

**COUNCIL VERBATIM**  
**12 JULY 2017**

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**LEEDS CITY COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

Held on

Wednesday, 12<sup>th</sup> July, 2017

At

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,  
CIVIC HALL,  
LEEDS

In the Chair:

THE LORD MAYOR  
(COUNCILLOR J DOWSON)

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**VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS**

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VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL  
ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 12<sup>th</sup> JULY 2017

THE LORD MAYOR: It is time for me to give you the now customary reminder to turn your mobile phones off lest we do hear them go off and you are fined very heavily for the Lord Mayor's Charity, so if you can do that please.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE LORD MAYOR: We have got some announcements to make, so I will move straight to Announcements.

When I came into office we had a minute's silence for the victims of the Manchester Arena atrocity. I will mention that again because some local people here in Leeds have subsequently had their funerals and we would like to send our sympathy I am sure to families and friends of everyone who has been affected. Further to that, we have also been on the steps of the Library to think about the victims of the London Bridge and Borough Market atrocity, the Finsbury Park atrocity and also the terrible events that we all witnessed at Grenfell Tower in London, so our sympathies do go out to everyone who has been affected by that.

On top of that we have had two of our Honorary Aldermen who have died since the last Council meeting. We have had Alderman Brooke Nelson – I am sorry, I went to the funerals. Brooke was a marvellous man, he was an Honorary Alderman and it is amazing how politicians and people who are active in their communities never actually go away. I know Brooke from his Covenant Meetings, the Armed Forces Covenant Meetings but at his funeral it was clear that he was still active in his community and trying to make a difference.

Councillor Ted Hanley, who was a very good friend to a lot of us here in this Chamber and a very fair adversary to others. He was a wonderful, wonderful man and again he continued to work for Lineham Farm and lots of other organisations when he was not a Councillor and I think we were just lucky that he did come to the Mayor Making so many of us did actually get an opportunity to see Ted for one last time at the Mayor Making.

I would like you all, please, if you would, to stand for a minute's silence.

*(Silent tribute)*

THE LORD MAYOR: What has become very clear to us in light of all this is how much we owe to the First Responders, so in complete contrast to our minute's silence I would like us to all give a round of applause for the First Responders, those brave fire-fighters, police officers, ambulance and hospital staff who day in, day out put their lives in danger for us. If you could join me just in a round of applause for them. *(Applause)*

Crikey, these announcements go on today, don't they! It is my honour to actually extend congratulations to the following people who were honoured in the Queen's Birthday Honours List.

Firstly we have got Ingrid Roscoe, who is the Lord Lieutenant of West Yorkshire, who has been made a Dame;

We have somebody called Councillor Judith Blake, who has been given the CBE for services to Local Government; *(Applause)*

Alan Gay, who has received an OBE for services to Local Government; *(Applause)*

Mrs Noor Jahan Ali, BEM, for services to diversity in the retail industry; *(Applause)*

Junier Browne MBE, services to the environment, diversity and the community of Leeds;

Kevin Clancy MBE, services to further education;

Aqila Choudhry MBE, services to public and political service;

Rosemary Godfrey, the Associate Royal Red Cross, ARRC, for services to the military;

Barbara Hodgkinson MBE, services to people with dementia; *(Applause)*

Dr Shah Noor Khan MBE, services to the Muslim community and community cohesion; *(Applause)*

Mrs Ibolya Knill BEM, Holocaust education and interfaith cohesion (marvellous woman); *(Applause)*

Edward Ziff OBE, services to the economy and the community in Leeds.

That is the full list. *(Applause)*

I would like to extend a big vote of thank you to all our Council colleagues who stood for election for the General Election that has just gone past. It shows how much we value democracy here in Leeds that our Councillors do actually put their names forward even in unwinnable seats sometimes to actually make sure that people's views are taken into account across the whole piece. A particular congratulations to Councillor Sobel, who I do not think is with us today, he is down at Parliament. *(Applause)*

ITEM 1 - MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 25<sup>th</sup> MAY 2017

THE LORD MAYOR: We move on to Minutes of the Meeting held on 25<sup>th</sup> May. Councillor Ogilvie.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: I move that the minutes be approved.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Latty.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I will call for the vote to approve those minutes. (*A vote was taken*) That is CARRIED.

## ITEM 2 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

THE LORD MAYOR: Declarations of Interest. I would like to invite any Members to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests now.

## ITEM 3 - COMMUNICATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: We move on to Communications. Tom.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. There are two responses to Council resolutions: one from David Moat MP, Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for Community Health and Care in respect of the White Paper on the National Dental Performers List considered by Council in March; and the Private Secretary at the Office of the Parliamentary Undersecretary of State for the Environment and Rural Life Opportunities in respect of the White Paper on Air Quality, also considered by Council in March. These responses have been circulated to all Members of Council.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Carter, I believe you have a communication you would like to bring forward.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Yes, thank you, Lord Mayor. Under Procedure Rule 2.2(d) I want to draw to the attention of Council two communications, both relating to the same issue, which is the arena site just up the road currently standing out of action now for almost two years – in particular the communication of 3<sup>rd</sup> July from Councillor Richard Lewis, Executive Member for Regeneration, relating to the current situation on that site. I have to say all Members have received that. The next communication I intend to comment on you have not all received but I think you will be very interested in.

Can I say, I am very surprised that Richard Lewis decided to send this communication on this particular site to all Members of the Council because whilst I suppose you could say it is factual in as far as it goes, it leaves out very crucial pieces of information that Members of this Authority ought and should be aware of; pieces of information that it has taken me as an Executive Board Member of this Council and a Member of the Combined Authority a considerable length of time to obtain and I

had to resort to a Freedom of Information Request on the LEP which has still not been responded to and on the Combined Authority, which has been responded to, the content of which was so light it was offensive and resulted in an apology from the Chief Exec of the Combined Authority and a scurry of officers from this Authority to my office to explain to me and give me answers to the questions I had asked. Not a happy state of affairs.

I think, Richard, if you were aware of all the facts – and I am not sure that you are – you would not put your name to this email and I am somewhat surprised you have.

The email sets out in detail some of the facts surrounding that building – a building which the developers of, now in liquidation, were loaned £4.8m of public money via the LEP.

I tried to find out, Members of Council, how that decision was taken, who did the due diligence. Indeed, at an Executive Board of this Council I made deliberately a point that I did not think the Council had been involved, and Councillor Lewis's email seems to try and exonerate the Council from any responsibility. I did that deliberately and finally got the truth. Indeed, this Council were involved because this Council provided the due diligence on that building – the due diligence on whether the £4.8m of public money should be loaned.

At a meeting of the LEP Investment Panel this piece of advice was given from the Due Diligence Report:

“There remains a significant period of risk for the LEP between the Co-op Loan being drawn down and practical completion of the building. During this phase, 18-plus months, if there is a default some or all of the LEP funding would be at risk.”

No mention of that in this email.

“Members of the LEP have two choices. One, they agree to the detail of the loan agreement and inter-creditor agreement of £4.8m accepting the risk attached to this, or not proceed with the loan on the basis that it exceeds the risk appetite of the LEP.”

The LEP decided to proceed with the loan; the £4.8m is now well and truly at risk. Indeed, the chances of us getting that money back are negligible.

The Panel comprised of the Chair, Councillor Keith Wakefield and other Members including the Chair of the LEP itself, Neil McLean. He wished it to be noted that for the record he did not support the deal. The deal still went ahead. Shortly afterwards the LEP was looking for a new Chair. I do not know why that was the case but you can put any construction you want upon it; I know what some people think.

The main points are these. One, £4.8m of public money has probably been lost. It would have been easier at the time, when you make investment of this sort

sometimes you do take a risk and you have to weigh that risk up and sometimes you will be wrong and sometimes things like this may happen, but you have to be prepared to demonstrate that you have taken all the proper advice in the proper way. I think a lot of questions remain unanswered by the LEP, by the Combined Authority and by this Council about how this whole business has been handled.

We now have a building standing there that everybody in this Council sees every day and will probably cost the public purse a great deal more than the £4.8m that currently appears to have been wasted.

Worst of all, the amount of subterfuge and deliberately misleading information that a Member of this Council has been subjected to and had to ask over and over again to get. I would say this to all of you, if that is the way a Leader of a political party and former Leader of Council is treated, then Heaven help the Back Benchers because you will never, ever get to the bottom of it. It is not good enough. It is a sad and sorry saga and it will not go away. Richard, I have known you a long time, I do not believe that you necessarily were aware of all of this. I am astonished if you would send out this if you have.

My Lord Mayor, it is a sad and sorry statement that I have to make.

#### ITEM 4 - DEPUTATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Deputations.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: To report there is one Deputation, the Leeds Youth Parliament regarding the UK Youth Parliament National Campaign for votes at 16.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ogilvie.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: I move that the Deputation be received.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Latty.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: If I can call for that vote. *(A vote was taken)*  
CARRIED. Right, deputation.

#### LEEDS YOUTH PARLIAMENT REGARDING THE UK YOUTH PARLIAMENT NATIONAL CAMPAIGN

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. We would now like you to make your speech. If you can make it no longer than five minutes and if you can please start by introducing us to the Deputation.

MS S ROWE: Good afternoon, everyone. We are the four elected Members of Youth Parliament for Leeds. We are here today to seek your support for our current UK Youth Parliament National Campaign – which is, “Votes at 16”.

Firstly I will give you some background as to how we got to this campaign, which I will try to get through quickly. Last year the Youth Parliament conducted its annual ballot called Make your Mark. The overall turnout of young voters was nearly one million, making it the biggest youth consultation ever held in Europe. 14,319 young people voted here in Leeds. In the ballot paper, votes at 16 was a very popular issue for young people with 112,000 eleven to eighteen year olds voting that it was the most important issue to them. The campaign was taken forward to the House of Commons in our annual sitting last November and Members of Youth Parliament voted for this as our national campaign for this year. Today we seek your support.

Sixteen and seventeen year olds today are completely ready to engage and participate in our democracy, having learned the principles in Citizenship education, a compulsory part of the National Curriculum in Secondary Schools since 2002. It is very hard to take a seat and watch as our futures are shaped for us with no political say whatsoever. The feeling of being voiceless and disempowered in any situation is something which is difficult to experience at any age. It is a feeling which many 16 and 17 year olds have to experience day by day as decision after decision is made – decisions which will affect our future immensely.

I cannot quite put into words the frustration as we watch outcomes endlessly unravel regarding our status as EU Citizens, education, healthcare, housing, unemployment, the list goes on – all matters which will undoubtedly make a difference to us, knowing that we have no democratic say in the matter.

I would like to remind you that all those 16 and 17 year olds are deemed too young to vote. A 16 year old in the UK has many responsibilities. They can, for instance, become a company director, employing staff and paying for tax and National Insurance Contributions; give full medical consent to treatments which may possibly have life-changing effects; become members of trade unions actively working to protect and further workers’ rights and interests; 16 year olds can join the Armed Forces.

Other countries do already give 16 year olds the vote, such as in Argentina, Brazil and Austria. 16 year olds can vote in State elections in Germany or in Slovenia if they are employed. 16 year olds can also vote in Guernsey, Jersey and the Isle of Man. Let us not forget the Scottish Referendum whereby 75% of 16 and 17 year olds cast their vote. Votes at 16 will, without a doubt, empower 16 and 17 year olds through a democratic right to influence decisions that will define our future.

Through giving 16 year olds we believe that young voters will themselves influence others to vote. Votes at 16 would also mean that in the future there will undoubtedly be a higher overall electoral turnout as young people will continue to vote throughout the years knowing the importance of voting in society and appreciating their vote more. This will mean that more people of all different backgrounds will be represented by the Government, making decisions passed in Parliament fairer.

As Members of Youth Parliament and on behalf of young people in Leeds, in all of your wards, we would like to ask you to support us in our objective to achieve votes for people at 16. As Councillors we would like to encourage you to publicly support our campaign. We would also like to work with Council officers and Elected Members to look at what can be done to achieve this objective.

Votes at 16 has the power to make a hugely positive political change in our society and for generations to come. Votes at 16 is about the freedom to achieve freedom – the freedom, for instance, to vote on healthcare and education. Speaking for the 1.5 million 16 and 17 year olds in the UK, votes at 16 is a change which we need now more than ever and a change which has the ability to shape a fairer democracy for all. Thank you. *(Standing ovation)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. I do not think we actually heard your names, the names of your Deputation, so I think we have some budding politicians and it would be quite nice to know your names. Would you do that for us, please?

MS S ROWE: Yes. I am Scarlet Rowe.

MS M AHMED: I am Muzdalfa Ahmed.

MS C WILLIAMS: I am Charlotte Williams.

MS L BRANSTON: Liberty Branston. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ogilvie.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: I move that the matter be referred to the Director of Communities and Environment for consideration in consultation with the relevant Executive Member.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Latty.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I would like to call for the vote to refer the Deputation. *(A vote was taken)* That is CARRIED. Thank you very much for coming today. officers from the relevant Department will be in contact with you in due course. Thank you for coming.

MS S ROWE: Thank you, everyone. *(Applause)*

#### ITEM 5 – REPORT AMENDMENTS TO THE EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 5, Councillor Ogilvie.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: I move in terms of the Notice, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harland.

COUNCILLOR HARLAND: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: If I can call for the vote. (*A vote was taken*) That is CARRIED.

#### ITEM 6 – SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 6, Scrutiny Annual Report. Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I can see Scrutiny is a vital part of the Council's work and I can see there are lots of Members of Council who are involved in it on a day to day basis lined up to speak on it, so I shall move the report in terms of the notice and look forward to hearing the contributions from Chairs and Members of Scrutiny Board.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Lewis. Councillor Ogilvie.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Buckley.

COUNCILLOR BUCKLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Some Members will be aware of the recent invasion of Alwoodley village green a week last Friday by travellers. I would just like to concentrate on two things today and one is a call for some Scrutiny of this matter which I will come back to, and the other is to make sure that thanks are given to all those who made possible the removal of the traveller encampment from the village green.

This group arrived on Friday afternoon of June 30<sup>th</sup> and were evicted by the police on the following Tuesday, using Section 61 of the Public Order Act. Heartfelt thanks must go to several people and groups of people. First of all, the PCSOs who originally attended, and attended very quickly. To Kerrie Murray and the Gypsy and Traveller team for their efficient and knowledgeable advice.

We must also thank Localities who were so speedily on the scene for the clean up. We must thank Sgt McKelvey and his team for all their efforts – it is very much appreciated. We must obviously thank the Alwoodley residents who cherish their village green and who were resolute in their wish to have the unwanted visitors removed. We must thank the Parish Council who sprang into action so quickly and were so decisive in their plans.

Lord Mayor, these people, the Parish Council and the local people, these are the good guys. These are the good guys. We speak in this Chamber about bringing people together, about people of different creeds, different religions, different backgrounds, the wealthy and the poor. The village green and the events on it and the people who organised it does exactly that. The Parish Councillors do all this for

nothing. They are generous, polite and selfless whereas the visitors were impolite, ungenerous and selfish.

I suggest that the Scrutiny Board responsible for these matters might like to look at how these incursions can be prevented in the future and what changes need to be made in our procedures in order to protect village greens and similar cherished locations. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Sue Bentley.

COUNCILLOR S BENTLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Firstly, I would like to thank Members of the Board, ten of whom are voluntary co-optees, for their continuing hard work, commitment, enthusiasm, passion for helping to improve the lives of our children and families in Leeds. I would also like to thank Sandra Pentelow, who works extremely hard in supporting us and ensuring that we get to our outside visits. I would also like to thank Sohab and Grace from our Graduate Training Programme, who offered extra support in the Scrutiny Office this year. Of course, none of the work would be done without the hard work of officers who prepare our reports and then subject themselves to the monthly grilling.

We challenged Alan Gay about the continuing concerning budget overspends. Although the Turning the Curve model initially brought very quick budget wins, it seems to be plateauing as this optimistic model is causing overspends. We appreciate this is a needs-led service and is unpredictable but we must ensure our children's needs are met.

Our Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Inquiry originated from the shocking fact that only 7% of our SEND young people were in employment. We focused on enabling our young people to choose the pathways and opportunities to develop their life skills, gain qualifications, get a job and some independence as they moved into adulthood. Our findings were reflected in the OFSTED report.

This year's inquiry into Children's Centres, looking at their impact on the very young and their families. Our visits to the Children's Centres were enlightening for Board Members in the depth and breadth of work that they saw, not only with the young children but their parents and carers in the Children's Centres.

We looked at behaviour management and the effect of our challenging behaviours not only on the child concerned but also on the children and their teachers who also needed support.

We ensured that there was accountability for the work of the Corporate Parenting Board and we challenged the annual Standards Attainment results with continuing concern that frustratingly Leeds school improvement continues to lag behind other Authorities.

We reviewed how the Community Committees engaged with young people in spending their Universal Activity Funds in their area and we also checked the sufficiency of school places across the city to meet this and future years' demands.

When we looked at home education there is so much concern about safeguarding that a joint letter from Mark Peel, Chair of Leeds Safeguarding Board, and myself was sent to the Secretary of State for Education. I hope this contributed to the Bill going through the House of Lords urging that Councils monitor the educational, physical and emotional development of our home educated children. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Barry Anderson.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I just start by thanking Angela Brogden for the excellent work that she gives to our Scrutiny Board and the hard work she puts in behind the scenes. Also can I thank the Members of the Scrutiny Board last year as well. Yes, we had our differences but I think we made a big, big difference to this city last year in what we did and we had some excellent debates. We worked hard. Anybody who has been on my Scrutiny Board knows that you do not come along just for the ride, you are there to work and to work hard and to improve the city at the same time.

We have made a difference in a number of areas and I want to highlight some of them. Customer contact – when you are telephoning into us as a Council there is a lot of money wasted in the number of repeat calls, so we are looking into that. Also, I will give by name, Councillor Wakefield brought it to my attention that he had an important issue to deal with one night when they were struggling and they could not find any out of hours people to help them and so as a result of that we brought that to the attention, so I think we made a bit of a difference there.

We also looked at the impact of welfare reforms. Everybody around here has residents who are affected by the welfare reforms in some way or another and our report is actually being taken forward as the Bible in terms of the way forward. James Rogers, who has taken over, passed it to Lee Hemsworth and said, “There you are, this is how benefits should be run in the city and this is a Bible” and he has benefitted from it.

While we are on about that I would also like to pay thanks to Steve Carey for the excellent work he has given to this city over the years in terms of being available to us all the time when we have issues. *(Applause)*

That is one positive thing that happened. One that did not go so well - well, I do not think they enjoyed it – ATOS did not enjoy coming to be grilled by us whatsoever because they were put well and truly under the microscope.

We have also looked this year into a revised Council Tax Support Scheme, which is controversial because of the amount of money that the Council were having to try and identify in terms of savings, so we had to make tough decisions on that.

The migration in Leeds that we looked into, we were actually complimented in terms of the way that we conducted the debate in a non-confrontational fashion and we had a great debate and we have learned a lot about it. Overall, in terms of partnership working I think we have proved our bit.

Just quickly in respect of Councillor Buckley, yes, I will give the Scrutiny Board a chance but I do think that because of a paper that is going to be coming to Development Plans Panel next week we maybe hold fire and see who is the best person to look into this overall issue, whether myself or Councillor Truswell. If I can just finally, ten seconds, honestly, I do think we have got to continue working in partnership between the officers, the Exec Members and the Board Members and we can prove that parity of esteem is the right thing for Scrutiny. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Varley.

COUNCILLOR VARLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I speak about the Better Lives Strategy of the Health and Social Care Scrutiny. Throughout the year one of the regular discussions and concerns had been the Better Life Strategy in respect of care homes and latterly domiciliary care. We were in receipt of regular information of the judgments of the CQC. The results were good in many cases. Unfortunately there were still too many with the judgment of needing improvement or inadequate.

In these latter judgments the comment that was most disturbing appertained to the safety of the residents. Safety, of course, covers a great number of aspects from the lack of an effective lock on a door through to the dispensation of medication and the keeping of accurate and updated care plan information.

The question was often repeated in our meetings, would we consider placing any relative in a care home which was not SAFE (in capital letters). The comments made in Scrutiny was the percentage of these judgments was a cause for concern.

As far as the domiciliary care this came into the equation later on in the year as the new contract became live and the preliminary results from CQC appeared that the pattern of the results were similar, perhaps not as alarming as residential care homes but not enough to give confidence to us that the citizens of our city were constantly receiving the best possible care.

Points received from feedback from the service users of the domiciliary care, the training of new employees seemed to be rather lacking. The method of transport, i.e. is public transport the best way to reach the client with all the actual germs that perhaps public transport transmits around? Of course, it was discussed that the CQC could behave perhaps in a little better, more organised way when giving results.

Finally, I would like to say at the seven hour call-in meeting concerning the closure of The Green and Siegen Manor, we were assured that when Siegen was closed the care home and day centre would remain as part of the Council stock and be used as some form of Better Care Facility. The existing residents have now been successfully and happily placed in alternative homes of their choice. I believe the building is now empty. My colleagues and I would appreciate a speedy proposal of the future use of the premises as an Extra Care Facility. Thank you, Lord Mayor.  
*(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lay.

COUNCILLOR LAY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Firstly I would like to join with everybody else and personally thank the Scrutiny Officers and their small team for all of their help. I would also like to thank the Scrutiny Chairs, in particular I would like to thank Councillor Truswell from his City Development Scrutiny Board for putting up with me last year and letting me rabbit away and go off on tangents and for never asking me to shut up. I suspect he was mightily tempted at times.

Secondly, I would like to support the Council's position in compelling publicly funded bodies, businesses and organisations to attend Scrutiny Board. We have all been in Scrutiny Boards where we have needed the input of external bodies. In my experience I have sat on boards where we could not get NHS England to the meeting, or Yorkshire Ambulance, and some of the accountants, large accountant firms and bus companies to attend. They all receive funding from the public purse either centrally or locally or through arm's length Governmental bodies and I can see no reason why the spending of that public money should not be accountable, transparent and honest. Let us hope the CLG committee listens and acts.

Two further pleas. Firstly, please stop fiddling with the names of Scrutiny Boards. Residents and Councillors alike require stability and the ability to know where to find reports and to follow up on their progress and monitoring. Finally, we need the continuing support of Exec Members, Directors, Chief Officers and perhaps most importantly report authors to be present. So often I have been in Scrutiny Board and the report author has not been there and it has been somebody above the line management of that author who is a little less well prepared, I suspect. Without all of those people we cannot continue to be the critical friend that you want us to be. Thanks, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Paulene Grahame.

COUNCILLOR P GRAHAME: Lord Mayor, I would like to start by welcoming the opportunity to once again be Scrutiny Chair, Chair of Strategy and Resources Board. I am looking forward to working with my Board colleagues over the next year as we continue to ensure the efficiency of public spending. With the new Scrutiny arrangements for this municipal year, the Strategy and Resources Scrutiny Board has grown. Functions such as elections, registrars, licensing, local land charges and Council Tax processing previously covered by the Citizens and Communities Board are now within our much larger remit.

This will not, however, hamper our ambition but rather enhance it. We remain committed to ensuring that this Council is run efficiently and continues to be enterprising and I greatly look forward to working in conjunction with the Executive Member for Resources and Strategy to realise this ambition.

In addition to maintaining an overview of the Council's financial health, one of the key priorities for the Board will be maintaining an overview of the Apprenticeship Levy. Business rates are also of interest, particularly in light of the Business Rate Relief Measures agreed by the Executive Board in June this year. Additionally, I am keen to look at our emergency planning procedures and our wider response with partners to major incidents in the city.

Lord Mayor, Scrutiny within Leeds is a critical friend. Working together in partnership we will continue to drive forward the Council's ambitions as we continue to make a real difference to the people of our city. Thank you, Lord Mayor.  
*(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Truswell.

COUNCILLOR TRUSWELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to start by endorsing all the positive comments made by previous speakers about our officers and our Scrutiny Board Members.

As a child of the old committee system where Members made and monitored policies, I really do cherish the demanding role that Scrutiny must play in today's Executive Board system. Scrutiny has shouldered its share of vicious and unnecessary Government cuts, I am afraid. Each Board is now serviced by just one half-time officer. Some might call that sweated labour. I echo the thanks to our Scrutiny Officers and in our case to Sandra Pentelow.

Speaking of sweated labour, my Board noted the increased job levels being trumpeted in various places, including today, but we wanted to dig deeper into the quality of those jobs. We wanted to know how many are minimum wage, zero hours, part-time or based on bogus self-employment scams and we hope that our colleagues on the new Inclusive Growth Scrutiny Board – if that is its full title – might pick up this issue.

We examined the deficiencies in local bus services for a 21<sup>st</sup> Century city and concluded that we need more local control with or without an elected Mayor. We continued to monitor the joint report we produced on housing mix with John Procter's Board when he was a mere Councillor – he is here, excellent, I am glad you are here, John, to hear that accolade.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: I still am a mere Councillor.

COUNCILLOR TRUSWELL: We must continue to press tirelessly, colleagues, for the right housing in the right place for the right price.

We conducted a very lengthy inquiry into Supertram, NGT and transport strategy, the conclusions of which you must wait with bated breath to receive.

This coming year we will be examining sustainable development, what it should mean and how far the system falls short of our and our residents' expectations.

We will examine, with two other Boards, the local implications of the dreadful Grenfell Towers tragedy and we must not allow that tragedy to be reduced purely to terms of cladding and fire precautions, crucial though they are.

Speaking of Grenfell, Lord Mayor, there is one clear overarching conclusion that emerges from so many of our enquiries and it is this, that the market is not working for our citizens. When market forces run amok, especially with political

support, those on the lower end of the ladder pay the price while those at the top reap the dividends. I am not making a party political point here because I know each party in this Chamber recognises the planning system is not working, that the housing system is not working, the bus and transport system is not working and the social care system is not working.

Lord Mayor, Scrutiny helps us to keep our own house in order but we must also use it to press all the parties in this precariously hung Parliament – or should I say bung Parliament given the backhanders to the DUP – to give us the tools and, if necessary, the bungs, we need to make Leeds a truly great city. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hayden.

