	Party	Question	Questioner
1	**Conservative**	Following the public consultation and progress on the proposed Puffin Crossing on Ainsworth Road, near Watling Street and Mile Lane, could the Leader of the Council confirm the exact date when construction work is expected to commence on site?	**Councillor S Arif**
	Councillor L Smith	Thank you for your question, Councillor Arif, I am pleased to say that following consultation, work is anticipated to commence in July 2027. During the consultation residents expressed a preference for relocating the proposed Puffin crossing on Ainsworth Road to the west of Watling Street. We have listened to residents and through further investigations confirmed this new location is feasible. The revised proposal will be considered by the Traffic Management Unit before progressing to consultation. Whilst I apologise, I cannot give an exact date, I would be happy to update Councillor Arif when we have one.	
2	**Together for Bury**	Has the Council assessed whether employees paid the statutory National Minimum Wage, rather than the Real Living Wage, would potentially have qualified for additional Universal Credit or other means-tested benefits, and the estimated value of that support? If so, has the Council quantified how paying the Real Living Wage affects employees' eligibility for benefits and the wider public finances, including whether costs are shifted from the national benefits system to Bury Council taxpayers? If no such assessment has been undertaken, will the Leader confirm this and explain how the Council evaluates whether the wider benefits of paying the Real Living Wage justify the additional cost to the Council?	**Councillor Lancaster**
	Councillor Thorpe	Thank you for your question. The Council has not undertaken a specific assessment of how paying the statutory National Minimum Wage, rather than the Real Living Wage, would affect employees' entitlement to Universal	

	Party	Question	Questioner
		Credit or other means-tested benefits, nor has it quantified any impact on wider public finances. This is because benefit entitlement depends on individual household circumstances, including income, savings, housing costs and family arrangements, and the Council does not hold the information needed to make reliable calculations. The Council's decision to pay the Real Living Wage is based on its commitment to being a fair employer and the benefits associated with improved employee wellbeing, recruitment, retention, workforce stability and service delivery, rather than on modelling changes to benefit entitlement or national welfare expenditure.	
3	**Radcliffe First**	Given the potentially serious consequences for residents' health, safety and the risk of increased pressure on unpaid carers, NHS services and other publicly funded support, what guarantees can the Council give that vulnerable residents will not be forced to go without essential care because of unaffordable charges, and what safeguards will be put in place to protect their health, safety and independence?"	**Councillor Sheppard**
	Councillor Tariq	Thank you for your question, Cllr Shepherd It's worth remembering that charging rules are set by the government and very little has changed for over 25 years, the same time we have been waiting for a long-term plan for adult social care so it's a relief our new Prime Minister has asked Baroness Casey to get a move on and deliver one soon. But whilst we wait please be reassured the Council will not allow charging arrangements to result in a person's assessed eligible care and support needs being left unmet. Everyone has an individual financial assessment which is specifically designed to ensure that people retain a protected level of income for their everyday living costs. Where someone tells us that they cannot afford their assessed contribution, or there is evidence that they are reducing or declining essential care because of the charge, we will review their individual circumstances, and see what support we can provide, which includes everything from support applying for benefits right through to debt advice and even taking on management of their money where they are not able to do it themselves	

