Minutes of: **CABINET**

Date of Meeting: 11 March 2026

Present: Councillor E O'Brien (in the Chair)
Councillors C Cummins, R Gold, C Morris, A Quinn, L Smith, T Tariq, S Thorpe and S Walmsley

Also in attendance: Councillors S Arif, R Bernstein, M Smith and Y Wright

Public Attendance: No members of the public were present at the meeting.

Apologies for Absence: None.

CA.133 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies received.

CA.134 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

CA.135 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no public questions.

CA.136 MEMBER QUESTION TIME

There were no Member questions.

CA.137 MINUTES

It was agreed:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 February 2026 be approved as a correct record.

CA.138 PRESTWICH VILLAGE REGENERATION PROJECT: DELEGATED AUTHORITY TO APPOINT THE THIRD-PARTY OPERATOR FOR PHASE 1A (TRAVEL HUB)

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth presented a report regarding a delegation to scrutinise and approve the procurement process once complete and approve the awarding of the contract to the preferred third-party operator for the Prestwich Village Regeneration Project Travel Hub to avoid unnecessary delay.

Decision:
Cabinet:

1. Approved a delegation of authority to the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Director of Regeneration and Project Delivery to approve the completion of the procurement process and award the contract; and

2. Approved a delegation of authority to the Director of Place in consultation with the Director of Law and Governance and the Director of Finance to finalise contractual arrangements and execute the contract.

Reasons for the decision:
Approval of the appointment of the third-party operator is required in order for the Travel Hub to become operational once construction has reached PC and handover has taken place. As per the 15th October 2025 Cabinet approval, an operator should be appointed as soon as possible in the construction delivery process to enable them to contribute to the final stages the of construction i.e. operational management items. This will also help with the smooth opening of the facility. Delegating authority to the Director of Law and Governance in consultation with the Executive Director of Place and/or Director of Regeneration and Project Delivery and the Director of Finance will enable the contract to be expediently executed within required timeframes.

Alternative options considered and rejected:
To fully complete the procurement process and seek approval at a future Cabinet meeting. This would reduce the ability for the preferred third-party operator to engage with VINCI Construction UK Ltd and reduce the contact time they have, to work together during the final stages of construction and have the potential to delay the opening of the Travel Hub.

CA.139 PRESTWICH VILLAGE REGENERATION PROJECT: PHASE 1B & 2 APPOINTMENT OF DEMOLITION CONTRACTOR - PART A

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth presented a report regarding the appointment of DSM Demolition Limited to carry out the required demolition of the Longfield Shopping Centre as part of the Prestwich Village Regeneration Project, and to note the likelihood of a minor adjustment to the contract sum regarding the investigations for the Prestwich Library site. Members noted and apologised for the disruption for residents, which was a necessary part of redevelopment.

Decision:
Cabinet:

1. Accepted that the tender process that was undertaken via a Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR 2015) was a compliant process, and approved the appointment of DSM Demolition Limited (company number 02266325) to undertake the demolition works package with a total estimated contract value of £537,437.14 excluding VAT subject to the agreement of the contract terms and conditions;
2. Accepted there may be a small adjustment required to fix the above contract sum based on an outstanding R&D (Refurbishment/Demolition) survey that cannot be fully carried out until the Prestwich Library vacates its current location; and
3. Delegated authority to the Director of Law and Governance in consultation with the Executive Director of Place or Director of Regeneration and Project Delivery to finalise contractual arrangements and execution of the contract.

Reasons for the decision:
Approval of the demolition contractor is required for there to be a meaningful start on site of demolition works ahead of the end March 2026 to meet one of the three GMCA

milestones to secure funding to deliver the next phase of the Prestwich Village Regeneration Project. Delegating authority to the Director of Law and Governance in consultation with the Executive Director of Place or Director of Regeneration and Project Delivery will enable the contract to be executed without delay and within the required timeframes.

Alternative options considered and rejected:
No alternative way(s) of selecting the demolition contractor has been considered as the tender process was via a framework ensuring procurement was conducted in a fair, transparent and open manner. Delegation to key senior officers ensures expedient appointment of the demolition contractor to meet GMCA timescales. As there is currently no clear alternative route to external funding for the project, other than that which is on offer from the GMCA, meeting their timescales is essential to the success of the project to secure full project delivery.

CA.140 BUSINESS RATES AND COUNCIL TAX DISCRETIONARY POLICY

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation presented a report regarding an updated Discretionary Rate Relief (DRR) Policy; it was noted this needed full Council approval. In response to Members' questions, it was noted that the figures concerned were in-line with other Councils, but also reflected the specific situation for Bury.