COUNCILLOR HAYDEN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am delighted to be the new Chair for the Adults and Health Scrutiny Board and actually I welcome the name change because it was the longest title I have ever seen previously. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the former Chair, Councillor Peter Gruen, and all Board Members for their work over the past year.

Thanks to their work we have been able to establish strong working relationships and the work Scrutiny does is now well regarded by health partners across the city.

The wide-ranging work undertaken by the Scrutiny Board has laid the foundations from which I would like to see us build upon in the future. This Board will bring together social services for adults and universal public health services to monitor the Council's progress in improving health, lifestyles and the quality of care across the city, alongside driving integration and partnerships with health bodies.

I would like to see the Board continue its focus on the quality of health and care services across Leeds, as Councillor Varley outlined, and maintain an overview on the development of the Leeds Health and Care Plan. Additionally, the Board will be examining the development of Primary Care, GP services across the city, with a real focus on the south and east of the city, and shaping the future vision for delivery. The Board will also maintain Leeds City Council's standing and the leadership role in the regional and sub-regional Joint Health Scrutiny Arrangements.

Not only will we be continuing in some of the work of the previous Board but there is also the opportunity to look at the other issues this year, such as the health and social care needs of offenders, especially at HMP Leeds, and the responsibilities of the Council in terms of the findings of the recent annual report of the Independent Monitoring Board.

On all these wide-ranging issues I am looking forward to working closely with Councillor Charlwood, the Executive Board Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adults. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lamb.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It was quite a challenge to take over as Chair of a Board mid-year in terms of Environment and Housing and I would particularly like to thank my predecessor and ward colleague Councillor Procter for all the help and support he gave me following his, do we say elevation?

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: No, no.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: That's a trip to Strasbourg coming up!

COUNCILLOR LAMB: I will just check the diary!

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Can we go too, John?

COUNCILLOR LAMB: I would especially like to thank Angela Brogden for all the support that she gave me, again taking over mid-year and trying to get up to speed with a lot of issues that were brand new to me was extremely difficult and Angela was an enormous help and support, as were the Members of the Board. They are certainly a feisty bunch when you include Councillor Grahame and Councillor Lyons among your number, but they were incredibly helpful and I thank every single one of those Board Members for the work that they put in during the year.

We did a great deal of important work. We held the Police and Crime Commissioner to account. We did a very important piece of work which seems even more so now in making sure that tenants in our social housing have a proper voice and are able to express that properly. It felt important then; even more so now.

We did a very important piece of work around the private rented sector. We made good progress on the Peckfield Landfill site, an issue which has blighted residents in Micklefield for many, many years including showing the power of Scrutiny of holding external bodies to account. It took an effort but we did it, we got the Environment Agency to come and give their own representations direct to our Scrutiny Board and that was very important.

Our big piece of work for the year was around air quality which has really helped to set the agenda for the city and again we showed the power of Scrutiny in this city that we were able to call civil servants from National Government to come and give evidence and contribute to our enquiry and the work that we did.

Looking forward, you did not quite get the full title, Councillor Truswell, it is the Sustainable Growth, Culture and Sport Scrutiny Board which is now the new longest title in the city. Again, we have a lot of work to do this year. I look forward to working with all of the Executive Board Members. There are big issues in the headlines already. I am certain we are going to want to have a look at what on earth is going on with devolution in the city and the announcement from Burberry today is, I think, something our Scrutiny Board will want to take a very close look at and make sure we understand what has happened there.

The value of Scrutiny remains undiminished. I have been proud to be on Scrutiny Boards for the whole ten years of my time as a Councillor and I think we continue to do good work. It is great when we actually come together and focus on

things that we agree on and put our political differences aside and just concentrate on doing things that are there to improve the lives of all of the people in our city.

It is a privilege, I am very proud to be part of it and I look forward to a good year ahead. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: I would now like to call on Councillor James Lewis to sum up, please.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think we have heard a really good sample of the work that Scrutiny does. Personally I have attended, or by the summer will have attended all of the Scrutiny Boards in various different capacities and I know how seriously Members take them.

There are a couple of things that came through a lot of the contributions about not this particular Council but holding external partners and organisations, actually, from the perspective of people that live in the city have as much influence as the Council does and often receive our money. I think some of the work that Councillor Bentley talked about in terms of children in actually getting out and seeing how services are delivered is important and again getting the real value for public spending.

I would certainly personally like to pay tribute to Councillor Kim Groves's group who scrutinised Strategy Resources over the last year. I think they have done some great work we can take forward and I look forward to working with Councillor Paulene Grahame.

I would like to pay tribute particularly to Councillor Barry Anderson for his work scrutinising part of mine and Councillor Coupar's portfolio and for also keeping my two ward colleagues in order, which I know what a challenge that can be. I think not only have we talked about the work of Scrutiny Boards last year but also looked at some of the work that is to come ahead and I think it is going to be another year where we see Scrutiny making a real impact in the Council. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: It just falls to me now to call for the vote to receive and note the Scrutiny Annual Report. (*Applause*) That is CARRIED.

#### ITEM 7 – QUESTIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: We now move on to Item 7, which is Questions. We move into Questions where for a period of 30 minutes Members of the Council can ask questions of the Executive Board. If I could first call on Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Will the Leader of Council commit to an external inquiry into the conduct and history of former Councillor Neil Taggart?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think I speak for all of us in the Chamber when I think about the initial shock and then deep revulsion that we all felt when we realised the extent of the charges that former Councillor Taggart pleaded guilty to on June 5<sup>th</sup> in court. I wrote to all Members on that day to inform them of the fact that he had pleaded guilty and we laid out the way we were going to take this forward.

There are just no words really to express how we feel and, of course, many people in the Chamber have known Neil for many, many years. The fact that he used to be a Councillor we felt we had to take this exceptionally seriously and for that reason the Chief Executive immediately ordered an internal audit into the period of time under question laid out in the charges.

We thought very carefully about how we take this forward, Councillor Carter. What we have decided is we want the internal audit to be as far reaching as it can be. I understand it is very close to completion and we believe that the appropriate way to take it forward, the next step, if you like, is to present the findings of the internal audit to the Independent Safeguarding Chair and ask for his advice and oversight to inform us about how we take this forward. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Any supplementary?

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Yes, Lord Mayor. Revulsion and horror are the right expressions. Don't you, however, Councillor Blake, share with me the additional concerns that an internal audit inquiry – and we should not pre-judge and I am sure it will be thorough – is unlikely (unlikely given the period of time that we are considering) to find anything and we should be looking further? Don't you also agree with me that the facts that Taggart was the Chair of West Yorkshire Police Authority for a number of years raises other very serious questions, so don't you agree with me that the two inquiries you have so far alluded to do not in any way address that third point and possibly the most important of the three, and that is his possible conduct while he was Chair of the Police Authority?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: My understanding is that none of the charges that were laid before him occurred while he was the Chair. As I said before, we need to be as open and transparent about this as we possibly can be, we need to do what we can do with regard to his time as a Councillor here and then we need to lay everything before the Independent Safeguarding Chair. If you have further concerns going forward then let us have that conversation. It is not in anyone's interests not to have a conversation about every different angle and I am more than happy to do that at the appropriate time. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Downes.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Does the Executive Member believe that the programme of public transport investment should be for the benefit of the whole of the city?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Ryk. You couldn't make it a little bit vaguer for me, could you? I spent all last night trying to work out what this was for and the short answer is clearly "Yes". I think all the interventions that we will be making will have a wider benefit than just their locality but I am sure there is something further you want to ask so please ask it.

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary, please.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Thank you. I just thought I would put you on your mettle a little bit there! I think what concerns me is that decisions are going to be made that do not address the real issues of the A660, A65 which the original investment was for and I would like to ask that ward Members be consulted within that because at the moment there seem to be some little schemes coming through, nothing is cast in stone but the concern is that things will happen that ward Members are not involved in that they can offer practical and useful advice. My supplementary question is, will you consult with ward Members and when will that consultation be?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Clearly we have got the cross-party working group which I think is the first stage of involving everybody in those discussions. I do not think we have got to that point of having anything to consult on on the A65 or the A660 but I will give you this assurance, that it has got to be cross-party. I think every time I have spoken about £174m, it has always been to say that it must be something where everybody is involved and everybody comes to some consensus about how we are spending this money, or we will get back in the same position we have been in for so many years on public transport investment and spend.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Khan.

COUNCILLOR KHAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Following the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower in Kensington please can the Executive Member update Councillors on fire safety in Leeds's high rise blocks.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Coupar.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Thank you, Lord Mayor and thank you for the question, Councillor Khan. I would just like to say that the Council has co-ordinated an immediate and thorough response to the tragic fire at Grenfell Tower. A joint Council and Fire Service task group continues to meet weekly to co-ordinate and monitor activity across the city.

Our aims have been to ensure the safety of all the 116 blocks of multi-storey Council flats, especially the 23 with some form of cladding, and engage with tenants and residents to reassure them; to pro-actively engage with owners and managers of privately owned high rise buildings in the city; to support the Government's request for all cladding similar to the type in use at Grenfell Tower to be tested urgently; support the efforts of the city's schools, universities and hospitals to ensure the safety

of their buildings and reassure their users; take city-wide ownership of the issue of high rise fire safety including being ready to offer practical support such as rest centres should any buildings be evacuated. This has involved close and positive working with West Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service in accordance with our Joint Fire Concordat.

In terms of our own social housing, 23 of the 116 blocks have some form of cladding. We have assured Government and our tenants that no aluminium composite material cladding similar to that used on Grenfell Tower has been used on our Council blocks.

We have now had a series of meetings with a contractor to scope some additional tests on our materials and systems. We are not required by Government to do any testing but have decided to do some tests for additional assurance to ourselves and our tenants.

We have reviewed fire safety risk assessments on all our blocks and are satisfied with these. We continue our policy of full annual reviews and of daily fire hazard checks in all our high rise blocks. We are coming to the end of a three week intensive series of safety and assurance drop-ins for Council tenants. These have encouraged residents of all our 116 tower blocks to meet senior housing managers and talk to us about their fire safety concerns. Ward Members have been kept informed of these events and we will feed back issues raised and any actions arising at the end of the programme.

For now it is good to know that tenants have positively welcomed the opportunity, raised some common concerns that various services and tenants can work together to address, and feel safer as a result. We have also had our first flat fire in a high rise block post-Grenfell. Fire stopping measures prevented the fire from spreading and no-one was hurt. Housing officers visited every property in the block afterwards to speak with tenants and reassure them of their safety.

The Council has invested around £12m in specialist fire stopping improvements in multi-storey blocks over the past three years. We are part way through delivering an already planned programme installing sprinklers in eight blocks of flats for vulnerable older people and will keep this issue under review pending the outcome of the Government's inquiry into Grenfell.

We believe that any strategy on retro-fitting sprinklers should be on a national scale so that resources are prioritised and demand is managed so safety is not compromised by strain on the industry.

In terms of the private sector, we have an inventory of private sector buildings over 18 metres high in Leeds and we have written urging building owners to take action with regard to testing and to updating fire risk assessments. Owners have also been approached by Government via various sector representative bodies and associations and many are taking proactive steps to ensure their buildings are safe and reassure tenants and users. We will continue to pursue those from whom we do not receive assurance.

The Fire Service will work with private building owners affected to agree additional fire safety measures, wherever possible avoiding the kind of evacuation scenarios we have seen across the country. Should the Fire Service deem it necessary in future to close any buildings on safety grounds, the Council is standing by to provide temporary rest centre facilities should evacuees need somewhere to go while they and their building managers arrange alternative accommodation.

Engagement with schools had taken place and a return to the Education and Skills Funding Agency completed on schools with four or more storeys of which there are six in Leeds. None of these six has the type of cladding currently causing concern. However, a note went to schools to advise them to recheck their fire safety procedures as an extra precaution.

A review of hospitals in Leeds shows that there is no issues over any cladding used on their buildings and universities in Leeds have issued their own safety and assurance information. I myself have written to you all as Councillors to keep you informed of progress of the aftermath of the Grenfell tragedy. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I have to ask but I take it there is no supplementary, Councillor Khan. Councillor Taylor.

COUNCILLOR TAYLOR: Can the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adults comment on the Government's recent announcement in the Queen's Speech to bring forward proposals for a consultation on social care?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Charlwood.

COUNCILLOR CHARLWOOD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Thank you, Councillor Taylor, for your question. It is a really important, extremely important issue for all of us. I know we are all very concerned about the quality and sustainability of our care market here in Leeds.

The detail of the consultation on social care which followed the very vague Queen's Speech did very little to actually provide specific detail on what exactly will be covered in terms of option other than simply referring to improving the system of financial footing and quality of care.

These are aspirations which we all want to achieve but without the detail we have very, very little to understand what the Government's vision for social care is. What is clear is that it must be something different to the Conservative proposals in the election which unfairly targeted pensioners across the country. Theresa May went from introducing a £100,000 floor with no cap on social care costs to a few hours later claiming that there will be a cap but she could not tell us what it would be and, of course, nothing had changed.

Members will be aware of the plan to force people to pay for all of their social care with their homes – homes which they have worked all their lives for and that amounted to a dementia tax and it was deeply unpopular.

The sustainability of social care remains an issue which needs to be addressed and we on this side of the Chamber have been warning of the crisis in social care for years. Even with the additional £2bn announced in the Spring Budget, Councils still face an annual funding gap of £2.3bn by 2020, according to the Local Government Association.

This is not surprising when you learn that sustained cuts to social care has meant that a total of £6.3bn has been taken out of the Adult Social Care budget in England since 2010. The Government's short term fixes do not address the real long-term pressures that we all know face the system and the challenges such as an ageing population with increasing needs continues to grow. The CQC recently, in a report on the state of social care, stated that a range of challenges facing the system, including highlighting the number of people aged 85 or over in England, is set to more than double over the next two decades. These challenges require an effective response which not only puts the system on a sustainable footing financially but also has a vision which seeks to improve the quality of care.

Unfortunately the Government's recent unilateral action on the Better Care Fund Planning Requirements which set out how social care and NHS funding to support integration should be spent, and that includes the £2bn that we got in the Spring Budget. The last minute changes to the guidance demonstrate that there is very little intention to work with Local Government on social care issues and has led the LGA to withdraw its support for the guidance.

In addition to the sudden shift in focus very late in the process to prioritise delayed transfers of care, the guidance includes plans to penalise Local Authorities like ours if we should fall short of delayed discharge targets set by Central Government. This is completely unacceptable and will precisely hurt the Councils which have the most need and require the most support.

Applying expectations on what the Spring Budget funding should be spent on, such as to fund social care packages and stabilising the care market, highlights the complete lack of understanding of Central Government for social care locally. Effectively Councils are being asked to spend one-off funding on the current spending commitments which will leave a significant risk to the system. You cannot achieve a sustainable social care system on unsustainable funding, so it is completely reckless and it has been criticised by the Tory LGA Chairwoman of the Community Wellbeing Board, Councillor Izzi Seccombe, who said:

“Ultimately this publication undermines integration, increases the difficulty of making important preparations for meeting increased demand during the winter and is likely to make the social care crisis even worse”

and that is the Conservative Chairwoman in the LGA.

This Council, I am very proud to say, has protected frontline services despite the huge cuts we face and we will continue to do the best we can for the people of our city. Councils across the country are doing their best to reduce delays in getting patients out of hospital and back into the community but, as the LGA also says, social

care is about far more than alleviating pressure on Health. It is a vital and essential service in its own right.

Even with the result of the election and the clear message that we have sent to Theresa May and the Conservatives on the issue of social care at the General Election, recent actions from the Government demonstrate the call to end austerity and its approach to tackle the social care crisis have fallen on deaf ears. This Government has no answers to the social care crisis. Their policies crashed and burned during the election campaign and what we need is clear and sustainable solutions for the long term. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Do you have a supplementary, Councillor Taylor? Right, Councillor Barry Anderson.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: Would the Executive Member for Regeneration, Transport and Planning confirm if the Council will be submitting an application for the £2.3 billion Government Infrastructure Investment Fund?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The simple answer is “Yes”. We have been in discussions with civil servants, the ACA and Uncle Tom Cobley and all for some considerable time about the blockages to the development of stalled mainly brown field sites within the city so I think we are in the perfect position to put in a bid for this new fund that was announced earlier this month. September deadline, I do not think we will have a problem with that.

There is only one bit of this funding that we as Leeds City Council can bid for and those bids can only be for up to £10m. However, there is a bigger pot that can be bid for through the Combined Authority and clearly we will be working with them with more ambitious bids to benefit the city. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary, Councillor Anderson?

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: Just quickly. Thank you for that. I hope you will take advantage of the comments made down at the LGA Councillor when the Secretary of State said if you have got an issue and you have got blockages in your system, come down, see him and he will work with you. If a Local Authority is willing to come forward with proposals for housing they will do their best and the continued carping on that there is no money available, the Government is proving that they are putting money into infrastructure and let's see if the Council match it in terms of their commitment to infrastructure investment in this city which is sadly lacking.

THE LORD MAYOR: I am sorry, I did not quite hear the question.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: I lost the will to live back there somewhere, Barry. It was rather a long question, or comment.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: Do you mean the question or the answer?

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Let's get on with it, we've only got half an hour! The conversations that we have been having are about the real blockages. Obviously they were not with the current Minister because Ministers tend to change and who knows how long Sajid Javid will be in post. I think we have always been willing, whatever our political difficulties, to talk to any Government Minister about these issues. I think we have always been very up front and certainly the civil servants I think have always welcomed their comments as being about the practical issues that we need to address. I look forward to us getting hold of some of that money and I am sure you will support all our bids, Barry.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Jonathan Bentley.

COUNCILLOR J BENTLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Member provide an update on negotiations relating to the development of Headingley stadium?

THE LORD MAYOR: Once again, Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Negotiations relating to the development of Headingley Stadium are progressing well. Since April's Executive Board there has been intensive work taking place between the Council, the third party funder and the rugby and cricket clubs. A number of the legal agreements are now in the final stages with the balance in the process of being finalised. On that basis, subject to consultation with the relevant Members, I expect the Council to be in a position to complete the necessary agreements later this month.

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary, Councillor Bentley?

COUNCILLOR J BENTLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Yes, thank you, Richard, for that answer. Can Councillor Lewis tell me then if discussions with the rugby club and the cricket club have covered the possibility of the clubs using any sales proceeds from land at Weetwood and Tingley as lump sum contributions to reduce their lease payments in future years?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: I am not in a position to say because I have not been involved in the negotiations. I do not know what has been said to that level of detail. I think that the agreement is as has been discussed in Council meetings and I expect that when we have the fuller discussion following on the agreement being finalised everything will be absolutely on the table.

To put it simply, I do not think there have been any discussions about other land sites but I do not know what might have been said in a conversation with somebody so I cannot – I think we have to wait until there is something on paper for both you and me, but I am sure that you will be pleased with what you see.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lyons.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Please can the Executive Member for Regeneration, Transport and Planning provide an update on the Temple Green Park and Ride?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: I am glad you asked me that, Councillor Lyons! Yes, Temple Green has surpassed expectations in the first few weeks of operation with over 250 cars parked most weekdays, which equates to approximately 500 passengers a day and 2,600 passengers for the week. Effectively the car park has been a quarter or a third full most weekdays. I was down there this week and I was told that on Monday we had 320 cars there. If you think of Elland Road which opened about the same time of year as Temple Green, we were struggling to get 50 cars most days in its opening few weeks, apart from the day of the Grand Départ. If we had had 300 cars Elland Road would have been three-quarters full within a matter of a few weeks. This is a real change, this is about people actually recognising because of what Elland Road has done the huge benefits that Park and Ride brings to the city. Temple Green, I think, has huge potential, greater in many ways than Elland Road because there are not any constraints on its use. It has a potential to be a transport hub and there are connection advantages for the Enterprise Zone for other people who want to travel into the city using park and ride bus services.

Overall a fantastic, healthy start to it to where we have got to. I look forward to it being full. I am not going to put a date on that but I think it will be very soon and then I look forward to our next park and ride down at Stourton. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary? No. Councillor Garthwaite.

COUNCILLOR GARTHWAITE: In light of the recent announcement by France, does the Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability agree with me that the British Government is falling behind compared to our neighbours on tackling poor air quality?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Yeadon.

COUNCILLOR YEADON: Thank you. I think the most recent announcement by France that they will ban all petrol and diesel cars by 2040 and also a recent announcement by Volvo shows that the UK Government is unfortunately falling behind our international partners.

The Government has also failed repeatedly to adequately address poor air quality in the UK and now has unfairly shifted the burden of dealing with poor air on to Local Authorities rather than effectively addressing the problem at a national level.

It was described by a cross-party group of MPs as a public health emergency. Air quality was barely mentioned in the Conservative manifesto or the Queen's Speech. When it comes to air quality it is clear that the Government does not take this issue seriously and had to be dragged through the courts just to make them publish their Air Quality Strategy.

The scale of this issue warrants strong, decisive action but it has been left to the Local Authorities to show leadership lacking from Central Government. Air pollution does not recognise Local Authority borders. It is a national issue. Whilst we all recognise that local action is required, action which this Council is not shying away from taking, it is clear that the wider centrally led interventions are also needed. If air quality is to be effectively improved across the country then actions to reduce emission impact across fleet, industries and activities must be taken using nationally applied strategies and levers.

What is needed from the Government is a series of key measures to help reduce emissions across the country and support all the work that is being undertaken by Local Authorities named by DEFRA. Leeds, alongside the Core Cities, LGA and the other five cities named by DEFRA, have called on the Government to consider additional measures to improve air quality nationally and a letter signed by the Leaders of the five cities with Sadiq Khan was issued to the Prime Minister to outline these concerns.

As we have said in previous Council meetings, locally we are determined to tackle air quality and we just call upon the Government to do the same. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Any supplementary, Councillor Garthwaite?  
Councillor Buckley.

COUNCILLOR BUCKLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Does the Executive Board Member for Culture believe that moving the Leeds Visitor Centre from the railway station to the art gallery has been a success?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: I would like to thank Councillor Buckley for giving me the opportunity to just inform Council of the enormous success that we have been having in attracting visitors to Leeds. Only this month we welcomed the STEAM Survey recording that Leeds welcomed over 27 million tourism visits in 2016. *(Applause)*

We have many statistics, I urge you all to look at them. Day visitors are up 4%, overnight visitors have increased by 5.4%. The most important thing to note is that in May 2017 Lonely Planet announced Leeds as one of Europe's top ten destinations for international travellers. Leeds was the only UK city to receive that accolade. *(Applause)*

The important thing is, when visitors come here, that they get the information that they want. I am sure you aware that part of the closure was due to cost savings and, indeed, we have saved £62,000. The most important part of this is actually the analysis that was done in the visitors, the people that were going to the visitor centre at the station, what they were actually asking for and the fact that the numbers who were going for core tourism questions going to the visitor centre now are stable.

If you actually look at what people have told us, they really want more web-based information, all of the things that we can give accurate information about – the

number of hits that we get, those are all going up and we are responding by investing in making sure that we provide the information that people want in the way that they want to achieve it. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary, Councillor Buckley?

COUNCILLOR BUCKLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It was a very interesting answer but it was answering a completely different question to the one I asked.

Given that visitor numbers have completely collapsed from half a million to just over 100,000 and that the number of people have gone down by a factor of three-quarters, would the Leader of Council like to explain why the signs on East Parade directing people to the visitor centre are still directing them towards the station?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: I can give a very clear answer as to why the numbers have dropped by that percentage, because 80% of the people who went to the visitor centre in the station were going to ask about bus and train times – clearly not the core business of the outfit.

I will look into the question of signage and I will give you an answer as soon as I possibly can. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I am sorry, everyone, we have now reached the 30 minute limit for questions so any unanswered questions will receive a written response.

#### ITEM 8 – MINUTES OF THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD AND THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

THE LORD MAYOR: We move on to Item 8, Minutes of the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Executive Board. To receive those Minutes I would like to call on Councillor Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Can I move in terms of the Notice, Lord Mayor. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ogilvie.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Consideration of comments on the Health and Wellbeing Board minutes will be heard for a period of up to 20 minutes and I would like to call on Councillor Golton. Councillor Golton does not wish to speak. Councillor Graham Latty.

#### **Health and Wellbeing Board**

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, I would like to speak on Minute 63 page 32 and refer to Minute 12 page 40. What I am really going to talk about is the increasing numbers of people living with dementia.

Lord Mayor, we all know that Leeds has an ageing population. With an ageing population the number of people diagnosed with dementia is also likely to increase and looking at some of the latest figures there are over 8,000 people in the city with dementia. The numbers have increased and are increasing as time goes by.

Research in The Lancet suggests that the cases of disability related dementia will rise by 40% in the next eight years amongst people aged 65 to 84, compared with only (I say only) 31% for other forms of disability.

Neighbourhood Networks are the vital community assets and they are rightly being used to help support people with dementia. GPs are now referring people to them and they are a wonderful way of keeping people from hospital and giving them care closer to their homes and tailored to suit their individual needs but, Lord Mayor, we need to find a way of ensuring that the money for patients with dementia moves with them from the NHS to the Neighbourhood Networks which it is not doing at the moment. As a result, the Neighbourhood Networks have been stretched and it is highly likely, certainly the one in my area, is shortly not going to be able to take any more dementia patients.

The total cost of dementia in the UK is £26.3bn with an average cost of £32,250 for every person. The NHS picks up £4.3bn of that and social care £10.3bn, a slight imbalance. Of the £10.3bn in social care, £4.5bn is attributed to Local Authority Social Services for state funded care. The remaining £5.8bn is what people with dementia and their families pay out themselves annually for help with every day tasks – washing, dressing and eating. Two-thirds of the costs of dementia is paid by the people in their families either in unpaid care or in paying for private social care.

We need to find a way of allowing Neighbourhood Networks to access the NHS proportion of the dementia budget and in the meantime grant fundings from the Government in respect of Adult Social Care, even use of the elements of the Better Care Fund should be explored as a means of providing the funding needed to support services in this vital area.

