

**COUNCIL VERBATIM
8TH NOVEMBER 2017**

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LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

**EXTRAORDINARY
MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

Held on
Wednesday, 8th November 2017

At
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
CIVIC HALL,
LEEDS

In the Chair:
THE LORD MAYOR
(Councillor J Dowson)

VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

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VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL
EXTRAORDINARY MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 8th NOVEMBER 2017

THE LORD MAYOR: Good morning, everyone. Half-past ten, hope you are all nice and awake for what is going to be a long and very exciting day, no doubt. Firstly, the time-honoured reminder to you all to turn off your mobile phones, or to at least turn them to silent, which would be quite good, and a reminder that we are actually webcast as well.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE LORD MAYOR: Once you have all done that we can move to any announcements. I do not think we have got any announcements at this point.

PROCEDURAL MOTION

THE LORD MAYOR: I would like to call on Councillor Ogilvie.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blackburn?

COUNCILLOR HARLAND: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I would like to call for the vote, please, to suspend Council Procedure Rule 3.4. (*A vote was taken*) That is CARRIED.

Councillor Ogilvie.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Could I move under the provisions of Council Procedure Rule (CPR) 22.1 (Suspension of CPRs) that CPR 3.4 (Time Limits for Business) be suspended to allow all those names as speakers on the Order Paper in relation to the White Paper Motion in the name of Councillor Carter to speak.

THE LORD MAYOR: I am not sure if you all heard that.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Or understood it, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR COULSON: I had extreme difficulty hearing that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Campbell, we always have this difficulty, I am not sure quite, with your microphone. If you could actually just repeat that, please. Quiet, please, come on, let's crack on.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: My pleasure, Lord Mayor. Could I move under the provisions of Council Procedure Motion (CPR) 22.1 (Suspension of CPRs), that CPR 3.4 (Time Limits for Business) be suspended to allow all those named as

speakers on the Order Paper in relation to the White Paper Motion in the name of Councillor Andrew Carter to speak if they so wish, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, we need to call for a vote on that, please, after it is seconded.

COUNCILLOR BUCKLEY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I thought you might!

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Recorded vote, please.

(A recorded vote was held on the Procedural Motion)

THE LORD MAYOR: We have 88 Councillors present, “Yes” is 34, “No” is 54 and there are no abstentions, so that is LOST.

I need to call for Councillor Ogilvie, please.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Unless there are any changes Councillor Latty.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I need to call for the vote to suspend Council Procedure Rule 10.1. *(A vote was taken)* That is CARRIED.

DEPUTATION

THE LORD MAYOR: Chief Executive.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: To report that there is one Deputation representing the people of Wordsworth Drive and Sugar Hill Close in Oulton, Leeds 26.

DEPUTATION – RESIDENTS OF OULTON

THE LORD MAYOR: Good morning. If you would please now make your speech to Council, which should be no longer than five minutes, and if you would like to begin by just introducing us to the people in your Deputation.

MS C READMAN: Lord Mayor and Members of the Council, my name is Cindy Readman, this is Sage Summers, Susan Gold, Mavis Abbey and Mark Field. We are here today representing the people of Wordsworth Drive and Sugar Hill Close in Oulton, Leeds 26, to ask the Council for help in our fight to save our homes.

We rent our homes from Pemberstone, a private investment company, on a small estate in Oulton – Wordsworth Drive and Sugar Hill Close. The houses were built in the 1960s as homes for mineworkers from the local area. Some homes are still occupied by ex-mineworkers or their families. There is a mix of two and three

bedroom houses of a concrete construction, common at the time. The 70 semi-detached houses all appear to be structurally sound, we do not have cracks in walls or leaks etc. However, they are in varying states of repair, dependent on what work has been undertaken over the last few years, such as replacing windows with double glazing. Improvement work has been undertaken both by the landlord and by the residents.

Towards the end of September we all received a small leaflet through our doors, amongst other junk mail. This was from a development company acting as an agent for our landlord, informing us that the landlord was considering demolishing our homes and requesting planning permission to develop 72 new build private houses of varying sizes and styles, and inviting us to a consultation evening the following week. Many residents discarded this leaflet along with the other junk mail, without realising its importance.

However we were able to alert people and many residents did attend the consultation, where little further information was available. Our many concerns, questions and the points we raised were left unanswered and this remains the case today. The landlord has not confirmed any details of their proposal, including whether these houses will be built for private sale or rental. In fact, the landlord has not engaged directly with us at all.

Many families on the estate have lived here for a long time, some since they were built or, in some cases, born. The houses are our homes, many families have spent their money on improving their homes, including installing new kitchens, carpets, fires etc. We have built a safe, secure and close community and love living here. Many families have relatives close by, children in local schools, work in the local area and are very involved in local sports clubs.

