


<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>The Council</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup> November 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 November 2025



Welcome to our final council of the year.

I would like to open this month's report on a sombre note - by paying tribute to the two men who were killed in the horrendous attack that occurred at the Heaton Park Synagogue early last month; Adrian Daulby and Melvin Cravitz.

Their act of bravery helped save countless lives and helped prevent an even greater tragedy. I would like to extend the condolences of everyone here at Bury Council to their friends, families and communities.

We will continue to stand by our Jewish community, as we have always done, and we stand united against hatred and extremism, no matter the form it takes.

At our recent Team Bury event – we were joined by over 100 partners from across Bury, where we heard Isaac Ginsbury, lead a very moving moment of reflection and prayer for the victims and communities affected by the Heaton Park Synagogue terrorist attack.

I want to thank partners for their attendance at this event, the conversations we had surrounding community cohesion were crucial at this time, and it sends a very strong message to our communities that hate of any kind will not divide us here in Bury.

Turning to the work of the council, at a recent Team Bury Gathering – the session was an honest appraisal of our work towards our Let's Do it goals, we're doing well, especially in regeneration, our work on skills, and digital access. However, we need to go further and faster in areas such as a good level of development and life expectancy, so we're setting up additional sessions with partners to drive this forward.

I was also very pleased to open the new Riverside Pocket Park in Radcliffe alongside Councillor Alan Quinn – this small park is a statement of our big vision for Radcliffe with the new Radcliffe Hub and Radcliffe Enterprise Centre underway.

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 look to next year, we remain ambitious, determined, and focused on delivering the best possible outcomes for the people of Bury.

I would like to personally thank all our staff, partners and members who have made this year a success, and if I do not see you – I would like to wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

### **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 stories:

### **Team Bury**



I was very pleased to welcome over 100 partners from across the borough at our Team Bury event on the 16<sup>th</sup> of October.

Joined by partners from the Voluntary and community sector, health service, fire and rescue, police and a



myriad of other partners we took the time to evaluate our performance over the last 5 years of our Let's Do It agenda. To give you the top lines: we're doing well, increasing investment and jobs in the borough, improving transport and travel, reducing carbon emissions and increasing digital skills.

However there is more to be done, and areas where we need to go further and faster especially relating to ensuring our children get the best possible start in life, closing our life expectancy gaps and reducing the inequality that exists between our wards.

### **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.

### **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:**

#### **Adult Social Care and Partners excel through CQC inspection**

Adult Social Care was recently inspected by the Care Quality Commission, and whilst we await the report from the CQC I wanted to extend my thanks to all of our staff members across adult services and across our partners.

Will and Adrian have done an exemplary job with our adult social care over their years in post, and I am told that the CQC noted: a strong, person-centred approach to adult social care, excellent partnership working, strong officer and political leadership and a positive departmental culture.

The CQC are still processing the evidence and data that was submitted, which I am also told was the highest number of staff submitted additional information – which is certainly very encouraging. The CQC report should be with us early next year, and I look forward to updating council on its contents.

So from myself, a big well done and thank you, to the staff, leadership team and to

our cabinet member for Adult Social Care and Public Service Reform – Councillor Tariq for their hard work and these first positive signs from the CQC. Well done!

### **Great Places break ground on £10.3m affordable housing development**



Great Places have broken ground on their new £10.3m affordable housing development, part funded by Homes England and the GMCA – located between Bury Cemetery and Peachment Place, the site will deliver 43 homes in a mix of apartments, bungalows and houses.

Our Housing Strategy Team and Adults social care team have worked hard alongside our partners to deliver this project, supporting those with additional living needs such as: wheelchair accessible bungalows, apartments for those with learning disability and general needs housing.

These new homes will allow us to move those currently housed in out of borough placements back into the borough, closer to their families and support networks.

A big congratulations to the team on this fantastic project and well done to Cabinet members Councillor Tariq and Councillor Cummins, for their diligent work on this project and within their portfolios.

### **Council Tax Support changes**

We're currently consulting on changes to the existing Working Age Council Tax Support scheme that would see working aged families and those with children better off.



The current system is old, inefficient and bureaucratically heavy, requiring complex calculations for each applicant and for any changes in income. The system included in these proposals is more efficient, fairer and provides better protections for those that need it most.

As part of these proposals, we are also rolling out a network of resident support hubs, where residents can receive support with benefits, council tax inquiries, housing queries and PIP.

These resident hubs are spread around the borough, and are located in the following locations: Prestwich Library, Radcliffe Library, Bury Town Hall and Ramsbottom Library.

I'm very pleased with these proposals, which will see working families and those with children better protected by the council tax support scheme, with over £7.59m worth of council tax discounted for working families – alongside our resident hubs, which will transform service delivery, bringing services closer to residents and make the process of understanding what benefits are available to residents easier and faster.

