

Minutes of: **Cabinet**

Date of Meeting: 11 June 2025

Present: Councillor E O'Brien (in the Chair)
 Councillors S Thorpe, L Smith, T Tariq, S Walmsley, A Quinn,
 C Cummins and R Gold

Also in attendance: Councillors R Bernstein and M Smith
 Lynne Ridsdale, Jacqui Dennis, Roger Frith, Sarah Porru,
 Robert Summerfield, Sian Grant, Adrian Crook, Neil Kissock,
 Kate Waterhouse, Will Blandamer, Alexander Burchell, Chloe
 Ashworth

Public Attendance: 5 members of the public were present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence: Councillor C Morris

CA.363 Apologies for Absence

Apologies were received from Councillor Morris

CA.364 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

CA.365 Public Question Time

The following question was submitted in advance of the meeting by a member of the public, Alex Abbey:

Too high a concentration of HMOs in any one area is a bad thing in respects of increased crime, social cohesion, litter and parking issues. Would councillors consider a Salford style scheme where HMOs can only make up 10% residential properties within a 100 metre radius including small HMOs that Bury council don't even currently register? I would plead with those that don't currently think this is an issue, to act before it becomes one.

Responding, Councillor O'Brien acknowledged the importance of the issue and noted that while national planning policies must be followed, the Local Plan allows for local guidance. He emphasised the council's desire to maintain a balanced housing mix in Bury and confirmed that restrictions are necessary.

Councillor O'Brien referenced Salford's approach but stated that Bury intends to go further, proposing a 100-metre threshold rather than 50 metres. He cautioned against labelling all HMOs as problematic but confirmed that the draft Local Plan is taking the issue seriously and aims to provide more flexibility at the local level.

Alex Abbey asked a supplementary question asking if smaller HMO's of less than 5 residents will be considered in future decisions.

Councillor O'Brien advised Regarding smaller HMOs (those with fewer than five residents) and acknowledged the difficulty in forming a planning policy without accurate data. While only one HMO was officially registered in a particular area, residents reported six or seven. The draft Local Plan will explore registering smaller HMOs to better understand and manage their impact. He reiterated the need to remain compliant with national planning frameworks while addressing local concerns.

In addition, three additional members of the public attended and asked questions of the Cabinet.

Daniel Jacobs asked whether the Leader could confirm if the Council had obtained a Section 123 exemption from the Secretary of State to sell the Pinfold Lane Library site for less than best consideration, or whether the Council was asserting that the price agreed represented the highest achievable value for the site.

In response, the Leader referred the question to the Council's Monitoring Officer, Jacqui Dennis. Ms. Dennis explained that Section 123 of the Local Government Act 1972 requires local authorities to obtain the best consideration reasonably obtainable when disposing of land. She clarified that a general consent, which acts as an exemption, is only necessary if best value is not achieved. In this case, the Council had examined the matter in detail, obtained independent legal advice from Counsel, and secured an independent valuation of the site. Based on this, the Council was satisfied that it had met its duty under Section 123 and had achieved the best consideration reasonably obtainable. Therefore, it was not necessary to seek a general consent, although the transaction may have qualified for one. The Council strongly believed that the requirements of Section 123 had been fully discharged.

The Leader added that in making decisions of this nature, the Council must always consider what constitutes best value for residents. While in some cases this means maximising the capital receipt, in others it involves weighing broader strategic priorities. In the case of the Pinfold Lane site, the Council considered how the land could support the ambitions of the Whitefield Town Plan and meet the needs of NHS colleagues. The Uplands Medical Centre, which the NHS currently uses, is not fit for purpose, with parts of the building condemned and others requiring significant capital investment. The Council took into account the independent valuation of the site and the potential for the sale to contribute to the delivery of the Whitefield Town Plan and improved NHS services. The Leader stated that he believed the Council had followed the appropriate procedures, achieved fair market value, and delivered a positive outcome for the residents of Whitefield. He acknowledged that other interested parties may be disappointed with the outcome but stood by the decision as being in the best interests of the borough and the Whitefield community.

Ryan Sidle asked the Leader to clarify how the Council defines the term "1 to 1 basis," noting that it appeared frequently in internal correspondence disclosed under the Freedom of Information Act but lacked a clear public explanation. He suggested that a formal definition would help improve transparency in asset discussions.