The landlord has stated that the homes are not fit to live in. However, they are continuing to let them and carry out major repairs. For instance, I have recently had new double glazed windows installed in some rooms. We as tenants believe that, with little renovation across the site, these houses can continue to provide us with a safe and secure family home for many years to come so that we can stay in our community alongside our neighbours, who we consider friends.

There is a lack of affordable secure social and rented housing in the area. Lots of new houses have been built in Leeds 26 recently. However, these new builds are way out of reach for us.

We feel the landlord is treating us with disdain, not listening or considering our point of view, our wellbeing or the enormous impact displacing us from our affordable homes will have, all in the name of profit. This threat of losing our homes and uncertainty about what the future will bring has created a great deal of anxiety and stress for the families on the estate.

We are asking the Council to do everything it can to support us in our fight. We do not want to be uprooted, we want to stay in this area, it's where we live, these are our homes and we want to save them. (*Standing ovation*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you very much for that. Councillor Ogilvie.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: I move that the matter be referred to the Director of City Development for consideration, along with the relevant Executive Member.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Latty.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. I would like to call for the vote. (*A vote was taken*) That is CARRIED.

Thank you for coming to today's Council meeting. Officers from the relevant department will contact you in due course. Thank you. (*Applause*)

WHITE PAPER MOTION

THE LORD MAYOR: We move to the White Paper on the Site Allocations Plan. Councillor Carter.

WHITE PAPER MOTION – SITE ALLOCATIONS PLAN

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. This argument is becoming more and more like a whodunnit every week that passes. Just to start with a very simple fact – the administration went to a public planning inquiry with a proposal for 70,000 new houses in Leeds in the plan period. The administration did that – it is beyond refuting. The Independents did not do that; the Greens did not do that; the Conservatives did not do that; the Liberal Democrats did not do that. We all went to the inquiry saying the figure was far too high and we supported and were supported by a range of community groups from across the city - all over the city, in point of fact. That argument started not in November of 2014, which I will come back to in a moment, but it started during that inquiry which went on for weeks and weeks and weeks and at which many of us spent hour after hour arguing with speculative property developers who could see an opportunity in the Council's numbers because they, I guessed and have been proved right, that that figure was too high, the Council would not be able to deliver it, would fall behind and therefore they would be able to win appeals against this Council on sites that I hope none of us wanted to see developed.

When the Planning Inspector agreed with the Council that the figure should be 70,000, that Core Strategy was agreed. There was a difference of view at that time because it had been made plain to most of us who were prepared to listen that without a Core Strategy at whatever number we were going to be more vulnerable than ever because we would not even have the first building blocks in place.

We tabled amendments back in November 2014 asking for a review of the housing numbers to commence immediately. The then Exec Board Member responsible, Councillor Peter Gruen – who I notice today has been given a bit part further down the Order Paper whilst the acceptable face of Gruenism seconds

Labour's amendment (*laughter*). In November 2014 Councillor Gruen gave an undertaking. He said, "I have given you an undertaking we will have an early review."

As the statistics stacked up, which I know they may want to dispute that they were wrong all along, the employment figures projected were too high, that the immigration figures were too high, there is report after report underlining that, they stuck to the 70,000 and did not start the review.

That early review, well, you can take your pick on a number of dates when it may or may not have started. The administration are now saying it actually started October/November 2016. What that really shows is that it was not an early review because you had already moved on heading towards two years. Councillor Lewis actually confirmed that, not in so many words but virtually, at the first part of what can jokingly be referred to, I suppose, as the beginning of the Site Allocations Inquiry. I will come back to that in a moment. In point of fact it was not until February of this year that this Council, through the Exec Board, confirmed that that review had started. It certainly did not start early, it started when it started and now we are facing three figures – a figure they float about of 50-odd thousand which may or may not be the case but they are sticking to the 70 in the inquiry, 42,600, the Government's starting figure for negotiation (very helpful, pity it did not come twelve months earlier) but the bottom line is this, the responsibility for where we are now rests wholly with the administration.

It is not acceptable for Exec Board Members to try and continue to deflect attention, blame and responsibility to anybody but themselves. If Leeds citizens are owed one thing it is that this administration holds its hand up now today and says "The 70,000 figure was our figure, we are sorry, it was too high, we should have listened and now we are going to get on and we are going to get that figure negotiated down to a level that all of us can agree is required in this city."

I move the resolution, my Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: I second, Lord Mayor, and reserve the right to speak and I would like to exercise that right to speak as well.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Campbell.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think there is no doubt that housing policy in this country is in a bit of a mess, and I am not blaming particularly this Government or the previous one or the one before that, or the one before that, or the one before that. I think, quite frankly, since the late 1950s no Government has had a complete grip on housing policy in this country.

I think there have been some positive steps quite recently with the DCLG's comments, because it would appear to me anyway that the Government is now beginning to move away from the mantra which is basically if we build lots of houses then the price will go down and pass that over to the house builders who have a vested

interest in making sure we do not build lots of houses and the price goes down. I think they have accepted that actually, I think there is a slow movement away from this principle that the house builders will solve the problem.

