

<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>The Council</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>11<sup>th</sup> September 2024</b>
<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Leader's Report</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Leader of the Council</b>
<b>Decision type:</b>	<b>Non key decision</b>
<b>Ward(s) to which the report relates:</b>	All
<b>Summary:</b>	To provide a summary of the work of the Cabinet and update on progress against the corporate plan.



### **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

Can I begin by welcoming all Members back following the Summer Recess, I hope the break provided an opportunity to relax and recharge in one of our 13-award winning green flag parks or visit and enjoy the recently opened play area in Summerseat.

Before and during the recess we have been engaged in several critical growth projects:

Following completion of early demolition and enabling works, the Radcliffe Hub and Market Chambers project completed foundation and piling works, sinking 469 augered piles, preparing the ground to receive the steel frame for the Hub building this week (w/c 9<sup>th</sup>

Sept). Significant structural and weather-proofing works have also been completed in the Market Chambers building in addition to works to the Market basement. This has included structural and repair works alongside activity to extend the space. Our contractor, Vinci has

also established a Community Skills Centre to provide young people (18-24) with construction skills and health & safety training in a classroom and site based environment. Vinci are keen to use this centre to introduce young people to employment via its supply chain. This activity will continue for the life of the project and is linked to the Radcliffe Goals initiative already on-going at the Football Club.



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The UK Shared Prosperity Funded (UKSPF) Radcliffe Pocket Park has been fully designed and will be tendered this week. This project has been developed in consultation with the local community and has been used as a training initiative by officers to develop trainee staff members. The works will begin in October (in line with planting and nesting season) and be completed by January next year.

The Council has now let a construction contract to deliver the Bury Flexi Hall and Market project and mobilisation activity will begin over the next few months, starting with utility diversions. The demolition activity will begin in November following the movement of the Admiral Casio operation to the Mill Gate Shopping Centre. It is a great success to see this incredibly complex project moving into a construction phase and the Council has overcome numerous difficult operational and design challenges to get to this stage.

The Prestwich Village Regeneration project completed a significant milestone in July when the team secured a Planning Permission to deliver the first phase of the project via a unanimous decision at Planning Committee. Officers will return to Cabinet later in the year for permission to deliver the Travel Hub element of the project once final designs are completed (RIBA 4).

Significant progress has also been made in terms of housing, with contractors now on site at Green Street and School Street (Radcliffe) and Seedfield (Bury) See below. These developments alone, will provide over 300 homes on former Council owned brownfield land, 140 of which will be affordable.





Since the last Council meeting, the Council have agreed to a £20 million investment in the refurbishment of Bury's Housing stock. Over the next year, hundreds of Bury Council homes will receive new and upgraded kitchens, bathrooms and windows. The planned improvements include:

- 565 homes will get replacement windows, doors, pointing and lintels.
- 138 will have replacement kitchens, bathrooms or heating fitted.
- 386 homes will get replacement roofing.
- 326 will see improvements to communal areas.
- 314 homes will have carbon reduction measures installed

In addition, Ramsbottom will be the home of the latest 3G all weather football pitch, the £1.4 million project is at Top Park Playing Fields, and will include improvements to the pavilion and car park. Bury Council is putting £425,000 behind the scheme, with around £1 million coming from the Football Foundation.

As Leader I wish to place on record my thanks to colleagues who worked as part of the GM Team to deal with the recent unrest witnessed throughout August, across the country, following the incident in Southport. I am pleased that we did not experience any issues in Bury. As Leader I am proud of our diverse and multicultural Borough. This multiculturalism, diversity and inclusion was highlighted recently at Burrs Country Park as residents gathered to celebrate the Bury Mela.

In addition, myself, Councillor Walmsley and other Councillors were pleased to show their support for the Pakistani and Ukrainian communities with their attendance at the Pakistan and Ukraine Flag raising events held in August.

And finally, I was delighted to see the first Pupils arrive at the newly opened Star Academy in Radcliffe.

**Work of the Council's Cabinet in addressing the three key Priority areas for the Council:**

At the September Cabinet meeting, Members of the Executive considered 16 reports covering a wide range of issues, illustrating the huge amount of progress we've made as a Council over the last 12 months.

The Council's 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

### **Progress against the Top Three Priorities:**

#### **1. TACKLING INEQUALITIES:**

Following a previously undertaken tendering exercise, Members agreed to award Adullam Homes a four-year contract for **supported accommodation**. Calico Homes has been selected for their outstanding floating support offer. Their comprehensive support system and proactive engagement with service users will ensure that individuals receive the necessary assistance to maintain their independence and well-being. It should be noted that this service will also be tenure neutral, meaning it will work with residents in social housing, private rented accommodation and also those that have mortgages or are owner occupiers. Also, this service will deliver much needed provision for older people in sheltered accommodation and those in the community.

