

	Party	Question	Questioner
1	Together for Bury	Can the Cabinet Member confirm what percentage of vehicle damage claims due to potholes have been rejected since 2022?	Councillor R Bernstein
	Councillor Alan Quinn	<p>Since January 1, 2022, a total of 695 pothole- related vehicle damage claims have been submitted, of which 346 (50%) were denied.</p> <p>The majority of denials were issued in accordance with Section 58 of the Highways Act 1980, which allows the Council to reject claims when it can demonstrate that an adequate inspection and repair regime in place at the relevant location.</p> <p>By way of comparison between 2016 and 2019 we received 875 claims and had a repudiation rate of 25%</p>	
2	Radcliffe First	Given the number of blocked grids and gullies in Bury. Does the council intend to increase the number of teams given our current climate crisis with the aim to limit the increase flooding risk.	Councillor M Smith
	Councillor Alan Quinn	<p>An additional £100,000 was added to Highway Maintenance budget in 2024/25 which allows the team to operate 2 gully wagons throughout the year.</p> <p>This additional resource allows us to attend to each of our 42,000 highway gullies annually.</p>	
3	Labour	Residents in Prestwich can now see spades in the ground for the regeneration project. Can we have an update on plans and timings for the next phase?	Councillor Elliot Moss
	Leader	<p>Alongside the delivery of the Travel Hub (that is expected to be practically complete July 2026), work has continued at pace to prepare for the delivery of the remaining development phases (Phase 1B and 2), which will see the rest of the project delivered. This includes new housing, new retail units, a market hall, new leisure facilities and a new home for the library and attractive public realm.</p> <p>The GMCA has provided comfort to Bury Council that funds will be available to deliver the next phases (1B/2) of development in their March 2026 Patient Equity regeneration funding round. The GMCA has set aside sufficient monies in terms of grant funding, patient and private equity which, combined with Council Prudential Borrowing, will fully fund the development to completion.</p> <p>The exact timescale in March 26 for submission of the Patient Equity funding application is yet to be advised by GMCA.</p>	

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		<p>Provision of these funds from the GMCA is contingent on the project hitting specific milestones; specifically, the submission of a Planning Application, procurement of a contractor and a meaningful start of demolition works.</p> <p>In line with achieving the 3 milestones, the current delivery programme has the following timeline that is constantly being reviewed and may change as it is further developed and moves through the RIBA stages but:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Submission of planning permission for the remaining phases (1B/2) that will see the delivery of the remaining commercial elements and new homes will be by the end February/start March 2026. This will include further consultation with the community and other key stakeholders currently being scheduled for end January 2026. - Demolition of the existing Longfield Shopping Centre will be from March 2026 – June 2026. All remaining tenants had their notices served on 7th January 2026 with a date for vacation at the latest 7th April 2026. The Council have offered meetings to support tenants with any queries /concerns they may have. Work is in progress to temporarily move the library to the Phoenix Centre in St Mary's Park. - The construction of the next phases will be July 2026 – October 2028. <p>More accurate timelines will be available as contractors are procured and appointed.</p> <p>There will be regular communications sent out across social media and other media sources.</p>	
4	Labour	It's great to see Mill town bridge now rebuilt. Can I ask what the leader believes the benefit of the bridge is to local people?	Councillor Debbie Quinn
	Councillor E O'Brien	<p>The Milltown Bridge is a clear example of this Council delivering on both its responsibilities and its ambitions.</p> <p>First and foremost, it reinstates a long-established public right of way, which is a legal duty we absolutely must fulfil, restoring a safe, direct route for local people.</p> <p>The bridge is a key piece of regeneration infrastructure, directly supporting new and future development in the Milltown area and ensuring homes are properly connected to the wider town</p> <p>It provides a high-quality route for walking and cycling, linking into Radcliffe's growing active travel network and making it easier for</p>	

