

Minutes of: COUNCIL

Date of Meeting: 25 February 2026

Present: The Worshipful the Mayor (Councillor Bayley, in the Chair)
Councillors A Arif, S Arif, R Bernstein, D Berry, C Birchmore, C Boles, A Booth, R Brown, C Cummins, D Duncalfe, U Farooq, E FitzGerald, N Frith, I Gartside, R Gold, J Grimshaw, S Haroon, J Harris, M Hayes, J Hook, K Hussain, B Ibrahim, J Lancaster, G Marsden, G McGill, C Morris, E Moss, E O'Brien, T Pilkington, A Quinn, D Quinn, T Rafiq, M Rahimov, I Rizvi, M Rubinstein, J Rydeheard, L Ryder, K Simpson, L Smith, M Smith, J Southworth, G Staples-Jones, T Tariq, S Thorpe, D Vernon, S Walmsley, M Walsh and Y Wright

Apologies for Absence D Green

Public Attendance: 8 members of the public attended the meeting.

C. 52 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Debra Green

C. 53 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest made at the meeting.

C. 54 MAYORAL COMMUNICATIONS AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor as Bury's first citizen updated Members of the Council on work undertaken since the last meeting.

C. 55 MINUTES

The minutes of the two meetings held on 21 January 2026 and 26 January 2026 were approved as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

C. 56 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

Notice had been received of the following questions:

Questioner	Topic	Responding
Andy Hay	Prestwich regeneration budget	Cllr Thorpe
Jonathan Moss	Highways budget	Cllr Thorpe
Andrew White	Budget for planned works for Turton Road	Cllr Thorpe
Samantha White	Damage claims for	Cllr Thorpe

	Turton Road	
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Questions without notice:

Questioner	Topic	Responding
James Ferguson	Budget for children's services	Cllr L Smith

C. 57 RECOMMENDATIONS OF CABINET AND COUNCIL COMMITTEES

(A) Meeting of Cabinet 15 January 2026 - Youth Justice Business Plan

It was moved by Councillor L Smith and seconded by Councillor Southworth, with all members voting for and the Mayor abstaining that, Council approves

Council to approved the plan submitted

(B) Meeting of Employment Panel 3 February 2026 - Pay Policy

It was moved by Councillor Gold and seconded by Councillor Rizvi, with 47 members voting for, one member voting against, and the Mayor abstaining that, Council approves

1. Commend the proposed Pay Policy Statement for 2026-27 for approval by full Council.
2. Agree the Council's proposed pay structure for 2026-27 as set out within the statement and inclusive of revised non-consolidated pay supplements to retain compliance with the Real Living Wage rate of pay. Classification Open Item No. 2
3. Also, to agree ongoing uplifts to retain compliance with the Real Living Wage if required.

(C) Meeting of Employment Panel 3 February 2026 - Chief Officer Recruitment

It was moved by Councillor Gold and seconded by Councillor Rizvi, with all members voting for and the Mayor abstaining that, Council approves

Council approve that a Market Supplement of £5k (total maximum remuneration of £101,251) be applied to the post of Assistant Director - People and Inclusion

(D) Meeting of Cabinet 11 February 2026 - Annual HRA Budget 2026/27 & Rent Setting

It was moved by Councillor Thorpe and seconded by Councillor Cummins, with 46 members voting for; and the Mayor and two members abstaining that, Council approves

- Approve the 2026/27 budget for the Housing Revenue Account
- Agree and approve the proposed HRA Capital Investment Plan for 2026/27.
- Approve the setting of individual social formula rents for 2026/27 based on the current National Social Rent Policy, giving a real rent increase of 4.8% with effect from 1st April 2026 (being September 2025 CPI (Consumer Price Index) 3.8% plus 1%).

