

COUNCIL MEETING
28 January 2015
LEADER'S STATEMENT

Madam Mayor, Members and Officers of the Council, there have been two meetings of the Cabinet since the last meeting of the Council.

Madam Mayor, before I speak about the work of the Cabinet, I would like to refer to recent events in France and try to reassure our Asian Heritage and Jewish communities about the work the Council, Police and partners are doing to ensure those communities feel safe. This is in the context of extensive national media coverage following these unacceptable attacks on law abiding French people, where Muslims and Jews alike were gunned down.

Bury Council and its partners can be rightly proud of the close relationships we enjoy with all our diverse communities, which of course just doesn't happen by accident. It comes from a meaningful and passionate desire to treat all our communities as part of the Bury Family.

Here in Bury, we have a zero tolerance to anyone who promotes hate against any of our communities, and especially where it might be Islamophobic or anti-Semitic in nature. In terms of working with our communities:

- We work with all of our secondary schools through the innovative 'Be Safe Be Cool project' promoting positive messages and dialogue with young people
- We deliver ongoing Prevent training with staff and students and partner agencies
- We will be holding our first ever Hate Crime Conference in February 2015, specifically targeted at all those who work with our young people
- We promote interfaith involvement through our annual Holocaust Memorial event

- The Team Bury Communities Group brings together members from a wide range of communities to discuss and agree priorities relating to community cohesion
- We provide funding to grass roots groups to help them in supporting their local communities and neighbourhoods
- We provide support to the near neighbours fund where members of the community are encouraged to come together to overcome differences and make a difference in communities
- Our Cabinet member for Communities and Culture is continuing work which began last year, to visit a number of leaders from faith groups including Mosques, Churches and Synagogues. This facilitates two-way dialogue and partnership working
- The Community Safety Partnership oversees the work of the Police and other agencies in providing Safer Communities for all residents of the Borough

- We now have a Strategic Interfaith Group that meets to discuss and formulate projects that can be of benefit to the Borough
- We will be holding the third of our Mayor Prayer Breakfast in March with the aim of involving a range of interfaith partners and
- We formulate and review local Township Plans providing opportunities for members of our communities to come together and address local priorities for their area.

This week through Holocaust Memorial commemoration, we remember the sacrifices faith communities made in the past when there is rampant intolerance and persecution of certain communities and we recognise that it is ordinary people who pay the price with their lives and shattered communities.

We must all continue to be vigilant and do all we can to speak out against the perpetrators of hate and intolerance.

The Council will go one step further by making a signed declaration about tackling intolerance and are asking all faith leaders to sign up and promote respect and tolerance for all our communities.

Devolution

Cabinet agreed the first principles for the establishment of a new overarching governance framework for the GMCA to oversee over £2bn of devolved funding transferring to the City Region. My only disappointment was to see the Members opposite failing to grasp this significant historical opportunity to put spending power in the hands of local politicians who are accountable to local communities.

New Tenancy Agreement

The codes of conduct concerning the actions and behaviour of tenants have been overhauled, bringing the new agreement up to date with recent changes in legislation as well as building in best practice.

I am particularly pleased to see that the agreement makes clear what actions will be taken against tenants who are in breach and seeks to speed up action where that is needed. The changes send out two clear messages:

- For those who abuse their tenancy, swift action will be taken. Ultimately if behaviours do not change, there is always the risk of eviction.
- Secondly, the new Agreement has been strengthened in order to give confidence to our good and loyal tenants that we are there to protect you in what, on occasions, can be very distressing situations with bad neighbours.

In line with good practice, we are now in the process of consulting tenants on these changes and hope to have the new agreement in place by the start of the new financial year.

Former GMP Police Station

The Cabinet agreed a contract for the demolition of the former police station. It is expected that work will commence in late February and be completed by mid July. No decision on the future of the site has been discussed.

Radcliffe Temporary Swimming Pool

Cabinet agreed to the proposal to erect a £1m temporary swimming pool in the grounds of the former Riverside High School.

The pool is likely to be open by mid April.

Alternative Services – Under 5s

Members of the Cabinet heard the outcomes from the recent consultation to develop an alternative model for delivery of Childrens Centre and introduction of new Under 2 Provision supported by an increased number of Outreach workers.

All of these changes were needed to secure the future of these important services and make savings of £820,000.

