

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Held on

Wednesday 18th April 2007

At

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
CIVIC HALL, LEEDS

In the Chair:

THE LORD MAYOR
(Councillor M Iqbal)

VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

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VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 18th APRIL 2007

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon, everyone. Can I welcome members of the public in the gallery as well – thank you for joining us this afternoon on this lovely day.

First of all, if I could say to switch off all your mobile phones and any electrical devices unless you want to contribute to the Lord Mayor's Charity.

We have a few announcements. First of all our Civic Hall Warden, Roy Wadsworth, has recently been diagnosed with cancer and I have sent best wishes to Roy Wadsworth and his family at this difficult time.

Secondly, good news. Councillor Lisa Mulherin has given birth to a son, Sean Patrick, on 19th March 2007. I am sure we would all like to send her congratulations and best wishes. *(Applause)*

Finally, as this is the last meeting of Council before the local elections on 3rd May, I should like to advise you that Councillor Andrew Millard from Wetherby will not be seeking re-election and I am sure we would like to thank him for his contribution to the city and wish him well in the future. *(Applause)*

ITEM 1 – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON
21ST FEBRUARY 2007

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hamilton.

COUNCILLOR HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Could I move that the Minutes be received?

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: Second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: All in favour? Any against? Any abstentions?
(AGREED)

ITEM 2 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I announce that the list of written declarations submitted by Members is on display in the ante-room, on deposit in the public galleries and has been circulated to each Member's place in the Chamber.

Any further declarations? I can see some hands.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Item 13 as a governor of Whingate Primary and Lower Wortley Primary.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Item 13 as a governor of Ryecroft Primary and Lawns Park Primary and Leeds West and North-West ALMOs

A COUNCILLOR: Item 13, Governor at Greenhill Primary and Cobden Primary.

COUNCILLOR W HYDE: Item 6 as a director of Leeds Bradford Airport.

COUNCILLOR WADSWORTH: Item 13, I am also a governor at Gledhow Primary School.

COUNCILLOR KENDALL: Item 13, governor of Roundhay School.

COUNCILLOR SHEL BROOKE: Item 13, governor of East Garforth Primary School.

COUNCILLOR BEVERLEY: First deputation, Lord Mayor, I have a personal interest as a member of the Leeds Branch of the Royal Society of St George.

COUNCILLOR TAYLOR: Thank you, Lord Mayor, Item 12 on the cemeteries, insofar as I visit them more than perhaps anybody else and therefore I ought to declare a personal interest!

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Taylor!

COUNCILLOR EWENS: Representative of the Council on University Court, 223.

COUNCILLOR McARDLE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am a community governor at Asquith Primary School, Morley.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: Item 6, as a member of the Leeds West North West ALMO and also 13 as a governor at Raynville Primary School and Intake High School.

COUNCILLOR NASH: Item 13, I am a governor at New Bewerly Community School.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Item 13, governor at Bramley Primary and I declare it because it is a single-form entry school.

COUNCILLOR MORGAN: Item 13, I am a governor at Our Lady of Good Counsel and Grange Farm schools.

COUNCILLOR RENSHAW: I am a governor at East Ardsley Primary and Seven Hills Primary.

COUNCILLOR G HYDE: Item 13, Lord Mayor, Governor at Parkland Primary School.

COUNCILLOR DUNN: I am a governor of Thorpe Primary School.

COUNCILLOR JAROSZ: Lord Mayor, I am a governor at Tyersal Primary School and – is it just primary schools? Just Tyersal Primary School, then.

COUNCILLOR GABRIEL: Item 13, governor at Hugh Gaitskell and St Anthony's Primary School.

COUNCILLOR SELBY: Governor at Grange Farm Primary School, governor at Cross Gates Primary School.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Governor at Sharpe Lane Primary School.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: Governor at Cottingley Primary School.

COUNCILLOR S HAMILTON: Governor at Hillcrest Primary.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: Governor at Bankside Primary.

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: Governor at Chapel Allerton Primary, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR HARPER: Governor at Primrose Hill Primary School and also West Leeds High.

COUNCILLOR MURRAY: Thank you, Lord Mayor, I am a governor at Swillington Primary School and also on item 15 I have a personal and prejudicial interest and the reason is already in the paper.

COUNCILLOR DRIVER: Governor at Middleton Primary and Windmill Primary.

COUNCILLOR A HARRISON: Governor at Garforth Green Lane and Raynville Primary School.

COUNCILLOR GRAHAM: Governor at St Gregory's Primary School.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Governor at Hillcrest Primary School.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Governor at Southroyd Primary and Greenside Primary.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Governor at Westwood Primary.

COUNCILLOR DAVEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor, governor of St Francis of Assisi Primary School.

COUNCILLOR EWENS: I made a mistake. It is 227. I have not got my glasses on!

THE LORD MAYOR: Anybody else? Thank you. Can I have a show of hands to confirm that members have read the list or the list as amended and agree its contents insofar as they relate to their own interests? Show of hands, please. All agreed? Any against? Abstentions? (AGREED)

ITEM 3 – COMMUNICATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 3, Chief Executive.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. This is one of those very rare occasions when I do have a matter to report under Communications. I am pleased to announce that the Council has recently been awarded the Charter for Member Development. This award recognises the investment that the Council has made in supporting and developing elected members to help them better discharge the responsibilities that they have as elected members in the interests of all of those who live and work in the city.

The Charter is a nationally recognised award. It aims to promote best practice in member training and development and is based on the Investors in People standard.

I would like to welcome Mike Leitch to this meeting today. Mike is the Head of Service Learning and Consultancy at the regional grouping of Local Authorities,

Local Government Yorkshire and Humber and he will be presenting the award at the start of this meeting to Councillor Carter as Leader of the Council on behalf of all members of the Council. Mike has agreed to attend this afternoon on the clear understanding that he is not expected to remain for the rest of the meeting. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I invite Mr Leitch and the Leader of the Council to receive the award, and Councillor Latty.