- Approve the setting of individual actual affordable rents for 2026/27 based on the current National Social Rent Policy, giving a real rent increase of 4.8% with effect from 1st April 2026.
- Approve shared ownership rents to be increased by RPI (as at February 2026) plus 0.5% in line with provisions set out within shared ownership agreements with effect from 1 st April 2026.
- Approve an increase in Garage rents of 4.8% with effect from 1st April 2026.
- Approve an increase in Sheltered Management and Support Charges of 4.8% from 1 st April 2026.
- Approve an increase in Service and Amenity Charges of 4.8% from 1st April 2026. · Approve an increase in Support and Heating charges of 4.8% from 1st April 2026.
- Approve an increase in Furnished Tenancy charges of 4.8% from 1st April 2026. · Approve continuation of the policy that when a social rent property is re-let to a new or transferring tenant the rent level will be revised to match the formula rent (target rent) for that property.
- Note in accordance with the Rent Standard, that where an affordable rent property is re-let to a new or transferring tenant the rent level be set by reference to 80% of the market rent (including service charges where applicable) for a similar property at the time of letting or the formula rent for the property, whichever is the greater.
- Approve in principle in line with Government's commitment confirmed in January 2026, the re-introduction of Rent Convergence for Bury's HRA stock, which will come into effect from April 2027, with an additional rent charge of £1 per week in 2027-28, and £2 per week from 2028-29 onwards until Rent Convergence is achieved.
- Note that Government has confirmed its commitment to the re-introduction of rent convergence from April 2027, with a proposed additional £1 per week charge from April 2027 and £2 per week from April 2028. Until the changes are finally confirmed the additional income has not been assumed in the revenue plan.
- Note that following the Cabinet decision to wind down and close Six Town Housing (STH), a working group has been set up to oversee this process, led by Management Consultants Campbell-Tickell. This process will take at least 12-18 months, and at this stage it is not possible to state what implications if any there will be for the Council's General Fund and HRA. The options as to what will happen to the remaining assets currently held by STH will be presented to Cabinet at the appropriate time for any decisions to be made.
- To note and approve the revisions made to the HRA 30-Year Business Plan.

On being put the result of the vote was as follows: A Arif, S Arif; Bernstein, Berry, Birchmore, Boles, Booth, Brown, Cummins, Duncalfe, Farooq, FitzGerald, Frith, Gartside, Gold, Grimshaw, Haroon, Harris, Hayes, Hook, Hussain, Ibrahim, Lancaster, McGill, Morris, Moss, O'Brien, Pilkington, A Quinn, D Quinn, Rafiq, Rahimov, Rizvi, Rubinstein, Ryder, Simpson, L. Smith, M. Smith, J. Southworth, Staples-Jones, Tariq, Thorpe, Vernon, Walsh, Walmsley, Y Wright voting for;

The Mayor, G Marsden and J Rydeheard abstaining,

The Mayor declared the recommendations contained in the Housing Revenue Account carried.

(E) Meeting of Cabinet 11 February 2026 – The Council's 2026/27 Revenue Budget and Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2027/28 through to 2028/29

At the invitation of the Mayor, Councillor Thorpe, Cabinet Member for Finance, made a statement on the Budget.

It was moved by Councillor Thorpe and seconded by Councillor O'Brien that the recommendations contained in the Minutes of the Cabinet meeting held on 11 February 2026 be approved and adopt the budget for 2026/27, and Council, Approves:

