

Council Meeting – 10 December 2014

Questions:-

The Leader of the Council

1. Councillor Gunther

Will the Leader please confirm how much of the 9.8 days average sickness level is attributed to the "one day sickness syndrome? **Cllr Holt**

A. 6.04% of the total number of days sickness is attributed to one day absences. This equates to 0.59 days of the 9.82 days average sickness level.

2. Councillor Parnell

How much of the £15 billion announced by the Chancellor, to be spent on highways schemes in England, will be delegated to local authorities? **Cllr Isherwood**

A. Sadly, the money referred to in Cllr Parnell's question is not additional money, it is in fact just another re-announcement of promised road improvements which have already been announced at least three times since 2013! To make matters worse the proposals relate to the national strategic road network of motorways and trunk roads, and not roads which are the responsibility of local highway authorities, and so none of the money will be delegated to local authorities. This means that the Government have missed a golden opportunity to replace the hundreds of millions of pounds that they have cut from Council's highways budgets since they came to power.

3. Councillor Bayley

Since the implementation of the "three weekly bin collections" has the Council seen an increase in the household recycling rate? **Cllr Isherwood**

A. Yes recycling performance has increased. The household collected bin waste recycling rate was approximately 55% for the month of October. This is an increase on the recycling rate of 47% in 2013/14. Figures for October this year show that there was a reduction of 600 tonnes of non-recyclables collected compared with October 2013. Over the same period, there was a rise of 399 tonnes in waste collected from the three recycling bins.

This is a fantastic achievement so soon, and I want to thank residents across Bury for their understanding and their efforts in helping us reach this recycling rate. As it costs the taxpayer £283 per tonne to collect, treat and dispose of 'grey bin' waste, it's easy to see how important it is to do all we can to put the right stuff in the right bin.

4. Councillor Stella Smith

Has the Leader received a response from Eric Pickles on Fair Deal 4 Bury?
Cllr Connolly

A. Yes I did eventually receive a reply from Eric Pickles and as expected it was nothing more than a standard letter full of political rhetoric that failed completely to address the issues raised. Neither would he agree to meet with us to hear what the people of Bury have to say about the level of funding that they receive back from the Government and he refused to take on board the constructive proposals that we put to him. And so I can only conclude from this that Mr Pickles, the coalition Government and the MP for Bury North couldn't care less about this borough and they certainly aren't interested in giving us anything approaching a fair deal.

5. Councillor Hodkinson

Should residents who do the right thing and recycle all their waste but have been identified by this Council as in need of an extra grey bin be charged £30 administration and delivery? **Cllr Isherwood**

A. The Council's policy on new and replacement bins hasn't changes in so far as new or replacement grey are concerned. There is a nominal charge for administration and delivery of £30. There is, however, discretion where cases of hardship have been identified and to other vulnerable residents. This charge is in line with all the other Greater Manchester Councils. All recycling bins are delivered free of charge and residents are allowed as many recycling bins as they require.

6. Councillor Quinn

Could the Leader tell us how much has been raised by the sale of surplus garage sites and what that money has been used for? **Cllr Shori**

A. So far we have sold 13 sites and earned a total of £291,500. This money will be held in the general pot and will be available to be spent on corporate capital priorities and/or repay debt to optimise our Treasury position.

7. Councillor James.

Can you tell us the impact that the recent industrial action by the Fire Brigades Union had on the people of Bury? Would you join with me and the whole of the Council in urging the Government to come to proper negotiations with the Fire Service Union in providing fair pensions that properly reflect the essential and brave work that Fire Service Personnel do to keep us all safe? **Cllr Connolly**

A. The people of this Borough rely heavily on the bravery and professionalism of our fire fighters in times of need and now in their time of need, the responsibility falls to us to come to the aid of our brave firefighters, before their rights at work and their pensions are damaged irrevocably. And so yes, I wholeheartedly join with Cllr James and in fact I'm sure that he and all members of the Council would also join me in supporting Labour's call for a full parliamentary debate to be held on the floor of the House of Commons so that ministers can be held to account, the views of firefighters can be represented in Parliament and all MPs can have a chance to vote and be counted.