I did want to finish on a more positive note, Lord Mayor, but I see time is running out. Suffice to say that AVSED, the Neighbourhood Network in my part of the world, has done a deal, as you might say, with one of the local practices whereby they are undertaking to provide a site for the flu jabs and they are transporting people who might otherwise have not got there because they have no transport or just did not get there. The local practice is actually paying them to handle this.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I will not abuse the hospitality of the Council any longer, thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: You are welcome. Councillor Lay.

COUNCILLOR LAY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I shall be speaking on Minute 11 of the Health and Wellbeing Board.

It is no surprise to me to see that applications from the EU have dropped 96%. When Governments are silent on challenging intolerance, xenophobic and nationalistic language, what do you expect? I am sorry, I am wrong, they were not silent on nationalistic rhetoric – they actually fan it.

I am sadly ashamed and embarrassed at how awful this Government has been. Tory infighting created Brexit. Sadly the Tories legacy will be one of how politicians are not all the same and how internal political division in a party destroys the future for millions, affects public services, increases inflation and diminishes people's livelihoods.

If this was not bad enough in itself they then compound this with the public sector pay cap – more about that later in my White Paper – and the introduction of student fees and loans to pay for a career in nursing. With 600,000 workers retiring and an ageing population with complex multiple needs, and just when we need young people and increasingly older people to consider a career in healthcare, we go and punish them. Healthcare workers but particularly nurses are not like other students. There are no three ten-week terms, no ability to work the long holidays, no opportunity to work three nights a week in a pub. Nurses are working on wards, working shifts, working weekends and nights, working 37.5 hours a week. Student nurses will now be paying to work on wards – worse than interns, worse than volunteers, worse than any other group of students.

Higher fees and workloads, lower applicants and pay, under investment, over work, over promise the public. Watch as the workforce cannot meet demands nor expectation and then blame those same staff and tell everyone how it will be better and cheaper done by the private sector. A toxic mix ripe for privatisation – enough is enough, really.

For the first time in my 30 year career in nursing I fear for patients, I fear for staff and I fear for society. This Government is hell bent on decimating the NHS and this report unfortunately is the proverbial peeing in the wind. Nothing in this report reassures me that this Council, the city's Health and Social Care sector nor its universities, quite know what to do about it. Nothing I read here reassures me that this Council will be listened to by its NHS partners. The Sustainability and Transformation Plan will trump all of this and we will see reductions in service, in staff, in outline and our unaccountable NHS providers and commissioners will be made to do this by their Whitehall masters.

It is nothing short of a national disgrace and a shameful indictment of this Health Secretary, the Government and this silent Tory Party. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Taylor.

COUNCILLOR TAYLOR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I will be speaking on Minute 9, page 36.

The draft narrative of Leeds Health and Care Plan was recently discussed at the Health and Wellbeing Board, a Plan which seeks to address the three gaps that have been identified in health inequality, quality of services and financial sustainability.

The plan itself covers a wide range of areas from prevention focused on deprived communities to urgent care with rapid response, calling for a simple system where people will be seen by the right person at the right time. Clearly, all these areas have a significant impact on our community and as such it is crucial that the people who have the service have the opportunity to be part of the conversation about what the future of health and care will look like in the city.

I am pleased that this engagement will now progress further and give the people we represent the platform to highlight their health and care priorities in Leeds. In Leeds our approach has been unique and very strong when it comes to engagement with communities, a statement with strong leadership and the partnership of the city. Engagement is key and is crucial and we continue to ensure that this conversation continues to take place with those who use these services. A citizen based approach must be at the forefront of this very discussion.

We as elected Members also have a role to play and I was pleased that every Community Committee was given the opportunity to be a part of the early discussion and the Leeds Plan in the Spring of this year. I also understand that the Health and Wellbeing Board agree committees will continue to provide an update which is encouraging and will help us to better understand our priorities.

It is vital that we continue to build on the engagement work as the plan sets out ideas to improve health outcomes, care quality and sustainability of health and the care system. This work is in many ways a response to the challenge we face as a city where the number of people aged over 65 is estimated to rise by almost a third to over 150,000 by the year 2030, where more people young and old are developing long term conditions such as diabetes and where if we had it the difference each year between the money available and money needed would amount to several hundred million across Leeds. Eventually there will need to be a respond to these challenges but it is crucial that we must ensure that any plans for a transformation to health and care services in the city must reach a balance of what is right to the community and the citizens of Leeds and that the people will remain at the heart of everything we do. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ann Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on Minute 9 page 36 and Minute 11 page 39.

I look forward to receiving the Draft Plan Narrative once it has been reviewed and reported back to the Board in September 2017. When we talk about the challenge relating to the workforce, I feel I must mention the fact that I spent a week in St

James's Hospital recently and spoke to some of the nurses. I was told that nurses work four twelve hour shifts and they stay in nursing due to it being a caring profession. However, they also told me that some nurses had left the profession as they could get the same rate of pay working more sociable hours at Aldi.

We need to do all we can to remedy this matter as we cannot keep losing nurses. Whilst I was in hospital I noted that they seemed to employ some agency staff nurses, particularly for the night shifts. This must cost them quite an amount of money and I think that money would be better spent trying to keep the NHS nurses we have and encouraging those nurses who have left the profession to return to it, but to do this the system needs to change so that the work nurses do is properly recognised in their work pattern and in the remuneration they receive.

I am therefore pleased that comments were made at the last Board meeting on paying appropriate wages to encourage staff retention and I look forward to hearing these comments have been taken into account and that this become one of the priorities in the Leeds Health and Wellbeing Strategy for 2016 and 2021. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ghulam Hussain.

COUNCILLOR HUSSAIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on Minute 10 page 38. In the June Health and Wellbeing Board meeting the Board discussed the Health and Care quarterly financial reporting paper which provided an overview of the financial options of the Health and Care organisation in Leeds. Importantly, the city's health and care partners have met the required targets and should be recognised for achieving significant progress in the last year. However, many of you will not be surprised to learn that the challenge remains through the future years ahead. Indeed, whilst all organisations in the West Yorkshire and Harrogate Sustainability and Transformation Plan have recently refreshed their financial plans for the next financial year showing a break-even position for each of these years, this is based on the assumption over £66m worth of savings will be needed to be delivered.

This is a significant undertaking and one which carries with it many challenges but also one which demonstrates the importance of adopting a strong partnership working approach not only in reducing health inequalities but also in achieving greater financial balance to the health and care system so that we can use resources more effectively and target these in the areas with greatest need.

Lord Mayor, we often refer to this approach or concept as committing to use the Leeds pound. That is our resources and our shared talents for the benefits of everybody in the city, this being an encouraging move away from the practice where each organisation decides on its own how to spend its budget and moving more towards thinking of these budgets as a collective budget for the city.

We as a city are taking this approach seriously and it is important as the wider plans develop that we continue to strengthen our partnerships so that we can achieve the vision which every partner across the city has committed in the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. That is for Leeds to be a healthy and caring city for all ages where people who are the poorest improve their health the fastest. Of course,

addressing the issues of financial sustainability is also linked to creating a high quality health and care system. After all, the drive to improve quality is dependent on having the resources to meet the needs of people in the city.

This is why it is critical that we must continue to work as hard as we can to strengthen the quality of services delivered to people whilst also recognising that every penny we spend in the system is done so wisely and effectively.

This Council knows more than most that whilst we have had to face the imposed austerity from Central Government, we have done our very best to protect the front line services we provide and maintain the quality of these services, something which we are very proud of and which has been achieved through this strength in partnership in the city.

Lord Mayor, the challenges we face in the system means that continuing this approach is more vital than ever. We have built the foundation of work and we must now look to strengthen this further. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: I am sorry, Councillor Dawson, Councillor Anderson, we are not going to get round to you. Councillor Charlwood, you now have four minutes to sum up.

COUNCILLOR CHARLWOOD: Thank you for saying four; I thought it was six.

Thank you very much for everyone's contributions. It is a real privilege to Chair the Health and Wellbeing Board. It is a really challenging agenda, as everybody has highlighted, but it is good necessary work that we elected Members are involved in.

Councillor Latty mentioned the very important issue that we had already raised earlier about dementia and how that is likely to raise and increase in the city, and the great work that our Neighbourhood Networks do and continue to do. We are reviewing that Neighbourhood Networks model at the moment and we are very much taking that into account within the Council. He mentioned CCG funding for dementia coming as part of that and that is certainly something that has been mentioned and raised in that group as well. I think the CCGs are aware of that but I think it speaks to a wider strategic intention that we have to push as Members on the Health and Wellbeing Board to have a way of the system funding upstream services so get that funding into prevention, get it into community based services and prove that it takes demand away from more expensive tertiary or secondary services and that is the way we will get that to be done. That is certainly the intention and how we would like to go forward.

Councillor Lay, thank you for your passionate (he is laughing, are you laughing at my previous comments?) We will push for it. Very passionate comments and I absolutely agreed with everything you said, I think everybody on this side of the Chamber did. It speaks exactly what we all believe in as well and the difficulty that Brexit is bringing the economy, the health system in Leeds, as well as the loss of bursaries for nurses and the fees that they are having to pay. Very, very few nurses

will end up earning high salaries. The vast majority of nurses will be working nurses and should they really be burdened with fees and without bursaries to help them? It makes no sense at the same time as coming out of the EU, so we completely agree.

There are some measures that we are taking in the Council to address this. people will nod their heads, I am sure, but I keep saying about we have an academy, a potential for a training academy through the Leeds Academic Health Partnership between organisations and I keep saying every time we need people to be able to become nurses, work through their continuous professional development, become a degree qualified whatever it is – nurse – without going to university and having fees and all of that. Is that really necessary? For those conversations to happen we have to do whatever we can but actually Central Government needs to do more as well, obviously as you said.

Councillor Taylor, Health and Care Plan, we are doing things differently. We are; we are talking to the Members of the public, we are having a bottom-up approach, we are talking to people, engaging with them about what they want to see. We are doing it differently to the rest as far as we can tell, the rest of the places that have STPs and things to do. We are committed to doing that and it is the right thing to do. We have all got to hold the NHS to account on delivering on what people want, of course.

Workforce from Councillor Blackburn, I think we have raised the same issue about nurses. Winter, we have really got to have enough workforce for the winter period. It is a key, key issue. We have got to do whatever we can.

Then Councillor Hussain about financial targets. He gave a really good overview of how individual organisations are progressing towards their targets, which is helpful. It is really good in the spirit of sharing, transparency that those organisations have brought their financial information to the Health and Wellbeing Board in public. These are significant steps forward but really we want efficiency, we want integration but ultimately we want more money. Cuts are cuts at the end of the day. Less is not more; less is less and we are having to manage that difficult situation. I just really would like to thank you for highlighting how Leeds has done well and how we can help the NHS to do well. Thank you. *(Applause)*

### **Executive Board**

#### (i) Communities

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now going to move on to the Executive Board. Consideration of the comments on the Exec Board Minutes will be heard until ten minutes past four and then the Executive Member will be allowed to sum up followed by the Leader of the Council. We are going to start with Communities, Councillor Hamilton.

COUNCILLOR HAMILTON: Lord Mayor, I am speaking on Minute 187 page 46. The Executive Board papers cover the Authority's use of right to buy receipts and I would like to speak today about how this fits in with our overall housing growth strategy.

Councillor Coupar has previously outlined our commitment to providing affordable housing to rent and buy in Leeds through a White Paper in 2016. This commitment is demonstrated through the Housing Growth Programme which is under way. This programme includes an ambitious target of 1,000 new Council homes by 2020. One of the ways this target is being supported is through a drive to bring empty homes back into use. Since the launch of the first Empty Homes Strategy in 2005 the Council and partners have successfully reduced the number of empty homes in the city from 12,000 to 3,800, a target of a net reduction of 2,000 empty homes which was set for 2012 to 2017. By May 2016 a net reduction of 2083 has been achieved. In order to reach these targets the Authority has used compulsory purchase order, the Local Neighbourhood Approach, third sector partnership work, working with agencies including LATCH and Canopy, the Empty Homes Loan and an increase to 150% of Council Tax for homes left unoccupied for over two years.

This kind of innovative work is central to our records of achievement in Leeds. Homes in Leeds are being built to the Leeds standard, which is a new quality specification which takes into account urban design, space standard and energy efficiency. This shows that our focus is on quality not just quantity. There is also a plan to improve the quality of housing in the private rented sector. The new Leeds Rental Standard has been launched. This is a self-regulatory arrangement which already includes many of Leeds' biggest private landlords and which looks to drive up standards in the sector.

To deliver our Housing Strategy we are working with a range of partners including registered housing providers, landlords and house builders. The Executive Board papers set out how we continue to support Council housing growth in Leeds, in this instance through right to buy receipt. £11.5m of right to buy funding will be used to support the delivery of the Council Housing Growth Programme and will contribute towards the delivery of 312 units of the new Council homes, getting the most out of the resources available to us. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Lovely, thank you, Councillor Hamilton. Councillor Caroline Gruen.

COUNCILLOR C GRUEN: Lord Mayor, I am speaking on the same Minute and report on the supply of new and affordable housing within the Replacement Funding Programme.

There are a number of factors which have a bearing on our ability as a Council to deliver sufficient quantities of affordable housing to meet our needs. Firstly, we need the vision to do so and this is clearly set out in our Best Council Plan. Secondly, we need the determination and the courage of our convictions to relentlessly push developers to deliver and this we undoubtedly do through constantly challenging them to provide the full contribution of affordable housing on all three of our Plans Panels.

We try our best to get our full quota, despite attempts to deflect us with so-called viability claims for this reason or for that reason, not forgetting their need to make a sizeable profit means they cannot simply deliver.

Thirdly, we need the wherewithal to do it and Councils, this one in particular, could make a much greater contribution themselves to building high quality affordable homes. Leeds City Council has a reputation second to none for building social housing. In my ward in Bramley a local estate agent who is also a responsible landlord said to me that in his view the highest quality homes possible that he can acquire for lets are Leeds City Council housing stock.

The Council has on a number of occasions applied for additional Government funding to provide more social housing and if this Government was serious about making affordable housing a priority, it would provide our city with extra resources to do this. The paper makes it clear that for every Council property sold we receive only a third of its value towards replacement Council property. That cannot be right or fair. When you consider that we are now forced to sell most of our Council properties at up to 70% discount, it is quite plain that the sums simply do not add up. For many residents in Bramley and in other inner city wards, the supply and availability of affordable housing is a crucial, life-changing issue.

We have contributed to the affordable housing replacement very successfully in Bramley. Desirable, affordable housing developments have been established on a previously derelict pub site at Cardigan Green, on the site of an ex-Salvation Army hostel at Copper Beech Avenue, and soon to be completed on the existing Broadleas estate. All of these are for attractive homes within the financial reach of ordinary folk in Bramley.

Comparatively speaking, however, the number of units available in the area is extremely low, with leases being snapped up immediately while many, many others continue to struggle in unacceptable and overcrowded situations because demand so clearly exceeds supply.

Lord Mayor, when is this Government going to wake up to the real urgent and escalating need for social housing in Leeds? (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Smart.

COUNCILLOR SMART: Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, I will be speaking on Minute 187 page 46.

I would like to echo the Lord Mayor's comments at the start of today's meeting about the Grenfell Tower tragedy. This was not only a horrific loss of life but a stark reminder of the importance of providing the poorest and most vulnerable in our society with somewhere decent, affordable and safe to live.

I know from speaking with my constituents in the 16 high rise blocks in Armley that the Grenfell fire must have struck dread into anyone living in high rise blocks throughout Leeds and the rest of the country. There are approximately 1,400 high rise flats in Armley, making up 42% of our total stock.

Since 14<sup>th</sup> June the Armley Councillors have held mobile surgeries in the tower blocks so that we can listen to residents' concerns and provide support at this difficult time. Some families told us about how their children had struggled to sleep

at night since the fire because they were frightened that they would be at risk in their multi-storey home, but we also heard time and time again the residents love living there, that there was a real sense of community in their block and that they had no desire to move elsewhere.

We have also been working with our MP, Rachel Reeves, who has been calling on the Government to provide funding to install sprinkler systems in all blocks in Leeds that do not have them. Here in Leeds we have stepped up to meet the difficult challenges presented by the Grenfell tragedy. It is now time for the Government to step up too.

Jeremy Corbyn was right to say that fire safety measures in tower blocks could not simply be left to a postcode lottery. If Theresa May can find a billion pounds for a sweetheart deal with the DUP, then why can't she find the cash to make sure residents in our tower blocks can sleep at night in the knowledge that their homes are safe?

In response to last months' tragedy all Council multi-storey tower blocks in Leeds that have cladding have been inspected. In no instance have we used aluminium composite material that was installed in Grenfell Tower. As a Council we are reviewing our Fire Safety Strategy across all of our high rise blocks which will include a review of our approach to installing sprinkler systems where it is likely to provide additional fire safety measures and a series of fire safety and reassurance drop-in events are being held in all of our Council tower blocks across Leeds.

As a Council we must also be ready to listen and then act on the review's recommendations.

I am proud of Councillor Blake and Councillor Coupar's response to this national tragedy and the response of our Council officers and Fire Authority. I am also proud of my union, UNITE, who gave £100,000 to the victims of Grenfell and offered free legal representation to those who require it. I am proud of Jeremy Corbyn's response. In the days that followed that tragic event Theresa May was an isolated figure while Jeremy met with the residents of Grenfell Tower and showed the empathy, humanity and leadership that our country desperately needs.

To those who say that Grenfell is not political, this was not a flood or an earthquake. This was a man-made tragedy, not a natural disaster. This is a tragedy that should never have happened. This was a tragedy borne out of austerity and doing things on the cheap.

As the tragic events at Grenfell Tower showed, you cannot put a price on people's safety. The Government must act now. Thank you, Lord Mayor.  
*(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am referring though to Minute 187 page 46 which is the infamous issue about right to buy and the view

that I have is that it should be abolished – more of the figures, more of the discussion and debate later on.

However, I am told that the Labour Party are socialist again. I know this to be true because Jeremy Corbyn came to Morley and told us that the Labour Party were socialist again. I am not sure how that panned out in the Morley Outwood constituency. However, we will move on.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: You know how it panned out!

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: We are told by Jeremy that he is likely to be the Prime Minister in six months' time. We know that from a reliable Glastonbury source. Perhaps now is a good time to pitch at the present Government and the new Government by Christmas about doing something serious about the right to buy because the right to buy needs to be abolished if we are going to make some progress in terms of improving social housing – of that there is no doubt.

I have always been puzzled by successive Governments' absolute obsession with continuing on with the right to buy. It is like an addiction. It is like having an alcohol or a smoking addiction, that you cannot figure out that this is doing you significant harm and damage.

The first thing that we need to do is recognise that we do have a significant problem with the right to buy and that the numbers of Council houses falls year on year on year.

Later on you will have the joy of discussing For the Many, Not the Few, the Labour Party's manifesto because we will be debating that along with Forward Together I am afraid, guys, which is not necessarily any more of a pretty picture. *(To Liberal Democrat Councillors)* I couldn't find yours! We didn't think it was that relevant!

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Neither could we!

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: The bottom line is that now is a good time to go back and revisit the right to buy. It needs to be abolished, we need to accept we have got an addiction and start to treat it. More of that later on. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Jonathan Bentley.

COUNCILLOR J BENTLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on the same Minute 187 page 46, Right to Buy Replacement Funding and as Councillor Finnigan said, we are going to be talking about the right to buy and housing issues later in the White Paper debate so I will try not to pre-empt too much of that though everyone will probably have forgotten what I said by that time – you will probably have forgotten what I said by the time I sit down, to be honest. *(laughter)*

I think it is fairly common ground, certainly between the administration and this Group and, in fairness, other Opposition Groups, that the right to buy has done

real damage to successive Governments' ability to have good sustainable housing policy. The constant transfer of Council housing from the nation's housing stock into private ownership and not adequately replacing it has been a significant - not the only - factor contributing to what we now rightly see as a housing crisis.

It is therefore really important that within the scheme we are now in, the system we are in, that what proceeds we do get back from the Government are used as effectively as possible to ensure that we get the best return in terms of replacement houses.

The amount of money coming back from the Government is not sufficient to provide a one-for-one replacement, therefore we have got to see how we can use what money we do get to attract more funding from other sources, so involving partners from housing associations and the third sector is an ideal way of doing this. Giving them up to 30% towards the cost of new development enables them to match funds from their own resources or use it to leverage other borrowing.

The report that went to Exec Board shows how this programme can help fund third sector organisations such as St George's Crypt on relatively small affordable schemes on brown field sustainable sites in established communities.

Social housing and Council housing has not necessarily got to be about big scale developments. I even saw a scheme that was on the site of a former Liberal Club in New Wortley. I do not know how the masses of Liberals in New Wortley are going to do without out but it is a good Liberal example of recycling and re-use. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mohammed Iqbal.

COUNCILLOR IQBAL: Thank you, Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors. I would like to speak on Minute 9, page 59. The work of the Illegal Money Lending Team is the subject of the Executive Board's Report. I would like to focus on some of the good work that has been done in Leeds by the Leeds Credit Union to help avoid people getting into difficulty with debt.

Residents and households in some of our more deprived areas can struggle to gain access to affordable banking services. It is for this reason that some will turn to high cost lenders. However, in Leeds we have many partners who are working hard to tackle financial hardship in the city including the Leeds Credit Union. They have been instrumental both in addressing high cost lending and in mitigating some of the impacts of welfare reform.

Leeds City Credit Union is a financial co-operative with 37,000 members. They provide competitive fair rates which are capped by credit legislation, the money saved by Credit Union members is an important boost to the Leeds economy as it stays in the pockets of Credit Union members rather than flowing out of the city to high cost lending companies.

The Executive Board paper outlines how more proceeds of crime money is now being allocated to Credit Unions. With this money the Credit Union has

announced a new saving scheme which offers Council housing tenants in Leeds a cash boost in time for Christmas. In a bid to prevent the use of illegal money lenders, the first 100 housing Leeds tenants to join Leeds Credit Union and save regularly between now and Christmas will receive a £25 boost to their savings.

During the upcoming implementation of Universal Credit, which obviously Councillor Khan is going to talk about in a minute, the Credit Union will be one of our key partners in the drive to mitigate against the worst effects. The work of Leeds Credit Union fits in with our Citizens@Leeds approach to tackling poverty in our city and also implements our mission to have a strong economy while remaining a compassionate city. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harland.

COUNCILLOR HARLAND: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, I too will be speaking on Minute 9 page 59. Thank you, Councillor Iqbal, for covering the work of the Leeds Credit union. I, though, would like to focus on another of our partners who are doing excellent work to help tackle poverty in Leeds.

I am really pleased to be able to celebrate the fantastic work the Money Buddies do in and for our communities. Money Buddies is an example of the support that is out there for people who need advice and support with their finances. They give that extra helping hand to keep residents on the straight and narrow with their money.

The project trains volunteers to become designated Money Bunnies –sorry, Buddies! Another concept maybe further down the line! (*laughter*) - to provide information and assistance to those struggling with financial matters in some of the most disadvantaged areas. They began by helping people in East Leeds but now we have seen Money Buddies Schemes open up across Leeds.

They offer residents free one-to-one services. Support is given from everything from saving money, to applying for grants, to reporting illegal loan sharks, and to negotiating with creditors. They have also supported people in applying for accounts from Leeds Credit Union whose work Councillor Iqbal has covered in his speech.

In the challenging financial context of the last few years this type of work is so important. When wage growth has been persistently low and punishing welfare cuts have hit working people hard, many of our most vulnerable citizens have felt the pinch. This kind of community led approach to tackling issues of poverty is at the heart of what we are trying to achieve in Leeds. The Money Buddies project and others like it across the city show that there are alternatives to approaching high cost lenders or illegal money lenders and it is important that we all work to promote these schemes in our communities. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Khan.

COUNCILLOR KHAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor, fellow Councillors. I would like to speak on the same Minute and also like to echo my colleagues, what they said. The roll out of Universal Credit is hitting people hard. Benefit sanctions and delays in receiving benefits are common reasons why people make the desperate decision to approach illegal money lenders. The Trussell Trust charity does great work running food banks. Its research has revealed that over the last year those areas where Universal Credit has fully been introduced have seen double the national rate of emergency food bank referrals. Trussell says the main reasons are benefit delays and benefit changes.

A study by the Child Poverty Action Group and the IPPR Think Tank shows that Universal Credit hits families with children the hardest. Lone parent families on average are £2,830 a year worse off. Families with two children are £1,100 on average worse off. Those with three children lose an average of £2,540 a year. A major area of concern with Universal Credit is the six week delay before the first payment. We are even hearing of some claimants waiting up to 60 days for the first initial payment.

Lord Mayor, in Leeds we have made considerable preparation for the impact of Universal Credit. Even though Universal Credit has so far only been introduced only for single and unemployed people in Leeds, we are already seeing worrying trends. Over 2,000 sanctions have so far been imposed on Universal Credit recipients in Leeds from January to December 2016 25% of Universal Credit claimants in Leeds received sanctions. In 70% of all these cases Universal Credit was stopped for three months. We can only estimate how many more people will face difficulties when Universal Credit is rolled out more widely.

We on this side we do not want Universal Credit to force people down unfortunate paths of using illegal money lenders. That is why Leeds City Council and our partners will continue to work energetically to mitigate the worse consequence of these various benefit changes. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. I would now like to invite Councillor Coupar to respond, please.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Thank you, Lord Mayor, and I would like to thank all those who contributed to the Minutes debate under my portfolio.

