


<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>The Council</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>17<sup>th</sup> September 2025</b>
<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Leader's Report</b> 
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Leader of the Council</b>
<b>Decision type:</b>	<b>Non key decision</b>
<b>Ward(s) to which the report relates:</b>	All
<b>Summary:</b>	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 September 2025



Welcome back to council, I hope you all have had a fantastic break and have made the most of our recess time, and the good weather.

Since we last met in July, we have had the fantastic news of a positive inspection in Children's services, which thanks to the hard work of hundreds of staff members and partners, has delivered us from 'Inadequate' to 'Requires improvement'. This is a massive achievement, and my thanks go to everyone who has been involved, and to our lead member for Children's Services, who has advocated for her service tirelessly across her time in post. While this progress is encouraging, we recognise that there is still work to be done to maintain our momentum and continue improving outcomes for children and families.

We've made positive strides in delivering many of our regeneration projects around the borough, including the sale of land in Whitefield to the NHS, delivering a new health centre for the community, replacing the aging Uplands medical centre. Our market regeneration is also well underway, with the canopies ahead of schedule, and the structure of the Flexi Hall quickly rising above Angouleme way.

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:

### **Children services show significant Improvement**

I was delighted to see that we have achieved an uplift in our Ofsted ranking, from Inadequate to Requires improvement, with Ofsted inspectors noting the remarkable progress made by the leadership team, with a comprehensive plan for change, supported across the council, partner agencies and backed by a significant investment – all to ensure that our most vulnerable children receive the care and support they need.

Since coming into my post as leader, Children's services has been a key area of focus, and that of my lead Cabinet Member, Lucy Smith, who has worked week in, week out to ensure children's services gets the tools, finance and support they need to deliver for our most vulnerable.

The Ofsted report is a long, but positive read for all members, and evidence that what we are doing here is having real world impacts for the people of Bury.

To give you the highlights:

- Leadership was rated as good, with a respected, effective and highly visible senior leadership team.
- Scrutiny and accountability have been strengthened at every level
- Financial investment has strengthened our workforce and expanded services
- Caseloads are down, workforce stability is up, and there is positive change in culture
- There are strong early help and safeguarding responses
- More support for carers and foster carers, as well as high quality foster placements
- Children only come into care only when absolutely necessary, and children's voices are heard and acted on.

My personal thanks go to everyone across the organisation and our external partners for delivering this well earned improvement, I know how much hard work has gone into this achievement.

However, this is not the finish line, and shows that there is still more to be done to achieve the best outcomes for children across Bury, a challenge I know our leadership, staff and partners will relish as we move forward.

### **15 Green Flag Parks for Bury**

I'm very happy to say that all 13 of our borough parks, as well as 2 of our cemeteries have been awarded Green Flag status for 2025, a national symbol of high-quality greenspace across the borough.



Bury now holds the highest number of Green Flag sites of any local authority in Greater Manchester. Eight of these sites have held the award since 2004, reflecting a two-decade commitment to maintaining accessible, well-managed, and welcoming green spaces.

Well done to our staff members, over 1,300 community volunteers, our sports clubs and groups, who have provided our residents with safe, clean and attractive places to relax, exercise and connect with nature.

A special thanks to Cabinet Member for the Environment, Alan Quinn, who has championed our parks and greenspaces endlessly in his role.

### **£37,500 of illicit goods seized from Bury shops**

The council joined with Greater Manchester Police, and officers from the immigration service in carrying out coordinated enforcement operations on premises across Prestwich and Bury. Finding 447 illegal vapes, 168 packs of tobacco and 1,713 packs of cigarettes – as well as numerous counterfeit goods.

This enforcement activity formed part of the broader Community Safety work to Keep Our Town Centres Safe This Summer, aligning with the national Home Office campaign. In early August, Dame Angela Eagle MP visited the Borough to see first-hand the partnership working in action, including Trading Standards, anti-social behaviour teams, the Business Improvement District, and efforts to tackle retail crime. This builds on the success of Bury's Safer Streets project last year.