- Approve the Medium-Term Financial Strategy to 2028/29 and the assumptions regarding resources and spending requirements.
- Approve the Council Tax base for Bury Council for 2026/27 of 58,709.94 Band D equivalent dwellings, this is the basis on which the Council Tax funding has been calculated (Appendix 1).
- Approve the net revenue budget of £252.135m for 2026/27.
- Approve the Council Tax requirement of £124.224m and the increase in Council Tax in 2026/27 of 2.99% in terms of General Council Tax and a further 2% for the Adult Social Care precept for 2026/27 (Appendix 1).
- Approve the budget assumptions of £29.364m in 2026/27.
- Approve new revenue budget proposal relating to additional Place Directorate income to be achieved across 3 areas: car parking, moving vehicle offences and EV cross pavement fees. Delivery plans will be brought forward for consideration by Cabinet in the new financial year, including the detail of any specific consultation exercises that may be required to be undertaken. The consultation outcomes will be considered by Cabinet before implementation along with any financial implications adopted in the 2027/28 budget proposed by Cabinet to Council.
- Note the remaining budget gap of £21.155m over the medium-term to 2028/29.
- Approve the use of £3.977m of reserves from the budget stabilisation reserve for 2026/27.
- Note the forecast position on reserves over the medium-term to 2028/29.
- Approve the recommendations set out in the Treasury Management Strategy (Appendix 2):
 - To approve the Treasury Management Strategy including the associated Prudential Indicators and Annual Investment Strategy.
 - To approve the Treasury Management Policy Statement.
 - To approve the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Policy Statement.
- Approve the Capital Strategy and the Programme for 2026/27 – 2028/29 (Appendix 3).
 - Cabinet to recommend and council to approve the use of £2m flexible use of capital receipts in 2026/27.
 - Council to confirm the of £3m flexible use of capital receipts in 2025/26 as included in the February 2025 budget report which has been applied in the following areas:
 - As part of the Council's wider savings proposals to close the financial gap a number of service reviews and restructures were undertaken. The costs associated with implementing these reviews including severance costs, will be funded from capital receipts, up to the value of £1m.
 - In order to identify and support the identification and implementation of additional savings in Adult Social Care, a consultancy firm was commissioned to undertake review work with the costs to be funded from capital receipt flexibilities (£382k)
 - Enabling services across the Corporate Core includes costs associated with financial transformation and zero-based budgeting exercises, including identification of additional savings plans as detailed in this report, this will be funded up to £0.418m.
 - Within Children's and Young People department, the Family Safeguarding project and a Family Safeguarding additional team have been working on prevention of costs to deliver long term reductions in revenue requirement. £1.2m
- Approve the Dedicated Schools Grant budget for 2026/27 at £257.345m and approve the allocations between the four funding blocks as set out in Appendix 4 of this report.

- The Schools and Academies 2026/27 funding unit values as recommended by Schools Forum and detailed at Annex 1 to appendix 4.
- Approve the 2026/27 hourly rates for all early year's providers as follows:
 - £5.77 per hour for 3- and 4-year-olds.
 - £8.35 per hour for 2-year-olds.
 - £11.30 per hour for under 2's.
- Note the Equality Impact Assessment for the budget report (Appendix 5).
- Note the Chief Finance Officer (Director of Finance) statement on the robustness of estimates and adequacy of financial reserves in setting the budget (Appendix 6).

(ii) An amendment was moved by Councillor J Harris and seconded by Councillor Gartside that: The suite of budget reports submitted to the Council should be approved, with the following amendments

	2026/27 £m
1% reduction in the proposed 4.99% council tax increase	1.242
Recurrent additional investment in highways maintenance (£160k relating to potholes and £160k relating to gully clearance and street-cleaning)	0.320
Recurrent additional investment in cemetery maintenance	0.030
6 month delay in recruiting to back-office vacant posts based on current turnover levels	-0.500
Increase in strategic workforce saving focusing on accelerating workforce efficiency savings through digital and process review but underwritten by an additional 1% increase in the staffing budget vacancy factor which may require additional measures to be put in place in terms of delaying recruitment to vacant posts should the additional saving not be fully deliverable through additional efficiencies	-1.000
Removal of non-statutory advertising and marketing budgets	-0.062
Additional 1 day voluntary unpaid leave offered to all staff	-0.030
Total cost of proposed amendments	0.000

On being put the result of the vote was as follows:

For the Amendment:- S Arif; Brown, Gartside, Harris, Hussain, **voting for**;

A Arif, Bernstein, Berry, Birchmore, Boles, Booth, Cummins, Duncalfe, Farooq, FitzGerald, Frith, Gold, Grimshaw, Haroon, Hayes, Hook, Ibrahim, Lancaster, G Marsden, McGill, Morris, Moss, O'Brien, Pilkington, A Quinn, D Quinn, Rafiq, Rahimov, Rizvi, Rubinstein, J Rydeheard, Ryder, Simpson, L. Smith, M. Smith, J. Southworth, Staples-Jones, Tariq, Thorpe, Vernon, Walsh, Walmsley, Y Wright **voting against**

Abstaining from the Vote:- The Worshipful the Mayor

The Mayor declared the **amendment lost**.