The Leader invited Roger Frith, Head of Land and Property, to respond. Mr. Frith explained that the term "1 to 1 basis" is used in two main contexts. One relates to internal staff meetings, and the other refers to direct land sales to individuals, supported by an independent Red Book valuation. These transactions typically involve

local residents seeking to purchase garden plots or businesses wishing to expand into adjacent land. Each case is assessed individually and must be justified by an independent valuation.

In response to a follow-up question from Mr. Sidle, Mr. Frith confirmed that the “1 to 1” refers to the party purchasing the land, not the valuer, who is always independent.

Rebecca Partridge asked the Leader to confirm whether all competitive offers for the Pinfold Lane site were formally logged, considered, and shared with Cabinet prior to the agreement of the sale price. If not, she asked why this had not occurred.

The Leader responded that as part of the disposal process, all offers and expressions of interest are received by the Land and Property Team. For strategic sites such as Pinfold Lane, these are taken into account when final decisions are made. However, Cabinet does not oversee the procurement process itself; rather, it receives the outcomes and recommendations from officers. The Leader emphasised that officers are responsible for advising Cabinet on the best course of action, and that other bids and considerations are factored into that advice.

Ms. Partridge asked whether a representative from the relevant department could provide further clarification. Roger Frith confirmed that while there had been a number of expressions of interest in the site over the years, no formal offers had been submitted prior to February 2025.

Finally, it was asked whether the deal had been completed. The Leader confirmed that Cabinet had accepted the recommendation to dispose of the site as outlined in the February 2025 Cabinet Report, and that the Council was currently awaiting final sign-off from the NHS to complete the sale.

CA.366 Member Question Time

There were no Member questions.

CA.367 Minutes

It was agreed:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 16th April 2025 be approved as a correct record.

CA.368 Adult Social Care Performance Quarter Four Report 2024/25

The Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Health and Public Service Reform presented the Quarter 4 report for 2024–25 from the Adult Social Care Department. The report provided an update on the delivery of the Adult Social Care Strategic Plan, outlined preparations for the forthcoming Care Quality Commission (CQC) assessment regime for local authorities, and included a summary of the department’s performance framework.

Councillor Bernstein queried the reported 4.9% rise in residential care costs, which was attributed to changes in NHS processes. He asked whether this increase was likely to have significant financial implications for the Council.

Adrian Crook, Director of Adult Social Care, responded that any rise in demand is a concern, as it inevitably results in additional costs. To mitigate the financial impact of increased demand, the department is focusing on expanding its intermediate care services. The recent rise in demand has been prompted by changes in hospital discharge pathways. In response, the Council has undertaken significant work within the hospital setting to reduce patient deconditioning, which is already showing positive results.

Mr. Crook highlighted that the Council's collaborative approach had been recognised with a Health Service Journal award. He noted that, according to several key metrics, the flow of older people through Bury's hospital system—particularly through the improvement plan titled "Getting It Right First Time"—has been exemplary, with Fairfield Hospital ranking as a top performer. The overarching aim remains to support older people to maintain their independence for as long as possible and to ensure effective patient flow through intermediate care services. This approach is intended to reduce reliance on long-term residential care and help manage financial pressures on the adult social care system.

Decision:

The Cabinet:

1. Noted the report.

Reasons for the decision:

Not applicable

Alternative options considered and rejected:

None

CA.369 Bury Flexi Hall - Operator Procurement

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth presented a report providing an update on the progress made to date in procuring a third-party operator for the Bury Flexi Hall. The report also sought Cabinet's approval to commence the formal procurement process to appoint an operator.

The Leader noted that the canopy structure for the Flexi Hall is now taking shape, marking a visible milestone in the project's development. It was confirmed that the procurement process is progressing well, and it is anticipated that a contract award recommendation will be brought back to Cabinet later in the year.

Councillor Mike Smith raised a query regarding the status of Radcliffe Market, noting that it had not yet progressed to a formal register of interest stage.

In response, the Leader acknowledged the point and explained that there are some challenges associated with the Radcliffe Market process. One potential reason for the

slower progress is that the operation planned for Radcliffe is more straightforward in nature, which may have influenced the pace of development. He added that he would speak with Councillor Morris to provide an update specifically for Radcliffe First members. Some of the delay may also be attributed to capacity issues, but the Leader expressed continued confidence in the project and confirmed that an update would be provided at the next regeneration meeting.

Councillor Quinn commented on the importance of building a strong customer base for the market and highlighted the need to consider infrastructure improvements, to ensure that children and families can safely access the Flexi Hall area.

