


Meeting:	The Council
Meeting date:	13 th November 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.

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



As it is this November's Leaders report to Council it is appropriate to begin by focusing on Armistice Day and the work being undertaken across the Borough to support our Military veterans.



On Sunday 29th September I was honoured to be present at the dedication service of the new Royal British Legion Standard for the Radcliffe branch at the Parish Church of St. Thomas and St. John in Radcliffe. The Legion provide lifelong support to the Armed Forces Community all year round, but it is timely that the Standard service took place just before the beginning of the Remembrance period and Poppy Appeal.

My thanks to Cllr Ken Simpson and all those involved in leading the revival of the Radcliffe branch and hope this continues to provide valued support within our Borough. The branch provides support for local Veterans and those connected to the forces.



I'd also like to extend thanks to Mr Rod Lloyd. Rod has been instrumental to Remembrance activity in Bury, particularly through the Poppy Appeal. Having been the trusted right hand man of the late and much missed Col. Eric Davidson, Rod's stellar work in co-ordinating the campaign, in, what one

veteran describes as 'infectious passion' is a testament to him and on behalf of the Council I would like to thank Rod, and his wife Janice, for all their work.

As the Borough comes together to remember the fallen over Remembrance Sunday and Armistice day, it is important that to not confine remembrance and recognition to one time of year, and the work of the Bury Armed Forces Covenant continues to see the Council work alongside Armed Forces personnel and local Veterans groups to shape local policies, increase awareness and training of support, targeted engagement and recognition – which will include a focus on the 80th anniversary of VE and VJ Day next year alongside plans being developed to build on the annual Armed Forces week in June.



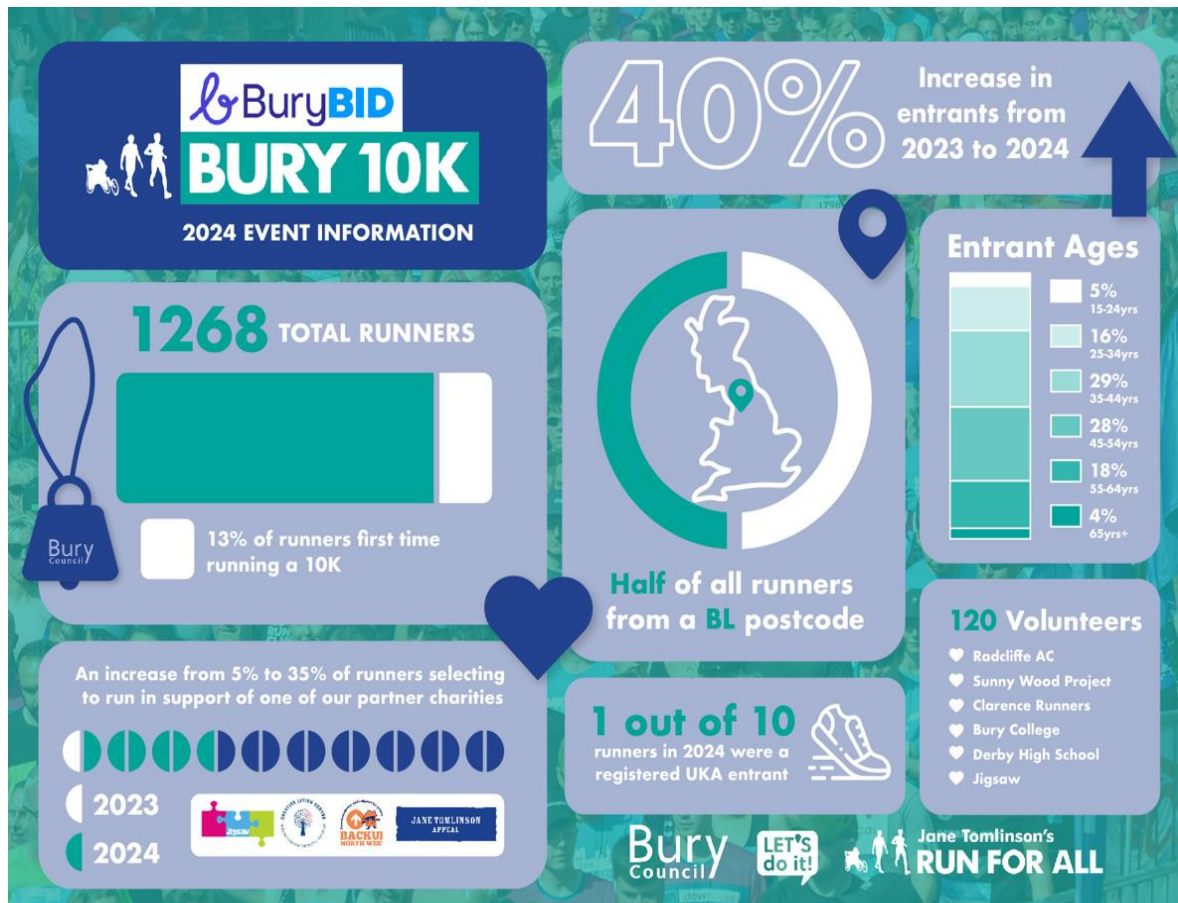
I was delighted to attend the annual Persona Awards with Persona staff and senior leaders of the Council. The annual awards are linked to Persona's values. There is also an award for someone who embodies all of the values as well as a Special Recognition Award which this year was focussed on those who have made a difference by enabling others. This award supports the strengths based ethos of the Lets Do It strategy. Winners included Grundy Hub and members of the Supported Living, Extra Care and Ageing in Place teams. A number of team members were also recognised for completing the Rising Stars career progression program.