The vast majority of claimants will see no change in their support and around 17% of working families with two children would be better off and 15.5% of families with one child would also see increased support.

Well done to our teams for carrying this innovative proposal through, and my thanks to Deputy Leader Councillor Thorpe, who has made supporting working families across the borough a top priority.

## **Bury stands against hate in all form – Hate Crime awareness week**



In October, the council and partners have held a number of events standing against hate crime across Hate Crime awareness week – sadly this event being needed more than ever in light of recent events.

GMP and Bsafe partners have been into schools and community groups to speak about hate crime, and a number of volunteer groups and council partners have been trained as ‘Hate Crime Ambassadors’ in how best to support vulnerable people and how best to report hate crimes.

Greater Manchester Police also hosted hate crime training sessions across the borough at Bury Active Women’s Centre and The Fusilier’s Museum.

The Mayor of Bury, Councillor Noel Bayley, presented newly trained Hate Crime Ambassadors with their certificates at the Red Cross Hate Crime Awareness event this week, at the Polish Social Centre. The event hosted by the Red Cross showcased the different support services across Bury and raised awareness of how residents can report hate crime.

Thank you to our hardworking staff, partners and Councillor Sandra Walmsley, Cabinet Member for Communities and Inclusion, in light of the horrific terror attack on October 2<sup>nd</sup> - we must come together in solidarity to root out hate in all its forms, we are a diverse and inclusive borough and we will continue to work hard to ensure that our communities live free from the scourge of hate.

£22k of illegal goods seized from local stores

I'm pleased to continue the council's strong action on the seizure of illicit goods continues with a further seizure of £22,000 from Bury Town Centre, Radcliffe and Ramsbottom.

Council teams joined by GMP, Immigration and the HMRC visited a number of businesses, and seized 888 packets of cigarettes, 108 pouches, counterfeit headphones, AirPods and Labubu dolls.

Whilst these may seem innocuous, purchasing goods like this can be dangerous, in construction and materials, and can help fuel illegal activities within our borough.

The council will take action on those that break the law, selling illicit or counterfeit goods.

Well done to Councillor Morris, who I know has led from the front with enforcement actions and continues to champion the work of our enforcement teams.

#### Demolition of Hawk Close Garages

On housing, we've taken action to demolish 28 derelict garage units on Hawk Close in Bury – these buildings are far beyond saving and contain dangerous levels of asbestos.

They've also become a hotspot for criminal activity, vandalism and are generally a nuisance for local residents.

We're acting by demolishing these buildings, freeing up the land for a variety of uses – which could include new homes, additional car parking spaces, or be used for landscaping.

Well done to Councillor Cummins for pushing for these buildings to be demolished, freeing up land for development and removing this blight from the community.

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

### **Bury Schools attendance recognised by Department for Education**

School attendance figures across our borough are improving at a faster than average rate with figures showing a 0.4% reduction in overall absences compared to 2023/24, and early figures for the current academic year indicate a continuing upward trend, with overall attendance up by 0.27% compared to the same period last year.

This improvement has been recognised by the Department for Education in their 'Attendance toolkit for local authorities' you can see the video they produced with our



staff members here: [Use of data - Incorporating pupil voice \(Bury\)](#).

This upward trend is a welcome sign, and reflects the hard work undertaken by councillors, council teams, schools and partners to drive up school attendance.

At our recent Team Bury event – we reviewed evidence that nearly 90% of all Bury schools are rated good or above, and this new data is a positive addition to the strong educational sector here in Bury.

Well done to our cabinet member for Children's services – Councillor Lucy Smith for this achievement, these improved figures come from strong partnership working and collaborative efforts between the council, parents, schools and partners. I'm very proud to see Bury leading the way as a forward thinking, innovative borough.

## A new pocket park for Radcliffe



Councillor Quinn and I (pictured above doing our best statue impression!.) recently joined with the local MP Christian Wakeford as well as students and teachers from St John's CE Primary School - to officially open the newly refurbished Riverside Gardens Pocket Park

I'm very with the park we've delivered for residents, it's a fantastic little space, that has picnic tables, local plants to support biodiversity, and has new sensory and interactive play equipment for children.

The park was created in collaboration with Radcliffe residents, and I'm sure they will be very happy with the space we have delivered.



The project has been funded by the UK government, alongside council funds and a contribution from the new housing development at School Street.

Well done to our teams for creating this fantastic little space – this park is just the first of several of the positive changes coming to Radcliffe, soon to be joined by the

new Radcliffe Hub, Leisure centre and Enterprise Centre.

### **Bury SEND & Inclusion event sees success**



Bury's SEND & Inclusion Launch Event at Red Hall Hotel was a strong demonstration of the borough's commitment to improving outcomes for children and young people with SEND. The event welcomed the return of SENCOs to the Local Authority and outlined a renewed focus on early support and collaboration.