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		<p>residents to travel safely, sustainably and conveniently without relying on the car.</p> <p>This brings real benefits - better access to jobs, education and services, improved health and wellbeing, and stronger connections between neighbourhoods.</p> <p>In short, this bridge reconnects communities, supports regeneration, promotes healthier lifestyles, and demonstrates exactly the kind of practical, people-focused investment this Council is committed to delivering.</p>	
5	Conservative	<p>Residents across Bury regularly raise concerns about blocked road gullies leading to surface water flooding during heavy rain.</p> <p>Can the Cabinet Member confirm how often gullies are inspected and cleared, whether known flooding hotspots are prioritised, and what the expected emergency response timeframe is when blocked drains are reported as an urgent risk to road safety or nearby properties?</p>	Councillor S Arif
	Councillor Alan Quinn	<p>Highway gullies are checked annually and any found to be blocked are cleared.</p> <p>Officers have identified flooding hotspots across the borough. We have an enhanced inspection and maintenance regime in place for these hot spot locations, checking and clearing them ahead of high rainfall weather warnings.</p> <p>Our emergency response timeframe for all types of highway defects is 2 hours.</p>	
6	Together for Bury	<p>How effective have the Christmas refuse collection arrangements been and if any bins have been missed how confident are the Council that any backlog will be dealt with quickly?</p>	Councillor D Vernon
	Councillor Quinn	<p>Residents were informed of the revised festive collection schedules through a combination of channels, including the annual waste collection calendar, the Council's website, and our social media platforms. To ensure we had sufficient operational capacity to maintain reliable collections over the busy period, food and garden waste services were temporarily stood down, allowing us to prioritise the main household waste and recycling streams.</p>	

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		<p>Across the Christmas and New Year period, all scheduled collections were completed on the designated collection day. In the small number of cases where streets were not accessible, we were able to return and complete collections within two working days.</p> <p>During week commencing 5 January, we did experience icy conditions, particularly in harder to reach and rural areas. This made safe access challenging for our crews.</p> <p>However, where collections could not be completed on the scheduled day, we deployed additional resources and successfully recovered all outstanding bins by the end of that week.</p> <p>Overall, the service operated effectively throughout the festive period, and we remain confident in our ability to respond quickly to any isolated missed collections that may occur.</p>	
7	Radcliffe First	Over the year many volunteers have been litter cleaning and saved the council thousands of pounds in cleaning. Volunteers have expressed frustration on constantly cleaning the same area. What does the council intend to do more to catch and prosecute fly tippers and litters. Will the council look at more means to catch casual littering.	Councillor M Walsh
	Councillor A Quinn	<p>The Council recognises and greatly values the efforts of volunteers who have helped keep our communities clean, saving significant costs. We share your concerns about repeat littering and fly-tipping and are committed to tackling these issues more effectively.</p> <p>Councillors and officers of the council were on the frontlines of the fight against litter the last year, with our community cleanups, with 259 volunteers helping to remove 23 tonnes of waste and fly tipping.</p> <p>Over the past year, our two dedicated full-time Fly-Tipping Officers have responded to 848 service requests, issued 27 Fixed Penalty Notices (11 for littering and 16 for fly-tipping), secured one successful prosecution with two more pending, and facilitated 10 waste removals from private land.</p>	

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		<p>Our strategy focuses on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targeting hotspots using local intelligence and community feedback. • Maintaining a visible presence in problem areas. • Working closely with community groups to educate and raise awareness. <p>While legislative limitations and evidential requirements can restrict enforcement, we continue to explore additional measures, including technology and partnership approaches, to strengthen our ability to catch and wherever possible prosecute offenders.</p> <p>However, our teams cannot operate without intelligence from councillors or the public, and I encourage all councillors here to report fly tipping using the councils tools, and I encourage residents to do the same</p> <p>Partner feedback is vital, and we remain committed to improving outcomes and reducing repeat offences.</p>	
8	Labour	Can the Leader update us on the CQC inspection at Falcon House, Chesham Fold?	Councillor S Walmsley
	Councillor Tariq	<p>I am pleased to inform you that our Extra Care Service at Falcon and Griffin was rated at Good in all 5 domains, Safe, Effective, Caring, Good and Well Led.</p> <p>The inspector spoke to a number of residents who said the staff went out of their way, and nothing was too much trouble.</p> <p>They reported feedback from professionals as being overwhelmingly positive and they praised the manager who they assessed as having the skills, experience, credibility and great values to deliver a great service.</p> <p>This rating is a credit to the hard work of our senior officers, and to the staff that work within Falcon and Griffin, I am proud to say that Bury's adult services continue to excel and improve.</p>	
9	Labour	The consultation on Council tax support has closed, what was the result of the consultation and what impact will this have on residents?	Councillor Ayesha Arif
	Councillor Sean Thorpe	<p>A paper was taken to November Cabinet seeking approval to consult on the proposed changes to the Working Age Council Tax Support scheme.</p> <p>The Council Tax Support scheme is more generous for Bury's residents and</p>	