Following consultation, in addition to the 'core' number of hubs a further 3 spoke provisions linked to Bury East, Prestwich and Radcliffe will be added.

Five of the remaining Childrens Centres will be converted to provide 2 year old nursery provision for those most deprived children.

Future Options – Social Care Provider

Members of the Cabinet heard the outcomes from the recent consultation to develop a new social care delivery model which would protect and ultimately enhance the range of services already available to service users. The Member led Task and Finish Group set up to determine the most appropriate model recommended the establishment of a Local Authority Trading Company.

A business plan for this delivery model will now be drawn up and presented to the Cabinet meeting in April.

Health and Safety Annual Report

The importance of Health and Safety for our employees, safe working practices and diligent reporting when things go wrong has always been of paramount importance.

Members of the Cabinet were pleased to receive the Annual Report which showed positive progress in both the reduction of accidents but also improved reporting and investigation of accidents. Prevention initiatives such as installation of Defibrillators in the Town Hall and Leisure Centres ensure that life saving is maximised.

I Will if You Will

Madam Mayor, I am pleased to announce that Sport England have agreed to extend the Bury Pilot Study for a further two years with £2m of funding to carry on the great work underway here in Bury on a high profile national programme.

This significant project has got more than 6,500 women and girls across Bury moving into some form of sport or leisure activity both formal and informal, to test out different ways of engaging women.

Local groups from sports providers, community groups, local businesses and volunteer champions have been mobilised to support the programme's diverse range of initiatives and in the process delivered nearly 25,000 activity sessions and awarded almost £35,000 of funding to local groups. Activities from aqua aerobics, belrobics and piloxing, to jog groups, swimming, netball and Zumba have been offered to women throughout Bury at venues across the Borough.

The latest phase of I Will If You Will comes as Sport England goes live with the new national campaign, 'This Girl Can', to tackle head on the barriers that stop millions of women from being more active.

This is a real vote of confidence for Bury in what it has achieved to date and I look forward to this project delivering even better results over the next couple of years.

I am sure Members will join with me in thanking everyone associated with the pilot scheme for their hard work and dedication in securing this extension.

ENDS

Community Safety Services

We all know about Community Safety but do we all know what an important and vital job they do in protecting our public buildings and schools? Day in and day out either within the control centre watching CCTV monitors or out patrolling they quietly go about their work.

And I was pleased to that recent the service successfully achieved ISO 9001 Certification and Accreditation.

This accreditation was necessary if the service to secure a licence from the Security Industry Authority Business Licensing which comes into force during 2015.

Achieving ISO 9001 acknowledges the work and systems of the service and will hopefully help to retain and attract further business growth as well as new opportunities for further development.

I am sure this Chamber will join me in saying well done to all the team.

Arts & Museums Accreditation

Madam Mayor I am pleased to advise Members that Bury Art Museum & Sculpture Centre has been awarded Full Accreditation status by Arts Council England.

The scheme sets nationally agreed standards for all museums in the UK.

To meet the requirements, museums and galleries have to demonstrate that they comply with standards relating to how they are governed and managed, how they provide services and facilities for users of, and visitors to any museums, and how they care for and manage their collections.

Arts Council Accreditation emphasises that the local community has a remarkable achievement on its doorstep while national and international visitors have an excellent arts venue to visit while staying in Bury.

I am sure all Members in the Chamber will join me in congratulating the Arts & Museums team and the rousing vote of confidence this gives to the way the arts are developing in Bury.

Fair Deal for Bury

Madam Mayor I wanted to finish my statement to Council by advising Members of my two telephone conference meetings with junior government ministers, no not with big Eric, I suspect he wouldn't want to lower himself to hear our pleas for a Fair Deal for Bury and similarly of course the deafening silence from our local Bury North MP who has kept a very low profile on this and other issues when lobbying on behalf of our Bury North residents, but we know that he has form on such matters.

So we prepared our arguments and made very pragmatic proposals to both Ministers, who were clearly 'on message' and after both calls it was clear that Bury would not, any time soon under this Coalition Government, be getting a Fair Deal on future funding formulas. And so the residents of Bury can rightly feel angry to see the leafy suburbs in Surrey and so on far better under the Coalition's formula funding than Authorities like Bury who are significantly and increasingly being marginalised. Never the less we will keep up the fight until we get that Fair Deal for Bury.

Madam Mayor, that concludes my statement.

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