Decision:
Cabinet:

1. Agreed to recommend to Council the approval of the new Business Rates and Council Tax Discretionary policy from 1st April 2026; and
2. Noted that adoption of the policy must be made by Full Council.

Reasons for the decision:
There is a governance requirement for the council to hold an up to date and robust DRR policy.

Alternative options considered and rejected:
N/A

CA.141 WRITE OFF POLICY 2026

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation presented a report regarding the new Write Off policy covering all council-related income streams.

Decision:
Cabinet:

1. Approved the new policy and relevant changes to the constitution being forwarded to Full Council for ratification; and
2. Noted that adoption and constitution changes must be by Full Council.

Reasons for the decision:
There is a governance requirement for the council to hold an up to date and robust Write Off policy, and for any constitution changes to be put before Full Council.

Alternative options considered and rejected:
N/A

CA.142 CORPORATE PLAN QUARTER THREE 2025-26 PERFORMANCE & DELIVERY

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation presented the summary report for the Corporate Plan. This described the progress made in the third quarter of the financial year (October – December 2025). In response to Members' questions, it was noted that ground investigations had been carried out on the alternative site for the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU), the results of which were expected by the end of March 2026. With regards to Unit 4, a delivery date of 1 October 2026 was anticipated. Mapping existing processes had proved more complex than initial estimates, but a slower methodical pace was required to get things right as this was integral to securing the a position of financial security.

Decision:
Cabinet noted the Quarter Three position on progress against the Corporate Plan 2025-26.

Reasons for the decision:
To enable transparency and robust monitoring of performance and delivery of the Corporate Plan.

Alternative options considered and rejected:
N/A

CA.143 2025-26 Q3 FINANCE POSITION

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Finance and Transformation presented a report regarding the 2025/26 forecast positions as at 31 December 2025. There was a forecast overspend of £7.932m, an increase of £2m since quarter 2, owing to an increase in demand in both children's and adult's social care. These were national issues and have been flagged as risks throughout the year. The analysis and mitigations in those areas were not apparent yet but were expected to have an impact in the next financial year.

In response to Councillor questions, it was noted that rising inflation, energy costs, fuel prices, etc, would be unlikely to be felt by the Council until the next financial year. Estimates had been made against rising costs, but effect was never linear and was therefore difficult to account for. The ongoing impact on Council budgets was beyond anyone's control and would continue to be monitored and picked up against the in-year position as we move forward.

Decision:
Cabinet:

1. Noted the 2025/26 forecast revenue outturn position as at 31 December 2025 of a £7.932m overspend (3.32%) against a net budget of £238.988;
2. Noted the 2025/26 forecast savings position as at 31 December 2025 of a forecast underachievement of £2.511m (-22.15%) against an agreed target of £11.344m;

3. Approved the in-year updates to the capital programme, revising the capital delivery programme for 2025/26 to £119.614m which will form the basis for future in-year monitoring and reporting of performance;
4. Noted the 2025/26 forecast Collection Fund Position as at 31 December 2025 of a surplus of £3.924m of which £3.746m relates to Bury's share; and
5. Noted the 2025/26 forecast HRA revenue outturn position as at 31 December 2025 of a £1.638m underspend against a net budget underspend of £3.790m.

Reasons for the decision:
To update members on the Council's budgetary position and actions taken or being taken to ensure budgetary targets are achieved. This report is in accordance with the Council's financial procedure regulations.

Alternative options considered and rejected:
N/A

CA.144 ADULT SOCIAL CARE PROVIDER FEES

The Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Health and Public Service Reform presented a report regarding the engagement process and outcomes for the standard fee proposal to contracted providers of adult social care services for the period 2026/27. For each provider sector, the Council has uplifted the staffing element of the fee by 5% in line with the increase in the Real Living Wage and 6.73% for those paying the National Living Wage. The percentage impact of the changes to National Insurance contributions for Employers has also been included in the uplift, and uplifts are also included on non-staffing costs to support providers with other cost pressures advised by providers in the engagement process.

Decision:
Cabinet noted the outcome of the fee engagement process and approved the uplifted 2026/2027 Hourly Fee Rate, with effect from 1st April 2026, as set out in the report.

Reasons for the decision:
The Council is required to carry out a provider fee engagement process and has done so for year 26/27. The uplifts are within budget and look to drive the provider market to meet needs now and going forward, while ensuring provider sustainability in light of current pressures. The recommended fee rates also support providers to pay their staff the Real Living Wage and continue the move towards the Cost of Care.

Alternative options considered and rejected:
Alternatives were not considered as we are required to issue fee uplifts within allocated budget.