8. Councillor Mallon

Can Council explain why we are suffering several major roadworks being carried out simultaneously, the combined effects of which are causing serious traffic congestion at the M60 Junction 17. The roadworks in question are:- M60 Smart motorway works on the slip road at Junction 17, closures of Croft Lane, directing significantly more traffic towards Junction 17 and gas pipe renewal on Higher Lane in Whitefield, which is a main route taking traffic away from Junction 17. As a result we have created the perfect traffic jam. **Cllr Isherwood**

A. All of the works referred to by Cllr Mallon are being undertaken by agencies other than the Council and regrettably the Council has no powers to stop the works taking place. The sewer work taking place on Croft Lane is necessary because the land under which the current sewer pipe runs is unfortunately slipping towards the River Roch and taking the pipe with it. The owner of the land is unknown and United Utilities have therefore been closely

monitoring the situation which has now reached the stage where action is unavoidable. With regards to Higher Lane, National Grid have been instructed by the Health and Safety Executive to upgrade their old cast iron pipes to plastic. The cast iron pipes are the cause of many gas leaks and often when one leak is being worked on another is discovered which results in a prolonged time span for completion of the work. The potential consequences of delaying either the Croft Lane or Higher Lane works could have been very serious and as they are both urgent works the Council had no control over the timing of the works nor did we have grounds from a highway perspective on which we could refuse the works.

9. Councillor M Bailey

Road safety in Radcliffe East is causing more and more concern, particularly in the area of Top o'th' Cross and Radcliffe Hall School. There have been numerous accidents this past 12 months due to vehicles losing control at speed on these bends, leading to shattered railings and bus stops, a van smashing through an elderly couple's front door, and as recently as two weeks ago, a 4x4 going headfirst into a building just feet from Radcliffe Hall School. It is miraculous that there have been no serious injuries or fatalities as a result of these accidents.

Whilst we welcome the 20 mph zone in the area at school times, this does not solve the woefully inadequate signage, the lack of anti skid surfacing, and safety railings to protect both pedestrians, residents and motorists. Does the Leader agree with me that despite budgetary pressures, safety of our residents must come before statistics, and that Officers should prioritise improvements in this area before there is a fatality? **Cllr Isherwood**

A. Of course I agree that the safety of our residents is of paramount importance and so the first thing I would do is to urge the drivers that use the roads in this area to help us to reduce accidents by driving more responsibly and adhering to the legal speed limit. For the Council's part I am happy to confirm that we intend to provide increased adhesion for vehicles travelling round these bends and we are currently looking at options for the application of surface treatments. Unfortunately at this time of year weather conditions are likely to limit what can be done in the near future and so in the short term we intend to provide enhanced warning signs on the approaches to the bends to encourage drivers to travel at more appropriate speeds.

10. Councillor Walton

Will the leader please give Council a full update on the insurance recovery position of the Mayoral chains that were recently stolen? **Cllr Connolly**

A. The matter is in the hands of our insurers, Zurich Municipal. We understand that the loss adjusters have submitted a report to Zurich and we await its contents. I can assure Council that we are continuing to assist the Police with their enquiries and so I would ask anyone with information about the robbers or the chains to contact the Police or Crimestoppers.

11. Councillor Grimshaw

What changes if any are we making within mental health in line with Concordat? **Cllr Tariq**

A. The Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat relates primarily to our partner organisations - NHS and Police - regarding how their operational services meet the needs of vulnerable people in urgent and crisis situations. As a result, the work to respond to the Mental Health Crisis Care Concordat is being lead locally by GMP Bury Division in conjunction with Bury CCG (as commissioners of acute and urgent hospital services). To date, a Bury response to the concordat has been drafted and is in the process of being finalised. The local authority is currently in the process of redesigning Community Mental Health Services (CMHT) which support individuals with more complex secondary care mental health needs. We will work alongside Bury CCG and GMP to expand on this work to ensure support for people in crisis is aligned to work to implement the Concordat locally.