Our communities should feel safe where they live and work, free from the harm and criminal activity associated with the distribution of illicit substances. These actions are a vital part of our commitment to protecting residents and maintaining the integrity of our local economy.

Well done to all involved, and to our lead member for Culture and the Economy – ,



Charlotte Morris, for her continued support of these important actions in tackling crime across our borough.

Over the summer, Bury has proudly celebrated and commemorated the diversity of its communities. Events such as Collabor8 at Derby High School and the return of the Bury Mela at Burrs Country Park showcased the richness of our Borough's cultural life. Flag-raising ceremonies and Mayoral receptions marked Pakistan and Ukraine Independence Days, while the Bury Islamic Centre hosted its annual multifaith procession for the Prophet Muhammad's birthday. As we look ahead to the High Holy Days, we extend our warmest wishes — Chag Sameach — to our Jewish



communities. These events reflect the strength we draw from our diversity. Across Bury and Greater Manchester, we remain committed to being a place that is Too Great for Hate, where we stand up to prejudice and live with mutual respect and understanding.

### **VJ Day Anniversary Celebrations**



On the 15<sup>th</sup> of August commemorations were held to mark the anniversary of the end of the Second World War in the Japanese theatre

The Lancashire Fusiliers had an important role during the war and combat in Europe and the Far East.

On the outbreak of the war, the 1st Battalion was based in India. It subsequently fought with various formations in Burma until 1943 when it became a Chindits formation with 77th Indian Infantry Brigade. It served with the latter until the end of the campaign.

A commemorative service was held at the Second World War memorial within the grounds of Bury Parish Church, featuring multi-faith prayers, wreath laying, and the reading of specially curated poems to mark the 80th anniversary of VJ Day. This



followed earlier commemorations by the Fusiliers Association to mark Minden Day at the start of August, further highlighting Bury's proud military heritage.

As part of the celebrations, Bury Town Hall and the Art Museum were illuminated in remembrance colours.



Our thoughts and thanks are with all that have served to protect us and our allies, their memory and sacrifice will not be forgotten.

### **Works in the council**

I'm pleased to recognise a number of ongoing internal works across the council that continue to strengthen our organisation, place and our networks with our partner Greater Manchester Combined Authorities.

We've continued to deliver our community cleanups which have now cleared 286



bags of rubbish and 6 tonnes of fly tipping.

### **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:**

### **SEND health visiting team shortlisted for the 2025 Health Service Journal Awards**

Bury's SEND Health Visiting Team has been shortlisted in the Reducing Inequalities and Improving Outcomes for Children and Young People category of the 2025 Health Service Journal Awards.

The service was designed and developed in partnership between the Northern Care Alliance NHS Foundation Trust and Bury Council Public Health Team. It provides early, targeted support for children aged 0–5 with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) and their families.



The specialist SEND Health Visitors offer an intensive, personalised service from pregnancy through to a child's fifth birthday. They are trained in neurodevelopmental conditions, communication needs, and family centred care, carrying out enhanced developmental reviews using targeted screening tools.

Congratulations to all of the team for this achievement, and for our cabinet members, Tamoor Tariq and Lucy Smith for their steadfast support for services such as this one.

### **Bury Ageing Well**



Partners from a wide range of services came together once again to deliver a vibrant and engaging week of wellness activities, supporting older adults in our communities to age well. The programme offered a rich mix of social, cognitive, and physical wellbeing events designed to inspire connection, movement, and joy.

The week consisted of a variety of events including a community health walk, a Pilates class and the 'Sporting Memories' session, allowing for reminiscence and social interaction.

The event culminated with a walking football Tournament at Bury FC, also a thank you to PERSONA, who came along to cheer along teams and engage with local services.

Thank you to our Adults teams and to our lead member for Adult Social Care, Councillor Tamoor Tariq.

