Three Priorities:

1. TACKLING INEQUALITIES:

A key priority for me as Leader and the Labour Cabinet has been the development of the **Bury Cost of Living and Anti-Poverty Strategy**. As part of the strategy, food and fuel support was provided to approximately 7000 residents and 400 vulnerable residents received a winter pack to help keep warm.

The provision of energy efficient measures to homes in Bury under the **Energy Company Obligation (ECO)** phase funding has delivered measures to 91 properties which is saving each household an average of £567 per year and saving an estimated 372.5 tonnes of carbon in addition.

Working with Bury Adult Learning, a **Learner Support Fund** has been established, which helps learners on qualification courses experiencing financial hardship to stay in education. The fund can be used to help with course costs, exam fees, childcare costs and travel costs.

2. IMPROVING CHILDREN'S LIVES

Under the direction of the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Councillor Lucy Smith, activity for the year has focused on delivery the Children's Improvement Plan including increasing the recruitment of social workers, changing the model of social care to the more holistic Family Safeguarding process, further developing the Borough's Early Years and Early Help offer whilst ensuring that the Council meets the requirements of Ofsted for return review visits.



In terms of **Educational Improvement**, work on the new Radcliffe High School has commenced.

Contractors have demolished the existing structures of the former leisure centre and Pupil Referral Unit, and has prepared the site ready to receive modular accommodation that will enable the school to open on the 1st September. The modular units are now

being delivered to site and will be ready mid-August to enable Star to set out the accommodation in readiness for the pupils.

It is pleasing to note that the school is due to admit up to its admission capacity of 150 places, with some applicants being unsuccessful.

With regards to **Special Educational Needs**, activity has been focused on service improvement, preparation for the new Ofsted SEND inspection framework and the delivery of Project Safety Valve in conjunction with the Department for Education. .

A key priority for the Labour Cabinet, is the delivery of a new **SEMH Secondary Special School** in conjunction with Oak Learning Partnership. Following on from the opening of Brookhaven special school in January 2024; these are important steps in increasing sufficiency for children with special needs within the borough. The scheme will be funded and delivered through the DfE Free School Programme with the Council being required to make a modest Capital contribution towards site remediation costs.

A site has been identified at Redvales Playing Fields at the junction of Manchester Road and Radcliffe Road. The DfE has commissioned detailed feasibility studies into the potential construction of the new school on the Redvales site. These have now been concluded and the results are anticipated soon, following the general election result.

In terms of improving the **standard of schools and education in 2023/24**, the increase in the percentage of good or better schools (Primary and Secondary) in Bury has slowly risen throughout the year from 71.2% to 78.8%.

3. ACHIEVING INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH

A key priority for me as Leader of the Council is the delivery of the “**levelling-up**” sites within the borough, the Town Centre Plans and the launch of the Economic Development Strategy and accelerated growth plans.



In collaboration with Councillor Charlotte Morris we have led the development of the **Economic Development Strategy** for Bury and this was published at the beginning of 2024 and set out a ten year framework to guide a collaborative approach to delivering a sustainable, competitive, inclusive and resilient local economy.

I was also delighted to attend the first **Bury Regeneration Expo** which welcomed business leaders, investors and stakeholders in Ramsbottom to discuss how Bury will be transformed over the next decade and beyond.

In February 2024, overseen by Councillor Cummins, Cabinet Member for Housing Bury Council completed the **in-sourcing of the Housing Services**, bring over 7,000 homes back under the direct management of the Local Authority. Work has continued at pace to improve the standard of accommodation and ensure tenant safety within the context of the new Social Housing Regulations, introduced on the 1st April 2024.



The **Prestwich Village Regeneration Scheme** will deliver attractive public realm alongside housing, civic, retail and leisure benefits at scale. Extensive progress has been made on the development and implementation of the Prestwich Village Regeneration Scheme. The development is currently at RIBA Design Stage 3 and has completed detailed consultation with local

residents. A Hybrid Planning Application for the project will be considered at the Planning Committee of 23rd of July.

The project team is now ready to deliver Phase 1A of the scheme which will provide a Travel Hub off Fairfax Road. This will facilitate the re-development of Rectory Lane Car Park and the wider regeneration of the site.

Work continues on **Bury Market and the development of the Flexi Hall**. To achieve the development of the Flexi Hall an initial period of Enabling Works and preparatory works are required to be undertaken in sufficient time to ensure the construction site is ready for development delivery (which is the Main Works package). The initial period of Enabling Works will commence during August 2024 and continue until May 2025, and in doing so will overlap with the start of the Main Works package that is due to commence on site during October 2024.

In addition at the June Cabinet meeting, Cabinet resolved to tender for the construction works required for the conversion of **Radcliffe Library into an Enterprise Centre** as part of the GM's UKSPF (UK Shared Prosperity Fund) SME (Small and Medium Size Enterprises) Workspace Fund (E22). In addition in Radcliffe the local housing pipeline is on track and developers have started on site for the construction of 600 new homes.



To support local communities with digital reforms, recruitment of a new **Digital Inclusion** and Engagement Officer took place in February 2024. The role will aim to work on bringing together digital inclusion strategy in Bury and creating a platform for community groups, local businesses and residents to access and signpost to digital support and upskilling resources.

In Conclusion, Members of Council, Bury Council has achieved several notable milestones since the last Full Council meeting, these achievements reflect Bury Council's dedication to supporting its community through economic, social and infrastructure initiatives.