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		<p>focuses on working families with children. The average CTS award will increase from 74% to 79% and 88% of residents will be better off under the new scheme – putting more money back into the hands of our poorest hardworking families and parents across the borough.</p> <p>The consultation was well run and well publicised, and received 1,333 responses – by comparison in 2016, the last Council Tax Support consultation recorded just 46 responses.</p> <p>The consultation focused on the specific changes being proposed to the scheme, whilst aiming to capture detail on the types of households providing response. Resident feedback was to be collated through an online survey, with a dedicated mailbox provided for submission of queries or issues, and resident Support Hubs available to support residents with face-to-face advice as well as assisted survey completion.</p> <p>Of the 1,333 respondents, 580 were in receipt of CTS, whilst 753 residents were not in receipt.</p> <p>Given the above, the response rate represents a significant improvement on previous consultations and most importantly provides a meaningful representation of resident feedback on the proposal.</p> <p>Consultation responses</p> <p>The survey results demonstrate that whilst some residents disagree with certain measures being proposed, there is broad approval for the changes being put forward. It is therefore considered that the public consultation, its response rate, range of respondents and its results provide a mandate for making the proposed changes to the Council Tax Support scheme.</p>	
10	Conservative	Following on from confirmation at a previous council meeting that a Puffin Crossing will be installed on Ainsworth Road BL8, please would you inform me directly as ward councillor when this work will take place and which criteria will be used to ascertain its location.	Councillor J Harris
	Councillor Quinn	<p>The Ainsworth Road crossing is scheduled for delivery as part of our 2026/27 ITB programme.</p> <p>The detailed programme has not yet been finalised, so we are currently unable to provide a more precise installation timeframe. Ward members will continue to be updated as the scheme design and delivery progress.</p> <p>Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM) is undertaking the detailed design work for this crossing, including determining its optimum location, as they are responsible for all traffic signal assets.</p>	

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		<p>The final location will be informed by several factors, including pedestrian desire lines, the existing highway layout, accident data, and other relevant considerations.</p> <p>As soon as I have this information, I will be happy to share it with members.</p>	
11	Together for Bury	How significant a challenge is falling school numbers to school planning?	Councillor J Lancaster
	Councillor Lucy Smith	<p>We now have well- established evidence that the country is experiencing a sustained fall in birth rates, and this trend is having a direct impact on pupil numbers both nationally and locally. Within our area, we are seeing an accelerated decline in rolls, with projections indicating a surplus capacity of around 11.6% in 2026/27, rising further to 17.2% by 2028/29. This pattern is not uniform across the borough, however. Visits to schools continue to highlight settings in significant need of investment, particularly where buildings have not benefited from major capital improvements over the past 14 years. There remains hope that future school- building programmes will enable these schools to access the modernised classrooms and improved specialist spaces they urgently require.</p> <p>At the same time, other parts of the borough are experiencing the most acute effects of falling rolls, which brings challenges both for individual schools and for the wider system. These issues go beyond simple pupil numbers; any decisions relating to school- place planning must take account of geography, travel distances, local neighbourhood identity and the valuable sense of community that schools provide.</p> <p>We expect to progress this work more fully once further updates are received from the Department for Education. Through our new Education Strategy, we aim to facilitate meaningful discussions about the future use of school buildings, sufficiency planning and the potential budgetary impacts of declining rolls, while ensuring we retain the strong sense of place that our school communities value. This work will continue through the new Education Board and will align with new DfE sufficiency guidance, to which we have contributed.</p>	
12	Radcliffe First	<p>I was recently told in a response to my question at Overview & Scrutiny that:</p> <p><i>“Bury is currently seeing the highest number of 18–24-year-olds per 100,000 accessing long term support compared to other councils and this will be a core area of focus for cost reductions and mitigations”</i></p>	Councillor C Birchmore

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		Please can you explain what you think the reasons for this are and what process you envisage using to identify specific “ <i>cost reductions and mitigations</i> ”?	
	Councillor Thorpe	<p>This is a complex, nationwide issue, and the full reasons for this not yet known - but will be explored as part of the work our Children’s and Adult Services are doing together to improve our services that help our older children transition to adult services.</p> <p>Collecting this data for councils in England has been in place for less than a year so the first thing we are checking is if our data definitions are correct and aligned with national guidance.</p> <p>Again, this is a national issue which has been covered extensively in the media, and our council will be working alongside the Labour government in devising solutions to ensure our young adults are best cared for.</p>	
13	Labour	Can we have an update on children’s services improvement following from July’s Ofsted inspection which had seen improvement in all areas	Councillor Shaheena Haroon
	Councillor Lucy Smith	<p>Inspectors saw improvement across all areas and noted areas for further development and improvement.</p> <p>We have refreshed our Improvement Plan to ensure it includes the recommendations and other learning points we identified, as well as some of our wider transformation activity that directly links to continued improvement.</p> <p>This plan was submitted to Ofsted in November, and in December they approved this stating that “It is helpful to see the actions planned to address the identified areas for improvement and the clearly identified governance arrangements for monitoring progress”.</p> <p>Progress against the Plan was shared at CYP Scrutiny earlier this month. We have established a Strengthening Outcomes Board to oversee progress of the plan, which is independently chaired and includes our DfE Advisor.</p> <p>We continue with plans in relation to wider improvement activity, including a delivery plan for implementation of the Families First Partnership Programme (commonly referred to as the reforms).</p> <p>Our Delivery Plan has been co-produced with delegated safeguarding partners (Police, Health, Education) and was submitted to DfE on 18th December 2025. Progress against the plan will be discussed in</p>	

