


<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>The Council</b>
<b>Meeting date:</b>	<b>21st January 2026</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 *January 2026*



Welcome back to Council and to our first Council of 2026, I hope you all had a very happy festive period spent with family and friends, whether you were celebrating Christmas, Hannukah or just enjoying some time off over the period, and are refreshed and ready to take on the new year.

As we enter 2026, I want to wish yourselves, your families and friends a very happy new year, I want to also wish all our staff members and partners a happy new year, as we look to continue our great work into the future.

Here at Bury Council we're looking forward to a good year with many of our major regeneration projects scheduled for completion, the Radcliffe Hub, Bury Flexihall, Radcliffe Market Chambers, Prestwich Travel hub and with many more projects continuing to advance at pace, moving us closer to delivering our ambitious vision for a stronger, greener and more prosperous borough.

I also want to recognise the challenge this year brings, following over a decade of cuts to our budget and now increases in inflation, the cost of energy and materials, as well as the increasing demand for our services, we are facing a substantial budget gap. This is not a position any of us in the council want to be in, and myself, my cabinet and all of our staff here remain committed to upholding our vital services, and working to build a stronger borough for the future.

On a brighter note we've had a busy few months since the last council in November, with our market canopies completing, a new bridge in Radcliffe, a new foster care hub, a new cross Manchester partnership to support our markets, and a whole host of other events, announcements, and project completions.

From our 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 the year ahead, we remain ambitious, determined, and focused on delivering the best possible outcomes for the people of Bury.

### **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.

### **Hannukah Celebrations**

It was an honour to join with our Mayor and members of the Jewish community to celebrate Hannukah.

I wish it was in better circumstances that we should be coming together this Hannukah, and my heart and thoughts are with those that have been affected by the horrific antisemitic attacks we've seen both here in Manchester, at Heaton Park synagogue, and abroad. With our fellow Jewish community in Sydney, who were the victims of another senseless act of terror as they celebrated Hannukah.

We stand firmly with our Jewish community, and condemn all forms of antisemitism, violence and hatred, these feelings have no place in our borough, and we are determined to ensure that Bury remains a place where people feel safe and valued - and where our proud Jewish community can continue to thrive, as it has for generations.

Despite the circumstances, I want to wish our Jewish community a happy Hannukah, and I hope that this period is filled with joy, family and happiness for each and every one of you, as it should be.



### **Congratulations to our Bury MBE winners**

Congratulations are in order for several people named in the Kings Honours from Bury, these are:

**Clive Tyldesley** – Awarded the OBE – A well-known football commentator and one of Radcliffe's very own, awarded for his services to radio and broadcast.

**Ethan Spibey** – Awarded the OBE – Ethan founded and ran the Charity FreedomToDonate, which successfully ran a campaign that helped changed the rules for blood donation for gay and bisexual men.

Ethan was inspired to do so following his grandfather receiving a lifesaving blood in Fairfield General, but found he was unable to do so as a gay man.

The law to change this rule was lifted in 2021, allowing gay and bisexual men to donate blood.

**David Llewellyn Barrington** – awarded the MBE – for Services to mountain rescue in Cumbria and the wider lake district.

David originally began his career as a volunteer at 14, when he helped on a rescue on Blackstone edge, now at 74, with two hip and two knee replacements David still continues to serve as the director of the Langdale/Ambleside Mountain Rescue Team.

**Gail Elizabeth Wood** – Awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) for services to charity and for fundraising for Cancer Research UK

Congratulations to all our recipients and nominees, it is great to see people from Bury having such an impact in so many ways across our country.

From all of us here at Bury council, I want to send our warmest congratulations, and you give us all more reasons to be proud of our great borough.

### **Budget Setting Process underway**

The council has begun its budget setting process for the 2026/2027 municipal year, and I will be frank. The council faces one of the toughest financial situations in its history.

Over the last decade, we have had £140m of funding removed from our budget, and a reminder that our total budget is £329m, meaning our budget is around 42% smaller than it should be. The last few years since COVID have been increasingly challenging, with rising demand and rising costs. This is not a unique position, and councils across the country are feeling the impact of these factors.