(ii) An amendment was moved by Councillor R Bernstein and seconded by Councillor Vernon that: The suite of budget reports submitted to the Council should be approved, with the following amendments

	2026/27 £m
Investment in a pilot scheme (to be reviewed) to encourage resident participation of wards not directly in the scope of regeneration or town plan initiatives of the Borough. The mechanism for the scheme would be a simple questionnaire seeking views about identified issues/improvement within each ward and inviting proposals from residents and community groups about prioritising improvements in their areas	0.050
Reprofiling in revenue capital financing costs resulting from either unplanned slippage of £1m to 2026/27 capital schemes being funded from prudential borrowing if identified through the monthly monitoring process, or planned slippage into 2027/28 of schemes totalling £1m if insufficient unplanned slippage is identified.	-0.050
Total cost of proposed amendments	0.000

On being put the result of the vote was as follows:

For the Amendment:- voting for; A Arif, Bernstein, Boles, Cummins, Farooq, FitzGerald, Frith, Gold, Grimshaw, Haroon, Hayes, Hook, Ibrahim, Lancaster, McGill, Morris, Moss, O'Brien, Pilkington, A Quinn, D Quinn, Rafiq, Rahimov, Rizvi, Rubinstein, Ryder, L. Smith, J. Southworth, Staples-Jones, Tariq, Thorpe, Vernon, Walmsley, voting for

S Arif; Berry, Birchmore, Booth, Brown, Duncalfe, Gartside, Harris, Hussain, G Marsden, J Rydeheard, Simpson, M. Smith, Walsh, Y Wright **voting against**

Abstaining from the Vote:- The Worshipful the Mayor

The Mayor declared the **amendment carried**.

The substantive motion (as set out in i) with the Together for Bury amendment, was put to the vote which was as follows:-

A Arif, Bernstein, Boles, Cummins, Farooq, FitzGerald, Frith, Gold, Grimshaw, Haroon, Hayes, Hook, Ibrahim, Lancaster, McGill, Morris, Moss, O'Brien, Pilkington, A Quinn, D Quinn, Rafiq, Rahimov, Rizvi, Rubinstein, Ryder, L. Smith, J. Southworth, Staples-Jones, Tariq, Thorpe, Vernon, Walmsley, **voting for**

S Arif; Brown, Gartside, Harris, Hussain, G Marsden, J Rydeheard **voting against**

Abstaining from the Vote:- The Worshipful the Mayor, Berry, Birchmore, Booth, Duncalfe, Simpson, M. Smith, Walsh, Y Wright

The Mayor declared the substantive Motion with the amendment carried.

(F) Meeting of the Standards Committee 12 February 2026 – Officer and Member Protocol

It was moved by Councillor Gold and seconded by Councillor O'Brien, with 48 members voting for; and the Mayor abstaining that, Council approves:

To approve the Officer Member Protocol

(G) Meeting of the Audit Committee 17 February 2026 – Terms of Reference

It was moved by Councillor Moss and seconded by Councillor Thorpe, with 48 members voting for; and the Mayor abstaining that, Council approves

To approve the updated Terms of Reference for the Audit Committee and recommend that the Constitution be updated to reflect these.

a YOUTH JUSTICE BUSINESS PLAN 2025

b PAY POLICY

c CHIEF OFFICER RECRUITMENT

d ANNUAL HRA BUDGET 2026/27 & RENT SETTING

e THE COUNCIL'S 2026/27 REVENUE BUDGET AND MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY (MTFS) FOR 2027/28 THROUGH TO 2028/29

C. 58 AMENDMENTS

a OFFICER & MEMBER PROTOCOL

b TERMS OF REFERENCE

C. 59 DELEGATED DECISION OF COUNCIL COMMITTEES

There were no questions received on the delegated decisions of Council Committees.

C. 60 URGENT ITEM - COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME TECHNICAL CORRECTION

It was moved by Councillor Thorpe and seconded by Councillor O'Brien, with all Councillors voting in favour, and the Mayor abstaining, that:

Council approve the technical correction of the income bands within the scheme to their intended level

THE WORSHIPFUL THE MAYOR

(Notes: The meeting started at 7.00pm and ended at 21.38 pm