Ben Dunne, our newly appointed Director of Early Years, Education and Skills, praised the turnout as a sign of strong partnership working. Attendees heard from Wendy Young, Head of SEND and Inclusion, who introduced the new SEND Strategy, alongside presentations on Bury's Graduated Approach, outreach services, and preparation for adulthood.

Feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with 63% of attendees reporting increased confidence in the SEND Partnership's ability to deliver support, and 100% believing the new Communities of Practice will positively impact inclusion and outcomes.

SEND has been a key area of focus for Children and Young People cabinet member Councillor Smith, who has overseen the positive Ofsted and SEND inspections I updated you on last time – now with a new director of education, both her and I are hoping to do even more to support our SEND children across Bury.

### **GCSE's and college results**

Finally, I wish to extend my congratulations to our teachers, students and parents for their A-level and GCSE results earlier this year.



Bury students did well with 39.1% of students achieving a grade 9 – 5 in both English and maths and with an attainment 8 score of 44.4%, compared to 45% last year.

In college education, students performed well once again with Holy Cross recording a 98% A-level pass rate and a 100% B-tec pass rate, increasing from 97% last year.

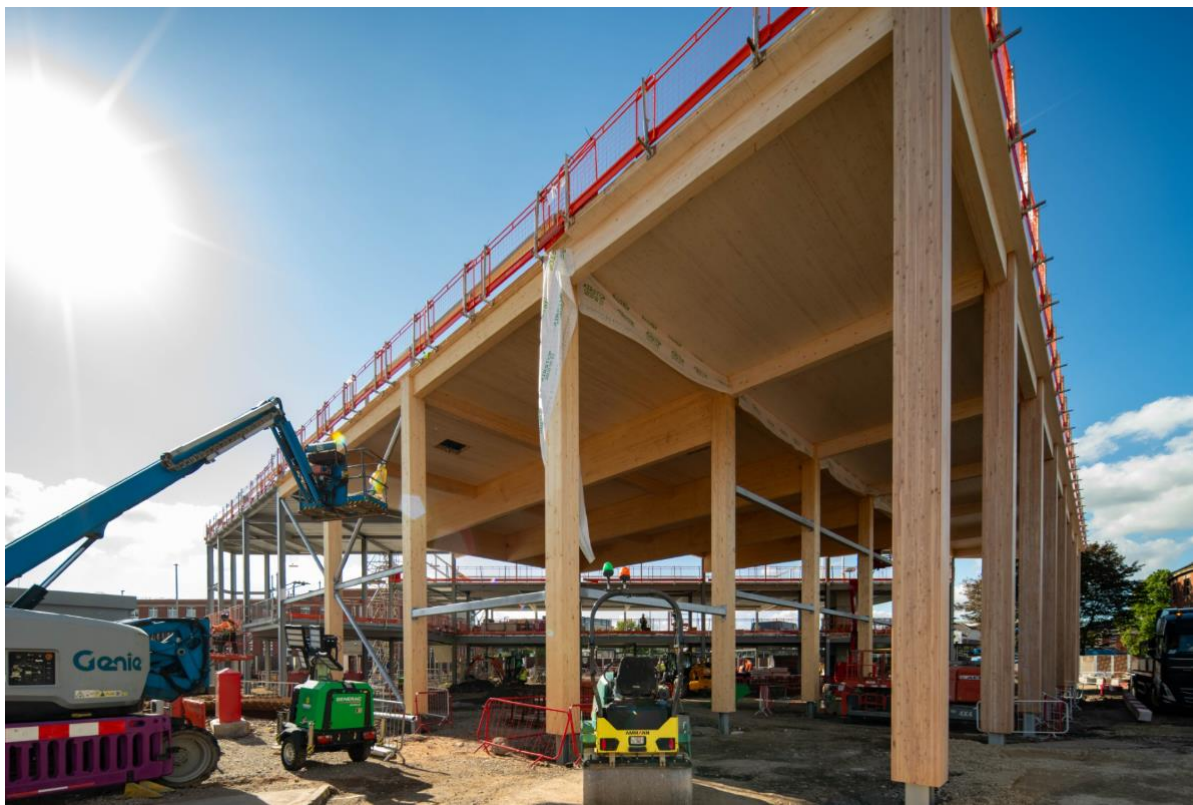
Bury college also saw a pass rate of 97% for A levels and a 98% pass rate for level 3 and vocational courses, an exemplary pass rate.

These are a positive set of results, and speak to Bury's strong educational institutions, and the hardworking ethos of many of our students!

My thanks to our council staff that support on education, our secondary and tertiary education partners and to all the staff, students and parents that have delivered these results – you are the future of our borough, and we are all very proud of what you will go on to accomplish.

