


Meeting:	The Council
Meeting date:	13th January 2025
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.



Welcome back I hope you all enjoyed a happy and restful Christmas break. As we reconvene following the Christmas period, it is an opportune moment to reflect on the successes of the past year, address ongoing challenges, and outline priorities for the year ahead. As Leader I will continue, throughout 2025 to work towards delivering positive outcomes for the Borough's residents, ensuring inclusive growth, community well-being, and sustainability.

Key Achievements in 2024

1. Housing and Regeneration

- Continued progress on regeneration projects across Prestwich, Radcliffe, and other areas of the borough, aimed at boosting local economies and creating vibrant community spaces.

2. Economic Development

- Investment in skills development through partnerships with local businesses and educational institutions, fostering job creation and workforce readiness.

3. Public Services and Infrastructure

- Strengthening public services, including healthcare, education, and transport networks, to meet the evolving needs of Bury's diverse population.

- Collaboration with the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) to address broader regional priorities, such as clean air and technical education.

4. Improvements in Children's services

Bury Council welcomed back inspectors from Ofsted in the Autumn, inspectors commented that services for Bury's most vulnerable young people are continuing to improve, and that Bury is making progress in ensuring that children are being helped and protected at the earliest opportunity. They looked at specific areas of practice: from early help to referrals, child protection investigations, child in need assessments, the management of allegations of abuse against adults who work with children, and how concerns are handled outside office hours.

5. Relaunch of the new lets strategy.

Lead by the Council's Cabinet, work is ongoing with partners and networks to refresh LET'S Do It. A Team Bury Partnership session held at the Fusiliers Museum in late November, recognising the achievements over the past five years, alongside familiar and new challenges, but also new opportunities.

The refresh will reaffirm the principles of LETS and restate commitment and ambition of the LETS vision which focuses on reducing inequality through focusing work in neighbourhoods, working innovatively and building from our strengths to come together as communities.

In addition, the LET'S Do It Challenge was shortlisted in the 2024 Public Sector People Managers' Awards Best Workforce Transformation and Change category recognising the innovative way that we have engaged over 1,500 staff across the Council in understanding LET'S and how they can bring it to life in their day-to-day roles.

6. And finally, thank you

As the cold weather continues I would like to thank all those hard working staff who have worked tirelessly over the last weeks dealing with flooding, ice and snow, as well as those who assisted in keeping vulnerable residents safe, thank you.

In addition, I would like to thank colleagues right across the health and care system in Bury for their hard work individually and collectively in maintain urgent care services over the festive period. There were some periods of particular challenge in Bury as there have been nationally, but overall, the Bury system coped very well. This is in part down to the quality of partnership in the health and care system – limiting unnecessary admissions to A&E, facilitating discharges more quickly, supporting primary care with the surge hub and respiratory hub, and working closely with a range of other partners including the hospice, Bardoc, Pennine Care and of course our own adults and children's services, and others. We know that there will be continuing pressure throughout the rest of winter but for now it's important we recognize the work of colleagues on the front line of the health and care system

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

I as Leader together with my Cabinet remain committed as we enter a new year to ensuring that we remain focused on the three priorities:

1.IMPROVING CHILDREN'S LIVES



Councillor Lucy Smith led the Cabinet representation at the annual Believe and Achieve awards night which celebrates the achievements of our cared for children and care experienced young people; recognising their achievements in education, sport, creativity and the support they have given their community. Commenting Councillor Smith stated: "It is always a privilege to attend the annual awards ceremony, a hugely important event in our calendar". Some 150 children and young people were nominated across seven award categories, and there were 15 winners.



Under the Leadership of the Council's Cabinet, the fostering service is preparing to launch the second Mockingbird constellation, a key part of the Council's strategy to increase the number of foster carers looking after our children. The success of the first constellation was evident at a recent fostering event when carers in the constellation spoke to other carers about their experiences. One lady said she did not know what she would have done without the hub carer, and others spoke about being able to speak to someone outside office hours

In addition, prior to Christmas, the service arranged its first Family Hub Christmas drop in offer with a range of family help staff, early years, and partner agencies to provide support and advice to our families over the Christmas period, including accessing food parcels and Christmas presents.