I have to say to you, and I will not repeat Andrew's history lesson, the situation in Leeds has been compounded by a stubborn resistance by the Labour Group to accept, one, the original figure was wrong and not just slightly wrong but quite dramatically wrong, and had we waited, as Tom had asked, for a month it would have been obvious by looking at the census figures that the numbers were wrong, and yet we kept on. We pursued this, we continue to pursue it, we have gone through the Core Strategy, we have gone through the Site Allocation Process, we have gone to the public inquiry.

The public inquiry in relation to sites has I will not say stalled, it has been delayed slightly so that the Council can come up with a fudge. That is really what it is about. I have to say to you, we sat in a Development Plans Panel last week when the fudge was explained to us, and the fudge is around green belt, quite frankly, and I have to say to you, none of us who sat in that meeting believed for one minute that the fudge would work because we could not find anywhere else that appeared to have done this. Nowhere else has done what we are proposing to do. Lots of other places have set aside areas for potential search but they have set aside areas. What we are proposing to do is in effect carry on with the Site Allocation Process, allocate all the sites but simply one or two of them will have a little dot next to them which says, "This is still green belt but it will be a housing site some time in the future."

That is just not the way we should be doing this. We do not need to develop these green belt sites. It is time to hold your hands up and say, as Andrew said, currently it seems very popular, particularly with Westminster politicians to put their hands up and say sorry, and rightly so in many cases, but it is your turn now. You really need to start saying "Sorry, we got this wrong." You really need to start on a process which provides houses for the people of Leeds in the places they need them and in the form they want. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Jonathan Bentley.

COUNCILLOR J BENTLEY: Second, Lord Mayor, and reserve the right to speak.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Leadley.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, it took about 15 years to get rid of Supertram and another ten to repel the NGT trolleybus. It has taken ten years to begin to drive down Leeds' inflated housing targets and it may take a little while longer to fix those numbers at levels which reflect the needs of our citizens, not the hollow ambitions of a few.

As has been said before, reckoning up the number of new dwellings needed in Leeds over any period of years is quite simple. Anyone with a pocket calculator and an afternoon to spare could come up with a workable schedule. None of the background information is new. The 2011 census returns, mostly published in the

Spring of 2013, held no surprises and showed no sharp change in Leeds' population. Nothing published since then has shown much difference. There is no doubt that the best chance of setting a sensible target of 40-odd thousand new dwellings for the 16 years of the LDF was presented by those census returns. The Core Strategy could have been adjusted accordingly before being sent for examination. Unfortunately Councillor Andrew Carter failed to support that strategy – probably because we thought of it first, though later he came round to our way of thinking, the Tories copied us at the Core Strategy Inquiry.

Those who favoured the higher targets hoped that something would turn up to justify them. It has not, so at or beyond the eleventh hour the 70,000-ers threw in the towel after being asked some awkward questions by the Site Allocations Plan Inspectors.

Planning the right houses in the right places may have been the straw which broke the camel's back but it cannot have been the main factor. As yet it is only a DCLG consultation published the day after the September Council meeting at which I had yet another go at the bloated targets.

On the last Friday in September the Chief Planning Officer rang round to say that the City Council had abandoned the 70,000 and asked the Site Allocations Plan Inspectors to defer the housing part of their inquiry. When he called me it was to deliver a Monty Python sketch in which the story line was that my target of 40-odd thousand had nothing in common with the DCLG 40-odd thousand, they were completely different and any similarity was a pure fluke. (*laughter*)

It will not now be easy to reduce Leeds' housing targets in an orderly way. Having SAP Inspectors who listen is a vital advantage but there will be much squawking from landowners and developers and quite likely a rearguard action from some Councillors and bureaucrats who will try to save face by edging the targets back up again.

There is no doubt that the NGT trolleybus was an attempt to save face by those who supported Supertram; it had no public transport purpose. We will give our full support to the administration if it will make a fresh start based on sensible targets. A great deal of site-by-site background knowledge has been gathered over the years by officers so starting from scratch will not be needed. It will be a matter of rearranging the existing knowledge to match new targets.

The second half of the SAP hearing will soon be upon us so there will be no time for false starts or detours to try and save face by saving old targets. Bloated targets do not bring more houses. They may reduce output by encouraging land banking by the big players and Arthur Daly buying and selling of smaller bits of land which are never developed. It is a nice little earner with a lot less risk and effort than actually building something.

Unnecessary loss of green belt seems to have been the factor that swayed the SAP Inspectors. The current targets would need more than 12,000 houses to be built on green belt. Reducing the net target to the mid or upper forties would not require green belt and would be more than enough to meet the needs of our citizens. It would

leave headroom and leeway and both the minimalist 42,384 suggested in the DCLG consultation.

