


Meeting:	The Council
Meeting date:	16th July 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.



Council Leaders Report Councillor Eamonn O'Brien July 2025



I would like to welcome you all back to council, and I trust you have been loving or loathing the warm weather we have been experiencing recently, it is also my pleasure to welcome the Mayor of Greater Manchester – Andy Burnham, to this month's council.

I would also like to take the time to welcome Councillor Thorpe to his new role as Deputy Leader, and welcome Councillor Gold's reappointment to the cabinet, as well as congratulating our newly appointed Mayor and Mayoress, in Councillor Noel Bayley, and Ms Gill Campbell.

This report highlights our achievements, the progress made against our strategic priorities, and the areas where we must continue to improve. From regenerating town centres to enhancing social care, tackling inequalities, and driving economic growth, our commitment to the "LET'S Do It!" strategy remains at the heart of everything we do.

As we progress through this year, we remain ambitious, determined, and focused on delivering the best possible outcomes for the people of Bury. Thank you to all our residents, businesses, partners, and staff who continue to support and contribute to our shared vision for the Borough

News:

Before updating Members on the work undertaken since the May Council meeting on the three Council priority areas, I wanted to update Members on some of our key successes and good news stories: including:

Community Cleanups see great successes

Community cleanups have been taking place across the Borough and delivered in partnership with the Operations team, and being joined by volunteers from across the council, community groups and residents.



I was very pleased to attend a number of these sessions myself and see the great work that has gone on by all to clean up our Borough, and work locally to deliver on our aims.

I've been informed that over 200 members of staff have signed up, or taken part in a community cleanup, and just last week we had 28 volunteers out in Whitefield, balsam bashing, litter picking and planting trees.

Together we have removed 6 tonnes of waste and committed over 550 volunteer hours in just the first handful of sessions.

A big well done for all the teams organising, and my heartfelt thanks to all community members and volunteers who have turned out to help keep Bury Tidy.

£40m Radcliffe Hub marks Golden Bolt Milestone

I was delighted to join with staff and the chief executive to tour the Radcliffe Hub site, where we held a 'golden bolt' ceremony to mark the near completion of the building's framework.



Since construction started in 2024, over 12,400 bolts have been installed into over 1,730 steel pieces. When completed, the hub will be a transformative part of the regeneration of Radcliffe, providing a home for leisure, a brand new library, a learning hub, community space and support for health and wellbeing.

The £40m hub will serve as just one part of the wider regeneration of the town, with a redevelopment of the market chambers, the basement at Radcliffe market and a new building to join them together.

I'm delighted with the process we are making to deliver for communities in Radcliffe, and I would like to extend my thanks to everyone who has worked on making this ambitious project a reality.

Bury's first ever Queer Fest

I was very pleased to see the launch of our first Queer Fest right here in Bury with the Art Museum hosting a day of free events to celebrate LGBTQI+ Literature, arts and culture.

I joined with Councillor Morris, Councillor Walmsley, James Frith MP and the organisers of the event to show our support.

This was just one part of our pride month celebrations, which saw hundreds of residents' turnout to show their support and enjoy the celebrations on Bury Pride which took place on the 7th of June.

It makes me very proud to lead a diverse and active borough that recognises the contributions of all faiths, communities and backgrounds. Well done to all for organising such an excellent set of events.



10 Years of the Purple Flag

I was very pleased to accept the Purple Flag accreditation for the 10th year in a row alongside Councillor Walmsley, staff, local businesses and GMP, marking a decade of Bury being recognised as having a dynamic, secure and vibrant night-time economy.



I know that Councillor Morris has worked tirelessly to support our night-time economy, with Bury being the first town in Greater Manchester to receive the award and now one of the longest standing recipients

However we are not standing still, and we are investing heavily in our town centre with a new interchange, new flexi-hall, market improvements and the forthcoming regeneration of the Millgate.

Congratulations to all involved who helped make our town centre a decennium holder of the Purple Flag!

Works in the council

I'm pleased to recognise a number of ongoing internal works across council that continue to strengthen our organisation.

- We relaunched our refreshed LET's Do It! Strategy, moving us closer to delivering on our key goals and outcomes for Bury by 2030
- We've continued to deliver our housing action days, strengthening our multi-agency partnership working and better tenant engagement
- Supported work placements graduation took place with 3 young people recruited into permanent posts
- Launched our new Bury Shakers staff network group talking about future transformation, staff awards and improving communication
- As part of learning disability week, on Thursday the 19th of June, we proudly celebrated the achievements of our young people who successfully completed supported internship work placements. We held our first-ever Supported Internship Graduation at the Town Hall to mark this milestone.