At November Cabinet Councillor Walmsley will present the Councils Social Value Strategy, whereby the local authority will forge closer relationships with partners and contractors to put more emphasis on engaging local businesses and delivering economic, community and environmental benefits. The council spends more than £100 million a year through its contracts. Maximising the social value of this spend presents a great opportunity to bring about truly inclusive economic growth and support local businesses and communities to create a strong sense of place we can all be proud of. A key initial area of focus for us will be how we use Social Value to support our role as corporate parents. A good example of this is **Radcliffe Community Skills Centre** delivered by VINCI as a Social Value contribution to the Radcliffe Hub works. It provides an opportunity for young people aged 16-24 not in employment, education or training to learn new skills and gain a Level 1 Award in a construction trade. Some 24 trainees are expected to be supported by January 2025.

I was also delighted to invite the Local Government Organisation's Peer Review Team back during October and pleased to receive positive feedback on our work since their visit last December. An updated action plan will be shared with Council by the end of November.

In addition, the Children's Services Directorate welcomed Ofsted inspectors on 31st October and 1st November. At the time of writing this report, the Council still awaits the outcome, but as soon as it's available this will be shared with Elected Members and stakeholders.

And finally, can I congratulate all those involved in the Bury 10k run and in particular those that competed, including the Chief Executive, Councillors and the Deputy Leader. The amount raised for charities this year was £21,697.55 I was pleased to finish the race in 1 hour and 15 minutes - watch out Los Angeles 2028!!



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

Following the last Council meeting, myself and the Cabinet members together with the Executive team undertook to spend a day touring the Borough.

Despite unfavourable weather conditions, together we visited the supported living accommodation at St. Mary's Place; a wonderful new scheme that provides accommodation for young people aged 18-25 with autism. As well as the old fire station site on the Rock; Ramsbottom town centre, and the proposed Northern Gateway site; Baguley Crescent in Middleton and Whitefield library. Finishing off at the Radcliffe Hub and the new Secondary school, Star Academy, and Elton Reservoir.

Thanks must also go to staff and service users at Bury Employment Support & Training (B.E.S.T). at the Welly Café for providing lunch. The visit provided an invaluable opportunity to see the Council's Corporate Plan in action with a particular focus on:

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



Work undertaken since the last Council meeting on the three priorities:

1. IMPROVING CHILDREN'S LIVES

At the September Cabinet meeting Councillor O'Brien, Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth reported that Bury Council is committed to delivering a new special school, working in collaboration with the Department for Education (DfE) and **Oak Learning Partnership**. The scheme will be funded and delivered through the Department for Education Free School Programme with the Council being required to make a modest Capital contribution towards site remediation costs.



Councillor Smith was delighted to attend the launch of the **Bury Carers Leavers Hub**. The centre provides a venue for young people leaving care. The Hub has been designed with young people and hosts education, health, emotional wellbeing support and our Care Leavers Forum.

An extension to the New Kershaw Centre temporary **Pupil Referral Unit (PRU)** is now complete and was handed over to the school on the 28th of October. Local residents were extremely helpful and understanding during the construction works and we are very grateful for their support. The creation of the temporary PRU at Whittaker St is moving through the planning process at present, and demolition activity to facilitate its construction is now complete. The team have also begun work this month on the development of a children's hub facility at Chesham Fold.



As part of my corporate safeguarding accountability role, I meet with Councillor Smith together with the Chief Executive, the Executive Director Children's Services and the Head of Bury Safeguarding Partnership to consider our safeguarding arrangements for children in Bury, both as a Council and across our wider partnership to ensure I have oversight of our safeguarding arrangements.

I've been pleased to see some **Bury's safeguarding** of the safeguarding work in action recently, including

partnership, who held a week of action promoted by **ICON**, a national charity dedicated to stopping abusive head trauma, which can happen when a baby is shaken – and crying is often a trigger.

Colleagues across the Bury Safeguarding Partnership were out and about on Bury market talking to people about what can happen when a baby is shaken.

Bury Town Hall was also lit up during the week, and there was a social media campaign to raise awareness of this important topic – with over 700k people seeing the information, with ICON reporting a significant increase in traffic to their website.

All of this work supports the partnership’s priority to keep babies safe.