(Presentation made)

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. A delightful, short ceremony. Warm congratulations to all those involved in it right away across the Chamber and in particular to the person who has looked after our group who, of course, is Liz Nash. A wonderful achievement.

The item, Lord Mayor, Item number 3, says 'Communications'. Is that the only communication we have had, or are we in a position now that we only really want to report good news to this Chamber, or good news from what they perceive to be their side?

Lord Mayor, why can we not have the report from the Chief Executive that refers to standard where we lost the star?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hanley, thank you. Can we move on to Item 4, please?

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: Lord Mayor, does that mean we will not have an answer to the question?

THE LORD MAYOR: We will have to carry on with the meeting, thank you. We will have to move on with the agenda.

ITEM 4 – DEPUTATIONS

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. There are four deputations before the meeting this afternoon. The first from the Royal Society of St George (Leeds Branch); the second Wharfemeadows Action Group; the third the Sikh Welfare Trust; and lastly the Parents and Carers Action Group to save Terry Yorath House.

COUNCILLOR HAMILTON: Could I move that all the Deputations be received?

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: Seconded, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: All those in favour - show of hands, please? Any against? Any abstentions? Thank you. (AGREED)

DEPUTATION 1 – ROYAL SOCIETY OF ST GEORGE (LEEDS BRANCH)

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. You can make your speech now to the Council, which must not be more than five minutes. Please begin by introducing your deputation. Thank you.

MR J TETLEY: My Lord Mayor, Councillors.

I am Councillor Joe Tetley of Morley Town Council, and I am Chairman of The Leeds Branch of The Royal Society of St George. I am accompanied by two Committee Members and a Knight of St George and a Longbowman from the Bowmen of Adel.

On Sunday 22nd April we are to stage our fourth St George's Day Parade and Festival in Morley. This is now recognised as the premier event of its kind in the North of England. The day will start with a Parade from Morley Town Hall where guests from our neighbouring towns will gather. I may add that The Lord Mayor had already received an invitation to this year's event.

The Lord Lieutenant of West Yorkshire, Dr Ingrid Roscoe will again be with us on this day. This event takes place on five local rugby and cricket fields. The parade will be led by the Knight that you see here. He will be in armour on horseback carrying the St George's flag. The 168 City of Leeds Squadron Air Cadet Band are to lead the Parade of Naval, Army and Air Cadets. Morley's Guides, Brownies and Rainbows are to take part in the Parade. Unfortunately this year there will be no Scouts. They will be here in Leeds celebrating 150 years of Scouting. The standards of The Royal British Legion, The Leeds Rifles and The Nuclear Test Veterans will be paraded. The Sealed Knot and the Earl of Manchester's Regiment together with Roman Legionnaires, Saxon and Victorian Military Societies are to march in the parade. A seven foot long sweet-filled dragon is to be paraded to the field, where children will be given the opportunity of attempting to slay it. No blood will come from it but any sweets that are dislodged will be their property. Vintage cars from The Skopos Motor Museum are to also take part.

Four years ago Leeds Royal Armouries gave The Royal Society of St George (Leeds Branch) a golden arrow for a longbow archery shoot. In conjunction with the Bowmen of Adel an archery competition will take place on this day when over 100 archers from all parts of this country compete for this prestigious prize. The winner is allowed to retain the arrow for two weeks. It is then on display at the Royal Armouries for the remaining 50 weeks of the year before coming up for competition at our next St George's Day Event.

A strong man competition of an unusual nature is to take place. Come and see it. We are to have a Punch and Judy show, maypole and Morris dancing and charity and craft stalls around the fields. A small fair will be in attendance. A falconry display will take place and a Civil War re-enactment with muskets and cannon will take place in the arena. A living camp is on the fields with the Roman, Saxon and Victorian Soldiers. There will also be a World War II camp with displays of that era.

The total cost that we endeavour to raise by grants, donations and offers in kind is in excess of £5000. This free event is not just open to the residents of Morley. Indeed it is open to all who wish to come and celebrate St George's Day.

It is only possible to hold this fourth St George's Day event because we have received financial help from a number of you in this Chamber with contributions from your Funds. Morley Town Council, South Leeds Area Management Committee, Arise Initiative and the Celebration Leeds Fund have also contributed. We are grateful to all these donors for their contributions.

Our appearance before you today is to seek help for the next year's and indeed following year's events to enable the Society too continue to stage what as I have stated earlier is now the premier event of this kind in The North of England.

We also ask for your support in the campaign to have St George's Day designated as a national holiday. If this successful our event could then be held on that day, not as now when we hold it on the nearest Sunday.

Today we wish to invite you all to Morley to our festival. We have even brought you a Programme of the day's events. We do hope that you can come and we also hope that you will be able to be with us to celebrate what is England's national day in the future on the correct day.

On behalf of the Leeds Branch of The Royal Society of St George, I would thank you for allowing us to come before you today and we look forward to your support.
We wish you well. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR HAMILTON: Lord Mayor, can I move that the matter be referred to the Exec Board for consideration?

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: Seconded, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: All in favour? Show of hands, please? Any against? Any abstentions? CARRIED. Thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which will be given to your comments. Thank you. (*Applause*)

DEPUTATION 2 – WHARFEMEADOWS ACTION GROUP

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Please begin your speech for only five minutes to the Council, and begin by introducing your deputation. Thank you.

MS L LUKATS: Lord Mayor, elected Members of Leeds City Council, ladies and gentleman, good afternoon. Thank you all for giving the Wharfemeadows Action Group the opportunity to present to you the overwhelming public opposition to the Leeds City Council's plans to fence off the River Wharfe in Otley.

