Public Questions

	Questioner/ Respondent	Question
1	**Andy Hay**	Can the Leader provide an update on the regeneration plans for Prestwich, including the expected timetable for redevelopment and, specifically, when the demolition of the Longfield Suite is anticipated?
	Councillor O'Brien	
2	**Nicholas Rose**	Can the Cabinet Member explain how the Council takes the real-life experiences of residents into account when assessing footways, alongside the technical investigatory thresholds? Furthermore, will the Council consider adopting a more holistic accessibility assessment for locations such as Hamilton Road rather than relying solely on defect measurements?
	Councillor L Smith	Thank you for the question. The Council's inspection regime is based on a risk-based approach and published investigatory thresholds, in line with national guidance and the Greater Manchester framework. However, we recognise that resident experiences of using a footway are important and that accessibility is about more than measurements alone. When concerns are raised, officers will consider the wider context of a location, including how the footway is used and whether particular issues are affecting accessibility for residents. We will continue to take local circumstances and resident feedback into account when assessing locations such as Hamilton Road and identifying priorities for future improvements.
3	**Jonathan Moss**	Please can the council state if the barriers put up on Manchester Road near Ramsbottom are owned the council or rented and if being rented what is the monthly cost please?
	Councillor L Smith	The barriers installed on the A56 Manchester Road are owned by the COuncil, as such there are no monthly cost of the barriers.

		The barriers are essential to ensure the safety of road users travelling along this section of highway, which has been affected by a land slip.
4	**Emma Baxter**	I recently contacted the Council regarding blocked highway gullies, standing water and the deterioration of roads and pavements on Bury New Road, Bury Old Road and the surrounding area. I have since been informed that, although the gullies have been inspected, they will not be cleaned until the next cyclical programme because they are not considered urgent. If a highway gully is found to be completely blocked, how can the Council consider it satisfactory to leave it in that condition for several more months until the next scheduled cycle, particularly when blocked gullies contribute to standing water, pedestrians being splashed by passing vehicles and the continued deterioration of roads and pavements?
	Councillor L Smith	The Council is responsible for more than 42,000 road gullies across the borough, and our gully cleansing teams aim to inspect and cleanse them annually. To complete this work effectively and keep the programme on schedule, crews need to follow planned cleansing routes. Individual blocked gullies are prioritised for additional attendance where there is a risk of property flooding or significant highway flooding. Where that level of risk is not identified, the gully will usually be dealt with through the next programmed cleansing cycle, as responding to every isolated blockage outside the programme would reduce the overall frequency with which gullies across the network can be cleaned.
5	**Rebecca Ogujor**	I am the parent of a child with special educational needs and have been trying to resolve concerns regarding my daughter's Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) process with Bury Council since February this year. Despite repeatedly raising concerns, requesting a meeting with senior officers and submitting a formal complaint on 15 June, I am still awaiting answers to a number of important questions. In addition, documentation required to enable me to exercise my

		statutory right of appeal to the SEND Tribunal has not yet been provided, despite the time-limited nature of that process. Can the Cabinet Member explain what assurances parents can have that Bury Council's SEND service is operating in a transparent, accountable and timely manner, and what steps are being taken to ensure that parents receive the information they require to exercise their legal rights without unnecessary delay?"
	Councillor Pilkington	The Council recognises that transparency, accountability and timely communication are essential to ensuring that parents and carers can understand and exercise their legal rights within the SEND system. Since the SEND inspection, significant work has been undertaken across the partnership to strengthen governance, oversight and quality assurance arrangements. Progress is regularly monitored through established partnership boards and reporting frameworks, providing appropriate challenge and accountability for the delivery of SEND services and improvement activity. We are also continuing to review and improve our communication with families, including the information available through the Local Offer, published guidance and engagement with parent and carer representatives. Our aim is to ensure that families have access to clear, accurate and accessible information about processes, timescales, services and their rights at every stage of their SEND journey. Alongside this, the SEND Partnership continues to focus on improving the timeliness and consistency of service delivery. This includes monitoring key performance indicators, identifying areas where delays may occur and implementing actions to address these where necessary. Through our ongoing SEND improvement programme and the delivery of our SEND Reform Plan, we remain committed to building a more responsive, transparent and accountable system which supports families to access information, participate in decision-making and secure the right support for their children and young people at the right time.

6	**Sunil Bhardwaj**	I live in Oak Avenue and there is a tree on path in front of my house. Although I do not live directly outside the Council-owned lime tree on Oak Avenue in Pilkington Park in question, I live nearby and have been affected by it for some time. Because the tree has not been maintained as regularly as I believe it should have been, I have found myself pruning parts of it to prevent it from becoming more of a nuisance. Following enquiry, the Council has confirmed that the tree will now be added to its pruning programme. Can the Cabinet Member explain how Bury Council prioritises the inspection and maintenance of mature Council-owned trees? Does the Council rely largely on residents reporting issues before action is taken, or is there a proactive programme to identify trees requiring maintenance before they become a problem for residents?
	Councillor L Smith	The Council undertakes visual inspections of all highway trees on a two yearly cycle. Trees identified as presenting a higher level of risk are inspected annually. Any works identified through these inspections are prioritised according to the level of risk, with safety-related issues addressed accordingly. In addition, the Council operates a scheduled tree pruning programme and aims to prune each highway tree on a six yearly rotation, subject to operational priorities and available resources.
7	**John Martins**	I understand that Bury Council generally requires residents to pay for replacement grey bins where they have become damaged through age or normal wear and tear, unless the Council has caused the damage or the resident meets certain hardship criteria. A lot of these grey bins received similar damage all during the same time period and that it was the fault of the equipment fitted to council vehicles and not damaged by the occupants. Could the Cabinet Member explain how this policy is fair to residents who have looked after their bins but whose waste containers have simply reached the end of their usable life? In particular, does the Council have an expected lifespan for its grey bins, and has any consideration been given to replacing bins free of charge where they have naturally deteriorated through normal use rather than through misuse or neglect?