	Party	Question	Questioner
4	**Labour**	Can the cabinet member for Communities and inclusion provide an update on the Bury BSafe project and how it helps promote positive outcomes for young people in the borough?	**Councillor John Southworth**
	Councillor Gold	I'm delighted to say that this year's BSafe programme successfully engaged around 2,000 Year 8 pupils from secondary schools across Bury. Delivered in partnership with agencies including Greater Manchester Police, Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service and Bury College, the programme combined an engaging Theatre in Education performance with interactive workshops covering issues such as knife crime, anti-social behaviour, healthy relationships, online harms, exploitation and personal safety. The programme continues to have a strong impact, with feedback showing 97% of participants understanding the key messages, 87% learned something new and 88% reporting a better understanding of the issues discussed. BSafe helps young people develop the knowledge, confidence and resilience to make informed choices and access support when needed, while also helping partners identify and respond to emerging issues affecting young people across the borough through feedback gathered. Following this successful year planning is already underway for its return in October 2027.	
5	**Labour**	With the cold and wet weather approaching, can I ask the Cabinet Member for Operations how much are we spending on our roads this year?	**Councillor Ibrahim**
	Councillor L Smith	Bury Council is investing £12.917 million in capital highway maintenance this year, with an increase in grant funding of £4.374 million through the Greater Manchester Mayoral Pothole Fund announced by Labour Mayor Bev Craig. Officers are carefully planning how best to use this increased investment to maximise improvements to the highway network. Current plans allocate around £6.6 million to carriageway resurfacing, alongside a further £1.5 million for preventative maintenance, helping to improve road condition and reduce the need for more costly repairs in future.	

	Party	Question	Questioner
		In addition to this capital investment, the Highways Service has an annual revenue budget of approximately £900,000 to support routine highway maintenance, including minor pothole repairs, street lighting fault repairs and gully cleansing. A further £350,000 is allocated to winter maintenance and gritting, helping to keep the network safe and operational throughout the winter months. The Labour mayor and this Labour administration are taking the condition and the state of our roads seriously, and investing in our infrastructure for the future.	
6	**Reform**	Can the Leader confirm the absentee levels for the year to date for each Council department, with data including and broken down by all types of absence?	**Councillor Davies**
	Councillor Thorpe	The year-to-date sickness absence position to 31 October 2026 shows that the Department for Children & Young People recorded 12.28 days lost per FTE, Corporate Core Services 15.31, Health and Adult Care 18.03, Place 15.87 and Six Town Housing 19.39. Across the organisation, the average was 15.57 days lost per FTE. There were 579 one-day absences, 1,835 short-term absences and 539 long-term absences, with 1,596 employees taking sick leave. The most common cause of long-term absence was stress, depression, mental health and fatigue symptoms, accounting for 39.33% of long-term absences. The main causes of short-term absence were other sickness, stress-related conditions and infections. There is more information which can be distributed after this meeting.	

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<tr><th></th><th>Party</th><th>Question</th><th>Questioner</th></tr>
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<table>
<tr><th></th><th colspan="5">31 October 2026</th></tr>
<tr><th></th><th>BVPI 12 Figure (Average Number of Days lost per FTE)</th><th>No of 1 day Absences</th><th>No of Short Term Absences</th><th>No of Long Term Absences</th><th>Number of Employees Taken Sick Leave in period</th></tr>
<tr><td>Department for Children & Young People</td><td>12.28</td><td>133</td><td>381</td><td>109</td><td>350</td></tr>
<tr><td>Department for Corporate Core Services</td><td>15.31</td><td>110</td><td>354</td><td>125</td><td>360</td></tr>
<tr><td>Department for Health and Adult Care</td><td>18.03</td><td>166</td><td>589</td><td>151</td><td>438</td></tr>
<tr><td>Department for Place</td><td>15.87</td><td>166</td><td>478</td><td>136</td><td>410</td></tr>
<tr><td>Six Town Housing</td><td>19.39</td><td>4</td><td>33</td><td>18</td><td>38</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sum:</td><td>15.57</td><td>579</td><td>1835</td><td>539</td><td>1596</td></tr>
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The Top 3 Reasons For Long Term Absences:
<table>
<tr><th>Absence Reason</th><th>Count of Absences</th><th>FTE Days lost Number</th><th>Percentage:</th></tr>
<tr><td>Sickness-Stress, Depression, Mental Health, Fatigue Symptoms</td><td>198</td><td>11003.61</td><td>39.33%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sickness-Other</td><td>60</td><td>3844.3</td><td>13.74%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sickness-Other musculo-skeletal problems</td><td>60</td><td>3783.86</td><td>13.52%</td></tr>
</table>
The Top 3 Reasons For Short Term Absences:
<table>
<tr><th>Absence Reason</th><th>Count of Absences</th><th>FTE Days lost Number</th><th>Percentage:</th></tr>
<tr><td>Sickness-Other</td><td>300</td><td>1320.33</td><td>16.56%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sickness-Stress, Depression, Mental Health, Fatigue Symptoms</td><td>165</td><td>1216.12</td><td>15.26%</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sickness-Infections</td><td>268</td><td>898.7</td><td>11.27%</td></tr>
</table>
</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>7</td><td>Conservative</td><td>The October Cabinet budget report forecasts that the Council’s Budget Stabilisation Reserve will fall</td><td>Councillor Gartside</td></tr>
</table>