The three founder members of the Wharfemeadows Action Group present here today, are Tony Hartigan, Sylvia Reid and myself, Linda Lukats. We are all Otley residents and Council taxpayers. The sole aim of our action group, which is non-party political, is to co-ordinate the overwhelming opposition in our community to your fencing proposal.

Today we have presented a petition with over 6000 signatures opposing the fencing, to Councillor Andrew Carter, current Leader of the Council. When we met Councillor Carter four weeks ago to explain our objections, he assured us that nothing further would happen until Counsel's opinion had been received and the people of Otley had been fully consulted. We have met with other elected Council members and have also presented a separate letter of support signed by our local MP, three city Councillors and Otley's Town Councillors, representing cross party support.

This opposition to the fencing is based on several grounds. For a start, the river is one of the main attractions of Otley and is integral to the enjoyment of the many people who come to Wharfemeadows Park, both local residents and visitors from all over the country. Visitors to the park of all ages enjoy sitting on the steps, feeding the ducks and swans and fishing. The riverside is where Leeds people come for a day trip, where they can relax and picnic by the river. It is a place of natural beauty - the gateway to the Dales. It is the life-blood of Otley and its appeal would be markedly reduced if the river was fenced off and made inaccessible.

Economically many of the local businesses depend on the custom on visitors to the town. Fencing off the river will discourage visitors and have a damaging knock-on effect on the local community and economy. As Council taxpayers the people and representatives of Otley have not even been consulted with regard to these plans. Why waste their money on something that they clearly do not want nor support?

Our understanding is that the proposals have been made on the basis of flawed recommendations by RoSPA – which, we would like to point out, is a charity with no mandatory authority. This plan (you were told) was a response to a Coroner's instruction at the Inquest into the tragic drowning incident at Roundhay Park in 2005. RoSPA cited the case of *Tomlinson v. Congleton Borough Council* as an example of the legal consequences of a Council not following their recommendations. In fact, the House of Lords overturned this Court of Appeal's legal ruling in 2003. The case is there for you to read. RoSPA clearly failed to do so. The Law Lords upheld people's right to enjoy natural hazards and take responsibility for themselves and their children. We urge Leeds City Council to do likewise.

The Coroner's recommendations, NOT instructions, related solely to signage in Roundhay Park and no criticism was made of Leeds City Council in relation to this tragedy. How has this situation gone from improving signage, at minimal cost, at Roundhay Park to spending £165,000 on Band 4 Exclusion Fencing in Wharfemeadows Park where no such tragedy has occurred? It is easy to see that, if implemented across Leeds, the RoSPA mindset on waterways could cost the Council millions of pounds - a ludicrous waste of Council taxpayer's money. Something has gone wrong with the Council decision-making process. (Applause) For once a deputation is attempting to save the Council money.

In the name of common sense and consideration for the rights and wishes of the local people, we urge you to reconsider the fencing off of our river. The river in Wharfemeadows Park has had an excellent safety record for over 80 years, a fact completely ignored by RoSPA in its misguided report. We are not against sensible safety measures. For example, fencing off the children's playground from the busy Farnley Lane would be a good idea. Do we really want to set a precedent in Leeds for the nation's waterways and natural beauty spots to be enclosed and inaccessible to future generations?

Do not underestimate the strength of opposition in Otley to your current plans. We are determined to see common sense prevail. We trust that you are, too. Thank you. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR HAMILTON: Yes, could, can I move the matter be referred to the Exec Board for consideration.

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: Seconded, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: All in favour? Show of hands, please? Any against? Any abstentions? CARRIED. Thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which will be given to your comments. Good afternoon. (Applause)

DEPUTATION 3 – SIKH WELFARE TRUST

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Please now make your speech now to the Council, which must not be longer than five minutes and begin by introducing your deputation. Thank you.

MR ABDUL QUDDUS: Honourable Lord Mayor and respected councillors. Good afternoon. My name is Abdul Quddus. I, along with my four colleagues, Mr Ujjal Singh Ryatt, Mr Prem Singh Duggal and Mrs Santosh Kaur and Mr Rafiq Tahal(?), are here to make a representation on behalf of all South Asian communities in Leeds.

We are deeply concerned about the lack of appropriate structure and support to maintain quality teaching provision of South Asian community languages eg Urdu, Punjabi, Bengali and Gujarati, in different schools in this multiracial multilingual and multicultural city of Leeds from September this year. The community language provision in Leeds schools was the result of a series of discussions, debates and negotiations between the representatives of various South Asian communities and the former education department of Leeds City Council.

However, in recent times we have observed the tendency of undermining the need and quality of provision compared to other European languages eg French, German and Spanish. This is evident from the fact that Educational Leeds failed to replace the Co-ordinator of Languages after the retirement of the previous post-holder. Not only that, in recent months the team is being managed by an administrative staff who do not have any requisite qualification and expertise of community language teaching.

Finally, we are shocked to learn that Educational Leeds has served redundancy notices to all the community language teachers, thereby virtually dismantling the provision without any prior consultation with the local South Asian communities. This outrageous decision has caused anger, frustration and disappointment amongst the members of local South Asian communities who constitute approximately 5% of total population in Leeds.

This is now almost a universally acceptable view that teaching of community languages not only helps in maintaining culture and heritage and building self-confidence and positive image of bilingual pupils; it also enhances their achievement level in education. There are ample evidences that grades obtained in the community languages are relatively high thereby raising the overall educational performances of bilingual children.

Given that a significant proportion of bilingual children are under-achieving in Leeds schools and there is gross under-representation of teachers from black and minority ethnic backgrounds, the decision to get rid of those teachers is completely unacceptable to the members of South Asian communities.

In addition to educational argument, there are other valid reasons for maintaining community language teachings provision in schools. There is a substantial population of South Asian origins in Leeds. Learning of a community languages help in maintaining close links with their countries of origin and in developing not only cultural but also commercial links which would be of great mutual benefit in this days of globalisation. It also helps in improving intergenerational and intercommunity communication, helping enhancing community cohesion. Moreover, it helps Education Leeds and the Leeds City Council to meet their obligations under various legislations including Race Relations Amendment Act and the EU directives.