I would like to start with a report which was not covered in the speeches today, or contributions, which is that of the Bangladeshi Centre. Just to update Members, the two groups involved have now set up an interim board of five members from each group to resolve the issues that were highlighted in the report. They have met several times to take the work forward, meeting the initial timescales within the report today. The Council continues to support the interim board on the challenge of the financial viability of the centre which still remains and, in addition, the Council has been approached by other members of the Bangladeshi community with offers of engagement and support and it has met with them recently with a view to engaging them in dialogue with the two groups and to scope their potential contribution,

I would like to start by thanking Councillor Hamilton for highlighting the good work of our Housing Growth Programme and the Right to Buy Replacement Fund, projects agreed at Executive Board and providing a total of 60 new units across Leeds through the investment of over £2,800,000 of Right to Buy Replacement Funding. Our Council House Growth Programme has produced lots of good results with innovative work such as the new extra care facility in Yeadon, and Councillor Caroline Gruen has also set out how the Housing Growth Programme has benefited Bramley. Our house building programme is the largest that this Council has undertaken since the early 1980s. Our housing programme is not just about house building, it is also about creating sustainable communities.

Thank you to Councillor Smart for her update on the work that has been carried out in Armley and especially since the tragedy of Grenfell Tower, and I am pleased to hear that Councillors are working really hard there to ensure that tenants are kept informed.

It was great to hear also from Councillor Iqbal about the work that we are doing in partnership with the Leeds Credit Union. I would also like to thank Councillor Harland for talking about the work of Money Buddies or Bunnies, whichever you prefer! These are two great examples of the range of excellent work we are doing to tackle poverty in Leeds.

We have also commissioned some innovative research into problem gambling in Leeds, which we can use to help improve support for those at risk from problem gambling. We have seen nationally what an issue this can be as David Cameron gambled and lost with the EU Referendum (*laughter*); Theresa May gambled and lost with a General Election. There is a clear message here; when the fun stops, stop. (*laughter*)

I would also like to thank Councillor Khan for his speech regarding Universal Credit. It is heartening that we have good systems in place to try and mitigate against the worst effects of the changes. However, the picture we are already seeing in Leeds is pretty staggering. The cohort currently on Universal Credit in Leeds were meant to be the quick wins – unemployed single people. However, we are already seeing the widespread use of sanctions which is very worrying when we consider the number of people yet to transfer across.

Just last week we learned that Ministers have been urged to further delay the roll-out of Universal Credit after Citizens' Advice produced some evidence that it is causing debt and financial insecurity among recipients.

If I can move to Councillor Finnigan's contribution and also Councillor Bentley's, and I thank them for raising the issue around Right to Buy that I know they feel very passionately about. I am sure we are going to go on in the debate later this afternoon to discuss these things much further, along with the housing crisis that is still unfolding in front of us, so I will wait to make more comments on that at that stage.

Councillor Anderson at the June Exec Board said that there is lots of positive work being carried out which should be celebrated regarding the Illegal Money

Lending Team paper and tackling poverty, so we thank him for his support, as ever, of the administration. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

(ii) Children and Families

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. We will now move on to Children and Families. Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak on the School Standards Report that was given to us at Executive Board.

Lord Mayor, we are used to hearing about the success of our Children's Services and how we are a good Authority and, of course, stand head and shoulders above colleagues in Core Cities. However, this is a paper that I think Members of this Chamber should hear more about because I know what it feels like to stand there as the Lead Member for Children's Services and have a report given to you by officers that says that you are good but good really means really good and actually say it and then not too long after that all of a sudden you find you are not so good and, in fact, you are inadequate. I think we need to take notice of the warnings that are given to us in the reports that we have.

In the School Standards Report the main headline is the fact that we are actually worsening in our attainment as a city and in very many areas we are actually below the national standard and actually getting worse. I will give you some examples.

Key Stage 4 across every ethnicity we are below national standards and averages. For free school meals and deprivation, Key Stage 2 attainment has worsened against national averages both for people with free school meals and without, while for non free school meals at Key Stage 4 attainment has dropped from being above national average to below.

Early Years attainment has improved by a single percentage point, whereas the national average improved by three percentage points last year and we are now six percentage points behind national averages. For primary, despite the number of good and outstanding schools in Leeds, which is as is often publicised at a record which we have not seen before, even withstanding that the level of attainment overall places the Authority in the bottom quartile at place 126 of 150 Authorities.

This paper says that we expect Leeds to reach and exceed the national average by 2017. I think you have missed that target already.

Lord Mayor, we have also been told recently with an announcement that Kirklees, being inadequate, is seeking Leeds's help in improving their situation. I would suggest that even if we do find ourselves in a good position at the moment, this is not the time for diluting the leadership of the Leeds Children's Services by sharing our Chief with another Local Authority and also at the same time effectively having a vacancy in the place of the person who should be leading on education in particular.  
*(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Downes.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on Minute 183 page 43, which is the Annual Standards Report and I have to ask, are our primary schools coasting? We are aiming to be the best city for learning 2016 to 2020. I know we are concerned that so far in 2017 31 of our primary schools have been OFSTED-ed and those reports have been published. Ten have got worse, 19 have remained the same and only 2 have improved, and both of those two are schools that have undergone academisation. All the Leeds City Council schools, all the LEA schools, have either stayed the same or got worse and that is a very, very worrying trend.

No Leeds school has been given outstanding yet this year, an outstanding rating by OFSTED. Whilst I am no fan of OFSTED, I am very concerned about their findings and the direction of travel in Leeds schools is at best staying the same but for many of them going down. I would like to know what we are doing to address this very worrying trend.

If we are to become the best city for learning we need to reverse this trend, we need to look at what is going wrong in our schools. I will accept that for many of the schools that have been OFSTED-ed this year it has been a number of years since they were last assessed and that could well be the reason, and that is why I say are we coasting? What are we doing as an Authority to make sure that those schools that have not been OFSTED-ed for a while are continuing to meet the high standards that we have previously achieved, and if we want our city to be the best for education we need to do something now. It is 2017, we still have time to do something before 2020 comes and I urge Members to look at that and to address this as a matter of urgency. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Heselwood.

COUNCILLOR HESELWOOD: Lord Mayor, comrades, also commenting on the Annual Standards Report. I see that the Opposition have already been very quick to pick this report to pieces and level every kind of criticism at our performance, attainment and our schools in general and I will let Councillor Mulherin respond to that when she is summing up.

However, I would like to take this opportunity to put on record my thanks and appreciation for the incredibly difficult job our teachers and teaching staff do in our schools in Leeds. *(hear, hear)* They are working in an environment where criticism seems to come from every level, where this Government constantly changes the goal posts and where nothing they do is ever good enough. Teachers have directed time of 1,265 hours per year, yet every teacher I know is working way in excess of their directed time, between 40 and 50 hours a week, to meet these changing goal posts.

I know from personal experience that teaching today can be extremely challenging and stressful and yet we still have people who simply want to help our children and young people succeed in life, help them achieve their potential and who take pleasure in teaching new things and help develop understanding with our children.

These are people who we should value and respect, not attack because too few eleven-year olds could not identify a fronted adverbial, and can you? *(laughter)* As well as thanking our amazing teaching staff I also want to recognise the amount of hard work that our pupils put in and to tell them that we, as a city, are proud of them and their achievements and that we know how difficult it can be for them at times.

We have a lot to be proud of in Leeds and the Annual Standards Report, as well as highlighting what we need to do better, tells us a lot about what we are doing right. 91% of our children attend a school that is judged by OFSTED to be good or outstanding, thank you very much, and 94% of our children attend an Early Years setting that is rated good or outstanding, and we have also seen our NEET figures drop by 2% from last year, so there we go, we have got some good and outstanding schools in the city.

I am certainly not saying there is nothing for us to improve on. There are lots of areas where we can and must do better, but what I am saying is that we need to be careful not to undermine the vast amounts of fantastic work that is already going on in our schools and we have to be careful not to undermine the confidence of our teachers and pupils. They need to know that they have all our support and our thanks. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ritchie.

COUNCILLOR RITCHIE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am also speaking on Minute 183. The Annual Standards Report is a very open and honest account of education in Leeds. There are some real strengths highlighted but we do recognise there are also some very real areas for improvement. There are areas we need to focus on and the report highlights these.

We know there are gaps in academic progress and educational outcomes between children in vulnerable groups and their peers. These include children with special educational needs and disabilities, those with English as an additional language as well as children who are looked after. However, it is important to note that gaps for children who are termed as disadvantaged is not an issue unique to Leeds. It is seen across other Yorkshire and Humber Authorities and is a wider regional issue.

With the right approach I believe positive progress can be made in all areas that need improvement. As you are all aware, we have recently invested £45m into specialist social, emotional and mental health provision. I am confident this will make a huge difference. At our last Council meeting we heard about the Future in Mind Leeds Strategy and the changes that will be taking place, particularly around improving mental health. The recent SEND inspection commented on the fact that we have maintained and developed services for younger children living in vulnerable communities. One of the ways we have done this, which was highlighted by the Inspector, is by continuing to invest to maintain our Children's Centres, something that we are only too aware that in increasingly difficult financial times we are very much in the minority of Local Authorities who have been able to do so.

Time and time again we hear about the importance of early intervention and yet still the Government will not properly fund Local Authorities to provide the front line early intervention support that is vital to make a difference in the lives of vulnerable children.

We continue to see a Government that cuts funding for learners with special educational needs and disabilities, a Government that in its appalling manifesto committed to removing universal free school meals, something that would have had a hugely damaging impact on some of our most vulnerable children. In short, we have a Government that either does not understand or does not care about those children and young people who need the most help.

We have the plans in place to make the improvements that are necessary and we will make them as we believe in investing in all our children and young people. What we are desperate for is the will and the money from Government to ensure that these plans are successful. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hayden.

COUNCILLOR HAYDEN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking to the Minute 183 also and I am speaking about the funding received from Government to support pupils with SEND or, to be more precise, the lack of funding.

Earlier this year the Local Government Association warned the Government that unless it increased funding for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities mainstream schools would be forced to start turning those pupils away. What was needed was significant additional funding. However, the funding that was announced was described by the Association of Teachers and Lecturers as nothing more than a sticking plaster over a gaping wound.

While the numbers of children with more complex SEND have been steadily increasing, the number of pupils in specialist schools has increased from 5% in 2012 to 8.5% in 2016. National funding for the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant has been frozen meaning that already stretched budgets have been forced to be stretched even further. Over the period 2013-2016, 111 out of 150 Local Authorities have been forced to move funding to the High Needs Block from the Dedicated Schools Grant or Early Years Block.

What does this actually mean for our schools? Essentially it means they have less money as they plug the gap left by inadequate Government funding. It is no different in Leeds. Schools Forum agreed to move £2m into the High Needs Block. In Bradford, that figure was £7m. Funding for post-16 SILC learners has also been hit by cuts. In 2013 the Government introduced changes that led to all post-16 students with education, health and care plans being funded for three days' education a week rather than five. Our SILCs, reliant on a minimum funding guarantee that budgets would not reduce by more than 1.5% per year, took the decision to maintain the five day offer. However, that is no longer sustainable and with no sign of additional funding, alternative options will need to be considered.

This huge gap in funding is a nationwide issue. It is not mismanagement by schools or Local Authorities. It is a woeful under-funding of a vulnerable group of learners by a Government that pledged to tackle burning injustices. As far as I can see, those injustices are simply getting worse. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cohen.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I do not think there is anybody in this Chamber who will be unaware of the challenges that we face in terms of primary school places across the city, certainly in the North of the city where parents time after time after time in recent years have been unable to get a place in their local primary school of choice.

There is no question it is an issue, there is no question it is a problem, there is no question that it is something as a city we try to work incredibly hard to, at the last minute very often, find school places for. Of course, those children who go into primary school will eventually come out – we hope, please God – the other end ready for secondary school and what we know is we have an issue in the making and I hope upon hope that in the coming years we will not have anything like the same issues that we have seen across the city - I can see it particularly in North Leeds, as I say – in ensuring that we have the secondary school places that we need.

COUNCILLOR JAROSZ: Give us the funding then.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: I am pleased you asked that, that was a very helpful interjection, thank you. Perhaps you might want to put your name on the Order Paper next time.

What is essential, therefore, is that we utilise free schools and make sure we have got our free school bids in where we need them. Now, I have had some really helpful briefings from officers who told me that we are indeed doing that and that is to be welcomed, but what we have to do is to ensure that those free school bids are of a quality and have the capacity of being accepted. One of the challenges we know is making sure that we actually have available sites, and having the available sites we are seeing is an issue.

That brings me very neatly to the issue of Roundhay Free School. I was stunned and shocked to be told not by officers but by members of the public what the outcome of the public consultation was likely to be that had taken place recently in relation to Roundhay Free School. We were told as elected Members that we would be told before that report was published to the public what the outcomes were and what the recommendations would be. It turns out that that has all been bypassed and we learn that the site that the Council prefers is the site to the east of Roundhay Park Lane. That is despite the fact that the elected Members of Roundhay ward said in a public meeting I was at that we should be making every effort to bring the golf club site forward. That is despite the fact that the elected Members of the Harewood ward have made very clear their view of the dangers of bringing that site forward.

I am really disappointed that this has been made public without sharing it with elected Members first. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Robinson.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I also intend to speak on the Education Minute and I echo some of the comments of Councillor Heselwood who said how hard teachers work not just in this city but across the country. They do more hours than they are paid for, they make incredible strides in education in some of the hardest communities and with some of the most challenging circumstances and children from those challenging circumstances, and so I associate myself with your comment that we should thank them for everything they do every year, especially as they are going through exams now and they are about to break up for a much-needed break. I think that is a fair comment to make.

What I would say, though, is when you read the report that approximately 45% of secondary aged children leaving without five good GCSEs is not right. It is nothing to be proud of or happy about. I understand there is a lot within the report that is talking about the advantages and the positives that have been made but we should never be resting on our laurels, which is what I fear the report is perhaps suggesting.

I also fear that the report has a particularly political line against multi-academy trusts, free schools and academies who are doing some fantastic work. I look at one of those chains, which is the Dixons Group who are about to open a new secondary and primary school down in the Harehills area. I have worked with the Dixons Group in the past, I know some of the work they have done in Bradford and they have made absolutely fantastic strides in achieving incredible outcomes for children from difficult circumstances and we should be looking to welcome multi-academy trusts who want to work constructively with us into this city as opposed to suggesting that we want to put the barriers up or build a wall around Leeds and the only thing we want is Local Authorities running the show. That is not the way forward. We live in a changed education environment and actually working with different providers from across the piece is what we need to do going forward.

I read the other day in the paper as well that there was a dirty little rumour that free school funding may be restricted and that free schools might not be found going forward, which the DFE immediately dismissed. Councillor Cohen is absolutely right, we should be looking at encouraging free schools, encouraging communities to set up free schools and encouraging parents to be involved in that process.

I am shocked that I have not heard about the results of the outcome of this consultation for a free school in North Leeds. I have heard now fourth-hand today about the outcome of the consultation which I have been told officers have reliably told these sources that is going to be the outcome, that there will be a new free school that is not in the Roundhay area, that is not serving the needs of the parents and children that most need it, that means that children having to go to that school will have to cross one of the busiest roads in Leeds with the East Leeds Extension and the East Leeds Orbital Road will have increased traffic there.

This is completely wrong, it is contrary to what officers had previously briefed ward Members about and I expect that the Executive Board Member will be in the

coming days emailing Councillors from the Harewood ward, Roundhay ward and Alwoodley ward which, were involved in the consultation, to explain the situation and to update us immediately and perhaps bring us all together for a meeting. This is a serious issue and we need to make sure we deliver for children. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Garthwaite.

COUNCILLOR GARTHWAITE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am going to speak to Minute 184 and talk about school places, Local Authority powers and money.

Leeds City Council has a statutory duty to make sure there are enough school places for all children and young people across the city. Over the last eight years Leeds has created an additional 10,000 school places to meet this need. However, this gets more and more difficult when the birth rate is going up, we have no powers to open new schools and not enough money to expand existing ones and the Department for Education can asset strip.

To get new academies or free schools they can take buildings that have been used for educational purposes within the last eight years, as happened with Fir Tree Primary.

Free schools can go direct to the Secretary of State to bid for a new school without needing to consult the Local Authority first. The Education and Schools Funding Agency then needs to find a site which is not easy – in fact it is more and more difficult. Now they are starting to simply walk away from projects that have been approved if finding a site is too hard.

This still leaves the need for places and the Local Authority is then expected to step in and provide those places. We could bring forward a free school presumption, as we are not allowed to open our own schools, but we would still need to provide the land and the funding for the new school.

The funding that is provided by Government for the provision of school places is nowhere near enough to meet full building costs. It does not provide anything for the acquisition of land or any additional associated costs like highway works.

Education and Schools Funding Agency rates for a two-form entry primary school would be just over £6m but the cost of actually building a two-form entry primary school is between £8m and £10m, which, as you can easily work out, is a shortfall of between £2m and £4m per school.

Leeds has been audited by the Education and Schools Funding Agency to see how effective we are at spending the money we do get. They found we were providing good value for money, so the shortfall is all because there is not enough money provided in the first place.

The deficit between the money we receive and the money we need to provide enough school places now stands at over £80m. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Salma Arif.

COUNCILLOR ARIF: Thank you, Lord Mayor. With reference to the Annual Standards Report, the prevailing issue that arises when talking about education groups and gaps between vulnerable groups is the matter of child poverty. Sadly, in Leeds alone there are 26,400 children living in poverty. Surprisingly, 66% of these children live in families where at least one person works. This means that a good number of children living in poverty are from working families.

Growing up in poverty has a lasting impact on children in terms of their health, their educational attainment and their employment prospects. No child should have to live in poverty, which is why we have put in place a number of early intervention programmes to help young children who are at risk of falling behind their peers and whose families are being forced into financial deprivation.

As part of our ambition to be the best city for children to grow up in, improving the quality of life for our residents, particularly for those who are vulnerable or in poverty, is key priority for us. Our Children's Centres work most intensely with our city's most disadvantaged families to help children reach their potential whilst supporting their parents into work. We have continued to invest in early support through our Children's Centres despite Government funding cuts which sets us apart from most other Local Authorities across the country.

Lord Mayor, if poverty can be effectively combated we will see improved health outcomes, improved education outcomes and improved employment outcomes. The cycle of deprivation will be broken and reports such as this will look very different.

In order for that to happen the Government has to take seriously the issue of poverty and in particular child poverty. The recent abolition of the Child Poverty Unit is just one example of how the Conservative Government is continuing to disregard the most needy in our society. At a time when the Institute for Fiscal Studies is predicting a 50% increase in child poverty by 2020, the Government should be doing more to help instead of abandoning an entire generation.

As Councillor Hayden reminded the Chamber, when Theresa May stood on the steps of Downing Street she promised she would fight the burning injustice of being born poor. Sadly, I have yet to see that evidence. I suppose I ought to wait in a long queue. God forbid Theresa May decides to return to my ward in Harehills with her outside entourage, I will be sure to tell her that children are being forced into poverty as a result of her Government's policies. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Pryor.

COUNCILLOR PRYOR: Lord Mayor, I too am speaking on page 44 Minute 184, the future challenges facing Education in Leeds.

I read this paper with great interest and found much that gave me cause for concern, but what came through loud and clear was that one of the biggest challenges

facing education not just in Leeds but across the country is an utter lack of direction in education policy from this Government.

What we are faced with is a Government with education policy in complete and utter disarray. Councillor Cohen helpfully reminded us that we have seen interference in the provision of schools which has led to extreme difficulties when it comes to school place planning and Councillor Robinson mentioned results but we have seen revision after revision of the National Curriculum which has left students and teachers trying desperately to keep up and face demoralising exam results as the goal posts constantly shift.

We have seen millions ploughed into academies and free schools while everyone else is left to flounder and cut courses as well as vital services such as mental health support. We have seen a spectacular U-turn on policies such as grammar schools and the scrapping of universal free school meals - policies which were as unpopular as they were misinformed. The reintroduction of grammar schools would have seen a widening of the social divide while the scrapping of universal free school meals for children in Key Stage 1 would have hit the most vulnerable children the hardest.

The General Election proved that there is no appetite for policies as divisive as these and the scrabbling together of a precariously balanced coalition of convenience does not give the impression of a strong and stable Government that is in control.

The education of our children should not be something to be constantly messed around with. How many more children need to be the unwitting guinea pigs of this political hard right ideology? The time has come for schools to focus on teaching the children the skills they need to succeed in life, not to continually teach for a test that for eleven-year olds at least has very little bearing on what happens after school and in many cases causes unnecessary levels of stress and worry for children who are too young to be able to deal with it.

Education policy has been written and re-written so many times over the past few years there is no longer any confidence in what the Government is now doing. Lord Mayor, the biggest challenge facing education in the future now is this Government. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: It is very close, Councillor Stephenson, but if you would like to finish off, please.

COUNCILLOR STEPHENSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor, for being so welcoming with the time.

I sit on this side of the Chamber because I believe in equality of opportunity and I think it is very interesting to hear some things from colleagues at the other side of the Chamber talking about how difficult it is today and all the figures for students and pupils from poorer backgrounds.

I am not sure if you overlooked the other figures that are available which show that 90% of children today are in good or outstanding schools. The figure in 2010

when Labour left office was 66% of children in good or outstanding schools; after seven years of Conservative Government that figure today stands at 86%, so indeed judge us on our successes including – and Jeremy Corbyn might suggest otherwise but Channel 4 FactCheck has proved that there are more people from disadvantaged backgrounds entering university today than ever before, and the Vice Chancellors of universities are saying that if we indeed got rid of tuition fees they would have to offer fewer places which would hit the poorest the hardest. Indeed, judge us on that record.

Returning to the paper that went to Exec Board on contextualising future challenges in education, I was very disappointed at how negative this paper was. It is entirely right for officers and the Exec Board to look at the challenges facing the department but one would have hoped for some comparable context as well so we on this side of the Chamber can hold the administration to account properly. Much is made of the fact that the funding levels, per pupil funding levels, is different across the country in different Local Authorities and indeed that is correct. For example, in Wokingham, which is mentioned on page 91, £4,166 is the direct grant which is lower than the figure in Leeds and yet – and yet, Councillors – the percentage attainment rate between disadvantaged and advantaged children is bigger in Leeds than in Wokingham where they have less money, i.e. with less money Wokingham are performing much better than this Council.

I would have hoped to have found in this paper some sort of reference to a conversation of how they were going to speak to Wokingham and, if Wokingham are not available you can speak to Cheshire East or indeed Poole or West Sussex where they too have less money than this Council and get better performance measures in terms of the disproportionate rate of payment between pupils disadvantaged and advantaged.

We all will work together to increase those attainment levels. Beyond all the politics and the fight back we all, I believe, do believe in equality of opportunity and the Council should act proactively in seeking to speak with other Councils who are performing much better than this administration to find out how they are doing the things that you are failing to do. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, I would like to invite Councillor Mulherin to sum up, please.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to start by saying how very proud I am of all of this city's children and young people and all that they achieve and to take this opportunity to congratulate the young people in Leeds who received their SATs results last week and the teachers who support them.

The Annual Standards Report tells us a lot. It tells us that 91% of children attending a school in Leeds are attending a school that is judged to be good or outstanding, as Councillor Heselwood noted. We have created an additional 10,000 school places since 2009, as Councillor Garthwaite noted. Also, we have invested £45m to improve social, emotional and mental health provision in the city, as Councillor Ritchie noted.

It does not rest on its laurels, Councillor Robinson. It also highlights some of the challenges we face. Just under 21% of children in Leeds living in poverty, 10,000 primary schools pupils with a special educational need and the fact that we need an additional eight secondary schools between now and 2023.

Councillor Arif was right when she referenced the links between poverty and gaps in educational attainment. These are a national issue and one which the Government should be focusing its attention on. In Leeds there are over 26,400 children living in poverty and over 66% of them live in families where at least one person works. It simply cannot be right when children in families who are doing their best to make ends meet still find themselves living in poverty that blights every area of their lives.

Councillor Heselwood described the outstanding work that is taking place in schools every day to close the gap for our most deprived communities and she was right to thank all the teachers and school staff for the fantastic job that they do in ever more difficult circumstances.

Thank you, Councillor Ritchie, for drawing our attention to some of the specific groups where more work is still needed to close those gaps – in particular children with special educational needs and disabilities and children who are on free school meals, amongst others. I think it is very important to highlight the work that we are currently undertaking around social, emotional and mental health provision and the difference that it will make to some of our most vulnerable children.

Councillor Hayden talked about the funding challenges around SEND provision. It is a complete disgrace that funding in this area is under so much strain at a time when need is increasing. We and those children need much more than a sticking plaster solution that has been provided so far by this Government.

We know that up and down the country schools are on their knees absolutely desperate for money but forced to cut courses, lose staff and cut back on vital support services for children who need them. We are facing a massive financial challenge which we will be discussing in more detail later today but it is worth noting here that we have a deficit of nearly £80m in the funding we receive to provide school places. The provision of additional school places has been made even harder by the continued fragmentation of the education system under the Conservative Government. Local Authorities have been increasingly sidelined when it comes to the physical provision of places and yet still have the statutory responsibility to meet that need.

Instead, we are expected to work alongside unaccountable Government agencies including the Education and Skills Funding Agency and the Regional Schools Commissioner whose understanding of the needs of local areas is not as great as ours. Additionally, if a project turns out to be too difficult to deliver then the RSC and ESFA are increasingly walking away and leaving Local Authorities to find the solution, although that solution cannot be the Local Authority opening a maintained school.

Councillor Garthwaite, the funding rates we receive from the ESFA for a new school are indeed woefully inadequate with a shortfall of between £2m and £4m per

school. Whilst our schools are struggling to cope with funding cuts and families are finding life harder because of the effects of austerity policies, this Government's education policy is, as Councillor Pryor rightly highlighted, an utter shambles. The havoc they have wreaked across the education system is staggering and all they seem to be able to do is perform remarkable U-turns.

The time has come for sensible interventions in education policy and I would suggest starting by properly investing in and returning powers to Local Authorities so that they can actually deliver the right school places in the right areas. For too long we have been held accountable for inadequate funding and no power to deliver because that power sits with those unaccountable Government agencies.

Councillor Downes, you made specific reference to OFSTED outcomes and I think perhaps we should be looking at the national trend in OFSTED outcomes over the last six months and perhaps we will come to that at a later date. As for Roundhay, there was never going to be an easy solution in this part of the city. We agreed to do a joint consultation with the Education and Skills Funding Agency and the Trust applicants who we had been working with since the start of this process. That consultation was extended due to the snap General Election. The conversations have continued with the Trust and the Education Skills Funding Agency and the RSC in the meantime.