	Party	Question	Questioner
		to approximately £6 million by March 2027, while around £9.6 million remains to be found for 2027/28 even if the new savings proposals are delivered in full. Will the Leader set out the Council's plan and timetable for closing that remaining gap through recurring savings or income, including the contingency if Exceptional Financial Support is refused?	
	Councillor Thorpe	The October budget report made it clear that the council's priority is to reduce the remaining £9.585m 2027/28 budget gap as far as possible before the 2027/2028 budget is presented in February. Officers are already working hard on further proposals, including significant workforce reductions to be brought toa a future cabinet meeting. This work is focused on three areas: internal transformation and efficiency, including workforce and digital changes; reducing demand-led cost pressures, particularly in children's and adults' services; and increasing income through a review of fees and charges and other income-generating opportunities. Alongside this, the Director of Finance has begun exploratory discussions with MHCLG regarding Exceptional Financial Support to ensure sufficient time to secure a conditional offer if required. Given the positive steps already being taken to reduce the budget gap, and the expectation that a number of councils will seek support in 2027/28, it is considered extremely unlikely at this time that an application for Exceptional Financial Support would be refused.	
8	**Radcliffe First**	Bury MBC have been awarded 4.3M from TFGM highways pothole fund. Seemingly good news, giving us 8.3M in monies for highways work if HIS money is applied for. However, I am given to understand we are not applying for the 4M HIS money. If this is the case we would obviously save money in interest on the 4M HIS funding which I understand is a type on Loan. Will the saving in interest be used as general savings or would this interest saving be possibly redirected to road repair/maintenance?	**Councillor Duncalfe**

	Party	Question	Questioner
	Councillor L Smith	Thank you for your question, The HIS 4 allocation is council funded capital investment, supported through borrowing. Where external funding, like the £4.3m from the Labour Mayor, is secured the most financially prudent approach is to maximise the use of that funding first, subject to our delivery capacity and highway need. This allows deferral of the HIS 4 allocation for use in later years, particularly where future grant funding may not be available. The benefit of requiring less borrowing arise through reduced financing costs within the Council's revenue budget and would therefore be accounted for through Treasury Management. However, these savings do not create a separate capital pot that can automatically be redirected into additional road repairs or maintenance, although the reduced borrowing requirement strengthens the Council's overall financial position.	
9	**Labour**	Can I congratulate the Council on securing £10m from Government for Bury's Indoor Market and for the £24m awarded by the GMCA Good Growth Fund to accelerate the delivery of phase one of the Millgate regeneration plans. Can I ask the Cabinet Member for Regeneration to outline the next steps on both of these excellent developments?	**Councillor Hayes**
	Councillor Morris	The Council has been working extremely hard to maintain the momentum of regeneration across Bury town centre, and I'm really pleased to see several major projects now moving into delivery. Casewell's will open on 26 November, creating an exciting new addition to the town centre, while remediation works to enable the major housing development on brownfield at Pyramid Park are also well advanced. We will shortly publish a new Bury Town Centre Delivery Framework, setting out the scale of our ambition for the town centre and, importantly, how we intend to turn that ambition into delivery. I'm incredibly excited to be leading this programme, which represents the culmination of a huge amount of work by the Council, GMCA, TfGM and our wider partners.	