This year we've already identified £8.5m worth of savings and we've closed our budget gap to £7.5m. Council teams are working hard to close this gap, creating a sustainable and stable financial base for the council.

However, the council is making great strides, we have improved our internal efficiency by magnitudes, transformed our systems and processes to reduce as much waste as possible, and we're increasing our income, by creating a stronger economy in Bury by building new town centres, homes, jobs and businesses.

It will not go unnoticed that wherever you look across the borough, there are projects, regeneration schemes, new buildings and new bridges – all in service of creating a stronger borough and local economy.

The council is working at 100% capacity to deliver for our local residents, grow the economy, and make Bury a great place to live, work and do business in.

I cannot give enough thanks to our hundreds of council staff that do more with less, and keep our vital services running.

### **Freedoms of the Borough**

I would like to also once again congratulate our Freedom of the Borough recipients, Keith & Helen Atkinson and Unsworth Councillor and former Mayor Joan Grimshaw.

All three of our nominees have demonstrated the highest levels of commitment to our borough and to the lives of our local citizens.

Keith & Helen have fostered 23 children across 30 years, helping to support the most vulnerable in our society, a truly selfless dedication that has supported dozens of children to feel safe and supported.

Councillor Joan Grimshaw needs no introduction, and has been a steadfast community champion across her decades of service to our council and her community of Unsworth, Joan has also been a keen proponent of the Bury Blind Society, who I know will be happy to see her recognised for her efforts

### **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:**

## **Winter Well programme**

We know that winter is a hard time for many of our residents, and the council is working to support our most vulnerable at this time.

We have Warm Spaces available across the borough, where residents can find warm, safe, and inclusive spaces in which to enjoy refreshments, meet other residents and seek information and advice, a full list of our Warm Spaces can be found here: [Warm Spaces Bury | Bury Directory](#)

We're also distributing Winter Warmer Packs to those most in need across the borough. The 450 packs contain essentials such as thermal socks, blankets, snoods, food, heat packs and hand warmers, as well as information about additional support, such as local community groups and financial support.

This is all part of our 'Winter Well Scheme' designed to support those who need it over winter, including financial support, the aforementioned Warm Spaces and Winter Warmer Packs, as well as support with the cost of living and vaccinations against winter bugs like coronavirus or the flu.

Thank you to our staff, community groups, partners and local businesses for helping to care and support our most vulnerable, and thank you to Councillor Tamoor Tariq for assisting with the organisation and his continued championing of initiatives to support our residents.

## **Falcon and Griffin Extra Care Team Rated Good**



The CQC recently visited our Falcon and Griffin Extra Care Scheme, under new framework that recently came into force.

Falcon and Griffin support tenants across 69 properties, with a warden system that provides help and support 24/7.

It gives me great pleasure to say that this service has been rated as 'Good' by the CQC, noting that the staff were confident in management, accommodation was well maintained and of a good quality, and the residents said they felt safe and supported living at Falcon and Griffin.

This excellent inspection is just another feather in the cap of the fantastic adults care services we have cultivated within the council, and again reflects the dedication and compassion shown by each one of our staff members.

Although there are areas for improvement noted by the inspection, I am assured that these recommendations are in hand, and that the service will be in an even more positive place come the next inspection.

Congratulations to the staff involved, we thank you for your tireless work in looking after those who need our support, well done to Councillor Tariq Tamoor, who is a constant champion of his portfolio area.

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

### **Believe and achieve awards**

In late November it was my honour to open the Believe and Achieve awards held to recognise the achievements of our children in care and our care leavers, it was wonderful to see and speak to so many, all in celebration of our young people.





136 children and young people were nominated, across categories for personal growth. Teamwork, wellbeing, education, sport, creativity and community spirit. Winners included two young children who raised money for bury hospice, and a young person who made the big step of joining their local theatre group.