Once again, let me say that we will give our full support to the administration if it will cut the housing targets down to reasonable levels but we are not fully confident that it will do so. Lord Mayor, I move my amendment. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Formally second this spot on amendment and reserve the right to speak, which I will be exercising.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am glad that Andrew did not use the intemperate language that he used in his press release on this meeting today. There has been a lot of re-writing of history and I have found it fascinating how everybody reads things in a different way. There are certain facts that just seem to be missed out and the basic one is that we took our figure at the time – and I say at the time, just to remind people, it was a product of the time – through an inquiry with a Government Inspector, and the Government Inspector agreed that figure. People can re-write history and think that that figure should have been something else but there was no way that that figure would have been re-written at that time and if people want to have that kind of fantasy, you want to go away and read SS-GB and think that you can have a counterfactual world, that is fine for you, but we are in the real world and we have to deal with the real situation that we are in, and the real situation that we are in is that that figure was agreed by a Government Inspector – a Government Inspector.

I will just do a little bit of history because Andrew was going on about the past. I will just mention something that happened fairly recently and that was when we had the problem in Outer North East over Headley Hall. What happened over Headley Hall, we had six Councillors from that Group all signed a piece of paper saying that they wanted Parlington as their preference to development in all the smaller communities out there – six of them.

I, for the administration, listened to you and what did we do? We agreed with that, not because we had any kind of axe to grind but because you as Ward Members wanted it. What happened? About three months later who is campaigning on the streets against the Labour administration over Parlington but half of that Group that came and signed the letter saying that they wanted Parlington. Now how can we trust you? How can any of our colleagues trust you when you come to them with proposals for anything and how can the people out there believe you because what if you had been in administration and you had suddenly changed your mind? That is your problem, that you do change your mind. Andrew has changed his mind over whether we should have a figure at all. He said in the past “Well, it is better to have a sound plan than not have a plan at all so I will go along with the 70,000” and depending on the kind of pressures on him he changes his mind. That is the problem for your group; you are not consistent, you never will be.

Let us go through a few more things. We have endless debates about planning in this place. When was the last time? Was it the last Council meeting? It feels like every meeting – it obviously is not. Do you come back on Adult Social Care? Where are the debates about Children's Services, about Highways, about the economy? You always come back to the same thing and you always come back to it in this one dimensional way. It is always about green belt release. It is not just about green belt release, it is not just about the outer areas. It is about the city as a whole, it is about the city's real housing needs and if you think that you can just massage away the fact that the city has got housing needs, all you are going to do is ensure that housing is built elsewhere and that those people will travel into a booming city because they cannot afford to live in this city but have to live somewhere else. Does that cause problems for us? It causes more problems than if they are actually living here.

We have got a real problem with you. You are absolutely in denial over NPPF. It is as if it is a neutral document. It is not. What you have got with the new figures is again not a neutral document because if you were to have used those figures back in 2011/2012 you would have had a figure of 97,900 houses to be built in this city. That is your Government's proposition; if it had been used back then it would have been for that figure.

You have to be very, very careful. If you go to accept a figure that the Government is proposing you may have bigger problems then you ever thought.
(Applause)

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

COUNCILLOR C GRUEN: I am pleased to second Councillor Lewis's amendment and in doing so I would like to focus on three main areas: the need for certainty within our Planning Policy; the crucial importance of a plans-led approach; and the complete disarray of this Government's Planning Policy. *(hear, hear)*

The Site Allocations Process deals with the future, not the present, and in deciding how, when and where specific sites will come forward, it is crucial that we have an agreed process which is fair, transparent, adhered to and respected by all involved.

To most of us it feels anything but fair or reasonable. For the past few years the Government has blamed what it terms 'The Planning System' for its failure to build sufficient homes. However, even they have now realised the futility of their claim by referring to their consultation paper as 'The broken housing market', something that we have stressed for years. At every stage of the SAP process we have shown that we are prepared to modify our approach if required, but enough is enough now. We must have certainty going forward. It is irresponsible of the Government to keep messing us and our communities around. Leeds residents deserve to have certainty, clarity and confidence in the system and because of this, as a Council this administration is committed to a plan-led approach.

For as long as I have been on the Council and well before that there has been a well understood order in planning ahead for new sites. This process, known as the Strategic Housing Market Assessment – the SHMA – was assessed in Leeds a few

years ago. It was to bring together the various partners, stakeholders, developers and volume house builders to thrash out the fundamentals of availability, viability and sustainability. The whole purpose of this plan-led approach is to ensure that over the plan period of 15 years sites are allocated according to need, fairness of distribution across the city and within a planned time scale. Developers, and particularly volume house builders, have repeatedly broken that convention bringing instead plans for green belt sites which, when challenged, are successful at appeal.

