

COUNCIL MEETING

2 April 2014

LEADER'S STATEMENT

Madam Mayor, Members and Officers of the Council, there has been only one meeting of the Cabinet since the last meeting of the Council.

Mayoralty 2015-16

The Cabinet were pleased to endorse the nomination of Cllr Michelle Wiseman to be our next Mayor. It's my pleasure to congratulate Cllr Michelle Wiseman who will be our next Mayor.

LGA Peer Challenge

The Cabinet received the final report from the LGA Challenge which took place last November.

As I have said before Bury is a well run Council and all Members I am sure are pleased to see this position roundly endorsed by an external body such as the LGA.

Elms Bank

Having visited Elms Bank last year with the Chief Executive I was doubly delighted to see that funding has been secured for much needed additional teaching accommodation.

Council Tax freeze/investment in Prestwich/funding for housing improvements

I just wanted to re-enforce the key messages from the 2014-15 budget.

Clearly the decision to freeze the Council Tax is the biggest commitment by the Council to support hard working families struggling to cope with the ongoing cost of living crisis. This coupled with the loss of revenue amounting to around £460 per household is being felt right across the Borough.

The £500,000 investment we announced along the A56 corridor will be good news not only for Prestwich but for road users who travel along this major route. We will also be fighting hard to increase this figure by using it as match funding to lever in other external investment.

The announcement of additional funding over the next three years of £34m to meet the Bury Standard in our Council Houses is a formal and sincere commitment to improve not only the building stock but also the quality of life for our Tenants.

Madam Mayor on other matters,

Bury FC Sponsorship

Members will have noted that the new owners of the football club announced late last year there would be new sponsors in place for the start of the new football season 2015-16.

As a result, Bury Council's two year sponsorship with the Club which was due to run out at the end of the season is also ending. There will be no further financial support going into the Club.

As a Council, we remain fully committed to working in partnership with the Club, like we have since we stepped in to save the Club in 2001 and the next 13 years directly supporting the Club.

I want to place on record my thanks to all the officers of the Council; Directors, staff (past and present) of the Football Club; staff and volunteers of the Football Community Trust and supporter from Forever Bury who have made the partnership so successful and moving the Club to become a truly community focused organisation.

Digital Inclusion conference

I was delighted to be able to speak 'virtually' at the recent Digital inclusion conference where nearly 100 people came together to look at how the Council can make access to the internet easier for those members of our community that are currently excluded.

Madam Mayor as no less a person than the First Lady of the United States said, access to the internet and all the benefits this brings is now almost a human right, and we are determined to make these benefits as widely available as possible.

Positive article in Councillor magazine re corporate debt

Continuing with the theme of the Council working hard to help people, I was also delighted to read the recent article in the C'llr magazine which showcased the superb work being led by Cllr John Smith to help people who face increasing problem of debt.

Tackling poverty is one of Team Bury's top priorities and this work, which builds on the welfare reform work that the Council is leading on, is already making a positive difference to people's lives as shown by the case study set out in the article. My thanks go to all concerned.

Bury Flu Pilot

Primary school children in Bury have been among the first in the country to be offered the new nasal flu vaccine to children aged 4-11.

The pilot scheme tested the logistics of giving the vaccine to a large number of children in a school setting. The results are helping to inform a planned roll-out to all children aged 2-16 over the coming years as part of the national seasonal flu programme.

Over 10,500 primary school children were vaccinated through the programme. The vaccine not only protected those children against flu this winter but also helped to reduce the spread of the virus to many other people including family and friends. It is estimated that, with this level of vaccination uptake, around 30 deaths per year could be prevented

Due to the success of the primary school pilot, Bury was also invited to be the first pilot site in the country to offer the nasal flu vaccine to secondary school children. Pupils at Tottington High School were given the opportunity to self-administer the nasal vaccine, under the supervision of a nurse. A total of 515 pupils were vaccinated against flu at the school.

Adult Services - Modernisation

- 1. Phase 1 of the Elmhurst refurbishment** is complete and open for use. The refurbishment is to a hotel standard and the look and feel has received many compliments from customers, families and professionals who describe it as being like a boutique style hotel. Demand has been high for the available beds with their full en-suite facilities.

This is the first time we have been able to offer couples the option to stay in the same room and already the room has been used for this purpose. Other features include a cinema area, hairdressing salon and an internet use area. I hope we see many more of these developments in the coming years.

2. Transfer of Seedfield Physical Disability day

service - we have been successful in transferring the day service from its previous base at Seedfield to a new base at Castle Leisure centre. The service has been renamed Re-start. Existing customers have been successfully transferred to a much improved environment where they are already making the most of the opportunities to engage in leisure activities, use the library and get out and about in Bury.

3. Day services (Learning disability) - due to the continued modernisation of this service away from large day centres to smaller community based settings over 80% of customers are now supported within 3 miles of their home.

This means that they can travel more easily to the bases and are maintained within their community so that they increase their confidence in accessing the local area more independently.

Progress with Radcliffe redevelopment

Positive progress continues to be made with the redevelopment of Radcliffe.

The temporary market is now in place and work will begin on the Market Hall improvements in early April.

The planning application for the new bus station has been submitted and will be considered in April. Current indications are that the pressure that we have applied to TfGM for match funding has been positive and I am hopeful in securing this funding which will allow us to provide the high quality facility that the people of Radcliffe deserve.

Beer and Bingo

Madam Mayor, I spoke earlier about the 2014-15 budget but I could not let the recent announcement by the Chancellor warning of yet more savage cuts to public spending over the next few years. I guess we will wait, with trepidation, for the next tranche of cuts to hit local government this coming December.

Despite all these severe and unrelenting cuts to public spending, its heartening to hear that George Osborne and Tory Chairman Grant Shapps have found some crumbs of comfort for the hardworking people of Britain.

Yes folks, the cost of beer and bingo are coming down! So, the everyone can cheer themselves as they ponder the massive drop in their living standards and do more of the things they enjoy. Once again we see the nasty party simply patronising hard working people and being out of touch like their obsession with the Bedroom Tax and of course the now infamous pasty tax from the 2013 budget which was quietly dropped.

Madam Mayor that concludes my statement.

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