12. Councillor Haroon

What has the Learning Disability Partnership achieved and does the Council have the intention to sustain this Partnership for the long term? **Cllr Tariq**

A. In the last 12 months various projects have been sponsored by the Learning Disability Partnership Board to improve service standards. These include:

- a. A project to improve planning and involvement of people with profound needs in their own care, decision-making and reviews**
- b. A project known as "The Looking Forward Forum" that involved establishing a service user forum to enable self advocates to have a greater voice**
- c. The Charter Mark Pilot Project which was established in partnership with Bury People First to assess the viability of engaging service users in quality assuring social care provider services.**

In addition the Learning Disability Partnership Board maintains an on-going strategic overview of learning disability, for example, oversight of the results from the annual Learning Disability Self Assessment Framework (a national assessment tool for health and social care learning disability services). The partnership board has been successfully promoting and monitoring the learning disability strategy over a number of years. It continues to act as the advocate for people with a learning disability within the Borough. Elected members are active participants of the board and we should ensure that this board is supported to continue to promote the wellbeing of people who live with a learning disability within our borough.

13. Councillor John Smith

Springs TMC are waiting for the figures for the valuation of the stock and any other associated costs as they are looking to pursue a transfer to a stand-alone Community Based Housing Association. These figures were promised soon after the meeting with the Homes and Communities Agency which took place on the 22 September 2014. They have still not arrived. When can we expect the promised figures? **Cllr Shori**

A. The Council is fully committed to the principle of undertaking a stock transfer to the Springs TMC and considerable work is on-going to bring this to fruition. The situation has been complicated by changes made by DCLG to the transfer and stock valuation process and this has delayed the production of figures by both parties. I can assure Cllr Smith, and the Springs TMC, that figures will be produced as quickly as possible with the intention that a report will be brought to the Cabinet on 21 January 2015

14. Councillor Gartside

The 2 remaining solutions to enable adequate broadband supply for Affetside and Hawkshaw Lane is to mesh together public funding through BDUK or the new SEPS fund (Special Extension Programme Service) with Bury Council driving dedicated funding specifically for these areas in Bury. Therefore, will the Leader or Cabinet member responsible, as a matter of urgency, please approach Transport for Greater Manchester who is managing the overall funding process, to discuss a suitable 'match funding' arrangement? **Cllr Connolly**

A. We have to remember that any funding for Broadband coming to Bury is because we are an integral partner in Greater Manchester's ambition to Get Digital and become one of the world's top 20 digital cities by 2020 and is predominately based on Business connectivity. Overall Bury will benefit at the end of the project by witnessing 94% coverage of our priority areas. This is the highest potential coverage across the 8 GM Districts. The challenge across the 8 districts is that there are more eligible post codes than available budget. Hawkshaw has not been included in Bury's priority areas for the purpose of SEP funding.

For the SEP funding the districts will only be advised if priority areas will be included in the SEP phase 2 when BT concludes the modelling work (December 2014/Jan 15). In total there are 40 postcode areas in the borough that can be considered for SEP funding including post code areas from Affetside. Officers are in constant dialogue with the BRIF group who accepted the offer of Council officers to investigate other options. We are currently working with partners to assist those in our communities who are digitally excluded not necessarily because their speeds are slow but because they do not have the financial resources to access the internet.

Throughout this process the Broadband programme has to rely on this BDUK funding and comply with the eligibility rules for funding and State Aid. This Council has no influence over the technical elements of the funding model. I can only repeat that we have put Affetside forward to be considered for SEP funding, however value for money rules may exempt Affetside from benefitting. Officers are willing to continue to assist the Affetside and Hawkshaw community to find other solutions.

15. Councillor Bevan

What efforts have been made to consult with the tenants and residents regarding plans for the sale of 8 garage sites in Ramsbottom and what efforts were made to promote their use prior to a decision being made for them to be sold? **Cllr Shori**

A. The sites in question are already relatively well used, albeit often not for the stated purpose of car parking, and so promoting their use is not an issue. In considering the future of the sites the Cabinet took the view that in those instance where garage colonies prove capable of being developed for housing then residential use should take a greater priority over storage. The need for additional housing within the Borough is well documented and it is initiatives such as this which will help to resist residential development within the Green Belt, something which the Council is fundamentally opposed to. The report submitted to Cabinet explicitly recognised the need to keep local councillors and affected residents informed of the outcome of the feasibility studies that are now to be undertaken and any proposals that may result from these studies and I am happy to reaffirm that commitment.