It follows from what I have said that to make the system work requires a clear, consistent, thoughtful and co-ordinated policy. It needs to anticipate future need, be even handed, logical and methodical. It is absolutely clear that in the last seven years this Government's policy has been anything but that. The Cabinet is now split wide apart on how to fund more house building and whether or not to use Local Authorities as a genuine partner or whether to continue to lambast them as the traditional enemy.

Just one example of this chaotic shifting of goalposts – back in 2011 the Government abolished top-down targets, only to reintroduce them in 2017. There is utter disarray and confusion at Government level and we cannot move on with either planning or housing policy until they have sorted themselves out. Councillor Carter's White Paper talks of confidence. Well, this is what is sadly lacking in relation to his Party's approach to planning policy on a monumental scale.

Councillor Lewis's amendment goes to the heart of this crucial debate and makes it quite clear that the Government needs to – and pardon the pun – get its house in order and that is why I am pleased to second this amendment. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Gruen. Before we move to Councillor Dobson I would just like to remind Members of what we decided and what was agreed at September's meeting, and I am going to read from the verbatim.

“Whips have considered the method by which Members who have previously reserved their right to speak in debate then subsequently wish to exercise that right. Whips have agreed that it should continue to be the responsibility of the Member concerned to indicate to the Lord Mayor that they wish to exercise their right to speak and, once the Lord Mayor has recognised that Member wishes to exercise that right to speak, the Member will be invited by the Lord Mayor to speak next in the debate, so be careful when you put your hand up, if somebody is speaking you will be next in line to speak and if we run out of time before you speak, then we have run out of time.”

Just to remind you, it is up to you to indicate before we run out of time. Councillor Dobson.

COUNCILLOR M DOBSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. In moving our White Paper amendment there are a few points that we did want to make on behalf of how we have got to this position. Certainly for those Members who went through the appeals process where we lost I think it was ten appeals on the bounce right throughout this

city, there was clearly an urgent need to get our act together and get the Site Allocation Process moving forward.

Councillor Carter I think it was in his earlier contribution asked for an apology from those who supported that position. Well, *mea culpa*. I signed up for it hook, line and sinker because actually as I saw it as a Garforth and Swillington Ward Member we had nowhere to go. We had nowhere to go other than move quickly to a Site Allocation Process but I think I was wrong and I think what has proved I was wrong was actually the experience of trying to navigate this situation for the next two-and-a-half years.

That said, what our White Paper amendment is about is an opportunity that collectively it gives us to have another go. I think it would be utter folly to even suggest pulling out of the process as it stands at this moment because there are avaricious developers right across this city who will be rubbing their hands together at the very prospect. I think what has to become embedded, and we need a cross-party agreement on this, is to quickly have an understanding amongst all of us that collectively this situation has to change. The numbers are too high.

I said I was wrong; I will explain why. We found ourselves in the position of basically scratching round in Outer South East Leeds for land that fits the target so whilst the initial concept was right, it has proved impossible in practice. I will give you some practical examples.

Yes, I am aware that the six from Harewood and Wetherby signed up to look at Parlington. I looked at Parlington. We all looked at Parlington. My idea of Parlington was would it be a better settlement than Peckfield, but the reality is that this whole process is so skewed against us as Councillors and pro the developer that it would never have flown, and for one simple reason. We have come on to the Housing Market Characteristic Areas. We are told we have to have parity of distribution. Can any Member put their hand on their heart in this Chamber and tell me that some imaginary blue line that has been constructed means that potentially we could have thousands of homes at Peckfield in Outer South East and slap bang on the border in Outer North East you would have a development? It is for practical reasons and experience that I am saying we have got it wrong and we urgently have to look again. There will be no parity of distribution.

I have got sympathy with Members who have actually come forward and said, "Can we look at this land?" Actually, when we got to Parlington there are a million and one reasons why it would not fly – a million and one – but sensibly we had a look and the reason we had a look was quite simple, because we have little in the way of options. The options have been so limited to us all based on the number, the target, that we found ourselves looking at land that quite frankly is fraught with problems.

We have never even spoken properly in this Council about the infrastructure needs that these houses come with. We have not spoken about the type of housing we need. So far the whole debate has been focused on the numbers and the important issue of the green belt, but we have way, way, way to go before we have anything like the kind of cohesion that I think we all owe each other as Ward Members and the citizens of Leeds.

We are looking in our White Paper for something that will actually pass muster with all of us where we can take a collective position that things have to change, but embedded in that has to be a look at the HMCAs which are simply not fit for purpose. On that point, I am looking at my stopwatch, I will stop there because I think I have covered the points I wanted to raise. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Field.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor McKenna.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking in support of Richard's amendment. This Government is an absolute shambles when it comes to planning and housing policy. It is an utter disgrace. One minute they are asking to scrap top-down housing targets and then next they want them back again. On the one hand they want X number of houses and yet again they want another figure. This simply cannot continue. Local Authorities and local communities deserve much, much more – more guidance, more certainty and better communication from Government.