While the DfES has decided to introduce the learning of modern foreign languages (including Urdu, Mandarin and Arabic) at the primary level from the year 2010, Education Leeds has been taking diametrically opposite actions with regards to community languages in Leeds' schools.

The claim by Education Leeds that individual schools would make their own arrangements in maintaining community languages teaching provision is not valid. It is understood that head teachers of schools who are the major users of the services of the community language team were in favour of existing arrangements. It is also a matter of great concern that schools having a relatively small number of children from South Asian backgrounds will find it difficult to appoint staff to each community languages.

Leeds is one of the most vibrant cities with cultural diversity and South Asian communities have made significant contribution towards its economy and culture. In the past City Council's actions to improve educational provision particularly for black and minority ethnic children have been applauded and greatly appreciated by all quarters. Unfortunately, all those great works are now being undone by Education Leeds to the horror and dismay of the local South Asian communities.

We therefore urge you to exert your influence and authority to reverse the decision of Education Leeds, thereby continuing the services of the community language team in delivering teaching of community languages in Leeds schools. Thank you. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR HAMILTON: Lord Mayor, can I move that the matter be referred to the Exec Board for consideration.

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: Seconded, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: All in favour? Show of hands, please? Any against? Any abstentions? CARRIED. Thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which will be given to your comments. Thank you. (*Applause*)

DEPUTATION 4 – PARENTS AND CARERS ACTION GROUP TO SAVE TERRY YORATH HOUSE

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. You can make your speech now to the Council, which must not be more than five minutes. Please begin by introducing your deputation. Thank you.

MS COLEEN GREENWOOD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. This is a deputation on behalf of Terry Yorath House.

Why is Terry Yorath House so important to its residents and family carers? Simply because Terry Yorath House offers a level of care and support that is truly exemplar and is of the highest standards and quality anywhere in Leeds. The residents of Terry Yorath House do have choices in their everyday living and real opportunities to develop their own independence across a diverse range of social, health and educational activities.

Terry Yorath House is a purpose built, fully accessible facility that offers a safe, friendly and inclusive environment that can be considered a 'Model of Best Practice' with regards to the quality and professionalism of staff and a 'Benchmark of Accessibility' when compared to many other facilities in Leeds. Given this outstanding facility and the level of care and satisfaction of the residents of Terry Yorath House, there can be no common sense or logical basis for this Council's drive to introduce unnecessary and expensive changes - changes that have already caused unacceptable levels of disruption and distress for residents and family carers involved.

The whole process behind the drive to 'remodel' Terry Yorath House and the manner in which the needs and concerns of the residents and family carers have been misrepresented should cause even this Council to question the validity and appropriateness of any recommendations for reconstruction of the building.

When considering that many of the residents of Terry Yorath House have hidden disabilities, with complex support and communication needs, it is and appalling failure of this Council and its alleged consultation process, to provide advocates for some residents, without ensuring that there was also a meaningful opportunity and timescale for the residents to develop a level of trust and understanding with their advocates; otherwise it is simply a box ticking exercise that exploits anyone who requires an advocate.

Also, when parent carers attend meetings to be informed that no decisions have been made and that everything depends on the findings of the consultation - whilst at the same time being informed that their needs will be recorded but will not count simply because the 'most likely outcome' is that Terry Yorath House will be tendered on a 'Less Than Best Deal', - would surely cause anyone to question the validity of the consultation.

It is inappropriate and cannot be acceptable for this Council to engage a wholly- owned subsidiary to deliver a supposedly impartial and unbiased consultation - a fact that is underlined when the Chair of the organisation carrying out the consultation openly makes public comments that are hostile to the needs and concerns of the residents and family carers involved - comments which, under the Standing Orders of this Council, may be considered to have conflicts of interest that clearly prejudice the consultation process.

In considering the distress that has already been caused by this policy, this Council has failed in your duty of care to the residents of Terry Yorath House, in addition to failing to meet your obligations to the family carers involved and you have also failed to have due regard for your legal obligations as defined by the many Social Care Acts and the Equality Act, 2005.

It is abundantly clear that his whole consultation process is irreversibly flawed, the Parent Carers Action Group on behalf of the carers and residents who we support call on this Council to impose a moratorium on the process to allegedly 'refurbish' Terry Yorath House, to enable the appropriate committee sufficient time to thoroughly scrutinise the remodelling policy and its compromised consultation process, or failing that, we demand that the District Auditor is engaged without delay to fully investigate this whole self-serving fiasco that is damaging the lives of Terry Yorath House residents and their family carers.

I would like to invite anyone on this council to visit Terry Yorath House and its residents to see first hand what this deputation has been all about. Thank you.
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR HAMILTON: Lord Mayor, could I move that the matter be referred to the Exec Board for consideration.

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: Seconded, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Show of hands, please, for all those in favour? Any against? Any abstentions? CARRIED. Thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which will be given to your comments. Thank you. (Applause)

ITEM 5 – REPORTS

5(a)

COUNCILLOR HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I move in terms of the notice and offer my best wishes to Councillor Mulherin.

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: Seconded, Lord Mayor, a great occasion.

THE LORD MAYOR: Show of hands please? All those in favour? Any against? Any abstentions? (AGREED)

5 (b)

COUNCILLOR HAMILTON: Move in the terms of the Notice, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Seconded, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Show of hands again, please, from all those in favour? Any against? Any abstentions? (AGREED)

ITEM 6 – QUESTIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 6, Questions. Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive member for City Services please tell me what progress is being made toward the Council meeting their 40% recycling target by 2020?

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. At the end of February the combined recycling and composting rate was 22.11%. The Council is piloting the collection of garden waste in five areas of the city and this will be evaluated later in the summer.

