

Classification: Open	Decision Type: Key
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Report to:	Cabinet	Date: 11 February 2026
Subject:	Bury Flexi Hall – Lease to Midlands Events Bury Ltd	
Report of	Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth	

1. Summary

- 1.1. This report seeks approval to grant a 15-year lease to Midlands Events Bury Ltd (MEB) for the operation of the ground floor of Bury Flexi Hall, enabling them to manage the food, drink and events offer in line with the Council’s ambitions for the venue.
- 1.2. The report also seeks approval to provide MEB with a loan facility, as set out in Part B of this report, to fund the full internal fit-out of the ground floor, including the installation of food units, bar infrastructure, stage, furniture and associated equipment necessary to prepare the space for occupation and operation.
- 1.3. MEB are an experienced operator of multiuse food and events destinations. Their portfolio includes the successful mobilisation and management of Queens Market in Rhyl, which launched in July 2025 with full trader occupancy and high visitor numbers, demonstrating their capability to activate complex spaces and support wider town centre regeneration.
- 1.4. Vinci is scheduled to reach practical completion of the Flexi Hall in Summer 2026. Following handover, MEB will undertake a two to three month fit out period, enabling the venue to open to the public in Autumn 2026.
- 1.5. The Council’s vision for the Flexi Hall is to create a high-quality destination that significantly increases footfall into Bury Town Centre, reinforces the pivotal role of Bury Market, enhances the town’s currently limited evening food offer, and provides a diverse programme of cultural and community activity. Securing an experienced operator is essential to delivering this vision and strengthening the town centre’s nighttime economy.
- 1.6. Following a period of public consultation on potential names for the venue, the name ‘Casewells’ has been selected. This reflects strong support for the heritage connection to Casewell’s, the shop believed to have produced and sold Bury’s first black pudding in 1810, and provides a

distinctive, locally resonant identity for the new hall. Hereafter, the facility previously designated as the 'Flexi Hall' shall be referred to as 'Casewells'.

- 1.7. The ground floor of Casewells will comprise 12 food and retail units, a central bar and a stage for entertainment and events, forming the core offer of the new food and events hall.

2. Recommendation(s)

That Cabinet:

- 2.1 Approve the grant of a lease for a term of 15 years with an option to grant a further 10-year term to MEB to occupy the ground floor and if required part of the 1st floor for use as a food and events hall.
- 2.2 Approve a 12-month rent free period.
- 2.3 Approve the loan to MEB of up to £1.1m.
- 2.4 Delegate any minor variations to the final Heads of Terms and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to the Assistant Director for Corporate Assets and Facilities Management.
- 2.5 Delegate the commercial terms of the loan facility to the Section 151 Officer.
- 2.6 Delegate the signing of all the required documents to complete the transaction, including the Agreement for Lease, Lease and Loan Agreement to Director of Law and Governance.
- 2.7 Note that the name selected for Bury Flexi Hall as 'Casewells'.

3. Reasons for recommendation(s)

- 3.1 MEB has a strong track record in delivering and operating successful food, drink and events venues, providing confidence in their ability to activate and manage Casewells effectively.
- 3.2 Granting the lease and enabling the associated loan for fitout works will ensure the operator can deliver a high-quality food and events venue, supporting the Council's regeneration objectives for the town centre.

4. Alternative options considered and rejected

- 4.1 Do not proceed with the lease and loan to MEB and Bury Council operate and manage the facility directly. This option has been discounted due to

lack of internal capacity and experience of operating modern food and entertainment facilities.

- 4.2 Lease to another third party. The Council undertook a procurement exercise to secure best terms for a third party and this bid aligns with the Council's objectives and timescale for delivery. To rerun the exercise would delay the opening of Casewells and incur further cost to the Council and could negatively impact the Council's reputation.

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5. Background

5.1. Casewells

- 5.1.1. In October 2021 the Council was notified of its successful bid to the Levelling Up fund for a £20 million contribution towards the Bury Market regeneration scheme. The project involves the creation of a high quality, flexible, multi-functional food and events facility adjacent to Bury Market and located at a key gateway to the Town Centre.

5.2. Vision for Casewells

- 5.2.1. When engaging with operators, Bury Council shared the following vision for Casewells:
- To have a facility which acts as a major driver of footfall into Bury Town Centre reinforcing the critical role Bury Market plays in generating visitor numbers to the town centre
 - To have an evening food offer (the Town has many daytime casual eating venues, but the night-time offer is much weaker)
 - To have a food offer of sufficient quality to draw in an audience from the wealthier catchments around Bury who do not use the town centre
 - To develop a food offer that complements the many cultural venues in the Town
 - To have a facility that is busy on a seven-day basis, with a multitude of different users
 - To create a focal point for the people of Bury, and offer community events, programmes and activities

5.3. Market Engagement

- 5.3.1. An expression of interest for the opportunity to operate a food and events venue in Casewells was launched on 19th March 2025. This was led by Sixteen Real Estate in conjunction with STAR Procurement and the Bury Council project team.
- 5.3.2. Initial introductory meetings with interested parties were held in late April and early May. Further meetings were conducted in early June with shortlisted operators.
- 5.3.3. Further engagement with operators took place between July and September 2025. Following this engagement, in October 2025, Bury Council entered into an exclusivity agreement with MEB for a period of six months whilst they progressed their detailed proposals.