To say mixed messages are unhelpful is a huge understatement. They can also be damaging to local areas. Such poor communication is detrimental to local efforts to ensure plans are sound and reflective of local needs.

As an example, the most recent consultation document on housing targets and other matters just appeared out of thin air with no prior warning of it at all, and look at what confusion and panic it is now causing not just locally but nationwide.

This just screams out of Government confusion at all levels. Until they get their house in order how can Local Authorities provide the certainty that residents deserve? They are doing nothing to help local communities. It really is a complete mess, Lord Mayor, the Tories should be embarrassed for themselves.

In 2010 Government decided to cut planning guidance from 1,000 pages to just 52, but they did not say they were putting much of an onus on creating enforceable planning policies on Local Authorities and they did not count on the hundreds of pages each individual Planning Authority has to produce as a guide in their Local Plan. It is exactly these ambiguities that have led to different methodologies appearing, including how to set the overall housing target numbers, which is now a Local Authority role. Some Authorities have done it one way and others in a totally different way.

What is right? Let us check the Government guidance on this but, of course, there is not any guidance. There is not anything to confirm either way or other. The Government has simply left it to the Inspector of State to make a decision on these matters.

How Andrew can say that there is no confidence in our administration is beyond me. It is far more the case of there being no confidence whatsoever in the

Tory Government to provide any sort of clear communication or direction or planning policy for Local Authorities and their residents.

Lord Mayor, this is why I am supporting Councillor Richard Lewis's amendment. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Bentley would like to speak now.

COUNCILLOR J BENTLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I appreciate it. Lord Mayor, John Maynard Keynes is often attributed to have said "When the facts change I change my mind. What do you do?" I would pose that question to the leadership, past and present, of the Labour administration. Some of us, of course, would say that the facts have not changed. Some of us have always resisted and challenged the basis of the housing numbers in the Core Strategy and the Site Allocation Plan and have a consistent record of voting against them.

The reason we had to cancel the inspection of housing numbers that was planned for last month is that the whole basis of this administration's numbers is beginning to unravel and they have run out of headroom and excuses, but they just ploughed on emboldened by the fact that they had support from other groups.

Quite frankly, Lord Mayor, it is an embarrassment not just for the administration – I do not care particularly if they are embarrassed – but it is an embarrassment for the City of Leeds and all who are involved in its governance and I do care about that. I care about our reputation and I do not want us to be a laughing stock and to be humiliated.

You talk to any of our residents who talk about the city and there are some of them with us today and they will say "What is the Labour Group playing at?" Councillor Leadley referred to the last time, I think, that the administration found themselves embarrassed and humiliated like this was when their trolleybus scheme was so roundly rejected. I mention that, Lord Mayor, because that was another example of the administration stubbornly hanging on to something that everybody knew was past it and based on a false premise, and they are doing it again.

What does Councillor Lewis say to refute that charge of no confidence? He says "It is not our fault. It is those big boys down in London. It is not fair." Well, we may not all agree with the Government planning policies but until we can change them we have to work with them and get the best out of them.

Opposition Groups have offered throughout the Core Strategy and the Site Allocation Process to co-operate but as always if it is someone else's idea, they do not want to know.

What could Councillor Lewis have brought to the table today, apart from this very negative amendment? Well, for a long time now many of our residents and communities have been living under a cloud of anxiety about what will be happening to their neighbourhoods and their environment. Councillor Lewis could give some assurance that those sensitive areas where development was planned on green belt and green space will be properly re-examined and consulted on again. We all know where

those sites are and which ones could be removed now. You could give some assurance that green belt sites will not be needed, you could remove the anxiety for many of our communities. The facts have changed; change your mind, show some leadership. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. A few weeks ago, September, we had a White Paper motion which I moved. I remember very clearly then the Labour Group howling with laughter about why are we here again, why are we debating this thing again, we are sick of White Papers on the housing targets and within a couple of weeks what do they do? They go and pause their own inquiry because they are in such a mess. An absolute travesty.

It is not right, Richard, to say oh well, it is the Government's fault, it is the Government's fault. Back in 2011 a Scrutiny Board that I chaired told you your housing target was wrong. It went to Executive Board, you did not accept the recommendations. We told you then. You could have changed the number then, had a different number, run the Site Allocations Plan with a revised number. That is what we have been telling you to do for the last six years and consistently that is what you have refused to do.

You have had six White Papers where you could have taken the opportunity that we tabled, two Scrutiny inquiries where we told you precisely and exactly where you were wrong. We even exposed the fact that you had chosen 70,000 from a range when you could have chosen a number closer to 40,000. Twelve different opportunities that we have extended to you to get this right and you have rejected every single, solitary one of them. Do not try and say it is the Government's fault, our fault, the Lib Dems' fault, the Independents, the Morley Boroughs or the Greens. It is your fault because you chose to have 70,000 houses.