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		<p>quarterly meeting with the DfE regional team. The Delivery Plan sets out our key milestones including an expansion of Family Group Decision Making in Spring, and pilots of Family Help and Multi-Agency Child Protection Teams in June 2026.</p> <p>We remain firmly focused on improving the stability of our workforce and quality of their work with children and families, and achieving the best possible outcomes for families.</p>	
14	Labour	Culture is a large part of our town and economy- what plans do we have in 2026 to support culture across the borough	Councillor Martin hayes
	Councillor Charlotte Morris	<p>The council is working closely with cultural partners to review the Cultural Strategy, in line with the <i>Let's Do It</i> Strategy through to 2030. In addition, we are collaborating the Combined Authority (GMCA) to shape emerging cultural priorities and secure investment in areas such as Creative Industries and Creative Health through Culture.</p> <p>Building on the success of events delivered in 2025—funded by Local Growth, Place, and Flexible Grants—which engaged over 32,000 people across 69 events between April and December, we continue to work with cultural partners and community groups to deliver a diverse programme supported by this funding. These projects will run through to March 2026 and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whitefield and Radcliffe Cultural Engagement - Feb-March • Storytelling Festival - Feb-March • Ramsbottom Come Together Festival - 6th - 8th Feb • Bringing It Back to You – An engagement project for local care homes, delivering creative sessions to boost resident activity and wellbeing in the new year. Feb-March • Artist Networking Opportunities – Encouraging collaboration and idea-sharing among local creatives. Feb-March <p>We are actively seeking further funding to continue a similar programme of cultural events into the next financial year, with the aim of increasing community participation and engagement.</p>	
15	Conservative	The draft 2026/27 budget report shows a £7.547m gap after £8.453m of proposed savings. What specific additional proposals does the Leader and Cabinet have in mind to close the outstanding £7.547m budgetary gap?	Councillor I Gartside

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	Councillor Sean Thorpe	<p>The December Cabinet report clearly noted that officers are working on further proposals to reduce the funding gap and have been focusing on 3 areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Internal Transformation - this includes the development of a workforce and digital strategy including looking at the scope for becoming more cost-effective and efficient in our service delivery models including opportunities for automation and process improvement. 2. Contain Growth / Demand Pressures – looking particularly at any options for reducing social care demand and the cost of meeting that demand. 3. Income in the Place Directorate - this includes ensuring that all current sales, fees and charges are reviewed to ensure they cover the full cost of service delivery, and new avenues of income generation are fully explored, including, but not limited to parking fees and traffic enforcement charges. <p>The updated 2026/27 budget proposals will be reported to Cabinet in February along with the outcome of the Provisional Financial Settlement received just before Xmas and the outcome of the Pension Fund Triennial Valuation which will lead to reduced employer contribution levels.</p> <p>Across the council myself and the leader are meeting with officers to find solutions to the challenges we face, which, if I can remind the member opposite, would not be so severe if his party had not spent their 14 years in government slashing our public sector funding to the bone.</p> <p>This labour government has committed to improving council finances, and we expect to see a rise in the funding we receive from central government as part of the Fair Funding review, and the first multi-year settlement in nearly a decade, ending the chaos of single year settlements.</p>	
16	Together for Bury	How many reported incidents of domestic abuse have taken place in the Borough during the last calendar year?	Councillor L McBriar
	Councillor Walmsley	Every incident of domestic abuse in our borough is a tragedy, and in the 2025 calendar year there were 4,316 reported incidents of Domestic	