16. Councillor Nuttall

In recent presentations given on the Council's funding position, one reason given as to why it was thought that Bury's funding settlement from the Government was unfair, was that Bury has less deprivation than certain other Authorities. Can the Leader explain why he thinks that less deprivation is negative and unfair? **Cllr Connolly**

A. First let me make it absolutely clear that I don't think that less deprivation is negative and unfair, in fact reducing deprivation and the evils of deprivation is something that this Labour-led administration has made one of its highest priorities. Madam Mayor, deprivation is just one of the measures that is used in the local government funding formulae and thanks to the efforts of all Team Bury partners this borough does not rank as high as others on the deprivation scale and as such our government funding is reduced accordingly. However our main concern is that in the round the funding formulae do not reflect fully the costs faced by places such as Bury in delivering quality public services that meet the needs of our citizens. As a result the people of Bury do not get a fair deal from the system.

17. Councillor Hussain

Numerous road works on our main roads are causing major traffic congestion for motorists in Bury. Can the Leader of the Council exert any influence on the Highways agency or anyone undertaking roadworks in Bury to stick to strict deadlines for carrying out road repairs? **Cllr Isherwood**

A. A great many factors influence the road network in Bury including the size and duration of road works along with, traffic accidents, poor weather conditions, operation of traffic lights. Some roadwork's have little impact whereas others such as Croft Lane have a direct influence on traffic especially at Peak Times.

As far as the Highways Agency is concerned they only undertake work on the Motorway Network. However, a upgrade to introduce Smart motorway proposals which are designed to reduce congestion on the M60 where it is possible there may be an impact on our local network. Contractors working on the Bury network are required to specify the length of time, hours of working etc on their permit application before it is approved. Penalty notices are issued where there is a failure to meet agreed timescales.

18. Councillor Pickstone

Could you Leader please provide details of the number of prosecutions made or penalties issued for illegal parking outside of schools so far this calendar year, and in each of the last three years? **Cllr Isherwood**

A.

<i>Year</i>	<i>PCN's issued</i>
<i>2014 -2015 (to date)</i>	<i>18</i>
<i>2013 - 2014</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>2012 - 2013</i>	<i>32</i>
<i>2011 - 2012</i>	<i>34</i>

19. Councillor Gartside

Can the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People please explain how the £928,000 one-off funding source to this year's budget will be reconciled in next year's budget? **Cllr Campbell**

A. Like many Councils, Bury is facing significant demand pressures for Social Care in respect of some of our most vulnerable children. Previously the Secretary of State for Education stated that local authorities should place more vulnerable children in care, but did not identify where the resources would come from to pay for what can be a very expensive provision. The onus of meeting the needs of these vulnerable children falls squarely on local authorities who are having to fund this expensive provision at the same time as having to make substantial reductions in all its other services. In the last week of November, the Chair of Parliament's Public Accounts Committee said that she was disappointed that the Department for Education cannot show that it has met its objectives to improve the quality of care and the stability of placements for children. She also said that "as demand increases and with real long term educational and employment costs of children not getting the right care... and she expects that the Department (for Education) to tell her how it plans to measure its effectiveness in achieving positive outcomes for children in care ... in January".

It is recognized that the £928,000 is one-off funding that is only available in the current financial year, and as such the Council will be looking at ways of controlling down costs in this area of the budget, or freeing up resources from other areas of the overall budget, to bridge the gap in future years.

20. Councillor Nuttall

How much has it cost this Council to write to all Bury households about it's funding position, including the cost of having the material hand delivered? **Cllr Connolly**

A. The cost came to less than £9,000 which is equivalent to 0.006% of the Council's budget and this is a cost that could have been avoided if the Government had provided a fair deal for Bury.