What is even more incredible is that Development Plans Panel, where the writing is on the wall, where the whole purpose of having an extraordinary meeting of that grouping was to say "Oh, we got it wrong", what do we hear? We hear from nowhere, Councillor McKenna, Councillor Walshaw saying the same thing they have said consistently, to be fair to them, "Well, we need more housing, we need lots more housing and actually we do not think that 40,000 or 42,000 is right. Nearer 50,000 sounds about right." That is what they were both saying.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Yes.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Yes, they say, yes. Where is the evidence? Where is the evidence base? Where is the proof? Where is the requirement?

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Where is the evidence for 42?

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: No, oh, I know, from nowhere 70,000, no, 50,000 – think of another number. Lord Mayor, it is absolutely – absolutely ridiculous – ridiculous. There is a way, there is a set of statistics produced by eminent statisticians. Edge Analytics have produced them for you. You chose not to look at

them. When we tried through a Scrutiny process to expose a piece of work that had been done for the Education Service we were blocked. The Director of City Development told me I could not have them, it was an unfinished piece of work. The Chief Executive told me, “Oh no, you cannot have this information, no you cannot have it.” It was covered up – that is the truth of it. It was covered up. You would not let us have the data even though you had seen it, even though you had got it, even though you all had it.

The truth is, Lord Mayor, that we did not need that housing target, we do not need that housing target and we have been saying so for the last six years.

Let me just turn to Parlington. Richard is right to a degree – only to a degree. Let’s be clear, it was the officers’ choice that that was the right strategic site, not elected Members. *(interruption)* That is the truth. No, not elected – extra time, Lord Mayor. I need extra time. If you let me finish we will get there.

THE LORD MAYOR: One sentence, Councillor Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Oh come, on, Lord Mayor. *(interruption)* Lord Mayor. Councillor Lewis ran on and on.

THE LORD MAYOR: One sentence. We are waiting for you and you are speaking far louder.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: In terms of Parlington the officers did say that that was the best of the two strategic sites. Richard is quite right, quite right. I and all of the Members in the Wetherby and Harewood ward were in favour of a strategic site, a hundred per cent, absolutely the case. I know to my detriment.....

THE LORD MAYOR: That’s lovely, thank you, Councillor Procter. We need to hear from Councillor Finnigan before we have time out, so thank you. *(Applause)* Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The first thing we would like to say is usually I am here and Councillor Neil Dawson is sat over there and we battle out these particular issues. From the Morley Borough Independents and I am sure from full Council we wish him a speedy return and a speedy recovery. It is important to say that, even if our opinions on this particular matter differ somewhat. *(hear, hear)*

We have always been prophets in the wilderness to some extent on many issues, whether that is Supertram, whether that is NGT, whether that is the housing numbers. Certainly if we cast our minds back to the Regional Spatial Strategy – people may remember that, the Labour Party’s views on how development should actually occur back in 2007 and, interestingly, the Labour Party has been consistent pretty much all the way through. They backed this higher target which was always unachievable, unrealistic and unsustainable. We have banged on about it year after year after year. Indeed, my colleague Councillor Leadley did respond to that consultation saying “You are wrong” and he has consistently said “You are wrong” all the way through. There is some realisation starting to occur at this particular point.

Councillor Gruen talked about certainty, clarity, confidence. From a Morley perspective there is absolute certainty – certainty that the Labour Group are going to back the developer each and every time against communities; clarity that at a point where they can help and assist they back the developers every time; and confidence – Morley folk have absolute confidence that you are going to shaft them time and time and time again because that is what you do.

To a degree lowering the target at this particular point does not help us. You have already violated most of our green sites – whether that is Laneside Farm, whether that is Owlars Farm, whether that is on Scott Lane, whether that is Low Moor Farm. You agreed and capitulated each and every time.

The reality of this particular target is that you put communities under significant pressure because you have not put the infrastructure in first. We are in a situation in Morley where we have 2,000 houses that have been agreed planning permission. We are in a situation where not one primary school is going to be expanded to accommodate the children generated from those particular developments. We are in a situation where the local health centres cannot cope, the local roads cannot cope and it is your fault. You have backed like mindless zombies the Regional Spatial Strategy up to today, housing targets that are unrealistic, unachievable and unsustainable. Ultimately you want to put your hands up and apologise to the people of Morley for what you have done and I am sure that they will reflect very seriously on that when they get an opportunity next May. I am absolutely sure that they will be clear in what they have got to say.

On top of that, to make things worse, the affordable homes target you have reduced from 25% down to 15%, making the developers' job easier and easier and easier.