The consultation findings will be published this week. They have not been made public and I would encourage Members not to try to second guess the consultation outcome in the meantime.

What I would say as a final note on that is, it must be noted that when this consultation comes out this is a consultation for the Education and Skills Funding Agency to deliver a school on one of those four sites. We have looked at four sites, we have asked the public for their views on those four sites and it is the public's findings that we will be publishing this week.

I think that is probably all I have got time for, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. I would now like to call on Councillor Blake to sum up, please.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think we have had a very comprehensive and detailed summing up from both Councillor Coupar and Councillor Mulherin on the Minutes that we have had before us today, but I think if we look across the subjects that we have discussed today there are some really key themes coming out that we need to address as a whole Council going forward. I think the debate that we had on affordable housing – listening to Councillor Hamilton, Councillor Gruen, Councillor Smart – the impact of lack of lack of coherent policy around affordable housing and the devastating situation where so many people are forced to live in sub-standard private rented sector housing, for example, and all of the consequences that that brings. When are we actually going to get from this Government any coherent policy around affordable housing? I think we are at crisis level in this. I will come back to the Grenfell Tower situation later

Let us come together and discuss the policy areas that we know we need going forward, because what we do know, what we have had time and time again is when we are given the power and the resources and the ability to get on and do things for ourselves, we know we can out-perform Government plans at every stage, so let us all go forward and start demanding that we can build more Council houses in this city. Let us get rid of the borrowing cap so that we can actually go out and demonstrate what we can do at our very best. We understand our communities, we understand their needs and I am afraid the Government's policy is getting in the way time and time again.

Councillor Iqbal, Councillor Harland and Councillor Khan really I think put the whole case of what happens to people when they end up in a situation where they cannot afford to pay for the basics in their lives and how many people do we meet in our wards who have an urgent payment to make who end up giving in to that knock on the door, that person who is there offering them that immediate amount of money and just cannot bear to consider the consequences of getting into that horrific spiral of debt that we see time and time again. Relatively small amounts of money that escalate into massive amounts that can never be repaid.

Absolutely shocking statistics about the number of sanctions and who on earth came up with the idea that you can just stop welfare payments to people for three months? Three months, no money coming into the household at all and when you get underneath the reasons why some people are being sanctioned, it is nothing short of scandalous.

We go on to the education debate. I just put this to Councillor Golton and Councillor Downes. Do you know, the really striking thing – and I know how much you care about this agenda, don't get me wrong but the really striking thing when we took over in 2010 was that you did not know the scale of the problem that you were dealing with. You were not getting the information coming through and that is the point, that in the report that is before us, whilst it highlights the incredible progress that has been made, I think there is a real degree of self-awareness in there and a real understanding of what we need to do in incredibly difficult circumstances. Just look at the numbers of teachers, highly qualified teachers, who have dedicated their careers to the profession who are walking away. They cannot cope any more with what this Government is expecting of them.

You know, what is really scandalous in this is that Michael Gove when he came in to the position of Secretary of State for Education acknowledged that he was embarking on a great experiment – an experiment with the future lives of kids in our city, in our communities and aren't we seeing the failure of that experiment going forward? I do not have the confidence I have to say, in the policies coming forward from this new Government that they have the wherewithal to address any of the problems that they are now faced with in the education community. We have heard about the massive shortfall in funding.

We actually have embraced free schools and academies where they work for our kids and our communities in this city. Do not try and say that we have an ideological problem. What we have is a problem where they are inappropriate, they

are not required, they are taking resources, important resources out of the centre of the city.

That shortfall in funding for places, where on earth is it going to come from? You might try and deny the fact that the free school policy is in crisis. I am afraid it is in crisis and we know from conversations we have been having that there simply is not the money to go round.

Let us pick up on Councillor Heselwood's point, and others. Let us all thank teachers for the extraordinary job that they do. Can you imagine a teacher striving to get their kids through their SATs to find out that they have been penalised because they put a straight comma in their work? This is the level of nonsense that is coming forward from our schools.

We have talked a great deal in the last couple of months through the General Election campaign about austerity and if there is one thing that has come through the results of the General Election campaign it is that the people of this country are rejecting austerity (*hear, hear*) and they realise that it is failing, and failing people in this country. Today we have heard about the aspects where it is coming through in affordable housing, pay restrictions, the absolute scandal that has been highlighted that by 2020 there is a predicted 77% fall in core funding for Local Government and you only have to listen to the Leader of the LGA, the Conservative Lord Gary Porter, talking about the £5.8bn funding gap that he is predicting in Local Government to realise just how serious the crisis is. As Councillor Ritchie said, no money at all coming forward for early prevention where we can intervene, stop the problems developing as we go forward. There is none of that vision in this Government's policies going forward.

I do want to end because I went to the Local Government Conference last week and Councillor Golton was there. I have to tell you across every Party the absolute shock at the speech made by the Secretary of State, Sajid Javid. You could just feel it in the room. I think all of us, actually, we will talk to you about this because I am not sure if you have all read his speech but his comments were absolutely disgraceful. He was trying very weakly to shift the responsibility for what happened at Grenfell Towers on to the Local Government family. Absolutely no acknowledgement of the impact of austerity, deregulation, outsourcing, privatisation, all of those things that came together in such horrific circumstances.

I really do not understand why when we have had such extraordinarily difficult events he could not show where Local Government works at its best, and because one Council has failed and actually I think was their flagship model of outsourcing everything so they did not have the capacity, where was the praise for Manchester City Council in response to what happened there? Where was the praise for the London Boroughs who have suffered such incredible problems?

I think we should all come together as the Local Government family and say, really, enough is enough, we need better and we need it now. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, I would like to call for the vote, please to receive the Minutes. (*A vote was taken*) That is CARRIED.

Now we moved into the scheduled tea break. I propose that we actually are back in our seats for ten-to five, please.

*(Short break)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I have already been told off for breaking Working Rule Directives for having you come back too soon. Learning curve! I will let you have slightly longer next time but I am sure you will all be riveted by the White Papers and what we have got coming up next, so here we go.

#### ITEM 9 – REPORT ON DEVOLVED MATTERS

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now moving on to the Report on Devolved Matters for a period of up to 30 minutes. Councillor Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am very pleased to move the eleventh Devolution Report that we have brought to Council. You will see within the report what we have talked about a great deal is the move away from the Combined Authority being primarily about transport to a much broader remit. Transport is clearly one of the most important elements of the Local Authorities working together at a Combined Authority level as, indeed, at a LEP level and beyond and Councillor Wakefield will be updating us on some of the matters relating to transport.

Within the report you will see details about how we are spending money from the Growth Deal and I think we should always remind ourselves when we are talking about devolution in particular that the Leeds City Region was actually awarded the biggest Growth Deal in the country and we are still working through the funding of some key projects around the Leeds City Region area as a result of that Growth Deal.

I think one of the other important elements, of course, is what the proposals are coming from Government around industrial strategy and they seem to be taking a two-pronged approach looking at different sectors but also the place shaping, the place determined impacts on productivity and other such matters. We are also talking about the Low Emission Strategy adoption which is close to Councillor Yeadon's heart, of course, and then picking up on inclusive growth and the Better Skills Outcomes.

I think it is fair to say that the issue of governance is one that is really exercising a lot of our minds. At the beginning of the week we were very pleased to welcome yet another Northern Powerhouse Minister to come to Leeds, a new Minister, I do not think he has had a role before. He is from the North West and he came to Leeds to have a look at the South Bank and he said he was very impressed with our ambition and all of the work we were doing with the City Region partners. When we were talking about devolution and getting a deal and the impact of the Metro Mayors that have now come in he was at pains to say how important it is that we have a bottom-up approach, that we decide locally what we want but unfortunately he had been in the paper in the Yorkshire Post that very morning telling us all what

we could not have even if it is what we wanted, so it is a little bit of an interesting start.

I was pleased that he came and actually saw the scale of what we are doing in Leeds, but I will go on later to talk a little bit more about the proposals that we are taking forward. Just remember this, that we put forward our asks for a City Region deal on the Leeds footprint, Leeds City Region footprint, and that has sat on the table in Whitehall for months now. That is the reality of the situation, that we have not been sitting back, we put our ask forward, we clearly outlined Leeds City Region as the area, the economic footprint that we felt would best deliver for the people in our area and I am very sorry to say that we have never had an appropriate response to that request that we put in, as I say some time, well over a year ago. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I second and reserve the right to speak.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I was at the last Combined Authority meeting. Leeds was quite well represented. Unfortunately the Leader was not there but Councillor James Lewis, Councillor Keith Wakefield, Councillor Stewart Golton and myself were there and there was an item on the agenda about rebranding the Combined Authority. I have never witnessed a more depressing and miserable lack of vision debate in my life. If a Government Minister had been present he would have wondered if that organisation was fit to run a raffle.

My Lord Mayor, the Chief Executive, despite having been warned by Councillor Robert Light and myself – not our Chief Executive, let me exonerate Mr Riordan – he briefed Councillor Light and myself some time ago about this paper about rebranding which would have been to headline Leeds City Region, as you have probably all gathered by now, and we said, “Are you sure that this is going to fly?” “Oh yes, yes, yes. The Leaders are all bought into it, everybody knows that Leeds is the centre of the City Region, centre of economic activity.” We said, it’s a funny thing but we have heard all of this before and when you bring it to a meeting all of a sudden out comes the Parish Pump or whatever pump you happen to have your hands on and lo and behold that is precisely what happened.

We listened and the faces were a picture. I looked across the room at Councillor James Lewis, Councillor Keith Wakefield and Councillor Stewart Golton and their facial expressions I think must have mirrored my own and we listened to everybody from Kirklees through to Bradford through to Wakefield saying why that paper should not be there now.

Members of Council, if we cannot even agree how to brand the blessed thing, how do we expect anyone to take us seriously? We were going back ten years to arguments that I thought were long since dead.

Leeds now has to lead as the major city and our colleagues, and we want their support, we want to work with them but they are going to have to wake up and smell the coffee, otherwise we are going to get nowhere. Funding streams are starting to run out and if we cannot get a City Region deal off the ground then we have to get a City Deal Mark 2, Mark 3, Mark 4 off the ground because it is crucial to the future of this city.

I say this to Councillor Blake, any efforts she wants to make in that direction she will have our support because we cannot be left behind. Whether you like or not South Yorkshire through Sheffield will have an elected Mayor next year, they will have another Authority like Manchester and we have to move, and if it means Leeds forging new alliances and forging new ways forward, we owe it to the people of this city. When the new Minister says – I will finish on this, Lord Mayor – that these deals are based on cities, that is what he means. We are a city, we can base it on Leeds. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thanks, Lord Mayor. I want to concentrate on one of the elements that Councillor Blake identified, which was the need for the Growth Deal that we do have and anything that may happen in the future to be associated with inclusive growth.

I mention it because we have developed, based on the Equality Champion model that this Council has developed, we have incorporated that at the West Yorkshire Combined Authority to have inclusive Growth Champions, and I just thought the Council Chamber would like to know myself and Councillor Groves are Leeds representatives on that body. This will, of course, supplement the Scrutiny that is there on the Combined Authority and I know that Councillor Groves is a member of that Scrutiny Board.

That kind of overview is needed and increasingly so we understand that these bodies that have been set up which are meant to be efficient and business like and business orientated actually do need to demonstrate their accountability to the fact that they are spending public money.

We have seen through the comments that were made earlier by Councillor Carter the spending of £4.8m of public money on a Hilton scheme which has not delivered one single job is of significant concern and it has been very hard to actually find the intended route for such spending to be scrutinised and for the criteria that was used for its allocation to be questioned.

It was actually brought up at the Scrutiny Board this week at the Combined Authority. Unfortunately, due to the non-attendance of some Labour and Conservative Councillors it was inquorate and therefore we could not have started the process for having that Hilton scheme actually brought under the Scrutiny of that body that is there.

We have to be very, very careful because we want to make sure that every job that our Growth Deal produces is an inclusive job and is not just bungs to private

enterprise for their interests. We have the news today about Burberry pulling out of the factory on the South Bank which has been reported in the Yorkshire Post. I have not been told anything official briefing-wise as a Member of the Executive Board so I cannot tell you the proper detail on that one. I am aware, of course, that Burberry has brought their Business Support Unit to the city and that involved £1.5m of easement but it does not specify at the West Yorkshire Combined Authority what that money is to be spent on, so we do not know if it is actually going to enable more jobs to be created for local people here or whether it is simply an inducement for a firm to choose us over Krakow. These things are important and will need to be scrutinised and I hope Councillor Groves will be able to report back to us at a later date.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor David Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: I have got to say I was going to get up and say I was extremely disappointed how things were going after reading the article on Monday by the Minister, but I have to say after the Leader made her comments there I am still disappointed but I am not as disappointed as I was.

I find it extremely frustrating that we are taking so long to go down this path and it would seem to me it is Central Government who basically have stuck their heels in and “You are doing it this way.” That is not the way to create anything. It has got to be from the bottom upwards. It has got to be something that we, whether it be West Yorkshire, whether it be Leeds City Region, whether it be beyond that in Yorkshire but we pull together and decide on ourselves, not something that is imposed on from Whitehall or Westminster and that seems to be the direction we are going.

Certainly I spend quite a bit of time in Manchester and I talk to Councillors there and while in public they may be very supportive of what they have got, in private they are not that supportive and they still think it lacks that proper democratic accountability.

I think we have got to stand out for what we want and pressurise the Government because, let’s put it this way, a Government that has got the majority that it has, around this Chamber we should be able to put some pressure on. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am going to call on all Party Leaders for some support in the case that I put forward in the next few minutes.

There are two reports out in the last few days that will do devastating damage to the economy of the North if they come true. The first report is in the Sunday Times which talks about the delay in upgrading the Trans Pennine. The second report concerns Christopher Grayling, the Secretary of State’s report on the National Transport Strategy launched last week.

In terms of the upgrading I remember David Cameron 2015 in Halifax talking to Look North and saying “We are upgrading the Trans Pennine way by electrifying

it.” That was then, live TV. Five weeks ago Christopher Grayling is going to Halifax – and we all know why – talking about the upgrading taking place. These reports have come after the General Election and, frankly, we should have seen the issue of the Northern Powerhouse because it was not in the manifesto. I sense a sense of betrayal. How many times have all parties here supported the case about upgrading and putting in a new powerhouse railway? How many times have you said that if you look at Germany, Holland, Spain, Shanghai and London and the South-East, the difference they can make to their economy is by running times of trains half the time that we take now. How many times have I said, or we said, that our average speeds across Trans Pennine is 40 miles an hour in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century? It begs the question if you are cancelling the NPR why have the HS2 shooting up here in 21<sup>st</sup> time only to get 19<sup>th</sup> Century times?

When I get to Scrutiny I am often lectured by Councillor Stephenson and Councillor Robinson about how this country is fit for fighting Brexit when we leave the Common Market. Frankly, if we do not get this investment, if we do not get the NPR that achieves so much for our economy, we are going to see London and the South East pull further away from the Northern economy and we are going to see a betrayal of the things that we wanted to see in the North of England and that is thousands of new jobs, extra investment and a much better transport system between the big cities. I would say this, this is not a joke, it is not something to scare, this is of substance, Lord Mayor, and I would urge everybody here, every Party Leader, to join in the lobby to end this betrayal and make sure this Government is committed to the North of England, the people of the North of England and the businesses of the North of England. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I would like to invite Councillor Blake to sum up, please.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think that was a very strong call from Councillor Wakefield. Maybe we could put together a letter that we could show to everyone to sign to start putting the pressure on.

Andrew, as you quite rightly said I could not attend the meeting last week. I must admit your account of it is not quite the same as I have heard from other people but I will get underneath what you have said.

Stewart, just to be absolutely clear, Burberry has not said they are pulling out of the manufacturing element of their plan – they are pulling out of the Temple Works, which was a separate proposal. The South Bank is still in the mix, they are considering their options and looking at the manufacturing activity in the City Region, so very much still talking to them. I think it is very clear we need to make that distinction.

You are absolutely right though about the power of procurement through the Growth Deal money that we have got and I know that working with Councillor Groves you will put that Scrutiny in in terms of if we are funding projects how can we make sure that they are delivering for the people that we represent, a really important piece of work.

David, I could not agree with you more about the bottom up approach. Absolutely essential, but I thought it was very informative that, do you remember George Osborn? I have to say I do think the Northern Powerhouse work did actually put attention on the North in the way that it has not been before and I do not think you can ever take that away from him. I think that is an interesting thing, but he brought Jim O’Neil, the Goldman Sachs economist, into the House of Lords to work side by side with him on the Northern Powerhouse and he was responsible for doing a lot of the negotiations to try and get the deals across the line. It was very interesting a couple of weeks ago in the Yorkshire Post – I do not know if you saw it – his explanation about why Leeds had not got across the line. This is in quotes in the paper:

“From my own personal experience the reason why the Leeds City based thing never really got anywhere was because the Tory MPs in Yorkshire refused to support the idea and said they would oppose the Bill. They can still do that and no doubt right this minute some of them or most of them would think that but they, like everyone else, one week after this remarkable election, needs to reflect back as to what has happened. When are any of them really going to stand up and really push for what needs doing?”

I think that is absolutely clear, someone who is absolutely at the centre of the negotiations putting it very clearly that it was the Tory MPs who would not support the deal that we sent forward from Leeds City Region. This has got to change, we need to work together and we need to pull together in a deal that will work for all the people that we represent. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, I would like to call for the vote to receive the Report on Devolution. (*A vote was taken*) That is CARRIED.

## **WHITE PAPERS**

THE LORD MAYOR: We now move to the White Papers. We have three White Papers for debate. Each debate will last for no more than 45 minutes and will conclude with votes on the motion and any amendments. I would like to invite Councillor Cohen to introduce his first motion.

### **ITEM 10 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – CHILDREN AND FAMILIES BUDGET**

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I must confess, when we put this White Paper together we actually hoped it would be that rarest of things, a non-political technical White Paper discussing how Leeds City Council accountants formulate their budgets and how we as a city could look to improve how Children and Families could better formulate its budget proposals so that we are not faced each year with that now customary scenario where we see an overspend from the demand-led area of the Children and Families budget.

So keen were we that this be the case that we actually asked the Labour Group if they would second the White Paper. As you can see, no great surprise, they chose not to, showing once again that cheap political point scoring matters far more to this Labour administration...

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Get on with your White Paper.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: ... than tackling a perpetual sore on the city's financial planning.

Let us sort out some relevant facts – and I say “relevant facts” because in truth there is nothing in Labour's amendment today that has any real connection to what this White Paper is actually about.

In each of the past four years as a city Leeds has underspent on its annual budget – get that right, it has underspent on its annual budget. In other words, despite all of the dire predictions to the contrary in many Scrutiny meetings, in Executive Board report after Executive Board report, on not one occasion has the city spent more overall than it actually planned to.

Against that backdrop is another fact. In each of the past three years the Children and Families Directorate has overspent on its budget, primarily as a result of the demand led provision. The effect of this has been that other Directorates have, mid-year, had to alter their spending plans to accommodate that overspend. For it to happen once would be excusable. To happen three years in succession and to be projecting an overspend of nearly £3m already for this financial year, making it four years in succession, suggests a deeper systemic problem with the budgeting framework and it is something that urgently needs addressing.

I want to be absolutely clear about something. We are not saying for one moment that vulnerable young people should ever be denied placements or provision that they need. It is a source of pride for all of us in this Chamber that our city does indeed ensure that our vulnerable young people are looked after in the placements they need. Equally, what we are not doing is examining national funding in these areas. If that is the conversation and the debate you want to have, with respect the right way to have gone about it would have been to have put a White Paper down on that motion. Frankly, if that is the conversation, if we are going to try and jointly seek more money, we will come down to London with you to ask for more money for our city. Indeed, the Government has recently awarded our Children and Families Directorate an extra £9m without which our projected overspend in this financial year would, of course, be higher than we are currently projecting.

I realise the moment that anybody starts talking about budgets to the Labour Group you immediately go into autopilot and unequivocally blame the budgetary challenges faced by the Directorate on Government cuts. This absolutely misses the point of the motion. The White Paper is not for one moment arguing that the additional money spent on vital children's services is being spent recklessly; rather, it is taking issue with the repeated failure of the Department to accurately budget for its needs.

If we are honest, every Member in this Chamber knows that this is an issue for the city. I am not saying there are not other issues but do you know what, this is an issue that we can actually do something about and it is not often we say that about our White Papers.

I do not want to be accused of simply trotting out a problem without coming up with some solutions. We could make far better use of the Trend Data that the Children and Families produce for us every year. We do not make adequate use of it. I wonder whether the Executive Member has been properly briefed on it. We could look at how we utilise external placements and external providers. If we were able to use fewer external placements we would save on average £120,000 for each one of our external placements if we were able to use internal provision. I know that in terms of our fostering the Department would prefer that instead of 20% external placements we were around 10% - that would be a huge saving.

If we put aside the political grandstanding I know some of you live for there is an opportunity to end the annual nonsense of every Directorate in the city doing mid-year somersaults with their spending plans. Surely that is something worth addressing. I move the White Paper. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Robinson.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: I second and reserve the right to speak, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mulherin.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The Conservative Government's funding cuts to this local Council are well rehearsed in this Chamber but nationally spend on children's social care has outstripped budgets by close to £1bn over the last three years, with up to 90% of Councils reporting an overspend, so this is not just a Leeds issue, this is a national issue.

COUNCILLOR: Correct.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Here in Leeds Children's Services have seen around £43m in Government grants stripped away since 2010/11, money that the Government has taken directly from vulnerable children and families in this city. This Labour administration has continued to protect the most vulnerable, with 66% of our entire Council budget now being spent on essential children's services and adult social care.

We have used the resources we have been given effectively to drive improvements and the Government has recognised this by awarding us Partner in Practice status. This has led to us being asked to support Kirklees, Councillor Golton, but this recognition does not make up for the shortfall in funding that has led to the budget deficit.

The LGA has warned that Children's Services across the country will be facing a funding gap of £2bn by 2020. The Conservative Chair of the LGA, Lord

Porter, has said that the money Local Government has to provide vital day to day services is running out fast, with huge uncertainty over how those services will be funded after 2020. The LGA in its Growing Places Report calls on the Government to invest in the early intervention programmes that improve outcomes for children and young people and reverse the cuts to early intervention funding for Councils. Lord Porter has made some interesting comments. He said:

“Councils can no longer be expected to run our local services on a shoestring. We must shout from the rooftops for Local Government to be put back on a sustainable financial footing.”

It is worth noting that the Conservative Group here did not put forward any budget amendments this financial year relating to Children’s Services. They did not feel the need to put more money in to reflect that growing demand. While Local Government has had cut after cut and protected Government by minimising the impact of those cuts as much as is possible, it is astounding to see that from nowhere £1bn has been found to prop up Theresa May’s Government through a coalition of convenience with the DUP. Mrs May seems to be determined to cling on to power at whatever cost.

I am unclear whether Councillor Cohen really understands what he means when he talks about differentiating between demand led and core elements of the Children’s Services budget. Demand led is essentially the children looked after budget which includes external residential and independent fostering agency placements, special educational needs outside placements, leaving care and transport budgets. These are all areas where the Council has a statutory responsibility to meet the needs of children. They are, therefore, I would argue, the core services of the Directorate.

I think it is worth noting that demand led spend is impacted upon by national legislation. It has already been pointed out that austerity measures have had a direct impact on the numbers of children becoming looked after but another area where national spend has had a significant impact is the Staying Put programme. Staying Put enables young people to stay with their foster family past their 18<sup>th</sup> birthday. It is absolutely the right thing to do to improve outcomes for those children but it is a double edged sword for us as the funding received from this programme in the last financial year alone was £330,000. The cost of delivering that service was £1.3m. That is an additional £1m pressure on the looked-after children budgets that had not been budgeted for at the start of that year.

Foster parents who look after those young people are keeping those young people for longer and are therefore not able to take on new teenagers coming into Local Authority care, so it has created an additional pressure on our looked-after children budget because we have had to then allocate those young people who are coming into our care in their teens to independent fostering agencies.

What I am saying is that the demand led budget is exactly that – led by demand and that demand is increasing while resources are decreasing and Government legislation and Government funding cuts are not making our jobs any easier. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Pryor.

COUNCILLOR PRYOR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am delighted to be seconding Councillor Mulherin's amendment. I think what our amendment does, it goes to the core of a problem which Councillor Cohen is dancing round the edge of. He does not just pretend that these gargantuan cuts can be mitigated by managing things in a slightly different way. Leeds has undergone a quite remarkable improvement journey over recent years and I think it is timely to remind Council of that.

Councillor Cohen talks about relevant facts. At the beginning of 2010 Leeds Children's Services had been rated as inadequate by OFSTED with children left at significant risk of harm. Now we should not dwell on it too much but I think the Opposition do need reminding that it was on their watch, they were the ones responsible for safeguarding these children at that time and they were the ones who failed. It was the Labour administration that came in and oversaw a complete overhaul of the Department, drove forward the drastic improvement that was so desperately needed and this was done in part by investing heavily year after year in early intervention work which not only delivers better outcomes for children and young people and their families but is also an example of an invest to save model.

Leeds has now been rated good by OFSTED with outstanding for leadership and management and, as Councillor Golton told us earlier he does not like being reminded but we are the only core city in the country to receive a good rating across the board, and I do not think we can say that enough.

This has been achieved through an awful lot of hard work and an unshakeable determination to deliver the best outcomes for all Leeds children. Leeds has seen a 12% decrease in the numbers of children looked after from 2010 and this is in sharp contrast to a national trend of a 9.4 increase. If we had followed that national trend then our LAC costs would have increased by approximately £13m per year. This is a saving that the Opposition seem very happy to overlook when they criticise the costs of keeping children safe from harm.