CA.145 ANNUAL REVIEW OF ADULT SOCIAL CARE FEES AND CHARGES FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2026/27

The Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Health and Public Service Reform presented a report regarding the proposed 2026/27 Adult Social Care fees and charges across the Health and Adult Care directorate to take effect in April 2026.

Decision:

Cabinet approved the proposed Adult Social Care Fees & Charges for 2026/27 detailed in Appendix A of this report.

Reasons for the decision:
In accordance with the Council's Financial Regulations, there is a requirement to review fees and charges on an annual basis.

Alternative options considered and rejected:
No alternatives were considered. The uplift to 2026/27 Adult Social Care fees are in line with the 2026/27 Adult Social Care Provider Fee Uplifts or in line with the November 2025 Autumn Statement which announced that Department of Works and Pensions benefits will increase by 3.8% and the Universal Credit amount will rise by 6.2%.

CA.146 ADULT SOCIAL CARE PERFORMANCE QUARTER THREE REPORT 2025/26

The Cabinet Member for Adult Care, Health and Public Service Reform presented a report regarding the Adult Social Care Quarter 3 Performance Report for 2025-26. The report outlined delivery of the Adult Social Care Strategic Plan, preparation for the new CQC Assessment regime for local authorities, and provided an illustration and report on the department's performance framework. It was noted that a Good rating was received in all domains for the Falcon and Griffin Extra Care Housing Service, and an Outstanding result for Killelea House; thanks and congratulations were extended to all staff in those areas.

Decision:
Cabinet noted the report.

Reasons for the decision:
N/A

Alternative options considered and rejected:
N/A

CA.147 STEP FORWARD FOSTER CARERS

The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Young People presented a report regarding the recruitment of a specialist foster carer group of Step Forward Carers who can care for children with more complex needs. The cohort of children who would be cared for by Step Forward carers are those who would be otherwise cared for in residential care or likely to need a residential care placement.

Decision:
Cabinet:

1. Approved a twelve-month pilot of the Step Forward Foster Carers Scheme, at a total cost to the Council of £369,324 for the term of the pilot; and
2. Noted that the estimated time for mobilisation of the Scheme is 6-9 months from decision to fund (this allows time for safe recruitment, assessment, approval, training, matching and placing).

Reasons for the decision:

The Scheme offers a strategic, cost-effective way to grow a specialist fostering model and reduce reliance on residential care for our children. It supports better outcomes for children by ensuring they can become part of a stable fostering family environment, reduces the current high spend on residential care and aligns with national priorities for children's social care reform.

Alternative options considered and rejected:
There is no doubt cost savings will be achieved via our current initiatives. However, doing nothing at this stage is not an option. The Scheme will complement the above initiatives already in progress and provide the Local Authority with more ways to improve the lives of children in care whilst significantly reducing current forecasted overspend on placements. This option builds on the already agreed cost-saving initiatives and strengthens the Local Authorities range of options available to them when placing children with complex needs in care settings. Often these decisions are made in times of crisis and when 'placement choices' are either nil or limited due to national sufficiency challenges.

CA.148 HOUSING IT AND SYSTEMS - QL IMPROVEMENTS AND UPGRADE

The Cabinet Member for Housing Services presented a report which sought approval for an additional £1.2m of Housing Revenue Account monies to be used to fund necessary improvements to the Housing IT software infrastructure used to enable the Council to provide its housing management service.

Decision:
Cabinet approved:
1. £383,800 in the 2026/27 financial year relating to a one-off professional services cost of improving/upgrading the current housing IT software;
2. £243,333 in the 2026/27 financial year relating to a Year 1 annual subscription cost;
3. £33,333 in the 2026/27 financial year relating to full-time (i.e. office hours 52 weeks per year) IT support in the form of an Aareon employee dedicated solely and exclusively to Bury Council;
4. £243,333 in the 2027/28 financial year relating to a Year 1 annual subscription cost;
5. £33,333 in the 2027/28 financial year relating to full-time (i.e. office hours 52 weeks per year) IT support in the form of an Aareon employee dedicated solely and exclusively to Bury Council;
6. £243,333 in the 2028/29 financial year relating to a Year 1 annual subscription cost; and
7. £33,333 in the 2028/29 financial year relating to full-time (i.e. office hours 52 weeks per year) IT support in the form of an Aareon employee dedicated solely and exclusively to Bury Council.