The Leader concluded that good progress is being made and that the selection of an operator represents a positive step forward for the project.

Decision:

The Cabinet:

1. Note the progress made to date on the procurement of a third party operator for Bury Flexi Hall.
2. Grant approval to commence the formal procurement process to appoint a third-party operator for the Bury Flexi Hall.

Reasons for the decision:

To allow the Council to progress the procurement of a third party operator for Bury Flexi Hall to ensure we have an operator on board in a timely manner

Alternative options considered and rejected:

Not to commence the procurement process and Bury Council operate and manage the facility directly. This option has been discounted due to lack of internal capacity and experience of operating modern food and entertainment facilities.

CA.370 Parking Standards in Bury Supplementary Planning Document-Consultation Draft

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth presented a report outlining the results of the public consultation on the draft Parking Standards in Bury Supplementary Planning Document (SPD11). The report sought Cabinet's approval for the final version of the document to be formally adopted.

Councillor Mike Smith raised a question regarding parking provision for the Radcliffe Hub. He noted that parking remains a significant issue and asked whether there had been substantial consideration or discussion around both short-term and long-term parking solutions for the site.

In response, Robert Summerfield, Assistant Director of Regeneration Delivery, confirmed that the Council is actively reviewing and modelling the parking requirements for the Radcliffe Hub. He stated that once the relevant data and modelling outcomes are available, this information will be shared with elected members.

Decision:

The Cabinet:

1. Note the responses to the public consultation and the proposed post-consultation revisions.
2. Approved the revised Supplementary Planning Document as the final version to be adopted and published.
3. Delegated authority to the Executive Director (Place), to make any minor non-material editorial amendments to the Supplementary Planning Document ahead of its final publication.

Reasons for the decision:

Supplementary Planning Document 11 provides recommended guidelines for parking provision for new development. The aim of the Supplementary Planning Document is to ensure that an appropriate level of well-designed vehicle and cycle parking is provided in all new developments. The document will give more comprehensive guidance on the types of parking that should and should not be provided.

The adoption of the document will ensure that all relevant planning applications are considered against up-to-date procedures, legislation and national planning policy.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

No other options were considered or were applicable.

CA.371 Adult Social Care Workforce Support Programme

The Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Health and Public Service Reform presented a report seeking approval to award a three-year contract to the Council's Local Authority Trading Company, Persona. The contract will be awarded via a vertical arrangement (formerly known as a Teckal exemption), which allows the Council to proceed without a full competitive tender under the new Procurement Regulations.

Councillor Bernstein asked whether the funding requirement for the contract would decrease over the three-year period.

Councillor Tariq confirmed that the funding requirement does decrease over the term of the contract. He added that Persona remains highly committed to delivering quality services and continues to set an exemplary standard in its operations.

Decision:

The Cabinet:

1. Approved the award of a 3-year contract to Persona under a vertical procurement arrangement for the delivery of Bury Council Adult Social Care Workforce Support Programme for total cost of £1,089,000.

Reasons for the decision:

Persona is the Council's Local Authority Trading Company for Adult Social Care. It has its own workforce of 450 and over the years has developed core strengths in social care workforce management which have been recognised within Bury and Greater Manchester. Persona was the first adult social care provider to become a Member of the Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter and has won awards with Greater Manchester Good Employment Charter for best large employer and best for inclusion. Persona has a strong reputation for workforce management and creative approaches to recruitment. Its position as a strategic partner to the Council puts it in a unique position to play an extended role in supporting the Council in its wider strategic aims. As a partner in the Integrated Delivery Collaborative Board, Persona has a remit to work as a system partner to share best practice and expertise for the benefit of Bury.

Persona can deliver the current service, with additional support measures for providers on top, at a reduced cost compared to the current contract. This provides best value for money for the Local Authority.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

A full re-tender of the service was considered but the proposal made by Persona was competitively priced and delivered a greater level of support to providers so a re-tender was not sought.

CA.372 Year End Corporate Plan Performance & Delivery Report and Launch of 2025/26 Corporate Plan

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation presented a report outlining the Council's strategic priorities and delivery objectives for the financial year. The report also set out the Council's role in delivering the overarching vision of the borough's LET'S Do It! Strategy.

Councillor Bernstein welcomed the clarity provided by the report, particularly following discussions at Overview and Scrutiny. He expressed appreciation for the identified priorities but suggested that an additional priority should be considered in relation to community cohesion. He noted that inequality is often the root cause of challenges to community cohesion and highlighted the importance of reviving multifaith and community engagement work. Councillor Bernstein emphasised the need for the Council to play a proactive role in bringing communities together.