	Party	Question	Questioner
		Through the Mill Gate joint venture, work is also progressing rapidly on the design of the new public realm and connectivity improvements, supported by the £24 million investment secured for the town centre from the Mayors Good Growth Fund. Consultation is already under way, with opportunities for people to engage with the team in person later this month. Subject to the outcome of that work, the team expects to submit a planning application early next year. I was also delighted to see the Budget announcement regarding Bury Market. It was fantastic to see the chancellor Bury name Bury in his budget and, more importantly, to secure further investment in one of the town's most important assets. The team is now working with civil servants to complete the process for drawing down the funding. Once that is concluded, we will be able to confirm the delivery programme for improvements to the Indoor Market. Our ambition is very clear: we want to move quickly and get this investment on the ground as soon as possible.	
10	**Labour**	Can the Leader clarify the Council position on setting Religious Education lesson content in schools?	**Councillor Hunt**
	Councillor Walmsley	Thank you for your question, there is a great deal of legislation which governs the teaching of RE in schools, which I won't delve into, but I will provide an update on how Bury sets its RE curriculum. The content of Religious Education is not set by the Council. By law, local authorities must establish a Standing Advisory Council on Religious Education (SACRE) and an Agreed Syllabus Conference, which develops and reviews the local RE syllabus every five years. The syllabus provides a framework for teaching RE but does not prescribe detailed lesson content, which is determined by schools. Faith schools teach RE in accordance with their faith, while academies and multi-academy trusts have greater freedom over curriculum delivery, subject to legal requirements that RE is provided for all pupils. Bury's RE syllabus was reviewed recently and an updated version will be presented to Scrutiny and then Council as soon as it is	

	Party	Question	Questioner
		available. Nationally, the government will be creating a national RE curriculum in the coming years, rather than a local curriculum. **Additional**: The Education Reform Act 1988 and the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 state that all pupils must receive RE as part of the curriculum, schools are required to provide daily acts of collective worship, typically of a broad Christian character unless parents request withdrawal for their children. The syllabus must reflect the mainly Christian traditions whilst taking account of other principal religions in the country.	
11	**Reform**	The Reform UK Council Group have been contacted by a resident who has recently moved to the UK. They speak fluent English, are working professionals and are an asset to our country. However, they have confirmed that whilst they speak fluent English, their child does not and they have received a SEND classification with an EHCP plan. Please can the Cabinet Member clarify if this is the normal process for non-English speaking children and if so, how many EHCP plans have been issued to children due to an inability to speak English and what the cost of these plans are?	**Councillor Martin**
	Councillor Walmsley	I can confirm that it is not the normal process for non-English speaking children to be supported through an Education, Health and Care plan. Having English as a second or additional language is not a special educational need. Specific help will be provided to support language acquisition, to enable each child to fully engage in education, but that will not typically be through an EHCP.	
12	**Conservative**	Could the Cabinet Member provide the current number of outstanding pothole and road repair reports across the borough, explain how much funding is allocated to highway maintenance, and confirm the timetable for addressing the backlog?	**Councillor S Arif**

	Party	Question	Questioner
	Councillor L Smith	Thank you for your question and as already discussed, Bury Council has been allocated an additional £4.374 million for highway maintenance this year, increasing our overall capital highway maintenance budget to £12.917 million. As of Friday 30th October, the highways team had approximately 1,500 carriageway potholes logged for repair. Our in-house team with the support of framework contractors carry out around 350 potholes repairs per week.	
13	**Radcliffe First**	On this Armistice Day I ask the leader of the Labour group if he and his party will join me in condemning the actions of both Bury's MPs who recently voted with the government to allow vexatious prosecutions of former members of the armed forces who have served in numerous conflicts from Northern Ireland to the Middle East?	**Councillor Simpson**
	Councillor O'Brien		
14	**Labour**	Domestic abuse often increases nationally during the winter months. Please can the Cabinet Member for Communities & Inclusion outline the work locally to support victims and work to prevent domestic violence?	**Councillor Chaudhry**
	Councillor Gold	Thank you for this important question. Domestic abuse remains a key priority for Bury's Community Safety Partnership and wider safeguarding arrangements. Through the Bury Domestic Abuse Partnership Board, we have developed a new Domestic Abuse Strategy, shaped by local insight and lived experience, which will be launched during this month's White Ribbon campaign. The strategy sets out our commitment to preventing domestic abuse, identifying and responding to it earlier, supporting victims, survivors and children, and holding perpetrators to account. It aims to ensure that domestic abuse is recognised early, responded to consistently, and that those affected are heard, supported and protected, and ensures that Bury is a borough	