2. ACHIEVING INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH

The **Radcliffe Hub** project continues to move forward at pace, with foundation and steel frame works now nearing completion. The scheme is in its 50th week and is already making a significant change to the skyline in Radcliffe. This is complemented by works to the Green Street Housing project on the former leisure centre site, which topped out last month. Works to market chambers in Radcliffe are progressing very well, with demolition works completed and sensitive improvements to the historic building well advanced. Activity to promote construction skills for the local community have been carried out with contractor Vincci and a number of young people have now found employment through this route, including some of our care leavers. This activity will continue over the construction period and will be expanded further once the Flexi Hall project begins.



Residents will have seen that we are now forming the contractor site offices and welfare facilities in Bury, ready to start mobilisation and demolition activity – paving the way for the **Bury Flexi Hall and Market Canopy project**. Works will start before the end of the year – although the team have already completed numerous utility diversions and other preparatory work. This includes gas diversion works to Angouleme way. We apologise for the inconvenience this caused to motorists, but this activity is nearly complete.

After securing a successful hybrid planning application for the site, work will shortly begin on the early phases of **development at Prestwich** which will include a Travel Hub. The team are currently finalising required legal and final design elements/surveys. This work progresses alongside significant activity being undertaken by the Council to acquire required grant funding to deliver future phases of development in line with the agreed plans.

The **Mill Gate Shopping Centre** continues to trade well and footfall remains very good, and is higher than pre-pandemic levels. This bodes very well for the sustainability of the asset in the long term. Following approval by Members of the Mill Gate Regeneration Framework, joint venture partners have now completed detailed business planning and development phasing work, laying the groundwork for the regeneration and improvement of the asset.

Activity on Brownfield Housing development is moving forward at pace with housing at **School Street and Green Street in Radcliffe** progressing well, in addition to

works at Seedfield. The team are also progressing large strategic sites in Elton and Walshaw alongside land-owners and other stakeholders.

In addition Councillor Morris, Cabinet Member for Culture, Economy has led on the work to the **Bury Art Museum** roof which needs a large capital programme to repair



The Council bid for a grant from the Arts Council MEND Fund and was successfully awarded £589,545 to which the Council have approved a matched amount of £65,505 The Council will need to enter into a deed of covenant with the Arts Council guaranteeing the building will remain as an Arts Museum

for a further period of 15 years.

3. Tackling Health Inequalities



On Monday 4th November the Council facilitated the 4th **cost of living summit** at Radcliffe Football Club with the aim of understanding progress on anti-poverty – and how we work collectively to prevent poverty and help people out of it. Attendees include Bury Council's elected members and officers, other public service leaders, voluntary organisations, and other community groups representatives.

As Leader of the Council, I am only too well aware that life has become harder for many of our residents because of the cost-of-living crisis the summit provided an

opportunity to hear from a number of different speakers including, Public Health Specialist Dr Beenish Hanif.

Dr Hanif's assessment is that Bury's anti-poverty strategy demonstrates strong leadership and effective coordination, addressing immediate, medium, and long-term poverty challenges.

In addition supported by Councillor Tariq the Council have **developed a winter well information and support pack**. These packs will help to support older people's health and wellbeing during the winter period and will include hats, scarves, draft excluders, and information on immunisations and staying healthy

I also want to place on record my thanks to Officers that have led the development of a refreshed drug and alcohol local plans. These plans will ensure those who experience the greatest inequalities get the help and support they need.

Following on from the success of the Bury 10k run the Council have also refreshed its physical activity strategy based on a number of workshops - with the focus now being on how we get groups the least active more active and reduce health inequalities.

On the 29th October I was delighted to attend **Prestwich Social prescribing** facility. It was great to see first hand the benefits of social prescribing, realising improvements in the lives of residents and reductions in the pressures on Primary Care.

Councillor Walmsley has also led on the development of the **inclusion strategy**. The Strategy will enable everyone in Bury to benefit from future prosperity and life chances it aims to ensure people have good and equal access to housing, health services, jobs, education, and support across a wide range of services.

The strategy delivers on the council's obligations to people in line with the Equality Act and also recognises the specific needs of Forces veterans, care leavers, carers, and those in poverty, although ultimately the policy is designed to benefit all Bury residents to share in the borough's success.

As part of our work in Greater Manchester, approved proposals have been submitted for an updated **Clean Air Plan** to government for review. Latest air quality data has shown improvements on local roads across the city-region and the preferred plan would mean that there would be no charges for any vehicle driven on a road in the city-region. This plan would also include investment in new buses and a fund to help taxi drivers upgrade their vehicles. Modelling shows the plan would meet a legal requirement to improve air quality by 2026 at the latest, rather than in 2025, as stated in GM's 2023 submission to government.



At the beginning of October, I welcomed, along with GMCA Mayor Andy Burnham, the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions Liz Kendall on her visit to Salford. We met her at Loaves and Fishes – a Salford charity which has helped inspire the idea of a “Live Well” service. Together with the Mayor we have asked government to hand control of running the job centres to the region.

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.