A range of other options for increasing recycling are currently being assessed in terms of performance, risks and cost. The results of both pieces of work will be presented later in the year to Executive Board for their consideration.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I thank you first of all, Councillor Smith, for confirming that it is still a 40% target and, given the track record of the Liberal Democrats in misleading the people of Leeds on a whole range of issues, including the claim of building all the schools in this city, including the claim of building all the Children's Centre, including the claim that the Labour Government has axed the Children's Centre, I wondered if you would like to explain your role in the leaflets put into Temple Newsam and Garforth by the Conservative candidates claiming that there is a 60% target?

COUNCILLOR SMITH: If you want to ask about the leaflets put out by other parties then I suggest you speak to representatives of those other parties, Keith. What I will say in terms of the question that you asked, which was about moving forward, Leeds was the best performing core city in the UK for recycling last year, it was the best performing core city in the UK the year before and, in the year before that, under this administration, it was the best performing city in the UK for recycling. We take our recycling efforts seriously and we intend to continue to drive that rate up. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Could the Lead Executive Board member for Children's Services tell me about recent developments in the care of our Looked After Children, please?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I hope my voice holds up for this answer. Too much canvassing!

There has been an injection of an extra £1.622m into the fees for foster carers and an extra half a million into staffing our children's homes. We are making positive progress with our plans to advertise the post for Head of a Virtual School for our Looked After Children. This will be a significant role that draws on best practice used by some other Local Authorities to ensure a level of co-ordination, management and accountability for our Looked After Children consistent with that operated by a Headteacher and governing body of any school.

We will be looking to appoint an individual with significant senior management experience in leading a Children's Service and preferably with school management experience.

A governing body that will be equivalent to this will be established to reinforce the virtual school concept to ensure that there is accountability for the Head. It is expected that an elected member will act as Chair of that governing body and that there will also be young people's representation in some form on that governing body.

In addition with national funding Leeds is able to provide computers for our Looked After Children so that by 31st August this year every Looked After Child between year 6 and year 11 in both children's homes and foster accommodation will have access to a computer and the internet at home.

From September 2007 this will be supported by the fact that all these young people will have an e-learning framework, mentoring support and learning guidance. Furthermore, staff in children's social services have been working with Neighbourhoods and Housing and the ALMOs on a number of measures to make improvements on housing issues that affect our Looked After Children and young people. These include a protocol to maximise the availability of Council tenancies for young people leaving care, enabling names officers in Pathway Planning to have access to the ALMO's housing record system so housing applications by young people leaving care can be tracked by social workers after a referral is made and ALMO and children's social services staff will be exchanging content details with nominated officers to maximise joined-up working by the two agencies.

Housing Management Officers are meeting regularly with Children's Service Delivery Managers to discuss how children and families in need can be given priority and, of course, the Corporate Parenting Guarantee, as we then called it, was introduced last July. That has helped elected members and senior Council officers and all departmental staff to focus on providing a good parenting entitlement for our Looked After Children. Thus I think we can be proud of a range of positive work and improvements that we are making in this area. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Could the Leader of Council please given an update on proposals for the Oakwood area in the Town and District Scheme, please.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. As Councillor Lobley is aware, the Oakwood District Centre is now one of our priority schemes in

the Town and District Centre regeneration programme. The Programme Board which is made up of officers, has viewed the proposals in a very positive light.

As Councillor Lobley is aware, there may or may not be other developments in the area out of which, if they come off, we may be able to extract some further resources to make this particular scheme even wider.

However, I know that your Area Management Team has now been asked to submit some further work to the Programme Board. I would strongly suggest that when that happens you look at the possible phasing of the Oakwood District Centre work because Oakwood District Centre, like most of the other district centres, has had years of neglect under the previous administration. Many of them are showing signs of needing urgent attention which cannot wait much longer and I would strongly suggest, therefore, that in view of other developments, as I say, which may or may not happen in the area, you look at perhaps two phases. As you know we have put additional resources into the Town and District Centre Scheme which means that those schemes which have currently been identified should easily be able to be undertaken.

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Good afternoon. Could the Leader of Council please confirm that the finance is available to support the Morley Bottoms Regeneration Project?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: The simple answer to that is, "Yes". I actually made a couple of visits to Morley Bottoms about ten days ago and had a look round that particular area of Morley. It always reminds me what a great pity it was that some other people not so far away to my left spent so many years ignoring it, because it sticks out like a sore thumb and desperately now needs to see comprehensive regeneration.

When I said money was available, the amount of money will need to be substantial, because it is going to have to be a comprehensive scheme in Morley Bottoms. It is one of the larger regeneration areas and I think it will have a huge impact upon the whole of Morley town centre, a lot of which is already regenerated but this is a blot on the landscape and I know Councillor Grayshon is very keen indeed on seeing progress and I will do my very best to make sure there is progress as quickly as possible. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Do you have a supplementary?

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: I do have a supplementary question, Lord Mayor. The scheme in Morley is bringing obvious benefits to the town, as Councillor Carter has mentioned. I wonder if Councillor Carter could advise Council of other such schemes throughout the city and the benefits that they are bringing to their local communities?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, Councillor Grayshon. The schemes that are already on site are in Pudsey, which started a couple of weeks ago, currently represented, Councillor Grayshon – I use the word "currently" – by three Labour Councillors; Kippax, which I think was the first scheme to get started, currently represented by three Labour Councillors; Wetherby, which is represented by three of my colleagues; and Rothwell, represented by three Liberal Democrats. In all cases the people are welcoming the Town and District Centre Regeneration package and most of them are asking why did this not happen years ago, to which there is a very simple answer – that lot had other priorities. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Will the Leader of the Council add his support to Councillor Wakefield's call that the people of our city should be given the opportunity to decide how the money from the sale of Leeds Bradford Airport is spent?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Yes, my Lord Mayor. It is amazing. I wonder if Councillor Hanley ever consults his colleagues before he puts questions in, or perhaps even opens his mouth. It seems to me he should take advice from at least three or four people before ever opening his mouth.