Reasons for the decision:
The improvements are necessary to ensure the provision of an effective and efficient housing management service, following bringing back in-house the housing management function, from the ALMO structure Six Town Housing Ltd.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

- Do nothing - Whilst ‘do nothing’ is technically a viable option in that the Local Authority is currently able to provide a housing management service to its tenants and leaseholders, the current housing IT software landscape is out-of-date, inefficient, and risks serious and imminent non-compliance with legislative, regulatory, and good practice requirements.
- Decommission current IT software provider and tender - Aareon is a long-standing software provider with a satisfactory track record both nationally and with Bury Council. That said, the option of a full and open competitive tendering exercise has been fully considered. The cost of this ‘start afresh’ approach however, is estimated to be in the region of £6m-£12m.

CA.149 APPROVAL TO PROCEED WITH BURY'S INTEGRATED TRANSPORT BLOCK (ITB) MINOR WORKS ROAD SAFETY PROGRAMME OF WORKS FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2026/27

The Cabinet Member for Environment, Climate Change and Operations presented a report which sought approval to proceed with the Integrated Transport Block (ITB) Minor Works Road Safety programme of works for financial year 2026/27. These schemes support Bury’s Road Safety strategy and Transport for Greater Manchester’s (TfGM) Vision Zero strategy of improving road safety and reducing road danger on the roads of Bury. Members supported the proposed works in their wards and, in response to Members’ questions, it was noted that traffic calming measures were distributed across known areas of concern. Members supported the safety measures and the reduction of incidents caused by poor driving.

Decision:
Cabinet:

1. Approved the receipt of the funding allocation from Transport for Greater Manchester (TfGM), in respect of the Integrated Transport Block (ITB) Minor Works Road Safety programme for 2026/27, in the sum of £543,000;
2. Approved the proposed ITB programme of works for 2026-27, as set out in Appendix A, which will fully utilise the £543,000 funding allocation from TfGM;
3. Delegated all decisions in respect of the procurement of the works set out in Appendix A, to the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Director of Regeneration, which will ensure that delivery timescales are met; and
4. Delegated all tender award decisions in respect of the works set out in Appendix A, to the Executive Director of Place in consultation with the Director of Regeneration, which will ensure that delivery timescales are met.

Reasons for the decision:
To meet the commitments to spend ITB monies on behalf of TfGM. Delays to the progression of the schemes may risk funding being withdrawn by TfGM and impact the council’s reputation with TfGM and the Department for Transport (DfT).

Alternative options considered and rejected:
ITB is provided for the introduction of more moderate sized road safety schemes which it is hoped will provide good returns in improving road safety and reducing road danger reduction. The funding is not to be used on one large project. Not proceeding with the schemes could result in funding withdrawal by TfGM.

CA.150 SUPPORTING BURY'S VOLUNTARY, COMMUNITY, FAITH AND SOCIAL ENTERPRISE SECTOR THROUGH THE GM VCFSE ACCORD AND INVESTMENT IN LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE ORGANISATION PROVISION

The Cabinet Member for Communities and Inclusion presented a report regarding Bury's commitment to the Greater Manchester VCFSE Accord and recognition that the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise (VCFSE) sector is integral to the fabric of the Borough of Bury. Our LET'S Do It! strategy sets out the vital importance of the sector as a core component in delivering improved outcomes for local people.

Decision:
Cabinet:

1. Confirmed Bury's commitment to the Accord and champion through the Team Bury network through the local Memorandum of Understanding with the sector; and
2. Agreed the revised Service Level Agreement with Bury Voluntary and Community Faith Alliance, as the local infrastructure organisation for Bury, and its funding from 1st April 2026 on a 2+1 year basis.

Reasons for the decision:
Bury has committed to the refreshed Accord through the Greater Manchester Combined Authority governance given the value the Borough places on developing the VCFSE sector, as set out in LET's Do It! The funding of infrastructure provision in the Borough provides a clear commitment to the importance of the voluntary and community sector. The agreement allows for a clear focus of activity to develop Bury's VCFSE ecosystem in a tailored manner to best meet local needs, in turn delivering on LET'S Do It! and GM VCFSE Accord commitments. By refreshing the Service Level Agreement the report seeks to strengthen the recognition of the sector as key partner in improving outcomes for local people and the role infrastructure support plays in ensuring this is robust, recognised and representative.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

- To not fund, or make a reduction in funding would significantly risk the loss of infrastructure support in the Borough, destabilising the wider VCFSE sector and jeopardise the positive progress made in recent years. Whilst recognising the financial pressures that the Council itself is under, investment in the infrastructure support to the VCFSE sector supports steps to increase the resilience of the sector itself, including supporting groups to attract inward investment into the Borough and diversity income generation streams.
- To not update the specification would fail to capitalise on progress made in recent years but more importantly miss the opportunity to further tailor and target the focus of infrastructure support provision to be an enabler and facilitator of a sector contributing in a pivotal way to realising the Borough's LETS vision. As such to not update the specification would have risked there not been the appropriate local focus on ensuring a sustainable VCFSE ecosystem, best positioned and supported to enhance and enable local outcomes at place.