What is interesting on these occasions is you will not actually admit you are wrong and nobody is ever accountable and nobody ever resigns, and that is a disappointment and it is a disgrace to this fine city. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: If I can refer you all back to the first Procedural Motion and ask David Blackburn to speak, please.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I do not know about the Labour Group getting fed up with this; I am getting fed up with it Council meeting after Council meeting, but it is your farce, you caused it. Every time this administration is criticised what we get is, "It is the Government's fault." Well, this has been every Government, the last three or four Governments' fault, and the administration over there, it was their decision to go for 70,000, that came out of the Regional Spatial Strategy which was a Labour Government document and they had choices, but they took the wrong choices. I would not have minded if they would have listened to what other people said and tried to alter them.

Richard, you can take something to an inquiry and say "This is what our view is" and the Inspector can say "OK", but that does not mean it is the right figure. It

means the Inspector has accepted what you said. We could have gone for less but we did not.

Yesterday Richard, myself and Tom were in Reading looking at public transport, looking at infrastructure there and the fact is we have not got the infrastructure to cope with 40-odd thousand let alone 70-odd thousand, and there is no sign of us getting that.

You have got to stop blaming other people for what you have caused and what you have caused to the people of Leeds and there are sites in this city that have been built on now because of the five year land supply and because of your seeming policy of 70,000 that have been built on.

Come on, let's get straight, let's sort this out and let's go forward. You can blame the Government if you do the job right but you are not even doing the job right yourselves. It is time things changed and time you listened and it is time somebody went. I know there are Members of the Labour Group who actually support 70,000, they want to expand the city. What I want to see, I want to see houses for the people of Leeds and not massive big houses on the outskirts that can bring people into Leeds. I want to see some Council houses for people on the Bournes and Heights and areas like that. I do not want to see rich people's houses and that is what you are doing, you are not helping the working people of Leeds. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Carter to sum up, please.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Very quickly first of all, Councillor Caroline Gruen, you completely missed the point. If you are a Chair of Planning and you are so ignorant about the consequences of building on green belt – it is not just about the building on the green belt itself. It is the consequences that go with it – the extra travelling, the road network, the lack of school places, the further to travel for working people and the lack of affordable homes because those homes are on the wrong sites and the regeneration sites that we have promised, all of us for year for people in Leeds, are not being delivered. When does your administration start to take some responsibility.

Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Andrew Carter!

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: With apologies to T S Eliot:

“He's outwardly respectable (they say he cheats at cards)
His footprints are not found in any file within the Civic Hall.
And when the green belt's looted and parkland disappears,
When the plan is broken and the situation past repair
Ay, there's the wonder of the thing! Our little Richard's never there.

Richard, Richard, there's no-one quite like Richard.
There was never a cat of such deceitfulness or suavity.
He always has an alibi and one or two to spare

And whatever time the deed took place our Richard's never there."

Well, Richard, you have been rumbled.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: But it's your Government, Andrew, never forget it.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: It is your responsibility, it is your plan, it is your 70,000, it is your timetable and it is your Council and if you cannot sort it, resign. Half your Group would like to see you go (*interruption*) who have got sites in their constituencies, their wards that should not be developed and that are under threat.

If your figure had been 50,000 – 50,000 and that is a midpoint between your 70 and the Government's 42,600 – we would have an 8.2 year supply of housing. There would be no losing of appeals, there would be no wringing of hands, no millions of pounds spent on QCs and barristers because we would be winning these appeals hands down. You had the chance years and years ago. 2011, as John said, this saga started and you have had more chance and more opportunities to get yourself off the hook than any other Councillor on any other issue I have ever come across in this Chamber.

I move the resolution, my Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

My Lord Mayor, to clarify, we are accepting the amendments from the Liberal Democrats and the Morley Borough Independents.

THE LORD MAYOR: Wonderful. I wonder if you have to pay royalties to T S Eliot! I would now like to call for the votes. We have been asked for a recorded vote.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: We have 90 Councillors present, "Yes" 31, abstentions 3 and "No" 56, so that is LOST.

We are now calling for a vote on the second amendment and we have been asked for a recorded vote.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: 90 Councillors present, 31 "Yes", three abstentions, 56 "No", that is also LOST.

We now move on to amendment 3.

(A recorded vote was held on the amendment in the name of Councillor R Lewis)

THE LORD MAYOR: We have 90 Councillors present, “Yes” 56, abstentions zero, “No” 34 so that is actually CARRIED. We move on to amendment 4.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: 90 Councillor present, “Yes” 7, abstentions 11, “No” 72 so that is LOST.

We now move on to the substantive motion in the name of Councillor Lewis.

(A recorded vote was held on the substantive motion)

THE LORD MAYOR: We have 90 Councillors present, “Yes” 56, abstentions zero and “No” 34 so that is actually CARRIED. Thank you. *(Applause)*

That concludes the Extraordinary Meeting. I will see you all back here at 1.00pm. Thank you.

(The meeting closed at 11.39am)