#### **a. IMPROVING CHILDREN'S LIVES**

### **OFSTED inspection**

Perhaps the biggest piece of news is the aforementioned OFSTED inspection, which saw us move from inadequate to requires improvement, a massive step and a confirmation that the journey we have been on with children's services is now bearing fruit, and producing real impacts for our most vulnerable children across the borough.

The report confirms that most children and families are now receiving the right help at just the right time, and children are telling us they truly feel heard. This is a huge testament to the dedication, skill, and passion of all our staff members.

Ofsted also noted how children in Bury are now better able to rely on a trusted worker, and how our focus on listening to their voices is shaping the future of services. We are moving forward at pace — creating better, safer, and happier experiences for young people.

Of course, there is still more to do. Making sure every child has a clear and effective plan, ensuring consistency, and continuing to strengthen our workforce are challenges that will drive us to improve even further. As always, we will approach these challenges together as a united council to achieve the best outcomes.

Over the three weeks of the inspection, we met all the requirements, and all of our practitioners presented themselves well and professionally. Feedback from young people, professionals, and staff about working in Bury was positive and uplifting.

I know that all our staff, our partners, senior leaders and members will continue to work hard to keep up this improvement journey, building stronger relationships, delivering care of the highest quality and making a real, tangible difference to the lives of hundreds of children and families across Bury.

This kind of passion and professionalism has to be present at every level of our council, and I would like to thank each and every person involved in Children's services for their work, from the political oversight provided by our lead member, Councillor Lucy Smith, to the strategic leadership given by our chief executive and senior leaders, and to our Director of Children's services, Jeanette Richards.

Without this team, and all our incredible staff and partners, we would not have been able to achieve this, so a huge well done and congratulations.

### **Changemakers celebrate a successful year with reception in Mayor's Parlour**

Young people from the Changemakers group were celebrated on Tuesday 22 July with a special presentation lunch in the Mayor's Parlour to say thank you for their work over the year, making sure that the voices of young people with additional needs and disabilities are heard and that their views are taken into account.



The Changemakers is a youth voice group for young people aged 11-25 and was created as a working group to feed into Bury's SEND Improvement and Assurance Board. The Changemakers meet fortnightly during term time and have reward trips during the school holidays. Their primary role is to assist in Bury's improvement journey, and they do so by reading monthly reports, attending board meetings, and providing regular feedback. Members of the board are also invited to attend Changemakers meetings.

This year the group has worked on a number of projects, including one on community safety, where they discussed their concerns with the police and advised them on how best to engage with young people, and a consultation on the Local Offer.

They have also been working with the board to deliver training to staff across the partnership to ensure that the views and wishes of young people with SEND are respected and acted upon and that they are treated as equal partners in the development of services that affect them.

### **SEND Services are improving across Bury**

Advisors from the DFE and NHSE recently performed a stocktake of Bury's SEND provision and found a shared commitment to lasting improvements to the SEND services and the wellbeing of children with SEND.

The stocktake visit demonstrated we've established strong partnerships – and we are proud to be able to show that, because we can only best serve our communities by working beyond council and NHS boundaries, together with our partners.

We are strengthening our workforce through our Workforce Strategy, as well as



training new staff to be able to bolster our workforce. As well as improving communication with partners and clients.

My congratulations to the staff on this continued improvement journey, as well as to the lead members for Children's and Adult's social care, Lucy Smith and Tamoor Tariq for their oversight and guidance.

## **b. ACHIEVING INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH**

### **Whitefield to get a new health centre**

The former Whitefield library is to be transformed into health centre for the residents of Whitefield, replacing the aging Uplands Site, which is in poor condition, and will enable the library site to reopen, as it has been closed since 2017.



This is a win-win situation for the people of Whitefield, with delapidated and empty buildings being brought back into use, and with medical services placed closer to the heart of the community.

The new health centre will form a key part of our Whitefield Town Centre Plan, which like our ongoing regenerations in Prestwich and Radcliffe, will deliver a better town centre for all, creating new homes, jobs and opportunities across the borough.