Decision:

The Cabinet:

1. Noted the year end position on progress against the Corporate Plan 2024/25.
2. Approved the draft Corporate Plan for 2025/26.

Reasons for the decision:

To enable transparency and robust monitoring of performance and delivery of the Corporate Plan.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

Not applicable.

CA.373 EOTAS (Education other than at School) Policy

The Deputy Leader, and Cabinet Member for Children and Young People presented the report which set out the SEND Inspection Report, Local Area SEND Partnership Priority Impact Plan and the Education other than at School Policy.

Decision:

The Cabinet:

1. noted the Area Special Educational Needs/Disabilities Inspection Report and the Local Area Special Educational Needs/Disabilities Partnership Priority Impact Plan
2. noted the Education other than at School Policy and approved the Policy for publication on the local offer and for local implementation.

Reasons for the decision:

The policy has been developed considering legal requirements and co-produced with the parents and carers whom children and young people have an identified EOTAS arrangement and amended based upon their recommendation.

The policy has been considered and approved by the SEND & Improvement Assurance Board (SIAB).

Alternative options considered and rejected:

An EOTAS policy is required as part of the SEND Improvement Plan. There is not an alternative to publishing a policy,

CA.374 Local Growth and Place Flexible Grant (formerly UKSPF Y4)

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth presented a report providing an update on the Greater Manchester UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) for Years 1–3 and the extension of this funding under the newly titled Local Growth and Place Flexible Grant (LGPFG) programme. The report included details of Bury's grant allocation and outlined the next steps in the programme's delivery.

The Leader reported that Bury had been allocated £1.7 million through the LGPFG programme. This funding will be used to implement changes across the borough, building on lessons learned from the previous three years of the UKSPF. The focus will be on delivering more impactful outcomes for local communities. While specific details of the programme will become clearer as the process develops, it is hoped that over the next year, residents will begin to feel the positive impact of the investment.

Councillor Quinn declared an interest regarding this item due to his involvement as a member of the Prestwich Carnival Committee and raised the importance of supporting local events.

Councillor O'Brien acknowledged that one of the key challenges facing community events such as carnivals is the rising cost of delivery. He emphasised that while the process cannot be pre-empted, the principle of using the fund to unlock the value of community engagement and economic growth would be well received.

Councillor Gold supported this view, highlighting that events like carnivals play a vital role in bringing communities together. It was noted that costs such as insurance have increased significantly, placing additional pressure on organisers.

Councillor Mike Smith referred to the funding allocated for the Radcliffe Enterprise Centre and sought clarification on whether funding remains available.

The Leader confirmed and reiterated that the LGPFG programme represents a positive opportunity for the borough and that further updates will be provided as the programme progresses.

Decision:

The Cabinet:

1. Noted the update and the allocations for the Local Growth and Place Flexible Grant Funding.

Reasons for the decision:

Not applicable.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

Not applicable.

CA.375 Radcliffe Enterprise Centre, approval to procure an operator.

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth presented a report providing an update on the proposed conversion of the ground floor of Radcliffe Library into an Enterprise Centre. The report also sought Cabinet's approval to proceed with the procurement of an operator to manage the facility.

Councillor M. Smith sought assurances regarding the long-term success of the Enterprise Centre and asked whether the Council was confident in the viability of the project.

In response, Councillor O'Brien stated that with the right operator in place, the Enterprise Centre has strong potential to succeed. He emphasised that the Council's first principle is to ensure that its buildings are actively used for civic purposes that support sustainable and inclusive growth. The intention is to make the best possible use of public assets to deliver long-term benefits for the community. Councillor O'Brien expressed confidence that, with the appropriate operator, the facility would serve the borough well into the future and become a valuable civic resource.

Decision:

The Cabinet:

Approve the procurement of an operator for the Enterprise Centre is granted which should be before the construction is completed in November 2025. However, further approval will be sought on appointment of the successful operator and the terms agreed before entering into any formal agreement. 3. Approve the operator taking on responsibility for managing the facility as a commercial entity as well as dealing with maintenance of the building. The operator will also be required to deliver a programme of business support from the centre with the aim of supporting the business community across Bury.