This yearly event is always wonderful, and reminds us of the talent and potential in all of children in care and care leavers, to recognise even a small portion of this, and to support our looked after children and our care leavers is always special.

My thanks to the many hundreds of staff that supported this event, whether directly in its organisation, or in the tireless work that goes on 365 to ensure those in our care are looked after to the best of our abilities.

And a big congratulations to all our winners!



## **Groundbreaking Foster Carers Hub opens**



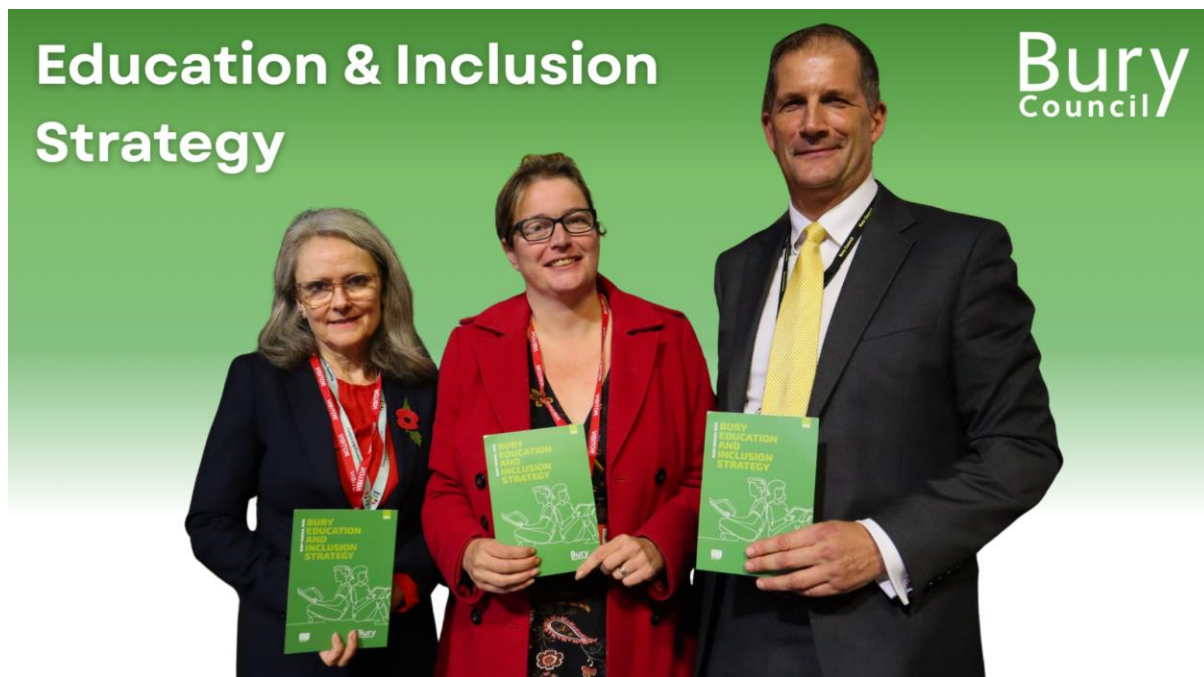
I was very happy to see the launch of our new Foster Carers hub in the town hall, providing a central space for foster and kinship carers can come together, have meetings, attend training, socialise and build a stronger fostering community.

I would like to especially give my thanks to Keith and Helen Atkinson, who have fostered 23 vulnerable children across more than 30 years. Keith and Helen were both recently awarded freedom of the borough awards for their selfless dedication to supporting the most vulnerable in our community.

Fostering can and will have an enormous impact for the better on many children's lives, and the council is committed to supporting our carers, and the work they do, to the best of our abilities. Alongside our new hub we offer training, development, respite care, peer support grounds, financial assistance and a council tax discount.

Well done to our teams for this wonderful new space, and for all that you do to support our foster carers.

## **Launch of Bury's new Education and Inclusion Strategy**



I was happy to see our new Education and Inclusion strategy launched by our recently appointed Director of Early Years, Ben Dunne, Executive Director of Children And Young People Jeanette Richards and Councillor Lucy Smith.