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		<p>Abuse across the Borough.</p> <p>Information on the work of the Bury Community Safety Partnership on addressing domestic abuse, which is one of the Partnership's priorities, can be found in the annual update provided to the Overview & Scrutiny committee in November 2025.</p> <p>The council and its partners are committed to reducing the rates of domestic abuse in our borough, so that no one should live in fear.</p>	
17	Labour	Can the Leader update us on the progress of the VALOUR programme for Veterans?	Councillor Babar Ibrahim
	Councillor Walmsley	<p>VALOUR is a groundbreaking national programme designed to make it easier for veterans across the UK to access care and support, but have for a long time not had proper access to.</p> <p>I am delighted to say that this Labour government is finally addressing this injustice, and ending the postcode lottery of support so many veterans have experienced, and ensuring all our veterans are cared for – no matter where they may be.</p> <p>Led by the Office for Veterans' Affairs (OVA) within the Ministry of Defence, it aims to improve how services are coordinated at national, regional and local levels, ensuring veterans get the right support, in the right place, at the right time.</p> <p>Nationally VALOUR has been recruiting the key roles of Head of VALOUR, VALOUR field officers and VALOUR managers, with this information shared through Bury's Armed Forces Covenant network.</p> <p>Bury is working alongside colleagues at the Greater Manchester Combined Authority on exploring opportunities to support connectivity locally and regionally into VALOUR development resources, including through a GMCA led session on 5th February – ensuring that the VALOUR programme in our borough and across our city helps as many of our veterans that we are able to.</p> <p>VALOUR is just one element of the Veteran support ecosystem, with Bury connecting through local Veterans and Armed Forces groups to review the national Veterans Strategy alongside local insight and priorities around health, housing and education through the local</p>	

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		Armed Forces Covenant Steering Group which most recently met earlier this month.	
18	Labour	Can the leader confirm current performance against target times for non-emergency repairs in council housing, and what action is being taken where residents are waiting beyond those times?	Councillor Gareth Staples-Jones
	Councillor Cummins	<p>The current performance against target times for non-emergency repairs is 67.32% being completed within the target timescale of 17 days. It is currently taking an average of 21 days to complete non-emergency repairs.</p> <p>Our permanent Head of Repairs started at the end of November and is currently carrying out a full review of our repairs data, performance measures, and operational processes. This review will ensure that our data is accurate, that we understand the root causes of delays, and that we strengthen our planning, scheduling, and reporting arrangements.</p> <p>For tenants waiting beyond target times, we are taking several actions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritising and clearing overdue repairs • Reallocating resources to areas of highest demand • Strengthening daily operational oversight • Improving resident communication and follow up <p>The review will inform a more robust delivery plan to improve performance and ensure residents receive a consistent and timely service.</p>	
19	Conservative	North Manor Ward includes semi-rural areas and has a growing ageing population. What action is the Council taking to protect access to key local services, particularly public transport and community health provision for older residents, and how will this be reflected in future budget decisions?	Councillor K Hussain
	Leader	<p>The council is taking a number of actions to protect access to local services in our more rural settings</p> <p>Greater Manchester has taken control of the bus system through bus franchising and for the first time, can plan routes, set affordable fares and integrate buses into the wider transport system: the Bee Network. This means that when planning bus routes and timetables, profit will no longer be the main focus. Instead, the network will be designed so that services arrive on time, at convenient locations and offer the best value for money.</p>	

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		<p>Now that all bus services in Greater Manchester, including Bury, have joined the Bee Network, Transport for Greater Manchester will be reviewing the network with the aim of making improvements to ensure that the bus system is accessible to everyone, whatever their background and wherever they live or work. We will work closely with Transport for Greater Manchester on this review to ensure that the bus offer meets local needs in all parts of the borough, including in rural and semi-rural areas.</p> <p>Whilst the council is not the budget holder for Community Services the council will work with NHS GM as the commissioner of community health services, and the providers of community health services, for example GPs and Northern Care alliance, to ensure needs are met in the light of changing demographics, and recognises the NHS 10 year priorities for a shift from treatment to prevention and from hospital to community based provision.</p> <p>This council is investing across our borough, and working to protect and support all our residents, no matter their age, income or location.</p>	
20	Conservative	What proportion of last year's budget savings proposals were delivered on time and in full?	Councillor R Brown
	Councillor Sean Thorpe	93.88% of approved savings were delivered in 2024/25	
21	Independent	<p>I welcomed the Leaders statement at the last Council Meeting stating that he was open to proposals for improvements in my Ward .</p> <p>The highways on Lyndon Close , Wesley St , Woodstock Drive and Meadow Way are all in an extremely poor condition .</p> <p>My request is that these roads be prioritised and included in the next programme of resurfacing for TOTTINGTON Ward</p>	Councillor Y Wright
	Councillor A Quinn	<p>Our resurfacing programmes are developed using a robust, evidence - based approach that considers a range of factors, including road condition, classification, insurance claims, and repair history. This methodology was commended by the LGA during their peer review of our highway service in 2022 and has subsequently been adopted by many of our GM colleagues.</p> <p>The streets you have highlighted will be assessed alongside all others streets in the borough as part of the process for planning future years' resurfacing programmes.</p>	