	Councillor L Smith	The Council's policy of charging for replacement grey bins is consistent with that operated by many local authorities. The charge is not simply for the bin itself; it contributes towards the administrative costs of processing requests, ordering stock, delivering replacement containers and maintaining the overall waste collection service without placing additional costs on the wider council taxpayer. The Council recognises that waste containers will deteriorate over time through normal use. However, grey bins are manufactured to be robust and are generally expected to last many years under normal operating conditions. As with all plastic products exposed to regular use and weather conditions, the actual lifespan can vary depending on factors such as age, usage, environmental conditions and handling. Where evidence demonstrates that damage has been caused by Council operations or equipment, the Council will investigate those circumstances and, where appropriate, replace the container without charge. This includes instances where a fault with collection equipment or operational practices has been identified as the cause of the damage. Where the Council can be satisfied that damage resulted from its own actions, residents would not be expected to bear the cost of replacement. In terms of bins that have simply reached the end of their useful life through age and normal wear and tear, the current policy does not provide for automatic free replacement. The rationale is that the cost of replacing aging containers across the borough would be substantial and would need to be funded either through reductions in other services or through additional costs to all taxpayers. The existing charging policy therefore represents a balance between maintaining a cost-effective service and ensuring replacement containers remain available when required. The Council will, however, continue to keep its waste collection policies under review and consider whether any changes are appropriate in light of operational

		experience, customer feedback and financial considerations.
8	**Sofia Constantnou**	As the building cannot simply be demolished or sold because the basement is required for the continued operation of the outdoor market, what is the council's long-term plan for the indoor market building, and what timetable has been set for implementing that plan? Had this been privately owned it's difficult to believe that an income generating asset would have been left abandoned for so long generating no income.
	Councillor McGill	The Council continues to do regular visual inspections of the RAAC panels to check obvious signs of deterioration. A number of recent inspections have been carried out by qualified structural specialists. We are currently using this information, which highlights the evolving advice on RAAC, to create a plan for the future of the asset.
9	**Susan Hargreaves**	When are we likely to get an answer to what is happening with the Market tall as it has been nearly 3 years and no information for the traders?
	Councillor McGill	The indoor market is an extremely complicated building and the Council has been working hard over recent months to secure its future. There is no easy and quick fix for the issues identified with RAAC. The construction industries understanding of RAAC is evolving and we are reviewing a number of recent inspections have been carried out by qualified structural specialists. We are currently using this information, which highlights the evolving advice on RAAC, to create a plan for the future of the asset.
10	**Jennifer Eagle-Cooper**	Following the discovery of distressed RAAC panels inside the market hall, what preventative measures are currently being taken to protect the remaining structural panels from deteriorating?

	Councillor McGill	The Council continues to do regular visual inspections of the RAAC panels to check obvious signs of deterioration. A number of recent inspections have been carried out by qualified structural specialists. We are currently using this information, which highlights the evolving advice on RAAC, to create a plan for the future of the asset.
11	**Tracy Howarth**	Whilst the Hall has been closed has any maintenance plan been put in place to prevent any further distress to the Racc panels, which would possibly protect traders stalls, goods & equipment still inside the Market Hall?
	Councillor McGill	The Council continues to do regular visual inspections of the RAAC panels to check obvious signs of deterioration. A number of recent inspections have been carried out by qualified structural specialists. We are currently using this information, which highlights the evolving advice on RAAC, to create a plan for the future of the asset.
12	**Mark Diggle**	The market hall was closed due to water ingress in the raac structure. This has been to the detriment of the local community in both jobs and social amenity. The traders have suffered huge personal financial losses, the vast majority regarded the purchase of their units as a form of pension provision and long term investment. If repairing the market will cost several million pounds, does the council accept that this represents the cost of preserving an important income-generating public asset, and how does it justify allowing the building to remain vacant for more than two and a half years that used to generate over £1 million in rent per annum?
	Councillor McGill	We recognise the importance of the indoor market and the positive benefits it generates for the local economy. Investment in the asset must be considered alongside the wider challenges facing the Local Authority at the current time.

13	**Chelsea Noone**	Following the discovery of distressed RAAC panels inside the market hall, what preventative measures are currently being taken to protect the remaining structural panels from deteriorating?
	Councillor McGill	The Council continues to do regular visual inspections of the RAAC panels to check obvious signs of deterioration. A number of recent inspections have been carried out by qualified structural specialists. We are currently using this information, which highlights the evolving advice on RAAC, to create a plan for the future of the asset.