At the December meeting of the Cabinet, Councillor Lucy Smith presented a reported seeking approval for the Council to sign up to the Care Leaver Covenant (CLC). CLC work with more than 500 organisations to connect young people with care experience to exclusive opportunities. By becoming a partner of the CLC, Bury Council will join 92 other unitary local authorities in demonstrating their commitment to care experienced young people.

In December, the DfE visited for their first stocktake of the progress being made by the local area following the inspection of services for children with identified SEND. The meeting was attended by senior officers from across the entire partnership of local agencies, together with the independent chair of the SEND improvement Board and representatives from Bury2Gether. The DfE welcomed the rounded self-assessment, which acknowledged areas where good progress has been made and recognised areas where progress has not been as rapid as we would have wished. The overall sense from the meeting was that the DfE felt that good progress had been made in Bury through the first six months of the improvement plan, while recognising the scale of the challenge in delivering substantially improved services and outcomes for children with SEND and their families. The session recognised the need to move from system revision, build and design to delivery and tangible impact during 2025.

In addition, NHS partners have been recognised by external regulators as playing a full part in the improvement programme for children's services in the council, and also a full part in the SEND partnership response to the CQC/Ofsted SEND inspection last year.

2. ACHIEVING INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH

Work on the Radcliffe regeneration continues at pace, at Stand Lane, Radcliffe Library has relocated to the upper floor, ready for construction of the new Enterprise Centre which will offer flexible working space, meeting rooms and business support services. In the town centre, the Radcliffe Hub project has come on leaps and bounds with much of the structural work already well progressed including; excavations and works continue to create the basement areas; work on the steel frame for the roof and the front of the building; works to start on the roof over the pool area.

Pouring for concrete slab has started on the Radcliffe Market and basement and the Market Chambers and the link building, preparation works have commenced to create the steel frame for the link building will begin as well as works to start on improving the staircases to the basements of the Market Chambers shop unit.

As Leader I am very proud to see our ambitious plans for Radcliffe are beginning to fall into place for all to see, evidencing the real progress being made towards bringing new services, homes and facilities into the heart of the town.

In addition, Councillor Alan Quinn welcomed the announcement of works joint funded by the Council, the national lottery and the Heritage fund for Whitehead Gardens Tottington. Plans for the site include making improvements to access and pathways, installing new seating areas, tree works, wildflower planting, wall repairs and improving drainage. A big part of the project involves also involves bringing the staged area within the gardens back into community use. The work on site will begin in Spring 2025 and is expected to be completed by Spring 2026.



The Council working with neighbouring Councils and the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government Community Ownership Fund awarded East Lancashire Railway just more than £1m towards the work. The three local authorities from Bury, Rochdale and Rossendale putting in a further £276,000 in match funding and supporters of the railway with members of the public and local businesses - adding a few thousand pounds more.

The Bury-based heritage railway has been awarded more than £1.3 million in grants to carry out urgent repair work to the Higher Woodhill Viaduct, on the edge of Burrs Country Park.

The stunning viaduct in the Irwell Valley goes past the site of the former Higher Woodhill Mill. Amazingly, its last repairs were carried out in 1932. The essential maintenance works are due to start on the structure in the spring.

During 2024, Bury Council invited Community Interest Company Proffitts – Investing in Communities to **help** on a project to improve Prestwich Clough and St Mary's Flower Park in Prestwich. The full improvement works, funded by both Bury Council through the Capital Programme and Veolia Environmental Trust, have included footpath and access improvements, drainage works, replacing damaged and missing fencing, and installing more seating and signage.

Lead by Councillor Alan Quinn, Cabinet member for the environment, climate change and operations, Councillor Quinn wanted to ensure that Prestwich Clough and St Mary's Flower Park continue to be beautiful spaces, and he is thrilled that the Council have been able to make some of the changes needed to keep the sites safe, and welcoming, to visitors. Ans commented that he wanted to make sure that “we manage the area where we can so nature can thrive in spaces like this, and we want to give the communities close by wonderful, outdoor spaces that they can reach and explore easily, and that they can spend lots of time in”.

At December Cabinet I had great delight in presenting a Cabinet report to seek approval for the Prestwich Regeneration LLP (the Joint Venture company) to appoint the main contractor for the main works for the delivery of Phase 1A Travel Hub of the Prestwich Village Regeneration Scheme. This scheme will now continue to progress at pace and I look forward to presenting further updates to the Council throughout 2025.