5.4. Midlands Events Bury

- 5.4.1. MEB is a family-owned business established in 2016 with experience in market operations, event delivery and food and beverage management. The company specialises in full end-to-end mobilisation and operational management, with a strong emphasis on high quality standards, local supply chains and community impact.
- 5.4.2. Their portfolio includes the successful operation of Queens Market in Rhyl on behalf of Denbighshire County Council, where Midlands Events implemented a multiuse trading and events model that achieved 100% trader occupancy at launch and attracted 50,000 visitors in the first month. The project is widely regarded as a benchmark for post Covid town centre regeneration, demonstrating MEB' ability to deliver inclusive, commercially resilient and community focused destinations.

5.5. Lease Terms

- 5.5.1. Full details of the terms for the proposed the lease are contained within Part B of this report.

5.6. Loan facility

- 5.6.1. Full details of the loan facility are contained within Part B of this report.

5.7. Timescales

- 5.7.1. The construction of Casewells is advancing rapidly as of February 2026. The structural frame is complete, and the roofs, floors, lifts and staircases have been installed. The base cladding sheets are nearly complete, and

windows are being installed around the building. The mechanical and electrical services installations are well underway, and the main air-handling units have been lifted up on to the lower roof. The timber cladding will start shortly together with the external brickwork walls. Works have started to form the new public realm along Princess Parade. Planned completion is mid-June 2026.

5.7.2. The operator/leaseholder will require sufficient time to fit out the space for their intended use, for a target opening date of Autumn 2026.

5.8. Operation of the Venue

5.8.1. MEB will be responsible for the full operational management of Casewells including vendor recruitment and selection, issuing and managing licence agreements, day-to-day liaison with traders, onsite operations, customer care, compliance, marketing, financial administration and delivery of the events and entertainment programme. Their operating package also covers health and safety management, lettings, income management, continuous improvement, and comprehensive reporting to the Council, including KPIs and turnover rent information.

5.8.2. The ground floor of the Casewells will comprise 12 food and retail units, a central bar, and a dedicated stage area for entertainment and cultural programming. There is a projector and music booth facility on the 1st floor which MEB may require. MEB will curate a diverse, high-quality vendor mix through a structured scoring and onboarding process, prioritising local businesses while ensuring a balanced and inclusive offer that reflects the borough's communities.

5.8.3. A core responsibility of MEB will be the development and management of a year-round programme of events, entertainment and community activity, including free, low cost and ticketed events designed to attract a broad demographic, activate the space from day to night, and complement wider town centre cultural venues.

5.8.4. Casewells will operate for a minimum of six days per week, from 10am until late, supported by a structured schedule of trading hours, operational procedures and ongoing vendor and customer engagement.

5.9. Naming the Building Casewells

5.9.1. A public and stakeholder consultation was undertaken on three proposed names for the new food and events hall:

- Casewell's Corner,
- Hope Hall,
- Yarn Corner.

- 5.9.2.** Feedback highlighted strong support for the heritage link associated with Casewell's Corner, reflecting the historic Casewell's site believed to have produced Bury's first black pudding.
- 5.9.3.** While Hope Hall and Yarn Corner each had some support, neither generated the same level of recognition, distinctiveness, or connection to Bury's food heritage.
- 5.9.4.** In response to this feedback, the preferred name has been refined to Casewells. This retains the strongest and most locally resonant heritage association while addressing concerns about the previous wording and providing a clear, memorable name appropriate for a major town centre destination. Historians believe that Casewell's on Union Street was the site of Bury's first black pudding shop, established in 1810, making it a significant and distinctive part of the town's food heritage. A summary of the points raised in the consultation feedback is set out below:

Feedback from the public consultation showed a broad range of views on the proposed names for the new food and events hall, with Casewell's Corner frequently highlighted for its strong association with Bury Market and the town's black pudding heritage, though some respondents felt the term "Corner" implied a small or less significant space. Hope Hall was often regarded as positive, forward-looking and inclusive, but others felt it lacked distinctiveness or clear links to the project's purpose or local identity. Yarn Corner attracted support for its reference to the borough's textile history, yet several respondents felt it did not convey the scale of the venue or might be perceived as old-fashioned. A number of contributors suggested alternative names, such as variants using "Hall" instead of "Corner", modern market-related names, or references to notable local figures, and some expressed a preference for reopening the naming process more widely to ensure stronger resonance with Bury's contemporary identity and aspirations.