- Our supported internships are designed to improve the life chances of young people with SEND by helping them transition into sustained, paid employment. These placements also support young people with Education, Health and Care (EHC) plans to:
 - Develop skills valued by employers
 - Demonstrate their value in the workplace
 - Build confidence in their ability to succeed at work
- Our next programme of supported internships begins in September, and we're once again calling on our teams to help create opportunities for those who are often furthest from the job market.

Finally I'd also like to **congratulate and thank the four outstanding individuals from Bury who have been recognised in the King's Birthday Honours List 2025** for their remarkable contributions to the community.

- Debra Ann Batchelor, a dedicated fundraiser and volunteer at the Margaret Haes Riding Centre in Holcombe, has been awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) for her services to people with disabilities in Bury.
- Jo Allen, Chief Executive of The Counselling and Family Centre, also receives a BEM for her transformative leadership. Under her guidance, the organisation has grown from a small volunteer-led service into a vital community anchor.
- Dr Marcel De Matas former Chair of Bury Football Club, has been appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire (MBE) for services to football.
- Captain John Joseph William Thornhill, National Parade Marshal at the Royal British Legion, is also to receive an MBE for his service to the ex-service community and his role in national commemorative events.

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

The Council's Corporate Plan for 2024/25 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:

In June cabinet Councillor Tariq brought forward our plan to support our care providers across the Borough

Using a portion of Bury's Markets Sustainability Improvement Fund, the Council have **worked alongside providers to develop a suite of innovate workforce solutions to support their workforce** challenges.

Up to now, the support programme has been made up of three main components.

- a. A centralised recruitment team that would support providers with their recruitment and retention processes as well as advertise, screen and signpost relevant candidates. This lessened the burden on small providers especially who were working without dedicated HR and Workforce functions.
- b. Bury Flex; our shared workforce initiative where providers were given access to a "ready to work" bank of flexible workers; saving them huge sums of agency staff costs.
- c. And a targeted leadership development programme for those new and aspiring registered managers, supporting succession planning across the sector.

The report details the achievements that have been made over the last 12 months but to summarise, since the introduction of the Support Programme there has been:

- a) **Decrease in vacancy rate**
- b) **Decrease in staff leaver rate**
- c) **Increase in number of staff working in Adult Social Care in Bury**

And we are seeing the improvement in quality of services too, with **Bury being Tenth in the whole country for percentage of beds in Good and Outstanding CQC rated Care Homes.**

The paper sees another 3 years of this support commissioned to be provided by Persona the councils care company who have a proven record is good employment delivery having won a number of Greater Manchester Good employment awards

I'm also pleased to report the advancement of our **Bury Food Strategy**, which has gone from strength to strength since being launched in 2021.

This year I'm pleased to say that that auto-enrolment for free school meals has seen an 18.1% uptake in the number of children, meaning another 232 children are receiving free school meals.

I was very happy to see the launch of our **Right to Grow Scheme** which will empower communities to grow fresh food in public places, which can result in reduced food inequalities, improved mental health, engaged citizens connecting to their greenspaces and improved access to fresh food.

The scheme has been codesigned by many internal and external partners, and my thanks go to all of our staff and associates that have made this happen, and to Councillor Quinn, whom I know is very pleased with this novel and unique approach to food inequalities.

Keeping with the health theme, I was very interested to see the launch of the **Bury Fast Food Index**, which allows for the tracking of fast food outlets across the borough and enables teams to better evaluate where food inequalities are occurring.

d. IMPROVING CHILDREN'S LIVES

Bury prides itself on the way that we care for children across our borough, and how we can better their lives at every step of the way.

We recently had our Ofsted inspection, and I would like to take a moment to thank our lead member for Children's Services, Councillor Smith for her tireless work to place the wellbeing of children at the heart of the everything this council does.

And of course, my thanks to everyone in the Children's Department, you represent the best work this council can achieve, looking out for those children who need our help. I would like to personally thank each of you for your contribution over these last years, no matter how big or small, you have all contributed to our success.

It was my pleasure to sign our new **promise to Care Experienced Young people**, this promise signed by myself, the Chief Executive Lynne Ridsdale, Councillor Smith and Jeanette Richards, covers a wide range of topics, and outlines how we as a council will deliver for Care Experienced Young People.