3.TACKLING HEALTH INEQUALITIES

The Cabinet and the wider CSP meeting and Scrutiny members continue to work on shaping new Community Safety Strategy recognising wider determinants of keeping people safe from harm. In December, Bury welcomed a delegation of representatives from South Korea who were keen to learn on Bury's Purple Flag success in terms of a thriving, vibrant and safe evening and night time economy, testament to strong partnership working between the Council, GMP, licenced premises and cultural venues, Bury BID and organisations such as the Street Pastors.



Councillor Thorpe, Cabinet Member attended a recently held Pension Credit session in the Millgate this was one of many sessions are held across Bury to advise people on Pension Credits and helping them to apply if they qualify. Drop ins sessions have taken place at Ramsbottom library, Prestwich Library, Bury Library, Outreach Centre Radcliffe, Your Space @ Our Place (Millgate) and Green Community Café at Clarence Park .

In addition, around 450 **winter warmer packs** for those most in need have been produced and distributed across the Borough. Each year Bury Council's public health team works with a range of partners to create a Winter Well programme of work. The programme promotes advice on self-care during the winter months and is an opportunity to

increase referrals to other services. Winter Well tackles a range of issues such as the cost of living, heating and fuel, food and nutrition, mental wellbeing, physical health, and vaccinations.



Bury Adult Learning hosted a Reverse Job Fair on 29th November, inviting employers and local businesses to connect with learners. Councillor Charlotte Morris, cabinet member for culture, economy and skills, said: “Adult Learning provide such a wonderful resource for anyone looking to increase their skills and develop themselves. In Bury, we offer a wide range of courses and support employment opportunities. This reverse job fair is one

of many amazing examples of how our adult learning team support our learners to achieve their goals.

Various employers such as Thales Ltd-a cyber security multinational company, Willmott Dixon-a Construction company, Rochdale Valley Radio, Persona, West Pennie Care, various council departments, Ingeus, and Bury VCFA will come to chat with learners described as neurodivergent about work and volunteering opportunities.



Councillor Tamoor Tariq, cabinet member for health and wellbeing, launched the Bury Works well service, commenting he stated “Bury Works is committed to supporting its residents through challenges and ensuring that individuals can thrive both in their health and in their careers. “The WorkWell service is here to provide the tools, guidance, and support you need to take that next step towards a healthier, more fulfilling life.”The WorkWell programme, launched by the Department for Work and

Pensions (DWP) and the Department for Health and Social Care (DHSC), is the latest initiative from Bury Works, the single access point for all enquiries regarding employability, work, health and skills in Bury.

The health and care system continues to transform and improve outcomes for Bury patients. The locality board meeting on 6th December included a review of 2024 and very many examples excellent practice and reform ,including regional and national awards for programmes and individuals in Bury. These include the roll out of my happy mind - a programme focused on wellbeing, resilience and understanding of mental health, improvements in the operation of the urgent care system, historically good performance on health checks in primary care for learning disabilities, huge numbers of additional patients seen in primary care, and new and innovative services such as the early phases of work on implementation the England women’s health strategy.

Also together, with the Cabinet Member, Councillor Tariq, place on record my thanks for all the excellent work ongoing in Primary Care in particular the establishment of Women's Health Hub in Prestwich in October 2024 as well as the establishment of 4 Respiratory Hubs in November 2024. Other great works has included:

- ◆ 34% increase in CVD health checks in this year compared to 2023.
- ◆ Increase in staying well referrals since April 2024 which has increased from circa 90 per month to 182 in October 2024. This means that 182 patients will have proactive care planning in place to reduce the risk of needing primary care or hospital support.
- ◆ 5000 more GP appointments in the last 12 months compared to the year prior.

And finally, **LET's Value Volunteering**

LET's Value Volunteering grants, funded by Bury Council were launched in the autumn which voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations could apply for grants of up to £250, utilising a proportion of the £100k LET's Do It Community funding available in year from the Council, with the remainder to be through a neighbourhood process aligned to the LETS Refresh from January 2025. 68 groups have been successful and activities are ongoing through those groups to recognise and thank their volunteers.

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. As we enter 2025, Bury Council is well-positioned to build on the progress achieved.