	Party	Question	Questioner
		where no one is left to navigate the system alone. To support this work, the White Ribbon campaign (which begins on the 25th of November) and 16 Days of Action will include awareness events, learning sessions and targeted communications focused on issues such as hidden victims, trauma-informed practice, information sharing and access to local support services, helping to strengthen both prevention and support across the borough. No one should have to suffer alone, and in Bury we will continue to work to improve our services and strategies to ensure that no one has to face domestic abuse alone.	
15	**Labour**	What is the Council doing to work with schools, parents and students to improve school attendance?	**Councillor Green**
	Councillor Walmsley	Thank you for your question. Each School has an allocated officer from the Bury Attendance team to offer direct support, advice and guidance on whole school attendance targets and strategies to improve. Attendance officers are locality based and a part of the communities of practice model, therefore attending and contributing to the solutions circles facilitated by the Educational Psychology Service, as part of a multi-agency response to child and family need. A Parent Attendance Awareness course has been developed by the Attendance team and Educational Psychology team and is in a test and learn phase. School Attendance Forums have been reviewed and there is a newly formed steering group including secondary and primary heads/senior leaders and MAT CEO to ensure that the forums appropriately support our schools **Bury Belonging In Education** will be the institutional pledge to better support stronger multi-agency partnerships working effectively with schools and parents/carers to promote a stronger inclusion culture that improves attendance rates.	
16	**Reform**	Reform UK have recently raised a number of issues with publicly endorsed training modules	**Councillor Roith**

	Party	Question	Questioner
		which are mandatory for Council staff, one of which has already been corrected by the training provider after labelling the majority of the British people as extremists. Can the relevant Cabinet Member please confirm why Bury Council's staff are being forced to undertake mandatory training on Climate Change and EDI, and given Bury Council's local governance role in the United Kingdom, confirm whether this in their view amounts to state-sponsored, taxpayer money-wasting brainwashing of public servants?	
	Councillor Thorpe	Care training modules are a method by which we mitigate risk by raising awareness of a subject and validating knowledge transfer. Instrumental temperature records from show that average global surface temperatures have increased by about 1.2°C since the late 19th century. Atmospheric gas concentrations have risen dramatically; polar ice shelfs are receding and weather patterns are changing significantly. In Bury we have seen drier hotter summers and winters with an increase in flooding incidents. As such an awareness that climate change is having real world impact on the way we deliver services is a requirement which training helps fulfil. It is unclear to me why anyone would question this as a valid form of learning and development. In 2010 a number of different acts protecting against discrimination and protecting rights was amalgamated into one act, the equality act. Amongst other things this introduced the concept of protected characteristics and reasonable adjustments. Ensuring we are compliant with that act across all the areas of delivery within and external to the council is again partly mitigated by training, in this case by the Equality Diversity and Inclusion training, which helps deepen understanding of why as well as how our duties can be discharged. The notion that this is 'state-sponsored, taxpayer money-wasting brainwashing of public servants' is frankly puerile. Officers in this council are educated and experienced individuals with a diversity of backgrounds and views. The notion that they could possibly be brainwashed by a piece of CBT is nonsense.	
17	**Conservative**	How many households are currently waiting for social housing in Bury, how many families are	**Councillor Hussain**