OFSTED are not alone in recognising this progress. The Government has made Leeds a Partner in Practice as they want to seize our expertise to help drive improvement in other Local Authorities. This recognition has come from your Conservative Government who clearly think we are doing something right, who clearly think that the political decision to prioritise protecting these services was the right one.

The sad reality is that there will always be children for whom it is not safe for them to remain at home and who need to become looked after. Leeds has done an amazing job in bringing that number of children down by continuing to invest heavily in early intervention and prevention programmes, an approach that has been proven to work and to deliver long-term cost savings. This approach has been recognised by the Conservative Government who, as we have spoken, awarded Leeds £9.6m in Innovation Funding to continue this work. £9.6m is good but it is nowhere near the amount we need if we are hoping to enable us to make a bigger difference.

There is clear evidence that increased deprivation and poverty have a direct link to an increase in children looked-after rates. Coventry University and the Nuffield Foundation undertook a piece of research that found that a child in the most deprived areas nationally had a twelve times greater chance of becoming looked-after than a child in the most affluent areas. This is a direct result of the Conservatives' continued austerity measures which continue to shamelessly target the most vulnerable and the most needy.

Lord Mayor, I second the amendment and I urge Members from all sides to support it. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Stephenson.

COUNCILLOR STEPHENSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. We find ourselves here again in another White Paper debate about cuts and spending and we have heard the same arguments all over again. I have to say, Councillor Cohen, well done. Well done on that White Paper because it was hilarious from my position here looking at Opposition Members sat opposite sat there dumfounded by your technical talk. I have not seen Labour politicians looking so confused about figures since Diane Abbott was on the radio.

You have missed the point – you have missed the point. We were asking for you to look at trends in data, to look at the technical side of the budget. It is something you are not doing and we should not be surprised. Councillor Cohen understands the data, he has had a career in business. I am not sure how much that can be said for Members opposite dealing with it. In fact, was it the former Labour Councillor for Garforth and Swillington, now independent – I am sure he will not mind me quoting the man in charge of Resources at Leeds City Council being, what was it, Councillor Dobson, 40 years old and never had a proper job.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: I am 39, get your facts right. I am 39, get your facts right! That is a technical point.

COUNCILLOR STEPHENSON: I think we need to have a proper look about the technical points in this motion.

When you look deeper down, Lord Mayor, into the issues and we look it is all about public finances. Members opposite, in fact indeed Members in the opposite group here, Councillor Alex Sobel had an opportunity this week in Parliament in Westminster Hall to discuss in a debate about balancing UK finances. There were only two Labour MPs in that debate and one of them was not Councillor Sobel. He is probably too busy double jobbing. (*interruption*)

I am glad Councillor Wakefield suggested a bit about the single market. Interesting that Councillor Wakefield mentioned something about the single market because, of course, Councillor Sobel told all his electors that he was going to vote to stay in the single market and then did not do so when it came to the House.

You talk about austerity and, Lord Mayor, this week I have had two work experience young lads with me in my office. I think it is very important for them to be able to go away and understand actual definitions – the definition of austerity being, according to the Cambridge dictionary, where a Government cuts its spending year after year, a political decision of a Government to cut its spending year after year.

Lord Mayor, this Government will be spending £80bn more this year than when it inherited the deficit from Labour in 2010 and in that context we still have a situation today where school spending is at record high, record levels. Again, look at the statistics. Given all that, given all the rhetoric, given all the facts in front of you, as I said earlier on, we have more kids in outstanding schools than ever before. That is the record we should be looking at. The Government has committed the per pupil Funding 4 will be introduced and no school will be better off and, as I said earlier on the Minutes, this Council needs to look much better at the way it is spending its money. To do that you can look at other Councils, Labour run Councils, who are doing more with the money that they have.

You have completely missed the point on this White Paper and you had an opportunity to look again and learn from the lessons. You have decided to make it into a political statement about austerity and by the way, you did not win the General Election; you lost the General Election. *(interruption)* The Conservative Party had the best results, and who is the Prime Minister? Who is Prime Minister? Here is the figure for Members opposite. Is it 56 seats you are short of a majority? Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lamb, please.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Come on Alan, give us some more of that!

COUNCILLOR LAMB: It is the first time I have been cheered by both sides of the Chamber at the same time and I would like to thank Councillor Stephenson for warming up superbly for me! I will try and carry on where he left off.

I think, Councillor Pryor, I am right that you were not here in 2010. The version of history that you have been given is not quite accurate and you missed quite a lot out. You have kind of re-written quite a lot of it. What you missed out actually was the credit that should go to Councillor Golton for the work that he did in response to the OFSTED findings which your administration then continued. He put it in place, he was the one that started the Corporate Carers Group...

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Let's re-write history!

COUNCILLOR LAMB: ...he was the one that put the action plans in place, he was the one that started the moves supported when we were in administration and actually you have missed out the credit that should go to Members on all sides of this Chamber for helping to improve the outcomes for children and families in this city across the board, and I think it is pretty churlish that you do not recognise when cross-

party working has actually made a huge difference. No mention of the work that Scrutiny has done under the leadership of Councillor Chapman and then Councillor Bentley; no mention of the work that the rest of us have done on the Children's Trust Board to try and help to improve outcomes for children and young people. None of that, nothing was there. You just take all the credit for everything that goes well and pass the blame to somebody else for everything that goes wrong. You same old Labour.

COUNCILLOR: We learned that off you.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Lord Mayor, the key point in this amendment is that it completely misses the point. What you do, year in, year out is set an unrealistic budget. The impact of that means that the officers in Children's Services have to spend the following twelve months trying to claw back a position that was never realistic in the first place. The officers in every other department of the Council also have to go round and spend their time trying to claw back a budget that was never realistic in the first place. We have pointed out in Scrutiny, in every other forum year after year after year, this is not a realistic budget, it is a fraud. It is a fraud to set a budget that is dishonest in the outset, that you know is not enough. We are not talking about what the national Government has done, we are talking about what you do with the money that you have and how you allocate it and how you apportion it in this city.

The suggestions actually are perfectly sensible. They are things we have been calling for for a long time on this side of the Chamber. You cannot scrutinise the Director of Children's Services properly if you put the whole budget together. If you separate out the running costs of the department you can scrutinise and challenge whether he is actually running his department properly. For demand led services it is another issue altogether and we should set a realistic budget. The reality is, if you get it right some years you will have more than you need and some years you will have less than you need. The point is it is demand led.

I am proud that in this city we have never been in a position where money is a factor on whether or not we take children into care. If they need to be taken into care the money is irrelevant and they will be placed in the appropriate place. That budget always needs to be flexible and we are all honest and open and respectful of that case.

The measures that Councillor Cohen has pointed out are simply realistic. You cannot go on year after year, bury your head in the sand, deflect attention to the Government and pretend there is not a problem when every year you come back weeks after the budget is announced to tell us there is going to be an overspend on Children's Services and the rest of the Council is going to have to scurry round and make up the difference. It is completely dishonest and it does a disservice to the children and families of this city. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: David Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. When I saw the motion I thought well, this seems quite a sensible motion but I think, like Members on the other side, if you start asking those questions why are we as we are, it is to do that we have a service that is, as it has been said, largely demand led where the families

who are vulnerable have been under pressure so the likelihood is that demand is going to increase and we have not been getting properly funded by Central Government.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Hear hear.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: That is the basis of it but I have got to say I quite support the motion because all you are asking for, let us go off and find out if we are right.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: You understand it.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: As I say, quite honestly I support you in that. What I will say is, Members opposite are quite correct at what the cause of it is and I am sure if we did that that would be the findings.

As I say, we will be supporting your motion but the fact is we feel that your Government is the cause of it. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: If you follow that you can follow anything.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor James Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. If people want to talk about the accuracy of figures, Councillor Stephenson, I am actually 39 not 40 but facts sometimes get in the way of a good argument.

I think again when you were speaking, Councillor Stephenson, I was just thinking at no point in this Council meeting yet have we had the opportunity to congratulate Fabian Hamilton MP on getting the biggest ever *(applause)* Labour majority in Leeds North East we have ever seen. When the voters of Leeds North East looked at the options in front of them they made a very, very clear choice. *(interruption)*

COUNCILLOR: It's going to be his birthday by the time he's finished!

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Lord Mayor, I hope I am going to have some extra time added on for all these interruptions.

I am absolutely delighted to be having a technical debate about the setting of the Council budget because nothing interests me more than that. I think it is worth remembering that every single year, despite the cuts that this Government has imposed on us, we have come in with a balanced budget in this Council. I was interested listening to the Conservative Party, maybe austerity which they said would only last three or four years, if they had balanced their budget in every year we would be through austerity and looking at the sunny uplands that come beyond that, not looking at austerity being a period that could last for ten or 15 years and that is the impact of the poor management of public finances which we have seen at a national level.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: You don't understand this argument. Go to accounts class and learn.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: As Councillor Wakefield mentioned earlier, significant infrastructure investment like the Trans Pennine railway is not going to happen because the Conservative Government cannot manage the books, cannot manage public finance, cannot manage this Government's money. We have seen the Government borrow more than any Government has ever done before (*Applause*) and no-one from the Conservative Party will lecture me about managing a Government when I look at their record at a national level and I look at the impact that is having here. That is a fact we are looking at.

I think also whilst we are talking about Conservative budget management it is worth remembering that the biggest overspend in terms of Children's Services in this country is the Conservative Council, Northamptonshire County Council, any suggestion that the Conservatives have some magic formula for managing Children's Services budgets that we do not have. It is simple enough, there is not enough money for Children's Services and again Councillor Stephenson made a really interesting point, the Government is spending £80bn more than it did in 2010 so the question is, why have we got austerity here? Why hasn't Northern Ireland got austerity, for example? Why hasn't Surrey got austerity when we saw their sweetheart deal? The money is there, they have chosen not to put it into Labour Northern cities.

It is a political decision from the Conservative Party and I do not know how they can stand there and say that is not connected to the impact on our children and our families from their constant tinkering the shambles we have seen of the Government, their poor financial management. If only the national Government had to set a balanced budget every year like this Council did, if only they succeeded in balancing the budget every year like this Council did maybe this country would not be in the mess that it is in today.

I am really interested, I do sometimes wonder which world the Conservative Council live in when they try and argue that you can look at the Children's Services Budget and the impact on children and families without looking at anything else that happens in Government and public policy. Do they not think the failure to deliver affordable social housing does not have an impact on looked-after children? The impact of benefit sanctions, benefit caps, things like that on families does not have an impact on looked-after children? The cuts in the Health Service, the cuts in early intervention services, the cuts in the police service, they do not have an impact on the ability for us as a city and a community to look after their children?

All we have heard is excuse, finger pointing, smear, innuendo from a Party that brought this country into constitutional and economic crisis. I commend people like Councillor Mulherin and her Children's Services team for trying to make sense of it, trying to deliver a strong Council services and I urge everybody to vote for the Labour Group amendment.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan please.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: I am 56, not 60, just in case people were worrying. That is fake news put about by my opponents!

We are very big fans of Children's Services and the excellent work that they have done and I think that is a credit to everybody sat in this particular Chamber. I think it is a credit to Stewart, I think it is a credit to Scrutiny, and we perhaps should recognise that instead of kicking it around like a political football.

We think Children's Services are running a very efficient and a very lean and a very effective service keeping children safe across the whole City Council area. Sometimes my own personal view is that they should err more on the side of caution perhaps, be spending more on these particular cases which I know are marginal where they do leave a child with their parents and perhaps my judgment would be different from them.

There is no doubt that since 2010 they have become leaner and more efficient. I think we have got to a point where whatever efficiency savings there are within Children's Services already have been achieved. I think we are in a situation where it is not a realistic budget. I think that is the bottom line. I think we are in a position where we should be setting a realistic budget, we should accept as a matter of course that the additional money that we are going to have to find somewhere needs to be found and to a degree when we come to budget time we all skirt around without actually fundamentally dealing with the issue. We have an exceptionally efficient service at this particular point. I am sure Scrutiny will continue to do what is proposed in the Conservatives' White Paper in terms of looking at other options, looking to see if there is any more efficiency ultimately to be found in that particular department but I think today they need a big pat on the back for doing an efficient job. I think we have avoided any issues such as the Baby P case and I think that is a credit to everybody in this particular Chamber but we do need to have an honest discussion about a realistic budget to be set by the City Council and also an honest discussion about the fact that Central Government needs to be offering more funds to continue with the excellent work that Children's Services undertake. Thank you, Lord Mayor.  
*(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cleasby.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I find it interesting, Council, my experience pre-dates 2010. I am surprised that Councillor Mulherin is able to talk pre-2010 because I do not believe she was here pre-2010.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Yes I was, I had been here for six years at that point.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Oh you had, had you, so you will be fully aware that the reason Education Leeds was formed was the failure of your group in running Education in this city, which was an absolute utter shambles. It is absolutely right, as has been said earlier, about a section of the change that was happening. It was the Coalition that were organising Education Leeds to bring it back on board because the Government of the day seemed to be happy with what was happening. We were not

happy with what was happening, standards could have been much better, there could have been a much better outcome of it.

It is interesting that I was here when Estelle Morris came. Remember Estelle Morris, the Labour Minister who came and took Education off you, off this city. That is how fundamental it was at that time. That is the starting point that you should have gone back to instead of trying to make out how clever you were in 2010 and as an organisation you have done a lot.

Yes, there have been improvements but just recently, Lisa, I think there has been some very dangerous things happening. I have sat with you on panels looking to choose a Director and then Deputy Directors. We were struggling to get somebody new in from the outside and so you just quickly decide we will make people up, so we have got no new talent into the Department where that is what is needed in the Department is new talent. New talent, so the talent you already have has something to measure itself against, that can improve collectively, and those are the ways we will get out of it.

Interestingly, going back to the original motion – and I see, Dan, you finish at the end by talking about co-operation. One of the things we have got wrong with our city is the silos of West Yorkshire. We have tried our damndest in the 20-something years I have been a Councillor to get rid of the silos within this organisation, to get across the board working and not the deep silos, but our Councils in West Yorkshire are deep silos. Here is a marvellous opportunity to get across our borders. They have the problems we have got; all the problems we have got, they have. I think if we had better working together across the board we could then reduce costs because we there will be increased efficiency and surely, Lord Mayor, at the end of the day, that is what we are all looking for – increased efficiency for our young people and therefore a high standard of education as a consequence. Thank you, Council. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think we have actually had some pretty good contributions today and a real sense of consensus that has been there for a very long period, which is any child which is in need of our help needs to get that help and the money will always be available for it.

I think the issue is whether or not you have realistic expectations of how much help you think you are likely to be asked for and that is the key behind this White Paper. We get it on this side anyway. You do not say every year for three years in a row “Oh well, we have had more demand than we thought we should have had.” You actually start to understand that actually the new level of demand is this and it is always going to be this.

Not so long back there was a policy that was called Turning the Curve and it was all about – it was very well intentioned and it was all about looked-after children and it was saying the numbers are going up because we have to, of course, look after children when they present themselves to us but we hope through the interventions that we make, eventually that number will go down. Over the years, actually, that turning is not happening and we have a plateau satiation now and that is a constant,

and actually that is no bad thing because what it says is that this Authority has good thresholds and if there is that level of demand we will always provide that level of support.

The problem is how you then commission that support for those people to go to because if you want to look after your budgets then you need to ensure that the people who supply are more your friends than competition so, for instance, we had a situation not so long back about our foster carers. Our foster carers were leaving us in droves because they did not feel they were supported by the Council. When we tried to change it the Council officers said “Oh, it is very complicated and we just can’t afford it.” However, the Council was paying private independent agencies that were providing the support and the training and the extra goods to those very same foster carers that were trained up by us in this Authority and then they were charging that back to the Council. You have got to face that kind of reality and say well, actually, if we are not going to stop people drifting over to the private sector, we need to look after our own.

The same thing is happening now when we are sending our young people away to outside places and we have been doing that for two or three years in a row now. If we had some leadership in this Council then we would have thought actually we need to commission those services in this city so that those young people do not have to leave our boundaries to get the care that they require, and that we need to invest some of our own money so that we can actually save money in the future because we are not paying for it from somebody else that charges us over the odds.

That is the kind of leadership that we need and that is why it is a little bit disconcerting when it feels like the leadership of the Council, if it is Council officers, are doing a lot going outside of this Authority and saying to others, “This is how we do it in Leeds” but actually are not continuing addressing the really serious issues that they need to within this city itself. I have to say, it does not help that the lead Members for Children’s Services seems to change every year so everyone has a go at it. There needs to be some consistency there and I do hope that Councillor Mulherin, who does show a real commitment to this portfolio, remains in place for some considerable time.

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, we are going to Councillor Robinson who reserved his right to speak.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: Thank you very much, Lord Mayor. I would like to join Councillor Lewis in congratulating our MPs who were elected at the recent election, including the MP in Elmet and Rothwell who got the biggest majority ever in the history of Elmet and Rothwell and I believe won the Kippax and Methley ward as well, as chance would happen.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Another inaccuracy. I thought we were talking about facts.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: I would also like to send my commiserations to the Councillors who were candidates in the election, including Councillor Dawson, Councillor Golton and Councillors on this side who were unfortunately not elected. I

like to think of it this way, that the public in Leeds saw us as doing such a vital job in this Chamber that they could not afford to miss us, so thought we don't want you going down to Westminster!

As I turn to the White Paper and to the amendment that has been put forward, I found the amendment just confusing, as I find so many Labour amendments confusing every single month. The amendment runs through a process and I think it must be a process in the Labour Group office because it must be a standard format now which is, open with kicking the Government, say why the administration is great, use what the Government said to approve what the administration is doing, bash spending again and then go on and praise the LGA, the Conservative representatives on the LGA to indicate what you are doing. It must be a standard format, it seems to happen every single month.

I was amazed to see, actually, in the amendment that because none of it matched what was the original motion we were not talking about other things that were pet projects of the Labour Party – banning the bomb or ending zero hours contracts or abolishing tuition fees that is in there.

We have heard a lot about funding and where that funding comes from. The funding to get rid of tuition fees is about £100bn. If you are so committed to making sure that social mobility counts, if you are so committed to making sure that money goes to the right places and looked-after children, perhaps rather than abolishing tuition fees some of that money could go into looked-after children in this city and go to the coffers in this Council and other Councils across the country to prioritise looked-after children.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Perhaps give us some of what you send to Northern Ireland.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: I am sure you will be coming in later, Councillor Coupar. What I find is that inequality takes place far earlier and it is wrong to turn round and say that you prioritise funding for this area for looked-after children because that is the right thing to do, that is the caring and compassionate thing to do, but then getting your budget wrong year in, year out to cause this debate to have to happen.

I think that what Councillor Cohen has brought forward is actually very sensible and it is very easy to agree with. In fact, I imagine if you put the politics to one side for a moment and look at the policy, you would probably think to yourselves as well that getting this right is for the best interests of children who are looked after in this city.

This is the fourth year of overspend and I imagine that there are as many Members on that side who are as concerned as Members on this side. What I would say is there are two very simple things that can be done. You can bring the Executive Board Report forward that looks at amending data collection and making sure that this does not happen again, and you can make a cast iron guarantee, an unbreakable bond today, that you will say that this will never happen again in next year's budget

because you are making sure that the demographic data comes forward is what matters most to looked-after children in this city.

If you want to prioritise it join us, join the Liberal Democrats, join others in making sure that looked-after children are going to be a priority, that looked-after children are going to be centre stage and that we will do the right thing for the children of Leeds. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cohen, would you like to sum up, please.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I begin by thanking Councillor Stephenson and Councillor Lamb, Councillor Golton and Councillor Robinson and something I never thought I would say, Councillor Cleasby, for your really helpful, insightful and actually on topic contributions today. It is very much appreciated. Councillor Blackburn, thank you – I think you agreed with us! Councillor Finnigan, nobody for one moment this side of the Chamber is criticising what Children and Families spend; it is just we are funny, we like to budget accurately so that the rest of the Directorates do not have to do financial somersaults for the rest of the year.

The fact is Labour's amendment today hardly engages in any way, shape or form with the original motion at all, and frankly if this is the way we are going to deal with White Papers we may as well not bother having Procedure Rules about it, we may as well just amend it with anything – talk about pink flies and pink clouds and just amend it with absolute random nonsense because if we are not going to stick to the topic it really makes a fallacy of the Procedure Rules.

There is one generic reference to overspending in Children's Social Care nationally but there is no acknowledgement that it has been a problem in Leeds over successive years, no rebuttal of our essential argument that we need to address this, no discussion of the effectiveness of the Council's projections and budget setting process.

Labour's amendment did focus on a huge and wide range of issues; impressively though, as we have said, they have managed to in large part totally ignore the motion. Indeed, if missing the point were an art form we would have to include today's Labour Group amendment in our Capital of Culture bid.

What the amendment does show is that Labour Councillor in this city are terrified. They are terrified if they do not spout left-wing mantras at every opportunity that come the selection processes they are going to be having with all their Momentum members, they are going to be de-selected in huge numbers. We all know that, they all know that, so we can get used to this in the coming months I am afraid. More and more left-wing nonsense being spouted.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: "Oh Jeremy Corbyn."

COUNCILLOR COHEN: We saw it in the answers to your questions earlier on (*interruption*) you speak for yourself when you are singing that, quite frankly! We saw it in your answers to questions earlier on, we have seen it in today's White Paper

amendment, we have seen it in your coming White Paper motion. Once again, politics for the sake of politics irrespective of whether or not it actually adds value to anything.

Colleagues, by not engaging with the subject matter of today's motion there is only one possible conclusion and that is that this administration is content with the current situation with regards to overspending, that they are seeing no issue with the flawed and inaccurate projections of the number of children looked after and the budget allocations year after year. Any impact that their financial negligence has on the Council's financial credibility is not considered an issue. It is shameful.

Our White Paper sought to present a constructive way forward whereas the Labour Group are seemingly ignoring that there is even a problem. To quote my learned colleague Councillor Carter, what a shower. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now going to vote on the amendment in the name of Councillor Mulherin.

*(A recorded vote was held on the amendment  
in the name of Councillor Mulherin)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Present 91, for the amendment 58, abstaining 17 and against 16, so the amendment now becomes the substantive motion. CARRIED

We can now move on to vote on the substantive motion which is the motion in the name of Councillor Mulherin. If we can do this by a show of hands. *(A vote was taken)* That is CARRIED.

#### ITEM 11 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – HOUSING

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now going on to the second White Paper of the day on Housing. Councillor Coupar.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Thank you, Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors. It is four weeks today since we woke to hear of the terrible fire at Grenfell Tower in Kensington and I am sure I speak for all Councillor Members here today when I say that all our hearts go out to the victims and to their friends and family in that terrible incident.

The tragic incident at Grenfell Towers has brought into sharp focus housing policy in this country. I think it is timely to bring forward this White Paper as there are many issues affecting housing in Leeds and across the United Kingdom which really need to be addressed. It is not my intention with this White Paper to focus on party politics. There have been failings in Governments of all colours that have led us to the situation we are in today. However, it is important to highlight the areas where change is urgently needed so that we as Leeds City Council can play our part in solving the nation's housing problems.

The Rent Reduction Policy which has been imposed on us by Central Government is one example of a policy which hurts Local Authorities. Introduced in the guise of saving poorer tenants money, it is instead an attempt to tackle the nation's booming Housing Benefit bill. In 2016/17 alone the loss of income to Leeds City Council has been £8.75m. As a result of this policy it is estimated that by 2025 the cumulative loss of income will be £283m, a sum we can all ill afford.

Since last year's Housing and Planning Act was passed by Parliament we have been experiencing a great deal of uncertainty. Whilst the Pay to Stay policy which would have seen households charged higher rents if they earned above a set threshold was quite rightly scrapped, we are still unsure whether policies such as the introduction of fixed term tenancies are actually going to go ahead. Guidance on this was initially expected last autumn and then at the start of 2017, then in the spring and, guess what, we are still waiting.

Since the Conservatives took office in 2010 the number of new Government funded houses built for social rent has plummeted by 97%. This nationwide failure to build affordable homes over the last few decades has meant that overall Government spending has shifted dramatically towards resolving the symptoms of the housing crisis through increased housing benefit spending up to £10.6bn in 1997/98 to £22.5bn in 2016. The Government has now reacted to this issue and has sought to save money on the Housing Benefit Bill through their rent cap. However, this again places a greater burden on Local Authorities and stifles the building of new affordable housing.

The borrowing cap on the Council puts serious limits on the ambitions a Council can have to build. The Local Government Association has pointed out that last time the country built over 300,000 homes Local Government supplied 40% of these. However, Councils need the support of Government in order to achieve this. In this Government's Housing White Paper in January we saw nothing about lifting or easing the Borrowing Cap.

I am interested to hear what Conservative Members have to say regarding their amendment as they have removed all reference to increased finance and power for Local Government. I would be surprised if this is really their position as we know that their Conservative colleagues across Local Government who back what we are calling for in this White Paper, including Councillor Martin Tett, the Conservative Housing spokesman at the LGA, who has summarised the situation very effectively. In response to the Government's White Paper he said that:

“Councils desperately need the powers and access to funding to resume their historic role as a major builder of affordable homes. This means being able to borrow to invest in housing and to keep 100% of the receipts from properties sold through the right to buy to replace homes and reinvest in building more of the genuinely affordable homes our communities desperately need.”

We have heard a similar message from the Conservative Chair of the LGA and I think this might be the third time that he has been quoted, but bear in mind the LGA are the only ones giving national leadership on this:

“If we are going to get serious about building more homes Councils need financial flexibility and that means among other things scrapping the Housing Borrowing Cap.”

I move the White Paper, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: I second, Lord Mayor, reserving the right to speak.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Barry Anderson.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Before setting out some of the views of the Conservative Group can I first of all associate the Conservative Group with the opening sentence in expressing our sympathies to the residents, their relatives and the families. Why on why on earth could you not have just left it there, because that is something that every single one of us in this Chamber agrees. Nobody disagrees with that part at all. No, you had to go a little bit further, you had to get your dig in. Why? What good does it do? Has your paper come forward with one idea – one idea – as to how we are going to get another Council house built? No, you have not.