It is a bit cheeky, my Lord Mayor, is it not, from a party – a party that failed miserably to move forward with the sale of Leeds Bradford Airport, despite the fact that many of them knew it was the right thing to do, and now want to be first in line in the discussions about how we consult or, indeed, how we spend money we have not even got yet. It is quite amazing.

What I can tell you is that we will be consulting. Indeed, the consultation will start on May 3rd this year. The people of Leeds at that stage will be able to decide whether they want to go back to Labour's postcode politics, which means that for three-quarters of the city there will certainly be no share in the benefits of the sale of Leeds Bradford Airport.

What I can promise you is that under this administration we will consult. We look forward to the first consultation on 3rd May and we shall make sure that all the city benefits from the sale of Leeds Bradford Airport.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hanley, supplementary.

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Following on from that – fancy you saying I am cheeky. Heavens! I really do not know where you get that from. The issue that is before us that the money – I nearly said “loot” then – the money that comes in, can you assure us that you will indeed be consulting the people of Bramley and Horsforth, where I happen to reside?

I mention Bramley in particular for two reasons.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Lord Mayor, he has asked the question.

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: I ask the question for two reasons. Bramley happens to be my Ward but, secondly, one of my Ward colleagues is here, Councillor Denise Atkinson, who has actually contributed greatly to the well-being of this establishment. The Leeds Bradford Airport, very, very successful, is obviously worth a great deal of money. Whether you lot have got the nous to sell it for enough remains to be seen. Can you assure us that you will indeed consult the people of Bramley and Horsforth?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: My Lord Mayor, I am always happy to answer anything Councillor Hanley wants to ask. I start answering by saying that I cannot ever recall Councillor Hanley, Councillor Wakefield or any of their predecessors consulting the people of Bramley, Horsforth or anywhere else about where they intended to get the investment from that needed spending on Leeds Bradford Airport.

Consultation works both ways. One thing that I think we all know about the bids for Leeds Bradford Airport is that every single one of them included substantial multi-million pound investment packages in that airport. I think as a Council we can regard that as a great success. I have to say, though, that that is the money that these organisations have identified that needs investing. Perhaps Councillor Hanley

and those of his colleagues who are closet opponents of the sale of Leeds Bradford Airport would like to explain to their residents where they would cut our capital programme for spending on schools, on roads, on leisure facilities, on Town and District Centre regeneration, on everything else, by keeping the airport and having to invest millions of pounds of this Council's money. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Could the Executive Board member for Development advise me about plans for the future of Otley Civic Centre?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: My Lord Mayor, as Councillor Campbell is aware we have had discussions now for upwards of two years – maybe almost three – about the future of Otley Civic Centre and it is quite clear that Otley Town Council and, we are led to believe, a lot of the residents of Otley, would like to take possession of the building. A large amount of investment is required.

As an Authority we are very happy about that but a lot of investment is required and we reached the stage where Otley Town Council indicated they could contribute half a million pounds and that the city would contribute the capital receipt for a substantial piece of property in Otley that we will be shortly disposing of, which is a value of about £1m. In addition to that the City Council would carry out other external repair works to the building.

That deal, substantial though it is, is not sufficient to make the proposition which Otley Town Council have brought forward to us actually work, so we have been looking at ways in which we can close that financial gap.

What I can assure Councillor Campbell of is this, that in June of this year we shall bring forward a report to the Executive Board of Council which seeks substantially to close that gap by an additional Council contribution to ensure that we can indeed hand the building over to Otley Town Council and they will be able to carry out the necessary work for it to become an even more valuable part of the life of Otley. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Campbell, do you have a supplementary?

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Yes. Would the Executive Board member for Development care to speculate as to the reasons why the simple refurbishment of the building is proving so expensive and would he like to indicate what he feels might help progress this particular scheme.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Yes, my Lord Mayor. I will not speculate on what has caused the situation, I can tell you precisely what has caused the situation – 20 years of non-investment in Otley Civic Centre. We have talked about Oakwood, we have talked about Morley – we can talk about anywhere you want, really, but a singular lack of investment in a civic building which has put it into a state where substantial sums of money - you might not like it but it is true – have to be found to make it fit for purpose, as they say. That is the reason why and you can look in any portfolio, any department that you want and you will find millions and millions of pounds of backlog maintenance to Council buildings that we inherited and we are now seeking to put right.

Yes, what will help speed the process up – it is already happening – I think we have now got Otley Town Council to agree the precisely the basis on which the building will be transferred and we feel confident we can identify sufficient money to bridge that gap. I just am sorry it has taken us two-and-a-half years to sort it but, my goodness me, they had 24 years at it and left it in a worse state than they found it in.

At least we will be able to hand it over as a building fit for the use of the people of Otley. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR SCHOFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Could the Leader of Council please confirm the Council's commitment to investing in Crossgates through the Town and District Centre Scheme?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I am delighted to confirm that Crossgates is again one of the schemes in the Town and District Centre Scheme programme, but better news still in Crossgates is that because of improvement works likely to be carried out at the Asda store in Crossgates, we could be going to see a much more substantial – a much more substantial – improvement in the Crossgates District Centre than we could have dealt with on our own. Having said that, once again money is available now through the Town and District Centre Scheme and I repeat once again, that money would not have been there under the previous administration. They had 24 years to think about this; they never did anything about it.

Please, Councillor Schofield, do not allow the Ward Councillors over here to be claiming credit for this because this is an initiative from this administration – Conservative, Liberal Democrat, Green – that is seeing investment in all areas of our city, Crossgates included. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Thank you very much, Lord Mayor. Before ask a question I would like to thank you, Lord Mayor, for chairing the meetings very efficiently during the year - this will be your last one - in spite of the fact that you have got an unruly crowd over there that keep shouting and bawling!