The new strategy is a shared vision between the council and our local schools, reaffirming the strong commitment to ensuring that every child and young person has access to a high quality education that allows them to reach their potential, built on strong partnerships, trust and transparency.

Members of our SEND changemakers gave powerful accounts of their educational journeys - with voices like theirs placed at the heart of our strategy, young people have helped guide and co-develop the strategy, alongside education leaders, children, families, carers and our wider services.

I would like to congratulate Ben, Jeanette and Councillor Smith on this new strategy, which will set the groundwork for stronger partnerships and relationships, by working together across the borough in this way we will improve the environment for all young people, helping to create a better, more inclusive educational system for all.

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

#### **Bury Market Canopies complete**





In a major milestone for our beloved Bury Market, I joined with our markets team, Vinci, Chief Executive Lynne Ridsdale and Councillor Morris to mark the completion of our new canopies.

The new canopies are now fully completed ahead of schedule creating a new layer of weather protection for traders, and it was nice to hear from traders how the new canopies are already making a difference, keeping the rain off them and helping to boost footfall on rainy days. It's also good to see the difference the canopies make to the market visually,



Installed by our partners and main contractor VINCI over the last year, our staff took great care in scheduling works to have minimal impact during the building phase, and I'm very pleased to say that not a single day of trading activity was lost across the construction of the canopies.

Bury Market has been in the town for over 600 years, and it gives me the greatest pleasure to see this world-renowned cultural asset continue to

flourish and improve.

We're investing heavily in the market and Bury Town Centre, with an ambitious £33m regeneration project in the canopies and Flexihall, joined by an additional £80m confirmed by the Chancellor to upgrade our Interchange.

The future of Bury and the Market is bright, and my thanks go to the many hundreds of staff, market traders and loyal market-going residents for their continued work and support – helping to make our market something that all of Bury can truly be proud of

### **Radcliffe Bridge returns after a decade.**



It's very good to see the new Milltown Bridge in place and spanning the Irwell, replacing a link that was sadly destroyed in the winter storms of 2015.



No one was more pleased than Councillor Alan Quinn, Cabinet Member for Environment and Climate Change, as the £3.2m 50m long single span bridge, which was manufactured from British steel in Nottingham, was lowered into place.

The new bridge, located higher above the water than the previous bridge, and without any in-river supports means that it is at less risk of future damage, and should be standing strong for many years to come.

The new bridge restores a crucial link in our borough and will help to improve the journeys of residents who wish to walk, cycle and wheel around Radcliffe.

My many thanks to our teams, main contractor Bethell and the fabricators of the bridge, Briton, for their work in making this a reality.



## **Our ambitious plans for Bury continue at pace**

2025 has been a strong year for many of our regeneration projects, with the commencement, continued work and completion of many schemes.

Across 2025, alongside many other cabinet members, it was my pleasure to open many of the completed schemes, these included the new Pocket Park in Radcliffe, a new extension to the Kershaw PRU, Whittaker Street PRU and we acquired the funding and design package for the Northern Gateway.



In 2026 the council will continue to drive forward with its ambitious plans for our borough, and were looking forward to having the best year yet for construction and regeneration across the borough – with landmark projects in Radcliffe such as the Market Chambers, Hub and the Enterprise centre all scheduled to complete in 2026.

Elsewhere, the Bury Flexi Hall will join with the new canopies, completing the updates to Bury market for now, before the work begins on renewing the interchange in 2027 and we look to future projects across the town centre.

In Prestwich the travel hub will open, and we'll be submitting planning applications for the Longfield Centre, which will be transformed into a modern community hub, new retail spaces, market hall and a new village square.

Finally, we'll be welcoming a new children's centre at Chesham Fold, a new housing development at Fletcher Fold, consisting of affordable and social housing to support our elderly community, and an additional 13 homes at Willow Road to support those with physical or sensory needs, or learning disabilities.

**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.