Let us be clear, just to answer your question directly. The Conservatives nationally and in this city believe in Council housing, so don't let anybody try and misrepresent our stand on that. We believe in Council housing, we know we need Council housing.

We do also believe that the right to buy has been successful, otherwise why would successive Labour Governments have done absolutely nothing about it? Not a thing. You were in power for years and years and years. I know that Councillor Finnigan has been consistent in his arguments; you have not been.

We also agree very clearly that there needs to be a review of the right to buy policy. It is not working as it currently stands. We do need to retain all of the money coming from it so that it can be reinvested locally. In case you were not already aware and you had not read your own Labour Party manifesto, then what Mr Corbyn said was that he will only suspend the right to buy legislation until the Local Authority proves it has invested in housing again and then the right to buy will be brought back in again. That is what your Government would tend to do if you had got into power.

We also believe that there should be greater borrowing freedoms and we would join you in going down to lobby Government. You would also get, I think, quite a good hearing based on the conversations that took place down at the LGA Conference. I think you are on the right thing and if we work together and stop trying to divide us all the time, you would get somewhere. I am quite happy to go and argue with you. You know fine my views on a lot of things that go on that the Government

do so I will be there shoulder to shoulder with you trying to argue it if you give us a chance.

We do need true affordable houses. One way of doing that is by looking at the use of commuted sums. I think you have started in the city centre, I think you should start looking at that city wide, the same type of principle and you can get more money into the system, you can get more affordable houses, true affordable houses that people can actually afford to purchase what we are talking about here, and it also means that you can get more Council housing. After all, it was under the leadership of Councillor Andrew Carter that we started to rebuild Council houses in this city. It had stopped for a number of years, so the Conservatives led again. The Conservatives can be trusted to do things in this city – you try and make out that we cannot but yes we can in terms of the things that we are doing.

What am I saying to Council today? What I am saying to Council today is by supporting our amendment, just support our amendment and you send a clear message out there that what we feel for these families. Let us cut the politics out. Let cut the mudslinging out. Let's agree on something together. Thank you, Lord Mayor.  
*(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor, I reserve the right to speak.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Robert Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Moving this amendment. We do not think the Labour Party has been radical enough, which is a strange thing to say by a party run by Mr Corbyn.

Let us deal with some figures. In 1980 Leeds City Council had 90,401 Council houses; by 2017 that was down to 56,366, a 38% drop, a loss of 34,000 homes. If we were to suggest that we can build 400 Council houses a year, as has been suggested, that would take us 85 years to get us back to where we were in 1980. We have 25,000 people or thereabouts on the housing waiting list, around about 2,000 of those in Morley. We would point out that those 400 Council houses have been proposed; not one of them is coming anywhere near Morley. In fact the last time we got any affordable housing in Morley was under the previous Coalition.

Leaving that aside, it is quite clear that we have had pretty much a free market in housing since 1980 that has not delivered the type of affordable homes that we actually need. We look to both of the major parties – and I hate to leave the Lib Dems out but they are not that relevant – both of the major parties *(interruption)* to have a look and see what they are suggesting about the way ahead and, as I am sure people have already perused, Forward Together, the Tories manifesto, talks about:

“We will enter the new Council Housing Deals with ambitious pro-development Local Authorities to help them build more social housing. We will work with them to improve their capability and capacity, develop more good homes” ... da-di-da-di-da... “In doing

so we will build a new fixed term social houses which be sold privately after ten to 15 years.”

I do not think that is offering us much in the way of long-term support. The right to buy has to be killed off, has to die in its entirety.

The Labour Party, according to my colleagues over there, won the last General Election, which is great news, Jeremy Corbyn is going to be in place by Christmas...

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Only playing Santa Claus.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: ...which I am sure is fabulous news but just on the off chance that is the case let us have a look at what the Labour Party has got to say about such matters.

The Labour Party basically says as far as they are concerned they are going to be building at least 100,000 Council houses and housing association houses a year for genuine affordable rent or sale. None of that is costed up so God knows where the money is coming from for that particular policy. We could look further down the Labour Party's manifesto and, as has already been pointed out, Labour will suspend the right to buy – not get rid of it altogether. That is far too timid. The Labour Party is now socialist – get right of the right to buy, repeal it totally and utterly.

Of course, what happens at the point that you do exercise the right to buy, and you all know that this happens in your own area, is that those new owners move out, it is sold to somebody else who uses it as a private rent and we end up paying extortionate rates of housing benefit for a Council house which ultimately then prior to that particular point we were paying half as much in terms of housing benefit payments. This is, as I said earlier, an addiction. We have to recognise that we have this addiction to the right to buy and we must kill it off.

Accept the amendment, it is reasonable, it is appropriate, it is the only way forward when we can start to reverse the decline in the number of Council homes we have got.

Outside that we have different policies, some of them unfunded, that are not realistic in terms of achieving what we want to achieve which is better affordable homes for local people. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Leadley.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: I second and reserve the right to speak, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Nagle.

COUNCILLOR NAGLE: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I am very pleased to have the opportunity to speak to Council on this vital issue. We heard earlier during the Exec Board Report section of Council some of the excellent work that we are doing as a Council in Leeds utilising right to buy receipts. As it stands we can only

keep 30% of these receipts. Even this comes with several conditions which limit the availability of local Councils to spend the money that is available. Despite these restrictions, this Council has managed since 2014 to support 227 start up sites with a further 247 units programmed to benefit from the funding. The frustrating thing is imagine what more we could do if we could keep 100% of the right to buy receipts.

This is a move that has support from across the political spectrum. As Councillor Coupar noted when moving our White Paper the Conservative spokesman of the LGA, Martin Tett, has been unequivocal in his support for Councils retaining 100% of receipts whilst support for greater financial flexibility for Councils has come from Lord Porter, the Conservative Chair of the LGA.

LGA statistics show that 12,246 Council homes in England were sold to tenants under right to buy legislation in 2015/16 but only 2,055 replacements were started by councils – a drop of 27% on the previous year.

In Leeds at the same time that we have commenced building 227 units using right to buy funding, we have sold or are projected to sell 1,793 properties. The claims from the Government that homes sold under this scheme will be replaced like for like have frankly never been true and now appear increasingly out of touch with the picture on the ground.

Consideration should also be given to the purpose of the right to buy programme in 2017. Historically arguments for the policy have come from across the political spectrum. Indeed, at the 1959 General Election a version of the policy was included in the Labour manifesto in an election won by the Conservatives. The legislation was ultimately passed by Margaret Thatcher's Government in 1980.

However, the picture today is very different. Council housing stock has dwindled significantly and we find ourselves in a situation where it is widely acknowledged that we need more Council housing, not less. We also know that the right to buy has not always been used in the way originally intended for Council housing residents to own the home they have been living in. Speculating investors have been able to buy up properties through deferred transaction agreements, helping to fuel rises in property costs. Too many former Council properties have ended up in the hands of private landlords charging extortionate rents.

In Wales and Scotland the right to buy has been discontinued by the devolved administrations as they feel that its cost to social housing supply has been too great. The Welsh First Minister, Carwyn Jones, has described the condition of right to buy as like trying to fill the bath with the plug out. Whilst we are not proposing an end to the scheme, what is clear is that without these homes being replaced, right to buy will only add to the housing crisis. That is why one of the key asks of Central Government is the ability to retain 100% of right to buy receipts and to do so without restrictions placed on the percentage of developments the receipts can cover, or the ability to mix the receipts with other funding streams.

In Leeds as in every other city and town across the country we need a new approach to Council housing. We need to invest more in our current stock such as continuing the work we have done on improving insulation, but we are desperately

short of Council buildings and we need to build more Council houses. Thank you very much, my Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hamilton.

COUNCILLOR HAMILTON: Lord Mayor, I am really pleased to have the opportunity to talk about some of the proactive work that has been undertaken to get a better deal from Central Government for Leeds. Officers have been working with officials in the DCLG and have presented them with a series of housing asks for Leeds. I will go through these and set out why they are important.

The first is that the Government should allow the Council to borrow in line with the underlying strength of its Housing Revenue Account. This would help the Authority to build more new houses.

The second is that all right to buy receipts are retained by the Council that has generated them on the explicit condition that the money is used for new build replacement.

The Council has requested that the right to buy discount rules are changed to include costs, then the sale price cannot fall. As we believe that the current legislation act has a disincentive for councils to build new houses. We have also requested that the Council is given the ability to place a covenant on the properties sold through right to buy to ensure that they remain in owner occupation, which is essential in preventing right to buy houses being sold to private landlords.

The Council has also requested that Leeds is supported in developing a Leeds Graduate Ownership Model using our knowledge of local markets to extend home ownership to people on average or below average incomes. This model would see the Council charge rent which covered the cost of providing a new home but which allowed the tenants to acquire a discount which would be offset from the purchase price of their homes, all at no loss to the public purse.

The Council has also asked the Government to engage with the Local Authority on the determination of Housing Benefit levels, enabling the city to set allowances which are relevant to local markets and which takes into account the condition of properties.

The Council has also requested that the discounted maximum value of starter homes is linked closely to local affordability to enable the Starter Home Initiative. Even in low market areas of Leeds the income needed to afford an average price property is over £43,000, well above the average Leeds annual income. A 20% discount on properties valued at £250,000 is of no relevance to the people of Leeds. Instead, starter homes should be providing access to an unmet need which is why local flexibility here is so important.

The final ask is for starter homes to be regarded as part of the overall affordability housing provision that can be legitimately counted against local affordable needs requirements.

I think that these asks will be ones that everyone in the Chamber can get behind. Greater flexibility is needed from Central Government to allow Leeds to make the contribution in providing new homes that everyone knows are desperately needed. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Just before we go on, if I can just remind those who have reserved their right to speak, if they could actually let us know if they want to speak while Councillor Blackburn is making her speech, please. Councillor Ann Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. After the tragedy of the Grenfell Towers fire I was pleased to receive Councillor Coupar's email of 22nd June stating that none of the high rise blocks in Leeds have any aluminium composite material type of cladding systems that are similar to the system installed at Grenfell Towers. I was also pleased to note that the Council has made a proactive decision that we do some tests ourselves to seek the extra reassurance that all of the cladding systems on our high rise blocks provide the required levels of fire safety.

As to the right to buy scheme, this scheme has resulted in the Council losing some of its better properties over the years and has led to many of our families who need Council housing having to rent from private landlords. Therefore, I agree with the MBI amendment which calls for the repeal of the right to buy by legislation so that this Council can fulfil its commitment to provide the much-needed affordable and safe housing the people of Leeds need. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Alan Lamb.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, a number of the speakers have not made any reference at all to the first paragraph in this paper and I think it is important to reaffirm what we are saying, that this Council expresses its heartfelt sympathies for all those affected by the Grenfell Tower fire and believes every resident in Leeds has the right to live in safe and secure housing. Every one of us – every one of us – can support that, but the reason we have amended the paper as we have is that should have been the end of that motion. The debate should have been a separate debate about housing and it saddens me enormously that we are linking two separate things on the back of such a horrible tragedy that has affected our country.

The first thing – not the first thing, after the horror had subsided, after the shock, after just the horror that unfolded in front of all of us, the thing that struck me was how on earth could something like that happen in our country in this day and age. It should not be able to. If we were having a debate about that and having some discussions about what we could do about that and why did it happen, it is a real shame that what is a perfectly legitimate thing to talk about is tacked on to such an appalling tragedy and I am sorry that you have done that. It is not too late to change it and separate the two things out, I do not see why we can't have two votes on the two separate things but that is for others to decide.

Lord Mayor, in terms of the amendment, in terms of the issues around right to buy, I am proud of the fact that successive Conservative Governments and others have

given people the opportunity to own their own home that never would have had the opportunity to do so without the right to buy. I think there is a perfectly legitimate argument to talk about how you replace the houses that have been bought but I would hate to see people denied that opportunity in future.

Lord Mayor, I do not want to stray into the politics of this because it just does not seem appropriate when such an appalling tragedy has taken place and I think we should reflect solely and singly on how it has affected those people and their communities and I am really sorry that you decided to attach the rest of this paper, and I hope everyone will just take that in the spirit it is intended. Let us support the motion in the name of Councillor Anderson on its own, let's not link it to other things, bring this back next time and then let us have a debate about housing and how we move things forward. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Jonathan Bentley.

COUNCILLOR J BENTLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Our Group is in general support of this White Paper and we will vote for it if it becomes the substantive motion, but a quick word on the two amendments. The first one from Councillor Anderson. When I first saw it I did not quite understand what it was about, Councillor Lamb and Councillor Anderson explained it and I do understand what they are saying but perhaps not to the same depths and levels you talk about.

The way I saw it was this is a White Paper brought forward by the portfolio holder for housing and she was taking the opportunity of expressing condolences for a recent tragedy in the housing area and not trying to do any more than that. I am quite happy to support it on that basis.

What is interesting is when Councillor Anderson put forward his amendment and explained why he was doing it that way, he then went on to talk about the other issues and, to be quite honest, there was not a great deal of difference in the sort of things he was saying we ought to be doing than is in the White Paper. The same with Councillor Finnigan to some extent, and other people.

I think what that is showing is there is probably a fairly good cross-party approach to this that we could build on and I am sure all Members would be happy to subscribe to that and come up with something that we can go to Government on as a cross-party lobby and we would be very happy to do that. That is Councillor Anderson's amendment.

Councillor Finnigan's amendment, if I look at my Whip it says here, "Support the MBI amendment." Having heard what Councillor Finnigan just said about the Liberal Democrats, I think we might be changing that! (*laughter*) If you do not think we are relevant you do not need our vote!

With regard to the White Paper motion itself, the first part of it about the Grenfell Tower tragedy, we not only feel a great deal of sympathy and we take every opportunity to express that, but I think as Council Members we can identify with it because we have all got residents in Council houses, we can all empathise with the situation and worry ourselves about what we would do if it happened here.

I would also like briefly to thank everyone in Housing Leeds under the leadership of Neil Evans and Councillor Coupar not only for the very quick response in terms of checking and inspecting our high rise stock but also for the very effective and prompt communication and reassurance that was given to our tenants. Well done for that.

We are in a housing crisis and it will not be solved by the Conservative Government's obsession with house ownership. Council tenants being given a huge discount incentives to buy their houses and not only does the Council then lose a house, it does not get enough money back to replace it. We have heard from other Members, up to a third of the right to buy sales end up in the private rented sector with landlords then charging higher rents than the Council to the very people who need affordable Council houses and cannot get them because those houses have been sold, the rent often funded by Housing Benefit, so the taxpayer is paying twice for it.

When the Housing Revenue Account, the HRA, was reformed in 2012, Councils were given a lot more control over it. They could keep their rents, a proportion of the proceeds from the right to buy and invest in new housing and housing improvements but, of course, the Government cannot let Local Authorities take control, cannot help but to interfere and then, of course, we had the forced rent reduction. Again, something that the Government did simply to ease the burden on Housing Benefit and push that burden on to Local Authorities.

Enforced rent reductions take something like £2.6bn away from Housing Revenue across the country, enough to fund 18,000 new homes. I see I have run out of time, Lord Mayor, there is a lot more to be said – I think a lot of it has been said already - but we would certainly support this White Paper and hope to work cross-party to move things forward. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Now, all three of the seconders have indicated that they would actually like to speak, so if I could start by calling on Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Every Councillor in Kensington and Chelsea will now be bearing the responsibility one way or another for the terrible thing that happened on their watch. It just reminds me actually of the huge responsibilities that we all as Councillors carry. Potentially we never have to face up to something like they are having to face up to. I think it weighs heavily with me because Andrew and I are the only people who were Chairs of the Housing Committee in this city and that was a far more hands-on role than is played now, but I could never imagine a conversation with officers where I would say to them as seems to have happened in Kensington and Chelsea, "How are you going to cut the costs of doing works on the tower block?" and I cannot imagine an officer starting such a conversation either.

I just wonder how has a Council got to a point where those conversations take place? I am sure it will come out in time but I just give people that reassurance that that is not the way we operate in this city and I think the work certainly that has been

done in the past few weeks to reassure people has been absolutely the right thing to do.

What does appal me is the comments that were made by Sajid Javid and by Theresa May following on from this. It was Theresa May who said, “This is a failure of National Government and Local Government.” It was not a failure of Local Government – it was a failure of a Local Authority and Sajid Javid said this was a crisis of confidence in Local Government. No it was not, it was a crisis of confidence in Kensington and Chelsea. I felt it was appalling the way that as politicians they tried to push the blame on to a sector that was quite blameless in every respect.

The way that Theresa May then ordered a whole lot of fire safety checks that were not fire safety checks. They were not in any way related to previous checks that had been done. When every block was coming back, you would turn on the News and it would say “70 blocks have now been found to fail – 75 blocks”, it was utterly meaningless because it did not relate to any tests that had been done previously. What it suggested was that everybody had fiddled their way around the regulations and in some way not delivered safety to the residents. I just see that as a total smokescreen and utterly irresponsible for Government Ministers to do.

The truth will come out and I think the truth will be shocking probably for all Governments that have tolerated a lax regime in terms of building regs and the details of that I think are just – I do not look forward to hearing all that.

Let us look at the other thing that we raised, and I think it was to say look, here is a huge failure, how can we actually do the right thing by people? I simply say, building Council houses is not just good, it is actually a public investment. It is an investment in the future and it can actually pay you money if you do it properly. Why don't we do it?

Barry tells us Tories believe in Council housing. Why did you come up with the Pay to Stay rules then? Why did George Osborn cut rents, because all that did was actually undermine any building programme that Councils had.

Right to buy, you believe in right to buy. John Prescott did not do away with the right to buy, he was a lot cleverer than that. What he actually did was he reduced the discount, which was a far smarter way of doing things. It still meant people could buy their properties but it meant they did not get them at bargain basement prices which everybody else had to pay for.

You came up with the levy to finance housing association right to buy where Council tenants pay for housing association tenants to be able to buy property. If you can see the sense in it, I can't.

The last thing I want to say, David Cameron made it clear what he thought of Council tenants – all we were doing was building houses for Labour voters. Sadly not true but we should be building Council houses for voters of every hue. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Richard touched on a point I was going to make and he is right, he and I both were Chairs of the old Housing Committee in Leeds and what happened at Grenfell Towers ought to be the worst nightmare for any politician in any position of authority.

I do not, frankly, think – and Richard almost strayed there, just about avoided it – any politician wants to start throwing wild accusations around and using words like “murderer” because none of us know when we are going to wake up the following day and find there has been a tragedy about which we knew nothing. That is the way, using extreme language of that sort to drive people out of public life, because I no more think that if there is a tragedy in a housing estate in Leeds tomorrow that I should blame Councillor Blake than fly to the moon. I would want to get to the bottom of why it happened and it is quite right that we do, but to start bandying around superfluous very dangerous accusations helps nobody.

That is why I think this debate should have been completely separate and there should have been a tribute that we could all join in to the tragic circumstances at Grenfell Tower. I find it difficult to imagine – I do not want to imagine – what a death by fire or suffocation is like, but you can imagine it if you try. Horrific is the word that comes to mind.

I wonder, people have been watching this on webcam and if anybody waiting for a house has been listening to this debate they would struggle to find any concrete suggestion for how this Council proposes to use its capability to provide more houses. They would go away, I think, scratching their heads at all of us and wondering precisely if we had got the plot. Actually, I think in many ways we have but we should be having a debate where you do not just speak for four minutes (and the orange light will be coming on soon), where we actually can talk in depth about the issues and about the things at our disposal where we can actually make a difference in housing terms.

I am very proud of the fact that I started rebuilding Council houses. Actually, two previous Labour Leaders had not done it – I did and I am delighted that it has been continued by your administration, but Barry was right, we do think the borrowing cap should be lifted. Months ago I offered to Judith that we would join with you, I wrote independently, actually – I cannot say they agreed but I wrote because I think the borrowing cap should be lifted. We can put a very good case together for a unique way of building more houses for rent and for buy, affordable, that actually pays back the interest on the money we borrow and that is the case we should be making to the Government.

Equally, yes, I do agree we could keep all the receipts from the sale of Council houses and put it back into investment into more Council houses. We should look at better use of brown field land and there is a whole range of issues that we should be talking about sensibly in this Council Chamber about how we deliver affordable housing for people in this city, but we should not link it to a tragedy like this and we should not be using emotive language about a tragedy like the one we have witnessed, because who knows when it happens elsewhere. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

*(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Leadley.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, I am going to make a slight detour into that area of affordable housing which is secured by Section 106 Agreements entered into by planning applicants.

In March Executive Board agreed to accept commuted sums instead of requiring affordable dwellings to be provided on site on build to rent schemes, most of which would in practice be in the city centre in flat blocks of which 5% should be designated affordable.

A few such schemes did get through at Panel – perhaps some Members were over-anxious to be seen on messages. The March report has not been subject to public consultation or examination so it is not formal City Council planning policy and is not really binding on anyone. It is to be suspected that these cash contribution agreements may not be accepted at Panel in future. There is a clear alternative which has been adopted already by some operators in which the 5% affordable flats will be provided on site and managed by the overall site operator rather than being sold or subcontracted to a housing association. Having one site manager will be far more efficient, it will remove the scope for dispute between majority and minority managers of the same site and give one site manager direct control of all tenancies making it easier to deal with anyone in breach of their terms of tenancy.

Over the years there have been many ingenious excuses for not providing affordable housing on site. We must not provide any more. Some planning authorities including, I believe, Manchester and Sheffield do not require affordable housing at all in their city centres so there may be resentment at having to provide some in Leeds. Even so, I believe that we must insist on the 5% on site subject to an agreed system of management being efficient and workable. That is the way to develop mixed rather than segregated communities in Leeds city centre.

The thing that I noticed about the March report is that it was entitled “The development of mixed residential communities in Leeds city centre” which actually might have been written in 1984 as its title is the reverse of its content. Really it would segregate communities in Leeds city centre by making it easier for some developers to pay commuted sums of money instead of providing affordable housing on site. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Apologies to Councillor Walshaw and Councillor Golton, we have run out of time for speakers. Councillor Coupar, would you like to sum up, please.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Yes, thank you, Lord Mayor and thank you to all the speakers who have contributed this afternoon in this White Paper motion. It does seem to me, however, that you all seem to agree with the initial paragraph of the White Paper and then disagreed that we put anything after that in the Conservative speeches. However, you all went on to explain exactly what was in the second part of the White Paper about how it is what we need to as a Council, the ask to Government, and Councillor Carter exactly what your proposals were around the ask

to Government is exactly the lobby letter that has gone off to Government from us as an administration.

I really welcome Councillor Bentley's contribution, I have got to say, and I am more than willing to work cross-party with our ask to Government if other parties are interested in doing so.

However, I do have to point out that there has been some criticism with regard to playing politics. Sadly, I do think it is right to point out that the Government response to Grenfell has been wholly inadequate with residents still living in inappropriate temporary accommodation and still waiting for the answers they require, whilst the Kensington and Chelsea response has been extremely poor. I am proud that in Leeds we have moved quickly to provide information to tenants, we have listened to their concerns and officers and politicians of all parties have engaged with residents on a one-to-one basis. By contrast, the newly appointed Leader of Kensington and Chelsea Council has said that she has never even been inside a tower block. I find this completely staggering.

Councillor Anderson seemed to just rant on and on, as far as I was concerned, and did not really come up with any suggestions. He seemed to think that we did not have anything positive in our White Paper, but then Councillor Carter went on to say how much it was positive – that one I don't get.

We are proud of our record on housing in Leeds. The House of Commons Library analysis has shown that Labour Councils have built on average 2,577 new homes since 2010, whereas in Conservative led areas that figure is only 1,600. In Kensington and Chelsea however, where Grenfell Tower is located, the Council has built just ten new Council homes.

Nationally the role of Housing Minister seems to be somewhat of a poisoned chalice. We are now on the sixth since 2010. The previous Housing Minister, Gavin Barwell, was a published author. He wrote a book entitled, "How to win a marginal seat." He lost his Croydon Central seat with a 10% swing to Labour so now we have a new Housing Minister, Alok Sharma, and we wish him luck in his new endeavours. He was also Theresa May's infrastructure envoy to India and it is disappointing that with housing an issue of such national importance, the new Housing Minister is someone without a background in housing.

I would like to thank Councillor Finnigan and Councillor Leadley for their contributions and, as I have said in previous debates before, I do have some sympathy about the right to buy that you feel strongly about. However, with the current legislation we are asking that we keep 100% of the receipts so that we can re-provide one house that is sold for another one that we can provide to tenants. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Coupar. We are now going to call for the vote and we have been asked for a recorded vote.

*(A recorded vote was held on the amendment  
in the name of Councillor B Anderson)*

THE LORD MAYOR: We have now got 89 present, for 22, against 64, abstentions 3 so that is LOST.

We now move to the second amendment in the name of Councillor Finnigan. We have again been asked for a recorded vote.

*(A recorded vote was held on the amendment  
in the name of Councillor Finnigan)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Again we have got 89 present, for 14, abstentions 16 and against 69, so again that is LOST.

Which means we now move to the motion in the name of Councillor Coupar and if we can do that by a show of hands. *(A vote was taken)* That is actually CARRIED. Thank you.

#### ITEM 12 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – PUBLIC SECTOR PAY

THE LORD MAYOR: We move now to White Paper 3, the final White Paper, and if I can ask Councillor Lay, please, to speak.

COUNCILLOR LAY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I will try not to get so emotionally involved in this White Paper.

I am pleased to propose this White Paper on behalf of the Lib Dems and with the support of the Labour Party, I hope. I am really pleased that Councillor Charlwood has agreed to second the paper.

I bring this White Paper not for the benefit of Councillors or nurses, like me, or Councillor Caroline Gruen as former teachers, or even Councillor Ron Grahame's beloved fire-fighters. These groups are organised enough, represented enough and professional enough to make their own case, and they will through their unions and pay review bodies. It is not so that you can all tell me how wonderful and caring I am because I work in A&E, or how paramedics, police officers and fire-fighters going towards danger are heroic and courageous. All very romantic, kind and a little embarrassing, but it is what we are supposed to do, it is our job.