Can the Executive Board Member for City Services please confirm the locations which are being considered for your administration's planned incinerator?

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. In terms of unruly mobs I think it takes one to know one is what I would say on that one.

Moving to the question in hand. A decision as to where to locate the proposed sustainable energy park has not yet been made. The process by which the site will eventually be identified is still ongoing and not yet complete. Disclosure of any information or report pertaining to potential sites would give a misleading picture, as no decision has yet been made as to where any facility will be located.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: There is a supplementary, please, Lord Mayor. Could you please explain to me why the coalition – Rag, Tag and Bobtail, you might understand it better – had decided and said what they are going to do, etc, nobody knows and give me a straightforward answer, how is it then Councillor Fox can go out and say, "The incinerator is not going to be in Adel and Wharfedale?"

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Because it damned well isn't, that's why!

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Thank you. Also, Councillor Finnigan wrote last week that it is not going to be in Morley. I would like you to reassure me that it is not going to be either Temple Newsam or east of Leeds, etc, because we have a strong feeling that the coalition has decided amongst themselves and told the people that is going out in leaflets now across the city – I am not saying it is you that's done it, I would not accuse you, Steve, of anything like that at all – where it is not going to be and they are all coalition members barring Councillor Finnigan, who happens to vote regularly with them, so that does not really matter.

It worries me somewhat, Lord Mayor, when one section of an elected body can go out and say definitely that it is not going to be there.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lyons, question, please.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: The question I am asking, Lord Mayor, is could you please tell me is it going to be in East Leeds etc and why are the people coming out in the statements like they are to say it is not going to be in these patches?

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Michael – may I call you Michael? You have asked me to comment on Councillor Fox's leaflet. Your Leader earlier asked me to comment on another leaflet. I will tell you what I will do, Mick. I will ask the Conservatives to let me look at their leaflets if you will ask me to look at your leaflets, because then I might be able to explain a little better as to why a certain Karen Marshall in Rothwell is saying that suddenly next year there are going to be two bin wagons a minute running up and down the streets of Rothwell. Two bins a minute is 120 bins an hour. Bearing in mind we have only got about 50 bin wagons on the streets, that means that they would actually have to just go backwards and forwards through Rothwell all the time and nobody but nobody in the city would get any bins lifted at all.

I am quite prepared to look at your leaflets and the Tories' leaflets, but if you would like to come and make that offer to me afterwards, then I will be delighted to do so. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Could the Executive Board Member for Learning comment on the recent Beacon Status Award for the Healthy Schools Initiative?

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Lord Mayor, I would like to congratulate everybody who was involved in gaining Beacon Status for the Leeds Healthy Schools programme. The Leeds Healthy Schools programme works now with virtually all the schools in the city and it has made outstanding progress with school achievement in gaining the National Healthy Schools Status and the more demanding now Leeds Advanced Healthy Schools Status. The latter includes, amongst other things, a focus on the environment and sustainable development and it encourages youth participation as well as the usual areas of personal, social and health education.

What really impresses me about the whole of this scheme is how it has empowered our young people and our Schools' Councils so that they take a major lead in this programme. It is recognised outside this city just how good our programme of work is. We have some of the healthiest schools now in the country. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR KENDALL: Could the Executive Board Member for Adult Health and Social care tell me if he supports the campaign by Help the Aged, Age Concern England, the Association of Directors of Social Services, Carers UK, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and other organisations for the Government to provide substantial extra funds to care for the elderly?

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: Thank you, Lord Mayor. If I can just begin with a digression, please. Last Sunday it was the Lord Mayor's Walk where some of us marched to the Armouries and back, being sponsored on behalf of various charities. I was asked by several of the charities there to make special reference the first time I was on my feet on this Chamber to Councillor Dunn, who was the first civic leader to actually do this walk on his own. He walked the whole thing with a suit and tie and

the whole chains on. That was greatly appreciated and Help the Aged and various other bodies are grateful. Thank you. (*Applause*)

To the question, Lord Mayor. It is unfortunate that this is a question and not a debate, a White Paper or, indeed, a whole Council meeting. This is the largest single important problem approaching this city over the next generation.

The report, the Rowntree report, is about the necessity for increased funding for older people and nobody really seems to understand at Government level the enormous avalanche of demand that is going to approach us in the next generation, mainly from people like us who will demand enormous expensive medical treatment, social care help and all on a scale and an expense that nobody has ever appreciated before.

The most important sentence of the whole report was, "There is no evidence that the Government is moving to address the critical issue adequately." It is the most critical issue. I urge all members to read it. As I say, we could have a three hour debate on this subject. It is an important subject. Please read it. If you can influence your MPs please bring it to their attention to. If they have any influence at all in London (a) we will be surprised and (b) will you get them on to do something about it fairly soon.

This Government seem to have a horizon of about three weeks at present to get from one crisis to another, but over the next 20, 30 years, the contents of this report by Help the Aged and such bodies is the most important single new social factor that is going to hit us. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Why are the defective uPVC doors on the Moor Grange Estate not being replaced in accordance with the resolution of the Leeds North West Homes Capital Programme Committee on 15 November 2006?

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: The quick answer to that is, it is.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Illingworth, do you have a supplementary?

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: Yes indeed, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, can Councillor Anderson explain to me why the doors have not yet been replaced and is Councillor Anderson fully aware of the extent of this problem? In particular, Lord Mayor, is he aware that there are other houses in the Ivesons that appear to suffer from a similar defect; that I have found similar houses in Kirkstall Ward which were improved under a different contract where a similar fault seems to be evident?

Is he also aware, Lord Mayor, that it is possible to silently remove the plastic trim with the edge of a craft knife and, having done so, there are some houses where a thief can get his arm or simple tool inside with a view to retrieving a bunch of keys that a householder might have left dangling in the lock?