This places their voices, feelings and lived experiences at the heart of our promise, and ensures we remain committed to their progression and wellbeing.

I was delighted to put my name to this endeavour, and I look forward to watching it progress.

I'm also very happy to report that **89%** of students progressing to Bury Secondary Schools this year achieved their first choice, whilst **94.7%** of Primary School Children began their education at their top-choice school.

This means that Bury is the **highest performing local authority in Greater Manchester**, but also means that Bury surpasses the national averages, a huge well done to our admission teams for this achievement.

e. ACHIEVING INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH

It continues to be busy in our place department and across the council, as we work to delivering sustainable economic growth across the borough.



Major works are ongoing in Whitefield, Bury, Radcliffe and Prestwich to deliver on the regeneration ambitions for our towns.

In Prestwich, we're pressing on with our ambitious £100m regeneration, with the first major milestone being reached, as the construction of the £14m travelhub is now well underway.

I visited the site recently, joined by our partners Muse and Vinci, and saw the huge amount of effort that's gone into creating what will be a state-of-the-art hub for all things travel in Prestwich.

I'm pleased to report that ground clearing and piling works are complete, as well as the site offices, work is presently ahead schedule, with the first and second concrete pours now completed.

Next, we'll move onto the Longfield centre, creating a new multifunctional village centre for Prestwich, with a new library, new retail units, new markets, new homes and new greenspace.

I also had the pleasure to attend the Bury Means Business Networking event, which was a fantastic event, which showcased many of the fantastic businesses we have here in Bury.



I am delighted to see **vegetation clearance at Pyramid Park has commenced** in early July in readiness for the main remediation works starting later this month. The Council secured £1.73m to unlock the site, including a major new access road.

In other news, the Council's William Kemp Heaton site has now been sold to Great Places Housing Group who have started on site and will deliver **43 new social** rented homes including bungalows and supported accommodation for people with additional needs. This will greatly reduce out of borough housing costs and enable our vulnerable adults to reside in the borough, close to family and friends.

A further 39 social rented homes for people over the age of 55 are being delivered at the Fletcher Fold site via Bolton at Home who have now started on site. I am delighted to see another affordable housing scheme coming forwards enabling older people and those with long term conditions to be housed.

The Council is working on a new pipeline of sites which will all come forward in 2025/26, including Humphrey House in Bury Town Centre (c. 74 units), The Elms in Whitefield (c.24 units) and our exciting plans for the Former Fire Station site which I will update on next time.

Our ambitious plans to **revitalise Radcliffe** are continuing at pace, with the progress made on our transformational regeneration programme clear for all to see.

At **Stand Lane, the final touches are being made to the new 'pocket park'**, which has enhanced and improved the existing Riverside Gardens space adjacent to the River Irwell. Here, new accessible routes, low-maintenance planting, new benches and play equipment have been installed to make the area a more open and visible place to enjoy. The new pocket park has been supported through £253,000 of funding, which includes grant from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, section 106 contributions and investment from Bury Council. The transformation of this riverside space, located at a key gateway to the town centre, complements the wider town centre regeneration that is taking place, such as the new Hub and Radcliffe Enterprise Centre, both nearby.

Meanwhile, in Bury town centre, **our bold regeneration plans to enhance and futureproof our famous market, through £33 million of funding**, continue to make headway, with the two new oversailing canopies that will protect the existing market stalls, now reaching full structural steel completion. In addition, the buildings that occupied the area that will hold the new Bury Flexi Hall have also now been cleared and the foundation formation works for the new building are now taking place.

Mayoral Development Corporation (MDC):

- Following analysis of a range of delivery vehicles, an MDC was identified as the preferred vehicle for Northern Gateway. In March of this year Cabinet endorsed the MDC as the appropriate delivery vehicle to drive forward Northern Gateway, and provided support for the proposed name and

boundary, in addition to approval to undertake a public consultation on the implementation of the MDC. Since March's Cabinet meeting, the public consultation has been held and governance and operational arrangements have progressed; the MDC will determine the final arrangements.

- The MDC will maximise benefits to new and existing residents and businesses in a location that has been amongst the most economically deprived in GM, including encouraging high-quality jobs, skills, and social value, through delivery of strategic leadership to secure the physical and social infrastructure required to support the delivery of the project.