I can also regale Members with the impact of seven years and counting of zero or one per cent pay rises and how radiographers have seen a near 20% real terms cut in pay, or how one in four newly qualified teachers entering the profession between 2011 and 2015 left the profession last year, partly due to a 10% real terms cut in pay, or my nursing colleagues who have seen a reduction of £1 in every seven earned – but I am not going to.

Why am I here? I am here to seek Council approval to write to the Chancellor so that he can better understand this Government's policy on those public sector workers without strong public sympathy; the silent majority that make up the six

million public sector workers and who are struggling to make ends meet as low pay and inflation at 3% - thank you, Brexit – hits them.

These workers include the care workers managing on minimum wage; the buildings inspector not just struggling to keep up to date with his building checks but also his banking cheques; the dinner lady and the lollipop man doing their bit to help our young children get the education they need to take their place in an increasingly complex competitive and changing world. These are the examples of public sector workers I want you to remember. After years and years of stagnating wages, coupled to rising inflation, these public sector workers should not be forgotten.

Why does any of this matter? It is not just about low pay. It is about whether we need a public sector at all. Despite what some think we need a public sector and we need public sector workers who do the job for love, not money; for pride, not profit; to care about people, services, communities and not bonus payments. Low pay contributes to low morale which contributes to retention and recruitment problems just when we need dedicated committed staff to educate, look after and keep us all safe. Perhaps if the public sector changed their name to the DUP Mrs May could find the money from her own magic money tree but that is not going to happen, I suspect. After all, this is the Government and its MPs that laugh when an Opposition amendment to scrap the cap is defeated.

I, we, the public sector, will not forget Mrs May, Mr Hunt, Boris. More than ever we need all progressive liberal and right minded citizens to demand to scrap the cap. If you are young, old, poor or relatively rich you, your family, the people you care about rely on good, accessible public services and they can only be delivered with a large enough reasonably paid and motivated workforce and scrapping the cap will go some way to providing that. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Charlwood.

COUNCILLOR CHARLWOOD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. We are very pleased to be seconding this White Paper motion. Lord Mayor, the vote in Parliament in June on the Labour motion to reverse the one per cent public sector pay cap freeze gave the Government an opportunity to listen to the calls from nurses, doctors and teachers, as Councillor Lay has set out to put an end to the pressures they have faced for years and to finally give them the pay rise they deserve. Instead, we saw a Government response that represented more of the same, more of what we have been forced to become accustomed to where those in the public sector feel the full force of the Government's austerity agenda while the other priorities are pursued for what is claimed to be for the good of the economy.

The Government is clinging on to its austerity agenda in the face of all the evidence against it and it is the reason they use to justify the policy of public sector pay restraint, suggesting it has helped to put the UK's public finance back on track. How can that be the case when people are leaving the public sector and leaving people in hospitals to have less than perfect care and for rotas not to be staffed? That is going to cost us more in the end.

If the Conservatives were proud of their record since 2010, why was the issue of the economy and public finances completely absent from the last election campaign? Cameron and Osborn went on about it all the time; Theresa May did not touch on it at all. The answer is quite simple – because they know it has failed and yet they cannot do anything about it.

Since 2010 the Government has been warned of the impact such a policy would have on those who work in the public sector. Groups like the Royal College of Nursing have warned that pay has remained static for many nurses while rent, food and childcare costs have increased for everyone. This is simply unacceptable and the worst thing is that it is not something that the Government needed to do – this was a choice this was their direction, the way they wanted to mend the economy and it has not worked.

We should be ashamed that as one of the richest countries on earth that our hardworking nurses and others are forced to use food banks and the RCM highlights further that the average nurse is £3,000 worse off in real terms compared to 2010, meaning they can no longer afford to stay in the profession and go elsewhere to the detriment of all of us.

With the one per cent cap and scrapping nursing bursaries as we talked about earlier, this Government seems to be in the business of discouraging people to join the profession rather than introducing incentives which will fill the gap in nursing vacancies.

On the issue of low pay and the Council and others giving pay increases, we have actually given a 20% pay rise over the last two years to our most lowest paid, people on the minimum wage as we have introduced an £8.25 minimum rate of pay for Leeds, which is what a Labour Council can do even with a really difficult Conservative austerity agenda around us.

We only need to look at the recent figures released by the Nursing and Midwifery Council that shows an increase in the numbers of nurses and midwives leaving the Register. For the first time there are now more nurses and midwives leaving the Register than joining it. Between 2016 and 2017 45% more UK registrants left the Register than joined it for the first time so, as I said, this is looking really, really difficult for the industry, for all of us who rely on public services, for the people in our communities who rely on the public sector every day and the right thing to do now is to give our public sector workers the pay rise they deserve and this means ending austerity, ending the pay cap and, Lord Mayor, we support the White Paper. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lamb.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Thank you, Lord Mayor. When Councillor Lay started talking, for about the first half of his speech I agreed with everything that he said, actually, and then it suddenly dawned on me, he seemed to have forgotten that his party were in Government for five of the last seven years and a big part of what has happened.

There are two reasons that we chose to amend the White Paper and I am going to deal with them in reverse order. First of all, it is about reminding ourselves collectively – when you listen to Labour it is like history started in 2010 and nothing happened before that and all of the problems that we face began then. Councillor Lewis made a comment earlier when he spoke which I noted down and he said, “If only the Government had kept a balanced budget the country would not be in the mess it is in today.” That is what he said and I completely agree with him. If we had managed a balanced budget when the economy was growing from 2001 to 2010 we would not have had to put any of these measures in in the first place and that is what they forget. It is the Labour Party that got us into this mess and it is crucial, absolutely crucial that any Government maintains control of the public finances...

COUNCILLOR TRUSWELL: He still believes.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: ... and you cannot talk about public sector pay without considering the wider impact of the total state of the economy and the state of the public finances. It is irresponsible to do it.

Then when we come to the issues around public sector pay, I think there are far better ways to approach it. The current system is grossly unfair because when you talk, if you take a one per cent rise blanket across the piece, it means the top earners in the public sector will see their pay go up between £1,500 and £2,000 while the lowest earners will see their pay go up by £200. How is that fair? How is that fair?

This Government has done a great deal to actually improve the amount of money that all workers can keep by raising the tax thresholds and that is something the Liberal Democrats helped to do in Coalition. When Labour were in power the tax threshold was at £6,350; it is now at £11,500. People can keep more of their own money. You ignore all of that when you speak, Councillor Charlwood, you ignore all the good things that this Government has done, you ignore the fact that unemployment today is at the lowest level for 42 years in this country and this Government has managed, despite the mess that you left and Liam Byrne reminding us that there is no money left, has managed to keep the show on the road.

What we think should happen is we should reform public sector pay and review the whole thing. Just removing the cap, I do not think that is good enough because I do not think it introduces fairness to the system. I think there are all sorts of things that can be looked at, whether it is around increments, whether it is around sickness, whether it is around putting a blanket percentage across the whole public sector. The simple fact, what is in place at the minute and has been in place for many years is not working and does not introduce fairness into the system and the reason we have amended this – and I hope you can all support it – is for that reason. One, remember the public finances, we cannot expect the 35 million other taxpayers who have also struggled over the last decade and more to foot the bill for everybody else. I think there is a way within the funding envelope that exists within the public sector pay bill to actually make a much fairer settlement, given sizeable benefits to those at the bottom end of the scale and introduce fairness to public sector pay. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Stephenson.

COUNCILLOR STEPHENSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I second and reserve the right to speak.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wilford.

COUNCILLOR WILFORD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. How can it be right that we praise public sector workers when need be and since 2010 Government policy has seen a two year pay freeze followed by a one per cent cap on their financial earnings. I am talking about those working in the police force, the NHS, doctors and nurses, fire-fighters. Where would we be considering recent events in Manchester and London without these women, these men who put their lives at risk and on the line on a daily basis for each and every one of us? Is this how we reward those in the public sector for doing their jobs, for all the responsibility and weight on their shoulders and maintaining our health and wellbeing, our security and way of life?

It needs to be made clear that staff are demoralised, some leaving the public sector after seven years of pay freezes and pay caps. Where is the Prime Minister's pledge for a fairer economy in all of this? How can staff be maintained and recruited when the Treasury advises that the cap must be adhered to? Agency staff pick up the pieces and best pay so where is the logic in this? Where is the value and continuity for staff teams?

All this is vastly unfair given that MPs received a backdated 10% pay rise in 2015 and, lest we forget, a 1.3% pay rise last year. On the strength of this imbalance implore the Chancellor of the Exchequer to rescind the one per cent public pay cap. Enough is enough. The Green Group supports Councillor Lay's White Paper. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Robinson.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. A lot of sense spoken by Councillor Lamb there, which is unsurprising because he is right, this strange idea that history only started in 2010, that economics only started in 2010 is utterly baffling because I can remember going and campaigning in that General Election when Labour's economic credibility fell to pieces. I actually do not disagree with what some of the comments being made opposite were about putting the economy centre stage, because I think we should have put the economy centre stage, actually. Personally speaking I think we would have won the General Election hands down rather than won it by having to go into an election arrangement with the DUP because I think we would have had a very clear majority.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: You didn't win it, Matthew, you lost.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Who is the Prime Minister?

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: If you are talking about record unemployment, if you are talking about record growth, if you are talking about inflation that is under control all of a sudden that is a message that rings very true to very many people out there, unlike the argument that has been put forward by the Party opposite.

I keep hearing this DUP thing that keeps coming back at us.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: £1.5bn.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: Perhaps maybe you would like to explain how you are going to find £100bn to cancel tuition fees. Perhaps we would like to discuss that and what that bribe was there that was put out towards young people across the country.

COUNCILLOR: We will do when we get into power.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: You are talking about the lowest paid, the lowest paid being the ones that you care about the most. Actually, you will find that if you cancel tuition fees, if you write off tuition fees for people like me, actually middle class children will do very, very well but the lowest earners out there will not do very, very well. They are the ones that will be hit hardest and they are the ones that will be hit the first.

Why is it fair that somebody who chooses at 16 to go and find a job and perhaps get a technical education and become a plumber has to go and foot the bill for somebody that wants to do a sociology degree? I am sorry, I cannot get on board with that. If somebody wants to go and do a degree that is fair enough, but you talk about things like the economy is some abstract principle that you do not quite understand that it is out there. It is absolutely barmy. Do you go into shops and go buy things? Do you go up and speak to people in small businesses? I cannot imagine that you do. You must just drink the Corbyn Kool-Aid and that is all that happens. It is absolutely madness. You turn round and I would like to see a show of hands that were Blairites as well at one stage. I know a lot of you are.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: They would not dare.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: We are all Corbynistas now, all of us.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: For now, while Momentum is there.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: They are Corbynistas to the core, the people that turn round and want to espouse socialism, sing The Red Flag. You forget that Tony Blair won you general elections.

Councillor Dawson, if Tony Blair had been Leader of the Labour Party I might have been more worried in Morley and Outwood but I am afraid he was not...

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Wait until an autumn election, Matthew, wait for it.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: ...because you turn round and reject somebody that knew how to win over votes. Instead you have gone and adopted this strange

Marxist agenda that I cannot understand and I actually know that many of you do not agree with either.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Even poor old Shelbrooke is going to have a rough time.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: They will have a garden tax on their vast properties.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: Councillor Truswell, you were there in Parliament when this Blairite agenda was there so what I am going to turn round and say is, sound economics is what needs to be at the core of our principles, sound economics is what needs to be at the core of our economy. I would say to Councillor Lay, if you think... (*interruption*) ...they refuse to listen to the truth.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we just quieten down a little bit.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: A refusal to listen to the truth. A refusal to listen to economic fact. Councillor Lay, if you think that I take any great pleasure in a one per cent pay cap you are wrong. I do not think anybody does but the public pay bodies are the ones in March 2017, public pay bodies in the NHS, the armed forces, doctors, dentists were turning round and saying they agreed with the one per cent. That was their recommendation. That was what was being said in March 2017.

What I turn round to this Chamber and say is, economic credibility must be at our core, not just for this Council but the decisions we take across the board and how we fund our public services. If the party in administration try and remember that they might win some more votes at the next General Election. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Heselwood.

COUNCILLOR HESELWOOD: Are we still talking on the same White Paper? As long as I know!

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Here we go!

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: This will be good!

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: The circus has arrived.

COUNCILLOR HESELWOOD: Lord Mayor, comrades – because I am a left winger and a socialist to my comrades, all right?

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Comrades – what a laugh.

COUNCILLOR HESELWOOD: Speaking in favour of the White Paper which I think we are still speaking on and I would like to invite Councillor Robinson there to attend one of my politics classes and I can explain the different types of politics to you because I think you are getting a little bit mixed up here.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: I have got a politics degree and I paid for it as well! *(laughter and applause)*

COUNCILLOR HESELWOOD: The invitation is there when you want to attend, don't worry about that.

Let us start by calling this what it really is. You can come for free, it's fine. Let us start by recognising what it really is. It is not a public sector pay cap, it is a public sector pay cut. Let's call it what it really is, OK? Public sector workers have had their pay cut year on year for the past seven years under this Tory Government. Let us have a look at a couple of them.

Teachers cut from £25 an hour in 2005 to £22 an hour in 2015. Police Officers drop from £20 in 2005 down to £18 in 2015. Doctors, who apparently agree with you, they have had their pay cut from £38 an hour to £30 an hour in 2015, so I do not think they do agree with you. In Further Education staff have suffered real terms pay cuts totally 18.3% so for an experienced lecturer that equates to a loss of over £6,400 a year.

How long can our public sector workers maintain this cut? I always thought, being a trade union negotiator, that pay was supposed to go up over ten years, not decrease as has been happening in these stats.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Where is the money coming from?

COUNCILLOR HESELWOOD: A recent survey of UNISON Members revealed that nearly 80% of respondents reported their income had either remained the same or declined while 77% of respondents saw their household expenditure increase. Members reported various strategies to cope including reduced spending, increased debt, second jobs and members using food banks, which is a disgrace in this day and age that working people have got to use food banks.

Despite the vast majority of staff not receiving a pay rise workloads continued to climb with nearly two-thirds of respondents reporting taking on extra duties due to redundancies because of the cuts.

Let us have a look at the recent fire fighters' pay offer, shall we? It is the first pay offer to breach the one per cent pay cap. However, it comes at a huge cost. It fails to take into account the extra work fire-fighters have had to take on including responding to terror attacks, flood rescue and emergency medical response.

COUNCILLOR: Grenfell.

COUNCILLOR HESELWOOD: Yes, I am coming on to that. These additional duties have never been recognised during the last seven years of austerity so this Tory Government think its fine for fire-fighters to run into burning buildings like Grenfell Tower and I have spoken to those fire-fighters, they thought that building – do not smile at me and laugh – they thought that building was coming down on top of them when they ran in that building.

COUNCILLOR: And they still did it.

COUNCILLOR HESELWOOD: And they still did it, you are right. It is acceptable to respond to the recent terror attacks and we need to say thank you to those fire-fighters that came and helped out and rescued our Leeds citizens in the floods that we had in Leeds 18 months ago because they received no extra pay for doing any of those duties. *(Applause)*

It is fine for them to do that but it is not acceptable to give them a pay rise or recognise any of those additional tasks they have got to do. Never trust a Tory, come on, let's be fair about this.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Never, never.

COUNCILLOR HESELWOOD: Comrades, we need to remove this one per cent pay cap, cut, whatever it is called because it is affecting all our public sector workers, and pay our public sector workers what they deserve. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Iqbal.

COUNCILLOR IQBAL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. A difficult act to follow! I think Jules should have been after me, but anyway.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we start again, nobody can hear Councillor Iqbal. I very much enjoy the banter but I would like to hear what he is saying.

COUNCILLOR IQBAL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, I too am pleased to speak in support of this White Paper motion. We have already heard a number of strong arguments why the one per cent public sector pay limit should be rescinded and I would strongly urge the Chancellor to consider our position in great detail and put an end to what is quite simply an injustice.

On 28<sup>th</sup> June the Conservative Party voted down Labour's amendment to end the public sector pay cap – or pay cut like Jules says. Lord Mayor, it was on this day that we saw this country's Cabinet down tools and abandon their collective responsibility to public sector workers who quite frankly continued to be stonewalled.

Indeed, Lord Mayor, the harsh reality is that public sector workers are not merely losing out on pay rises, they are in fact facing a reduced income overall. It was only last week that the Government's very own Office of Manpower Economics quietly published a damning report illustrating how the average hourly public sector wages fell in real terms by 6% in the last decade. Lord Mayor, this is ludicrous.

Our teachers have seen the average pay for the profession fall by £3 an hour in real terms and our police officer have seen a £2 per hour decrease. I fail to understand how this Government, which claims to support the just-about-managing, is truly dedicated to empowering all this country rather than the privileged few.

In her first statement as Prime Minister Theresa May acknowledged the average gap in earnings between women and men with our female workers coming

out worse off. The pay gap between men and women remains around £100 per week yet, Lord Mayor, this side of the Chamber is still to see what work is being done to address the burning injustices the Prime Minister outlined.

COUNCILLOR: Inequality.

COUNCILLOR IQBAL: What we can see, however, is a Government that is not only incapable of tackling in-work poverty but one that actually contributes to it. The voting down of Labour's amendment in Parliament was amongst the clearest evidence yet that this Government is not capable of working for the benefit of those facing disadvantages in our country.

Furthermore, this Government is showing a failure to work for already marginalised groups in our communities – black African women in this country face a pay gap of 19.6% in today's workplace economy and the reality is even bleaker for Pakistani and Bangladeshi women who experience a gender pay gap of 26.2%.

Not only does the Government fail to recognise the importance of these employees who hold our public sector together, they are also failing to address the systematic disadvantages ethnic minority workers face today in the UK.

Lord Mayor, I want to end by thanking all those who work in the public sector who really do make up the fabric of our society. They continue to find innovative ways to improve our services for the benefit of some of the most disadvantaged communities in the country and it is only right that the Chancellor, who is seemingly not afraid of a U-turn, takes action now. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton .

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Austerity did start seven years ago and it started in the Coalition Government. I will remind people why that Coalition Government was formed. The economy needed strong leadership.

COUNCILLOR: Strong and stable.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Why were the Liberal Democrats there then?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Let us just say I think you will have experienced more stability with the Lib Dems than you are going to get with the DUP, I can assure you. It was there for the national interest but there was also a consensus amongst all parties that actually the economy needed to take a gear change and we did not find in the Labour Party manifestos that were under Ed Miliband any difference in terms of overall public spending. They were all roughly around the same and that included Local Government, much to our chagrin.

The point is about making interventions in a time of crisis, that you review their success because you intend to get the positive consequences out of them but if you do not get those positive consequences, then you try something else and I think the problem with austerity is that this intervention has not delivered the outcomes that

were expected at the start of the Coalition Government. We have not got those balanced budgets by 2015, have we? We have not actually got the balanced economy that we hoped to have had by then. We have not had that balanced investment between the regions so that it is not just an overheated London economy which is generating tax revenue but also the rest of the country as well. These are all missed opportunities and then, of course, we have the great self harm of Brexit which will also affect our economic growth.

The point is, everybody who is a public sector worker is also an economic unit and if we are not allowing those economic units to participate as effectively as possible in the wider national economy, it has an effect. When you have communities like ours which have a higher level of public sector employees as part of their population, it actually holds back that local economy within which they live and what they are not doing when year after year after year their family income reduces, is that they are not buying the services of those SMEs, of these new start up companies that are hoping to grow.

This is where the intervention of public sector pay restraint, as part of public sector reductions in terms of costs, actually stops being intervention and starts becoming an ideology and I really do think you need to think about that. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Stephenson.

COUNCILLOR STEPHENSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Councillor Robinson I commend you for your speech and hand the mantle over as Labour poker to you there.

I have to say, Lord Mayor, for one reason or another I had to read a few manifestos in the recent General Election and in the Liberal Democrat manifesto...

COUNCILLOR LYONS: You should have read it before.

COUNCILLOR STEPHENSON: ...they called for the legalisation of cannabis and you have got to wonder, you have to wonder whether Councillor Lay was around the fumes of the wacky baccy when you wrote this White Paper because, of course, cannabis leads to memory loss and, as Councillor Lamb has rightly pointed out, you were our Coalition partners. Furthermore, the Chief Secretary to the Treasury who came up with the idea of the public sector pay freeze – and remember for the first two year it was not a rise at all – was no-one other than Danny Alexander, one of your MPs. Let us get some perspective on the matter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Don't remember him.

COUNCILLOR STEPHENSON: I am afraid, administration, you do not get away lightly either because, as has been pointed out by Councillor Lamb, your motion in the House of Commons last week would have delivered a one per cent pay rise to the highest paid public sector workers in society and, as my late grandfather always used to moan to me about percentages when I was quoting them to him, when he was a factory worker here in Leeds at Dawsons, when he got a pay rise it was the same

percentage as the guys in the offices upstairs but he was much worse off at the end of it than they were.

I just cannot understand for the life of me why the Labour Party of today, and I know they are full of the elites of Islington and the like but I cannot understand why you want to give a pay rise to the rich. Why do you want to give a pay rise to the rich when the poorest in society could do with that money instead?

The fact is under the Conservative Government the rich are paying more than they have ever paid before. The top one per cent of earners pay 27% of income tax; the bottom ten per cent of earners pay just one per cent of income tax. The bottom 25% pay 28% and the top 50% pay 91%.

The fact is the rich are being taxed more than ever before, they are paying more than ever before and that is helping to balance the books so eventually we can give pay rises to everybody – public and private because let us not forget the private sector have not had pay rises either.

At no point in this debate have I heard the word “increments”. We have to remember it is not just as simple as a pay rise or not. Teachers on average have had a 3.3% rise due to increments; nurses 3%; and the armed forces 2.8%. That is why I support and I seconded Councillor Lamb’s amendment because it calls for an overall review so we can actually look at the real pay situation today.

Like, for example, you were quoting figures about nurses. I think we need to be more honest with the public and understand, for example, the average nurse’s pay is £30,000 and what that would mean moving forward. Ultimately there is a cost to lifting the one per cent.

I do ask the Members opposite where are you getting that money from? Are you going to up taxes, which hits the poorest the hardest? Are you going to put fuel duty up, which hits the poorest the hardest? Where are you going to get the money from, or are you going to borrow it again?

COUNCILLOR: We have got the money tree.

COUNCILLOR STEPHENSON: Are you going to borrow it again because unlike investment that is a one-off investment to other parts of the United Kingdom that well deserve that money, it is a one-off payment, a pay rise is year on year so are you going to borrow more money?

Your manifesto had a black hole of £50bn. This country still borrows £50bn. That is why we are making the adjustments we are. Thank you, Lord Mayor.  
*(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I would now like to invite Councillor Lay to sum up, please.

COUNCILLOR LAY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Well, where to start. Alan, your argument was full of holes. It was full of holes. You talk about controlling

public finances yet we know the debt has gone up and you are spending £80bn more than when they were in because you were saying that earlier. Fairness is decided by review bodies, not by politicians. Fairness is, to steal someone else's slogan, for the many, not the few! *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR TRUSWELL: Get yourself over here, Sandy!

COUNCILLOR LAY: The Tory amendment talks about removing the blanket ban but the flip side of that is you introduced the blanket ban based on no other evidence than ideology and an attempt to attack public servants and to drive public servants down. If you were interested, if your party was interested in doing the best for public servants you could have, of course you could do away with the cap, yes, but you could then look at those sectors that are short on retention and recruitment but you do not take any interest in that because this is an ideological point that the Tories want.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: That is the point, reform public sector pay.

COUNCILLOR LAY: Rebecca, I agree with everything you said. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: What about Julie?

COUNCILLOR LAY: I have colleagues and indeed myself who have to take a second job. My second job is here! Nurses are leaving – I don't get a bonus here, no. Nurses are leaving in droves. Terry, thank you and thank you to the Greens. You made a good point about the Treasury resisting this but the Tories are on the wrong side of the track on this. You will come round to abandoning the pay cap. Mrs May knows it, Jeremy Hunt knows it, Chris Grayling knows it, Boris Johnson knows it.

Matt, you just like to wind that lot up, don't you!

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: It's not hard!

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Certain key words you have to use.

COUNCILLOR LAY: You just like to wind them up. You never mentioned the pay cap until the end and then you said my bosses agreed and the bosses of all these sectors. I will tell you what, I am not aware of that. My union – sorry, my trade body, RCN is not a union, it is a member of the Trade Unions Congress – we are for the first time considering industrial action. You have got to go some way to – I was going to swear – to irritate nurses that they want to go on industrial action.

Julie, thank you for a very passionate response. It clearly means something to you. Lots of facts in there, so thank you very much.

Councillor Iqbal, thank you, you make a valid point about Mrs May saying one thing on the steps of Downing Street and then doing something completely different. We will at some point, this lady is for turning, you know.

Stewart, what can I say? In times of crisis you come to the front and in times of crisis in the public sector (*interruption*) - I have been floating your boat all day so give me a little bit with my own lot, you know! I think I am on the Back Benches again! As you say, they do not balance the budget, they do not balance the nation, all they really do is divide and rule. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, before we actually move to the vote I would just like to say, because I know you will all be rushing off after the vote, how pleasurable it has been to actually be here for the last six-and-a-half hours despite the uncomfortable nature of the seats and how the last six-and-a-half hours have actually flown by. Next time we have schools in I will be able to tell them, with notable exceptions, how well you have actually all behaved today.

We have had a call for a recorded vote.

*(A recorded vote was held on the amendment  
in the name of Councillor Lamb)*

THE LORD MAYOR: The amendment in the name of Councillor Lamb. Present 90, “Yes” 16, abstentions 3, “No” 71 so that is LOST which moves us to the motion in the name of Councillor Lay. We are asking for a recorded vote on that – seconded.

*(A recorded vote was held on the motion  
in the name of Councillor Lay)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Present 90, “Yes” 71, abstentions 3, “No”, 16, so that is CARRIED. (*Applause*)

It just falls on me to wish you a safe journey home. Thank you.

*(The meeting closed at 7.33pm)*

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