21. Councillor Wright

Given the continuing increase in obesity and the huge financial impact this has on the NHS , is it now time to consider introducing a moratorium on applications for more fast food outlets, as all commercial areas in the six townships are already well served. **Cllr Walmsley**

A. The problems of obesity and life style issues are something that the Council is concerned about, but the introduction of 'knee jerk' policies without full consideration would not be helpful. Only a few years ago I seem to recall Cllr Wright being reported in the press as welcoming a 'healthy' fast food outlet in Whitefield and as she knows if the Council were to introduce a moratorium of fast food restaurants, the good as well as the bad would be stopped as the planning legislation cannot control the operator of a fast food business. What is needed is a coordinated and holistic approach to be taken to these issues. Bury is already part of the Greater Manchester Healthier Catering Awards which encourages ALL restaurants, pubs, takeaways, cafes and sandwich shops, to sell a wide range of healthy food and drink and this is judged though criteria that have been set by dietitians, nutritionists and Environmental Health Officers on behalf of Greater Manchester Public Health Network.

It is this administration's intention to coordinate policy across the Council and ensure that any changes truly reflect the needs of the residents of the six townships.

22. Councillor D Bailey

Due to the closure of Church St West in Radcliffe Town Centre, small business owners are going through a very difficult time, with takings down and some near to closing completely. As the scheme is only half way through, will the Leader back our request for the Council to work with traders and provide an advertising platform to help promote Radcliffe Town Centre? This will not only benefit the traders but also support the much welcomed relaunch of not only Radcliffe Market but also the Town Centre Team. **Cllr Walmsley**

A. I am sure Cllr Bailey knows the importance this Administration places on the regeneration of Radcliffe Town Centre with the recent refurbishment of Radcliffe Market which will give all traders a fillip in the run up to Christmas. Looking forward work will start in the New Year on a new Bus Station with a total investment of £3m.

The main contractor is United Utilities who have been liaising with the Council's Business Support and Liaison officer with a view to identifying opportunities for additional advertising, and marketing and promotion of Radcliffe Town centre. A number of fixed advert locations are currently being examined. The initial ideas from the group are to look at signage that will promote the town centre and will allow for businesses to take paid space. Proposed location details have been sent to highways for initial advice.

23. Councillor M Bailey

At the last Local election, in their manifesto the Labour Group pledged to repair the main pool and keep Radcliffe Leisure Centre open. Will the Leader provide an update as to their progress in keeping this pledge? **Cllr Shori**

A. Following storm damage last winter, the existing pool and fitness centre has been subject to a structural investigation as well as the removal of asbestos cladding to the main pool area. This has identified that the main supporting columns are in very poor condition with concrete breaking up and corroded reinforcing bars. Unfortunately the level of structural damage has meant that the main pool was required to remain closed while further asbestos removal was carried out as well as further structural investigation. Although the building is safe, the structural engineer has advised that the whole building be considered for structural remedial works which could cost £1.5m. We also know from visual surveys that other parts of the building such as the roof, external cladding, mechanical and electrical services will need to be replaced in the next 5 to 10 years due to the age and condition of the building.

As I have already announced, we are committed to retaining a swimming pool and gym in Radcliffe, however it will be a major project to develop a replacement facility that would be modern, sustainable and fit for purpose. In order to provide time to develop a permanent solution as well as a funding package a report will be considered by Cabinet on 17th December that will propose a high quality 25m by 8m temporary pool and gym be provided at the former Radcliffe Riverside School. The aim will be to compliment the indoor sports facilities already available on this site.

By providing a good quality temporary pool and gym, it will allow for continuity of service as well as sustain existing levels of usage. It will also provide the opportunity to develop a permanent solution on the existing town centre site. If approved by Cabinet the works at Radcliffe Riverside will commence in January 2015 and run through to April. In the meantime Radcliffe fitness centre and teaching pool remain open for business as usual and there is a comprehensive swimming programme at Castle Leisure Centre and at Ramsbottom Pool and Fitness Centre.

24. Councillor Pickstone

Could the Leader please provide a breakdown, by Township Area of the estimated expenditure on the current Capital Investment programme in Six Town Housing properties? **Cllr Connolly**

A. It is not possible to provide a detailed analysis by Township Forum and so a ward breakdown of the 2014/15 Programme will be circulated to all Councillors.