6. Links with the Corporate Priorities

- 6.1.** The Bury Market and Casewells scheme supports the regeneration of Bury Town Centre and the delivery of each of the themes underpinning the Corporate 'Let's Do It!' strategy. These underpinning themes focus on building inclusive Local neighbourhoods, driving economic growth and Enterprise, shaping public services (Together) collaboratively with communities and businesses, and delivering improvements that are built on Bury's inherent Strengths. All these themes have a correlation about how Bury Town Centre is designed for the future so that it continues to remain vital and viable; a future where people travel less, buy locally, and

work and access local services. To this end, the Council has had to think carefully about neighbourhoods and how they can be redesigned to work well. This includes Bury Town centre, its neighbouring communities as well as others across Bury, who depend on it to access services, for retail purposes, for work and business, and for a multitude of other usages including leisure and culture. The Bury Market & Casewells levelling up and Council matching investment will play a major role in the delivery of these priorities and the resulting benefits that will be achieved.

- 6.2. The 'Let's Do It!' strategy acknowledges that we have an unprecedented opportunity to address some of our deepest challenges by seeking to build a fairer society that leaves no-one behind, tackling the climate emergency, as well as addressing inequalities of opportunity within the Borough. In this regard, the Council has embraced the national "Levelling Up" agenda with investment propositions, including the Bury Market and Casewells scheme. This strategic investment in Bury Town Centre is fully aligned with the Council's 'Let's Do It!' strategy, Bury Town Centre regeneration masterplan, and other Team Bury strategic initiatives, whilst a detailed economic value / benefits cost analysis, and strategic case was included as part of the approved Levelling Up Funding bid.

7. Equality Impact and Considerations:

- 7.1. The scheme has undertaken an Equality Impact Analysis (EIA) which is reviewed regularly as the scheme has been developed. This analysis considers the effect of scheme activity on different groups protected from discrimination under the Equality Act 2010. It aims to manage any associated risk on those affected by the change. The EIA will be reviewed as the internal fit-out progresses.

8. Environmental Impact and Considerations:

- 8.1. Casewells is designed so it has the potential to be carbon neutral in operation and is to a BREEAM Excellent standard. Casewells will incorporate photo voltaic (PV) solar panels sited on its roof which will help to generate sustainable, clean electrical power for the building and achieve building regulation compliance. Casewells also incorporates roof mounted Air Source Heat Pumps which are a renewable energy source generating hot water and heat for the building. The timber cladding system to the external elevations and colonnade, is a visually attractive, renewable construction material which is also characterised by containing lower levels of embodied energy.

Assessment and Mitigation of Risk:

Risk / opportunity	Mitigation
MEB default on the loan repayments for the fit-out of Casewells.	The loan agreement will be linked to the lease agreement to enable the Council to take action in the event the tenant defaults on loan repayments.
MEB ceases trading.	The Council has invested in changes to the design of the building to make sure it's suitable for reuse or occupation of another food and events hall operator.
MEB do not meet the KPIs	Ongoing management and dialogue and review and monitoring of the KPIs

Legal Implications:

The grant of a lease for a term of 15 years passes occupational right to the lessee for the whole of that term. The lease will be contracted out of Part 2 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954 to ensure that there is no automatic right to renew at the end of the term.

Agreements granted to unit holders will require expert drafting to ensure that the licensees do not acquire legal rights of possession of that area, giving them an automatic right to renew.

Operating licences will be required from the Council's Licensing Department in connection with opening hours and alcohol etc.

Legal advice will be provided throughout.

Financial Implications:

To enable Midlands Events Bury Ltd (MEB) undertake the fit-out works ahead of trading, the Council will provide a capital loan to Midlands Events Bury Ltd (MEB) through a separate loan agreement.

The commercial terms of the loan agreement will be delegated to the Director of Finance (section 151 Officer) to ensure compliance with the Subsidy Control requirements and the loan repayments cover the borrowing costs incurred by the Council and therefore no impact on the Council revenue position.

To mitigate associated risks, the loan will be secured against the fit-out works undertaken, financial modelling will be updated to ensure the agreed commercial terms for the loan repayments are affordable over the lease term and it will be proposed the Council will receive regular financial performance reports.

Appendices:

Appendix 1 - BMFH Equality Impact and Considerations

Background papers:

11th June 2025 – Bury Flexi Hall – Operator Procurement

10th July 2024 - Bury Market & Flexi Hall – Enabling Works & Main Works tendered cost / approval to progress Enabling Works & Main Works packages

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.

Term	Meaning
Third-party operator	The outsourcing of a function to an outside company/organisation to ensure (in this case) the efficient management/operation of Casewells for the Council (as the client).
Expression of interest/Market Engagement	Process of engaging with potential suppliers before you begin buying goods or services for your organisation.