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Bradley Fold Estate Set for Major Redevelopment

July 11, 2025

— Categories: Real Estate



Bury Council has approved a £1.4 million investment to kickstart the transformation of the Bradley Fold trading estate, a sprawling 25-acre site on the outskirts of Radcliffe. The estate, one of the council's largest non-operational assets, is in a dire state, with many buildings described as dilapidated and unfit for modern use. The goal is to turn this ageing

industrial hub into a modern, thriving centre for high-quality businesses, delivering more jobs and greater economic value to the borough.

The Bradley Fold estate, generating a modest £250,000 in net income annually, has seen better days. Its main structures, built in the early 1900s as a munitions factory during the war, were later subdivided for commercial use. Over the decades, a patchwork of additions has left the estate with a mix of buildings in varying states of disrepair. A council report highlighted that limited investment over the past 20 years has rendered much of the site obsolete, with some buildings so degraded that insurance cover has been withdrawn.

The council sees this as a golden opportunity. The report outlines plans to redevelop the estate into a modern industrial hub, replacing outdated units with high-quality facilities to attract dynamic businesses. Currently, the estate supports around 130 jobs across its tenanted areas, which include Bradley Court, Bradley House, and 35 industrial units under various lease agreements. Redevelopment could double this figure, based on average employment density estimates, offering a significant boost to local employment.

However, the path forward is not without challenges. Insurance has been reinstated for Bradley Court, the ‘villa’, and the ‘depot’, the latter two occupied by the council, provided no combustible materials are stored within 20 metres. Other units remain uninsured, prompting the council to consider terminating leases to facilitate demolition or requiring tenants to take on full repairing and insuring leases. This approach has sparked concerns about the impact on existing businesses, though the council has pledged to work with tenants to support relocation.

At the cabinet meeting where the plans were greenlit, council leader Eamonn O'Brien described the estate as "an underutilised asset with enormous regeneration potential." He added, "The site is in pretty poor condition and at this point poses more risk than reward." This is about creating a place with modern industrial units and potentially other uses, delivering high-quality businesses and better jobs that benefit the borough." His comments reflect a pragmatic view, acknowledging the estate's current liabilities while emphasising its future promise.

The Labour-led council's decision comes amid broader scrutiny of its financial management and priorities, with critics arguing that such investments must deliver tangible results to justify the cost. The £1.4 million initial funding is just the start, with further investment likely needed to realise the estate's full potential. If successful, the project could transform Bradley Fold into a cornerstone of Bury's economic landscape, but it will require careful execution to balance the needs of current tenants with the ambition for growth.

The council's commitment to engaging with businesses during the transition is a step in the right direction, but questions remain about the timeline and feasibility of doubling employment. For now, the focus is on laying the groundwork for a revitalised estate that could redefine Radcliffe's industrial future.