Planning Application:

- Planning application, for up to 6.5m sq ft, has been submitted by the Northern Gateway Delivery Vehicle (NGDV);
- As part of this application, a Transport Assessment has been submitted, which is currently subject to review by key stakeholders, including National Highways, TfGM and the two highway authorities.
- The Northern Gateway masterplan, which was approved by Cabinet in March of this year, will be used as a key consideration in the determination of the planning application.

Highway and Sustainable Travel Infrastructure:

- Work is continuing to develop a number of infrastructure projects, including the Western Access scheme, which will facilitate the unlocking of the initial phases of the site. The Western Access scheme is being led by Bury Council, working closely with key stakeholders including Rochdale Council, National Highways and TfGM. Optioneering is currently underway to determine a preferred scheme as an integral part of the development of the Outline Business Case;
- In addition, **work has also progressed on the development of a Northern Gateway Transport Framework Document**, which outlines the transport vision, transport issues and opportunities for the site as well as identifying what transport interventions will be needed to truly unlock the full potential of the Northern Gateway development, and lead to a phased transport programme of interventions.
- **Bury's new Local Plan has taken an important step forward with an eight-week period of public consultation ending in May.** All comments received will be given thorough consideration and, where necessary, changes will be fed into a revised version of the plan which will be subject to a further period of consultation. The Local Plan will then be submitted to the Government before being subject to an independent examination. The Local Plan will be an extremely important document that will provide a strong policy basis to assess and manage future development in the Borough, including the strategic sites that are identified in the Places for Everyone Plan. The plan sets out key policy requirements including securing much needed affordable homes and education infrastructure, whilst protecting our most important green spaces.

- Following the adoption of the Places for Everyone Plan last year, work has also progressed on the preparation of **masterplans for each of the strategic housing and employment sites identified in the plan**. The masterplans will set out a high-level framework for the development of these sites, including identifying where and when key supporting infrastructure should be delivered. The approved masterplans will then be used as a key consideration in the determination of any planning applications within these sites. In March this year, the masterplan for the employment-led development of the Northern Gateway was the first to be approved.

Reinstatement of the Milltown Street Bridge

- Work has begun on a scheme to reinstate the Milltown Street Bridge in Radcliffe, which was destroyed in 2015 during the Boxing Day floods. This £3.2 million project will restore a long missing link in Radcliffe's local infrastructure and significantly improve walking and cycling access to and from Radcliffe town centre and neighbouring communities. The scheme is funded from the government's City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS1) and the Mayor's Challenge Fund.

Prestwich Travel Hub

- Last month, GM Leaders agreed to redirect some CRSTS1 funding to projects linked to delivering housing and employment growth, and I am pleased to say that £14m has been earmarked to cover the full cost of the Prestwich Travel Hub, construction of which is underway as part of the wider Prestwich Village Centre regeneration scheme.

Bury Interchange Redevelopment

- Plans to redevelop Bury Interchange are moving forward rapidly. TfGM has submitted planning applications for a new permanent southern access and a bridge, which will connect Union Square and Pyramid Park with an upgraded platform. A temporary northern access is also proposed, ensuring Metrolink services can continue operating throughout the main construction phase.

Transport for City Regions funding announcement

Last month, the Chancellor announced £2.5 billion in devolved 'Transport for City Regions' funding for Greater Manchester, part of a £15.6 billion national fund covering 2027 to 2032.

I am committed to securing maximum benefit from this funding for Bury, working in partnership with Transport for Greater Manchester to deliver key priorities, including:

- Completing the new Interchange in Bury town centre
- Upgrading all Metrolink stops on the Bury line, with Heaton Park as a priority

- Delivering a new Metrolink stop and Park & Ride at Elton to support 3,500 new homes
- Introducing cutting-edge tram-train services linking Bury with Heywood, Rochdale, and Oldham.
- Work with TfGM to explore extending Metrolink to Middleton and Northern Gateway, helping connect residents to future job opportunities.

Additional funding will support highways maintenance, regeneration of our town centres, safer streets through VisionZero measures, and improved bus services and infrastructure—enhancing access to opportunities across and beyond the borough.

Development work is already underway to ensure our borough makes the most of this transformative investment.

In Conclusion, Members of Council, Bury Council has achieved several notable milestones since the last Council meeting, these achievements reflect Bury Council's dedication to supporting its community through economic, social and infrastructure initiatives.