Both Adullam Homes and Calico Homes have a proven track record of delivering excellent services, and we are confident that their expertise will contribute significantly to the success of our housing-related services. We look forward to working closely with them to achieve our shared goals and improve the lives of those we serve.

Bury Council have recently reviewed the **Housing Allocations Policy** this work has been undertaken to meet local needs and to maximise the use of Council Housing stock to meet increasing demands. The Policy highlights and recognises the Council's commitments to its Looked After Children.

Work has also been undertaken to secure and promote a new local credit union (Hoot) to work with local people and groups, to support them with their financial planning e.g. savings, affordable loans etc. This has been promoted through all partners. Adult Learning have also played a pivotal role in offering incentivised tailored courses to support those in work who are experiencing hardship, these courses include money management, managing on a budget, basic maths/finances and healthy eating on a budget - these have been promoted through local employers. 65% of learners who attended the courses were from priority areas (i.e. the most deprived areas).

In addition, an investment plan for the Health Visitor service signed off by Northern Care Alliance has agreed to the recruitment of 1 additional clinical lead and 4.76 health visitors, this will make a big contribution to our partnership ambition around SEND.

## **2. IMPROVING CHILDREN'S LIVES**

Lead by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, Councillor Smith, **the Councils support to Looked after children** has been further enhanced with the development of a Corporate Parenting Strategy. The strategy includes key strategic priorities

- i. Supporting engagement and achievement in education, training, and employment.
- ii. Ensuring that our children in care and care leavers have stable and secure homes and sufficient support.
- iii. Listening and responding to the voice of our children, young people, and care leavers.
- iv. Ensuring that our children, young people, and care leavers are healthy and are supported in the physical and emotional wellbeing.
- v. Developing a Highly Effective Care Leavers Partnership.

Following the local area SEND inspection, Cabinet have agreed to additional capacity in the SEND service as well as a co-produced SEND priority impact plan, Member agreed additional training for existing and newly recruited staff. In addition, future reviews of the education psychology service, outreach and sensory support services and SEND transport.

Work to specifically target children in Bury living in poverty, steps taken, have included:

- Utilising the family hub to identify vulnerable families to share key information about national and local support
- Promoting the uptake of the Healthy Start Vouchers (now at 69% up from 62% in Jan 23)
- Working with the Public Service Leadership Teams (PSLT) to identify ways in which children/families living in poverty can be identified and supported at place level
- Ensure there is provision to support families around the purchase of school uniform
- Providing free childcare provision for parents signing up to adult learning courses

## **3. ACHIEVING INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH**

Members agreed at September's Cabinet further additions to the Accelerated Land and Property Disposals Programme (ALPD). The wider disposals programme (including ALPD) has achieved capital receipts of £1,168,900 in 2022/2023 and £7,929,635 in 2023/2024. As part of the wider disposal programme the Brownfield Land programme has brought forward sites for residential development with affordable housing to the borough.

There are several sites at various stages of disposal with Capital receipts expected in years 2024-2026.

- Former William Kemp Heaton site, Bury – 43 affordable homes (all social rented) - see Cabinet Report 18/11/2021
- Former Millwood site, Fletcher Fold Road, Bury – 43 affordable homes (all social rented) - subject to planning - see Cabinet Report 16/11/2022
- The Elms – circa 24 affordable homes (subject to planning) - see Cabinet report 13/03/2024
- Pyramid Park, Bury – circa 148 homes (24 affordable) - subject to planning - see Cabinet Report 15/03/2023
- Humphrey House – build to rent scheme (subject to planning) - see Cabinet Report 01/09/2021
- Former Police station, Irwell Street, Bury – extra care scheme (subject to planning) - see Cabinet Report 07/06/2023

**Spurr House**, Pole Lane, Unsworth was a site used as a short stay residential building which was shut in October 2021.

The property is now surplus to the Council's requirements and the Council seeks to dispose of the property thereby eliminating all ongoing holding costs and generating a capital receipt for the Council.

I am also pleased to share updates on the number of events hosted in Bury to showcase good quality jobs available locally as well as courses which can support residents to improve their skills and general employability.

A work and wellbeing event was hosted in July and August at the Bury Adult Learning Centre, In July, 17 partners had a stand there, 59 people attended the event, 35 discussions about future job opportunities took place and 137 meetings were arranged with partners to support individuals after the event.

Finally, the GM work progression programme is due to be rolled out in Bury in October. This is a service to specifically support residents of Bury who are in work and within a low-income household and aims to help them progress into more skilled / better paid work or increase their hours of work. The programme will help to overcome practical and skills barriers, increase confidence and provide specialist information on how they can develop skills for different employment sectors and job opportunities.

**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.