Reasons for the decision:

Not applicable

Alternative options considered and rejected:

None

CA.376 Housing Services Property Restructure

The Cabinet Member for Housing Services presented the report which set out proposed changes to housing functions including the permanent addition of several key roles within service. The changes will ensure the service is able to deliver improved services to tenants, ensure tenants' homes are safe and well maintained and that the Council meets the requirements of the Regulator for Social Housing's (RSH) Safety and Quality Standard.

Councillor Bernstein raised a question regarding the financial implications of the proposed changes. He asked, in the context of a return to zero-based budgeting, how confident the service was in its ability to achieve a significant level of efficiencies.

Sian Grant, Director of Housing, responded that the service had undertaken a review of the repairs function and was actively identifying areas where efficiencies could be made. She confirmed that the service is committed to delivering value for money while ensuring compliance with regulatory standards and maintaining high-quality outcomes for tenants.

Decision:

The Cabinet:

1. Approved the additional full-year costs of £979,527 from the HRA for the proposed structures as set out in the body of this report.
2. Approved the proposed structures outlined in the report for the repairs, building safety and asset management structures as a basis for a 30 day consultation with Trade Unions and affected staff.

Reasons for the decision:

To support the delivery of efficient and effective property services to Bury Council tenants, ensure our council homes remain safe and well maintained and to ensure we meet the requirements of the RSH's Safety and Quality Standard.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

To maintain the current structures. This is not a viable option, the current structures are interim structures which are staffed with either permanent staff TUPE transferred from Six Town Housing in interim roles or are interim agency staff. This is leading to a high level of uncertainty within the affected teams. In the case of the both the asset management structure and the building safety structure the structures are not fully staffed and this is impacting the ability to deliver core housing services to tenants.

CA.377 Bury Town Hall Refurbishment- Architect Appointment

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth presented the report which sought budget approval to recruit a project manager /construction manager to oversee all aspects of the project from its inception to completion.

The Leader expressed his satisfaction that the appointed architect, Ellis Williams, a local firm with a strong track record of delivering projects in the area. and Councillor Thorpe noted their commitment to social value and suggested that they could help set a standard for supporting care leavers through employment or training opportunities. The Leader confirmed that the Council would continue to push for such added value, as it has done in other projects, and that this initiative could align well with the Council's broader social and economic development goals.

He also commented on the importance of creating high-quality working environments, noting that well-designed, light-filled spaces can significantly improve productivity. In relation to the Town Hall, Councillor O'Brien stated that the Council is exploring ways to make the building fit for modern use. He acknowledged that while modernisation is important, it does not always mean replacing traditional features, and a hybrid approach that respects the building's heritage while enhancing functionality would be considered.

Decision:

The Cabinet:

1. Approved the appointment of the successful architect Ellis Williams Architects Limited and the project cost in its entirety, to undertake the design of a phased refurbishment of the Town Hall. The contract award will be for all RIBA work stages, subject to two individual break clauses to be exercised at the discretion of the Council at the close of RIBA stage 2 and 4.
2. Authorised the Director of Law and Democratic Services in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth to finalise the terms of the contract appointing the architect.
3. Approved the additional budget of £649,628 to proceed with actions below, ensuring on going compliance of the Town Hall building and progress the refurbishment project including:
 - a. Appointment of Architect and LK
 - b. Town Hall Project Manager
 - c. Asbestos removal
 - d. Compliance of the Town Hall
 - e. Refurbishment of the Town Hall

Reasons for the decision:

The recommendations represent the next stage in the delivery of a phased refurbishment of the Town Hall up to RIBA stage 2 and the phased exiting from leased premises at 3 and 6 Knowsley Place, reducing the size and cost of the administrative estate.

Mitigate any health and safety concerns within the Town Hall that have been raised during the process so far.

Creation of a higher quality office space in the Town Hall.

Potential to create future income generation and increase town centre footfall through the sub lease of ground floor space and opportunities, as well as a desire to provide contemporary workplace and office design to reflect new agile working practises and promote staff wellbeing.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

Do not commence appointment of the architect and continue to repair any ad hoc repairs on the Town Hall.

Remain in 3KP five-storey block at 3 Knowsley Place until 2035, and remain in lease for the six-storey block 6 Knowsley Place, which is in lease in place until 2036 with a break clause in 2031

CA.378 Minutes of Greater Manchester Combined Authority

It was agreed:

That the minutes of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority meeting held on the 28th March 2025 be noted.

CA.379 Urgent Business

There was no urgent business.

COUNCILLOR E O'Brien
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.40 pm)