CA.151 BURY TOWN CENTRE PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER (PSPO)- REVIEW

The Cabinet Member for Communities & Inclusion presented a report regarding the findings of the statutory review of the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) currently in force within Bury Town Centre. It was noted that the review concluded that, whilst the general public were not in favour of an extension, the responses submitted by affected businesses in Bury supported retaining the conditions prohibiting the use of amplified equipment and the consumption of alcohol in a public place. Both elements of the PSPO continue to deliver clear community-safety benefits and were therefore proposed for a further three-year extension. Members noted the low response rate to the consultation, although key partners were consulted and gave their feedback so the results were satisfactory. It was also noted that performance arts and music was still welcomed in the Town Centre, but permission was needed.

Decision:

1. Cabinet approved the proposed extension of the Town Centre PSPO with conditions prohibiting the consumption of alcohol and the use of amplified equipment for a period of three years.
2. Cabinet confirmed satisfaction that:
    - the criteria for an extension and a variation has been met;
    - the necessary public consultation has been undertaken; and
    - Agreed to the conditions of the Order.

Reasons for the decision:

- The consultation findings provide continued strong public support and the ongoing requirement for early intervention powers, the Council considers it both necessary and proportionate to extend this condition namely the restriction on alcohol consumption in public spaces within Bury Town Centre for a further three years.
- Taking into account the 2026 public consultation and the original concerns that led to the implementation of the current PSPO, which has proved effective in managing the use of amplified equipment, the Council considers that retaining this condition continues to meet the statutory tests of necessity and proportionality.

Alternative options considered and rejected:

- Civil Injunction - This would only apply to a single individual in question, meaning anyone other person(s) allegedly causing any issues would be dealt with separately. Consequently any enforcement would have to be repeated for each individual.
- Community Protection Notice (CPN) - as with the Civil Injunction this is an action that can only be used towards an individual and not to tackle a collective problem.
- Acceptable Behaviour Contract (ABC) - An ABC is a low-level intervention that can be used alongside a PSPO. This is a proportionate enforcement option for low level offending and is a non-enforceable contract between Bury Council and an individual which is voluntarily agreed. During the consultation process, the option to ban busking altogether was considered as this had be requested by some residents and businesses, however after assessing the situation and looking at the impact this would have it was agreed that this was not a viable option and for the members of the public who are socially and economically struggling, it would possibly have a detrimental effect on them.

CA.152 APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY MAYOR

It was agreed:

That Council be recommended to appoint Councillor Mike Smith as Deputy Mayor for the Civic year 2026/27.

CA.153 MINUTES OF ASSOCIATION OF GREATER MANCHESTER AUTHORITIES / GREATER MANCHESTER COMBINED AUTHORITY

Members noted the minutes, in particular the work to support the safety of women and girls on public transport.

It was agreed:

That the minutes of the AGMA Executive Board and Greater Manchester Combined Authority held on 28 November and 12 December 2025, and 30 January 2026 be noted.

CA.154 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Decision:
That the press and public be excluded from the meeting under Section 100 (A)(4), Schedule 12(A) of the Local Government Act 1972, for the reason that the following business involves the disclosure of exempt information as detailed against the item.

CA.155 PRESTWICH VILLAGE REGENERATION PROJECT: PHASE 1B & 2 APPOINTMENT OF DEMOLITION CONTRACTOR - PART B

The Leader and Cabinet Member for Strategic Growth presented a Part B report regarding the full financial details.

Decision:
Cabinet:

1. Accepted that the tender process that was undertaken via a Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (PCR 2015) was a compliant process, and approved the appointment of DSM Demolition Limited (company number 02266325) to undertake the demolition works package with a total estimated contract value of £537,437.14 excluding VAT subject to the agreement of the contract terms and conditions;
2. Accepted there may be a small adjustment required to fix the above contract sum based on an outstanding R&D (Refurbishment/Demolition) survey that cannot be fully carried out until the Prestwich Library vacates its current location; and
3. Delegated authority to the Director of Law and Governance in consultation with the Executive Director of Place or Director of Regeneration and Project Delivery to finalise contractual arrangements and execution of the contract.

Reasons for the decision:
As set out for Part A.

Alternative options considered and rejected:
As set out for Part A.

COUNCILLOR E O'BRIEN
Chair

(Note: The meeting started at 6.00 pm and ended at 7.00 pm)