### **3. ACHIEVING INCLUSIVE ECONOMIC GROWTH**

#### **Bury market regeneration approaches major milestone**



Regeneration works on Bury market continue at pace, with the timber boards covering the market canopy now in place as well as the structure for the Flexihall going up, as can be seen from the ground and from aerial images (pictured above)

The Market canopy installation is approaching its end, with the project on track to deliver in

November of this year - Work has begun on the Flexihall – providing a great deal more space for our market, its traders, our local residents and the many thousands of tourists that visit our outstanding market each year.

#### **Fishpool and Pimhole to receive active travel upgrades**





The second phase of the Bee Active Travel Scheme in Fishpool and Pimhole is set to begin on 3 November 2025, marking another milestone in the borough's commitment to safer, greener, and more accessible travel.

Funded by the UK Government's City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement and the Greater Manchester Mayor's Challenge Fund, this £5.7 million investment is part of the wider Bee Network – the Greater Manchester wide integrated transport network.



The works will include a variety of additions, including upgrading existing junctions, creating new crossing points and introducing traffic calming measures to slow speeding drivers on long roads.

Both Cabinet member for the Environment Councillor Quinn and I are very happy with the works, although there will be some disruption these additions will create a better – safer space for people walking, wheeling and driving.

### **Residents improvement plans for Whitefield to be heard**

I've been working hard alongside council officers to ensure that we spread the positive regeneration seen in Bury, Radcliffe and Prestwich around the borough and I'm happy to say that residents are now being consulted in Whitefield on regeneration plans as part of the Whitefield Town Centre Plan.

The improvement projects focus on Victoria Park and the public space at the corner of Church Lane and Bury New Road. Some of the potential changes include tree works, colourful planting schemes, access and entrance improvements, and adding new signage, seating and bins.

Having residents input on or plans in Whitefield, just as everywhere else in the borough, are crucial to creating successful, inclusive regeneration that aids a local area, instead of hindering it. This consultation mean we can hear from residents and deliver the improvements they want and need in their local area.

### **Radcliffe schemes working at pace**

Across Radcliffe, ongoing schemes are coming together as part of our comprehensive regeneration of the town - The work to replace the bridge over the Irwell in Radcliffe is underway, with the £3.2m project progressing well and the Radcliffe Hub pool is well



underway.

The project is being delivered by Bethell Civil Engineering – based just across the border in Bolton, and the bridge itself is being manufactured in Nottingham, keeping the work local and the jobs and investment within the UK.

I know that Councillor Alan Quinn (pictured in his natural engineering habitat above!) is very pleased with the project, and the fact that the bridge is being fabricated in the UK, using British steel, using British talent and keeping British industry working.

The bridge is scheduled for completion by March 2026 and when it is complete it will form part of the Bee Network walking and cycling route, helping to create a healthier, better connected Radcliffe for all.

I am also happy to see the installation of the Radcliffe Hub Pool, which is coming together well – once complete this pool will sit at the heart of a state of the art leisure centre, with a 25m 6 lane adult pool, a 15m learner pool and seating for over 150 spectators.

The leisure centre itself will feature a 100 station gym, two fitness class studios, four

consultation rooms for wellness, and multiple clip'n climb climbing walls as well as also having a rooftop activity space and a café.

I'm very pleased with the number of progressing works in Radcliffe, we're delivering a bold vision for the town, one that boosts the local economy and supports local residents.

### **Prestwich Travel hub approaches another milestone**

The regeneration of Prestwich is also continuing at pace, with the new Travel Hub approaching completion of its superstructure erection, with just a week remaining on this element of the building.



Works are now progressing on the masonry and fire systems, as well as the concrete floors going down and connections to water, gas and electricity are just a week away from being connected.

The Travel Hub is a crucial part of our regeneration of Prestwich, representing the first phase of our ambitious plans for the town, creating a vibrant, sustainable village centre that serves the whole community.

Once complete, the next phase will see the transformation of the Longfield Centre, with it being regenerated into a new multifunctional centre for the village – complete with a new library, retail units, a transformed market and new community and greenspaces.

Well done to our teams who have worked to keep disruption to a minimum, whilst delivering this transformative piece of regeneration.

### **Extra £20m boost for Radcliffe**

We're all pleased to welcome £20m worth of additional funding through the Labour Governments Pride in Place programme, with the spending of the money being decided by local residents.

The investment could be used for many things, including renovating old shops, restoring highstreets, planting gardens, designing new street furniture, or purchasing community assets – the list of uses for the money is virtually endless, and is totally up to local residents to decide.

This gift from the labour government is great news for local residents, and for the council, as this money comes alongside the millions of pounds we've invested into the regeneration of Radcliffe over the last few years.

Radcliffe is a town of great opportunity and potential, and I'm excited to see what local residents do with this funding, and how it links in with our ongoing regeneration.

**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.