

**COUNCIL MEETING
22 October 2014
LEADER'S STATEMENT**

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

Relocation of Service Users – Wheatfields

Cabinet agreed to a consultation programme on the relocation of services from Wheatfields in 2015.

Service users and their families will be fully engaged and consulted with matched alternatives.

These proposals are the last stage in the overall modernisation of Learning Disability Services, which have been carefully and sensitively managed over a number of years. The net result has been the replacement of all large day centres with community core bases and new outreach centres spread out across the Borough.

Adult Care Services – Future Service Options

The Cabinet received a report on the outcome of a very well conducted consultation programme to discuss a series of possible alternative service options, where our bottom line will always be to safeguard those who are most vulnerable in our community.

As I have said previously, we have a proud record of consulting and listening. On this occasion there was an overwhelming view that no change and privatisation were not acceptable options.

We have listened and the outcome of the consultation and agreed by Cabinet is to develop a new social enterprise or local authority traded company separate from the Council and where staff and service users would transfer into the new organisation.

Bury Core Strategy

As Members will know the Planning Inspector suspended the Hearing into the Council's draft Core Strategy.

The Cabinet received a progress report and agreed that a further report was necessary once we considered the implications of the Government's updated household projections, due out in November, as well as the outcomes of the GM Spatial Review which is looking at housing needs and numbers for the next 20 years.

Adult Care Services

Madam Mayor it is only a few short months since I stood here to tell Members about the outstanding performance in our Secondary Schools which was the highest in the whole of the North West, yes little old Bury again.

But there is more! Bury can now proudly boast that it provides the best care for the over 65s in the whole of the North West. Health bosses regularly publish

performance information on how well elderly people are cared for by local Councils and CCG's. Bury scored 9/10 and one neutral score. This achievement is all the more pleasing given the huge loss of Government revenue to fund these crucial budgets.

Mosses Anniversary

Madam Mayor I am pleased to advise Members that the Mosses Community Association, (a local Bury Charity) is celebrating 15 years of managing and running the Mosses this October. In addition, it is 40 years since the Centre became a resource for the people of Bury.

Over the years the Centre has seen many and varied activities and services to the community both as a Centre run by Bury Council and, over the last 15 years, by the Association.

Currently the Centre hosts over 40 different activities a week with over 1,000 people attending.

The Association's current projects include the Ofsted 'Outstanding' Mosses Pre-school and youth clubs, both of which have plans to increase their provision. Over the past few years the projects have also included Mosses Play weeks (play schemes on local green spaces), projects supporting parents and the Mosses Community Courses Project (taster courses encouraging people to take education further).

Planning Performance

We often speak about planning issues; in this Chamber most notably debates about the green belt and some Members opposite have challenged planning processes and procedures. I suspect we will have more debates in the future as we strive as an Administration to protect the green belt from a variety of threats.

But for now it is pleasing to note that Bury has been singled out by DCLG in their latest performance statistics covering speed of decision making and quality for major applications over the past 2 years.

Bury is the best performing Local Planning Authority across AGMA with over 90% of all applications being determined within the 13 weeks or having an agreed extension of time. In addition 100% of all Major Minerals and Waste Applications were determined within the statutory time limits.

This performance also puts Bury in the top 10 best performing LPA's in the country and the 2nd best Metropolitan Authority.

This is a remarkable performance and a testament to the professionalism of the Planning Officers as a whole and I am sure all Members will agree it's a great pat on the back for them.

Procurement

Finally Madam Mayor Members will recall the Council some 18 months back received an award from DCLG for our performance in paying invoices within 10 days to support local businesses with their cash flow.

I have just learned that because of our track record the Council have been invited to join a new national Prompt Payment Advisory Board where Bury will be one of only two local authorities invited to join this board.

This is another acknowledgement for the Council and commitment of our staff to turn around invoices so quickly to help hard pressed local businesses.

Light Night

Is now in its fourth year and again the weather was kind as it didn't rain. Over 25,000 people, mainly families, which is brilliant, came to enjoy some 20 art & cultural events ranging from Bollywood dance and performance troops through to the site of a large hot air balloon and street performances. This is our major showcase event that illustrates what a fabulous experience Bury town centre is for all our community.

I want to publically thank all those employees; partners and of course the many thousands of people who flocked to the town centre for making this such a wonderful annual event for our Borough.

Purple Flag

You may well ask what Purple Flag is, what does it represent?

Like Blue Flags for Beaches and Green Flags for Parks, Purple Flag is for town centres and encompasses the good management of town centres from early evening through to the early hours and where visitors can enjoy a night out in Bury in a safe and welcoming environment.

This can't simply happen by accident, Purple Flag Accreditation is very demanding both in terms of creating the right organisational framework for this such as Policing, litter picking and how partners interact with each other.

To progress our ambition for Bury Town Centre to secure accreditation, a Task and Finish Group, chaired by Dr John Findon and supported by a range of Partners, developed an ambitious plan and timetable, culminating in a final assessment by a Lead Assessor to go through a five point check list.

We opted for the assessment to take place during the Light Night festivities which was to really test our organisational readiness and resilience to handle such crowds and then switch to late night activities which historically provided a sterner test for partner organisations.

I am advised that whilst we have not heard the outcome of the Assessment, the two assessors were very complimentary about Light Night and other leisure activities which carried on into the wee small hours.

Irrespective of the outcome I want to publically thank all our partners including the pubs and clubs, shopping centre operators, along with Police and Council staff, all ably managed through the good chairmanship of Dr Findon.

English Folk Expo

No sooner were we calming down after the success of Light Night than we then looked forward a week later to host the second English Folk Expo. I, along with a number of Members and Partners, attended a welcoming reception for this

wonderful group of people who are totally dedicated to promoting English Folk music.

English Folk Expo operates in association with the Homegrown. Homegrown is a festival of contemporary and traditional English folk, roots and acoustic music performed by professional, export-ready artists.

Homegrown is open to the public as well as English Folk Expo delegates, giving English Folk Expo delegates a chance to see showcase artists performing in a concert environment in front of a live audience. Homegrown is programmed by The Met in Bury, a partner of English Folk Expo.

I was pleased to be able to attend a couple of events at The Met and Castle Armoury and Bury was buzzing I can tell you. The value to tourism in Bury is that in the 1st year there were 90 delegates who spent £45,000 and this year there were 120 delegates. The Expo people are very pleased with Bury's hospitality and how well attended each of the live performances has been.

Again as with other such leisure and culture events, I hope this takes off here in Bury and becomes another part of our annual Civic Events Calendar. So, I am pleased that the event is assured for the next 2 years.

I want to publically thank all those who made the weekend an outstanding success, in particular David Agnew from the Met; Captain Alan Fortuin of the Fusiliers; our lead Member Cllr Lewis and lead Officer Tony Trehy.

Town Hall – 60th Anniversary Bury Town Hall

Finally Madam Mayor for those historians in the Chamber, today is the 60th Anniversary of the completion of this fine Town Hall and symbol of stability and civic pride throughout those 60 years.

I would like to pay tribute to all the past and current Mayors, Leaders; Councillors and Officers who have served and sat in this Chamber to lookout for the wellbeing of the residents of this fine Borough.

Madam Mayor that concludes my statement.

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