### **Prestwich Update**



Works continues ahead of schedule on the construction of the travel hub with the groundworks complete and the main structural steel frame construction now started. This first phase will benefit from a successful bid to the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement Round 1 underspend pot where officers are busy constructing a Financial Business Case to fully secure the funding. There has also been lots of Social Value activity happening via Vinci including so far judging an electrical competition at Bury College, two local primary schools designing the site hoardings with a celebration on site for the pupils involved, employment of three Bury residents (one from Prestwich) with two through Bury EST, various work placements, a contribution of building materials to a local business moving premises and supporting local events such as the Prestwich Carnival. The Joint Venture continues its efforts to positively progress the next phase of the regeneration scheme which will complement the completion of the travel hub with a new multifunctional village centre as reported last time.

### **Housing update around the borough:**

I am delighted that three more affordable housing sites will be coming forwards in due course as a result of some successful brownfield housing bids. These include; Station works in Radcliffe c. 30 units, Spurr House, Unsworth c. 60 units and Durers Lane in Radcliffe totalling £3m in investment to unlock more brownfield sites in the borough, generate council tax revenue and improve footfall in our town centres.

The Council is also working on a new pipeline of sites which will all come forward in 2026. We are currently working on a bid to Homes England to accelerate affordable and social house building working with smaller locally based SME developers, which I hope to update you on next time.

In terms of current housing delivery, we are working on a small residential scheme at The Elms in Whitefield (c.24 units), which will be a residential scheme for over 55's

and bring more disused brownfield site in to use. Master planning has concluded at the Former Fire Station site in Bury and delivery options are currently being considered to improve the north of The Rock area.

The contractor has also started on site at the former William Kemp Heaton site and Fletcher Fold sites in Bury, both of which will reduce dependency on out of borough placements and allow Bury residents to be housed in our borough, close to their family and friends.

In other news, a supported housing scheme on Willow Street, Bury is progressing well and on track to complete and ready to occupy later this year. The scheme will be for people with learning disabilities and/or autism.

Later in September, I am looking forward to attending a spade in the ground event at Pyramid Park which will be an exciting sustainable residential development with built in connections to Bury Interchange, providing quick access to the town centre and trams to the city centre.

### **Bury Interchange Redevelopment**

Plans to redevelop Bury Interchange continue to move forward. The Council has approved the planning application submitted by TfGM for a new permanent southern access and a bridge, which will connect Union Square and Pyramid Park with an upgraded platform. We continue to work with TfGM and other stakeholders to develop the design for the main interchange, including associated public realm works.

### **Highway and Sustainable Travel Infrastructure:**

Work is ongoing to deliver a programme of road safety schemes that will make Bury's roads safer and reduce road danger for all road users:

- New School Crossing Patrol Lights have been introduced on Radcliffe Road outside Derby High School:
- New replacement interactive safety signs are now up and running at Radcliffe Road in Bury and Brandlesholme Road in Holcombe.

More schemes are being planned and will be rolled out over the coming months, including:

- Installing pedestrian crossing facilities at the Higher Lane/Park Lane/Pinfold and Bury New Road/Pinfold Lane/Moss Lane junctions in Whitefield, with work on the first of these to take place over the summer.



- Two new Puffin crossings on Sheepfoot Lane, one near Eastleigh Road and one near Meade Hill Road, which are due to start in August/September this year.
- School 20mph speed limits at Charlton Avenue in Prestwich and in the Clough Street area of Radcliffe planned for October.
- New and upgraded crossings, one on the A56 Bury New Road in Prestwich and two on the A56 Walmersley Road, one near Chesham Road and another near Lime Street, planned for January 2026.

These schemes are funded by government's City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) and Active Travel England.

Elsewhere, work continues to reinstate the Milltown Street Bridge in Radcliffe and to construct the new access to the Star Academy on Spring Lane.

**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.