	Party	Question	Questioner
		living in temporary accommodation, and what additional measures is the Council taking to address housing pressures?	
	Councillor A Arif	As of 2 November 2026, there were 2,146 households on Bury's housing waiting list, with a further 28 properties currently under offer. In addition, 172 families are living in temporary accommodation. To address these pressures, the Council is consulting on a new Housing Strategy to support the delivery of new homes across the borough. We are also developing a new Homelessness Prevention Strategy and Action Plan focused on early intervention, preventing homelessness, reducing rough sleeping and ensuring people can access the right support at the right time. Alongside this, we are maximising external funding opportunities to increase access to private rented accommodation, redesigning homelessness services to strengthen prevention work, implementing our B&B Elimination Plan, reviewing temporary accommodation provision, and developing a Supported Housing Strategy to ensure the right accommodation and support is available to meet future needs.	
18	**Radcliffe First**	The Market chambers traders have been told that shutters need to be internal at their expense. This exposes the plate glass window to potential damage also at their expense. Is it the case that all council owned premises in the Borough are leased in this way, with the lessee being responsible for the external areas of the building?	**Councillor M Smith**
	Councillor McGill	Responsibility for shutters and plate glass rests with tenants across council-owned commercial premises. We understand the concerns raised about the requirement for internal shutters at Market Chambers. However, the retail units form part of a multi-million-pound regeneration scheme, and we have required shutters to be internal to protect the appearance of the shopfronts and ensure they remain smart and in keeping with the wider scheme. The new plate glass is also significantly stronger than the glazing in the previous shopfronts, providing greater resistance to damage.	
19	**Reform**	Residents across Bury tell me that roadworks are taking place with no workers on site for long	**Councillor Zaman**

	Party	Question	Questioner
		periods, that temporary traffic lights are often unmanned at peak times, and that lights break down without prompt repair. When residents contact the companies responsible for the works, they are often kept waiting for 30 to 60 minutes. What is the Council doing to monitor roadworks and temporary traffic management across the borough, how many permit compliance inspections have been carried out in the last 12 months, and what enforcement action, including fixed penalty notices, has been taken against works that breach their permit conditions?	
	Councillor L Smith	Thank you councillor Zaman, The team issued 27 Fixed Penalty Notices in the past 12 months and 91 Section 74 fines to utility companies for failure to comply with permits and streetworks conditions. Utility companies have a legal duty to manage their works safely, and we employ a team of Highway Inspectors that carry out inspections of works on the highways. Where we find defects, permit breaches or failed traffic management, we require them to rectify it or we will take enforcement action. Temporary traffic signals remain the responsibility of the utility company, which is required to maintain them and respond to faults. Residents experiencing issues can also report them directly to the Council so that they can be investigated and, where justified, escalated with the utility company concerned.	
20	**Radcliffe First**	How often is the Old Tower at Radcliffe Manor, Radcliffe inspected and what risk assessments are there in relation to youths entering the tower, drinking and breaking glass and dogs leaving their bodily deposits, as owners fail to pick it up?	**Councillor Walsh**
	Councillor L Smith	Our Greenspaces team carry out fortnightly visits to the tower to carry out grass cutting and litter picking. During these visits the tower is inspected, with broken glass and litter regularly removed from within the tower. Replacement dog fouling signs are on order and will be installed as soon as we receive them.	

	Party	Question	Questioner
		The Greenspaces service has risk assessments in place covering the maintenance activities at the site, however there is currently no formal site-specific risk assessment for the tower structure itself.	
21	**Radcliffe First**	Given that the Council is required to follow Accessibility Regulations 2018 and to comply with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.1, what guarantees do we have that all documents and websites created by the Council or on behalf of the Council are meeting these requirements?	**Councillor Birchmore**
	Councillor Thorpe	The council has adopted a set of Accessible Document Standards which is inclusive of the presentation and navigation functions of websites considering the requirements of the Public Sector Bodies (Websites and Mobile Applications) (No. 2) Accessibility Regulations 2018 which require adherence to WCAG 2:2 standards. These standards can be accessed by council teams and officers from the intranet Accessible Document Standards these can and should be shared with commissioned partners who produce websites for commissioned council services.	