Lord Mayor, will the administration be seeking advice from Crime Prevention Officers as to how these risks might best be minimised and will he also initiate an audit enquiry to ascertain whether this particular contractual defect might be more widespread in Leeds and to establish the total number of houses that might be affected?

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: In answering Councillor Illingworth's question, can I first say that I am disappointed that he felt it necessary to raise this issue in Council. As the Chair of the previous North West ALMO and in my current role in the

new ALMO, I would have felt it more appropriate if he had written to me to advise me that this issue had not been resolved to his satisfaction.

Your two Ward colleagues, when the ALMOs have got it wrong, have contacted me and we have tried to do something to resolve it and if you do it that way, we can all get on a lot better and we can all resolve things without using this, for whatever reason you decide to bring it here.

Anyway, if you want a comprehensive answer, I can give you a comprehensive answer. We will be here all day otherwise.

This query relates to a scheme to replace external doors to 286 properties on the Moor Grange Estate in Kirkstall. Some properties had both external doors renewed whilst others only required a single door. The scheme was undertaken by Norfolk Frames from June to November 2006 and towards the end of it Councillor Illingworth and a number of tenants raise a number of problems. Some complaints related to the fitting operations but a number related to the size of the door. As a result of representations from Councillor Illingworth, a full survey was undertaken of all properties in the scheme in November 2006, as he was concerned that the contractor had fitted doors that were too small and he feels fraudulently.

He seems to use this word all over the place and I think it is just a bit much. The survey shows that with one exception the contractor had fitted a standard sized door to all properties. In the case of the exception, regrettably, the door fitted was indeed incorrect and a new door was fitted. That then led to a claim for damages against the ALMO and that has now been settled as well.

Norfolk Frames have fitted a standard sized door on the estate and adjusted the door frame to fit the opening. The size of the frame at the top of the opening, therefore, varies in size.

Further enquiries have taken place. Regrettably, however, Councillor Illingworth exaggerates. For example, he has reported that on one property the door is about a foot out, or 300mm. The trim at the top of the door measures 90mm of which the frame being 70mm, leaving a possible gap – we are talking about the door, not between his ears – of at least 20mm. *(Laughter)*

In his letter to tenants dated 23rd March, he has recommended to tenants that they request the door be renewed in all cases and not ignore the issue due to potential disruption that may occur, but the potential gap between the frame and the door opening lintel is estimated on average between 5mm and 100mm maximum. However, until the cover trim is removed, it is not possible to measure the actual gap.

I could go on and go on and go on, but I am not going to go on and go on and go on, because there are a number of other things. I am also advised that Councillor Illingworth has raised concern that some doors are only fitted with mastic. The doors would fall out if they were not bolted in every place, so you are coming up with spurious problems.

Bring the issues to the ALMO and we will deal with it. We are currently going round the residents and asking them what the problems are. They are telling us. We have piloted it in three separate houses, we are coming up with responses. You keep saying there are more properties. We keep asking you for the addresses of the properties; you have provided eleven so far but you have not provided the rest. Today you have managed to mention it again. Tell us the addresses and we will then be able to tell you whether or not these properties are or are not going to get one, two or no doors replaced.

Please, speak to me. I know you might think I am a horrible person – other people in here might do so – but I am not. I do try and help. Speak to your two Ward colleagues; they will tell you that if you bring a query to me I do not go about shouting it from the rooftops and say, “I have solved this”, or, “I have solved that.” I do pass the information back and they can then pass it on to the residents. I do try and be fair and I would ask you to be the same way in the future. (*Applause*).

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, members. The time for questions has finished. The answers for the rest of the questions will be circulated to all Members in due course. Sorry, Councillor Anderson, Councillor Illingworth will not be able to speak to you.

ITEM 7 – RECOMMENDATIONS OF EXECUTIVE BOARD

THE LORD MAYOR: We will move on to item 7 now. Before we start, Councillor Carter, the Chief Legal Officer wants to give advice.

THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES: An issue has been raised as to whether directors of the airport need to declare an interest in this particular matter. You will notice from the Order Paper that it is one of the starred ones they have to declare an interest if it is appropriate.

Section 18 of the Airports Act 1986 places a prohibition on directors as part of the discharge of executive functions from taking part in the consideration or making any decision regarding, amongst other things, any matter relating to the activities of the company.

In my view the matter in front of you under Item 7 does not fall within the above as it relates to a Council function rather than an executive function and also it is not a matter relating to the activities of the company but rather the activities of this Council, namely the removal of Members as directors of the company.

My advice, therefore, is that Members who are directors do not need to declare a personal and prejudicial interest. However, as members have been appointed to the Airport Company by the Council and this should be on their Register of Interests, members who are directors may wish to declare a personal interest. However, if they choose to do so they can still take part and vote in this particular matter.

COUNCILLOR ATKINSON: I wish to declare a personal interest but I do not wish to stay in the room. I shall go out.

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: Personal interest.

COUNCILLOR HYDE: Ditto, my Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR HAMILTON: Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR CASTLE: Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR BARKER: Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Any other interests? Councillor Cleasby.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: I am a member of the Airport Consultative Council and that is what I am declaring.

THE LORD MAYOR: We will continue with Item 7. Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I move Item 7 in the terms of the notice, my Lord Mayor.

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

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: My Lord Mayor, when this resolution or this paper came to the Labour Group on Monday there was a fair degree of anxiety about the phraseology of para 1.3 on page 34. In particular, it says that there were two confidential appendices attached to this report. I quote the words:

“It is considered that the public interest in maintaining this information as exempt outweighs the public interest in disclosing this information as disclosure may prejudice the outcome of the disposal and the financial return to the shareholders.”

It did occur to us that there might be nine people in this Chamber – those in the Executive Board – who had seen the full information and who therefore knew the full terms of the disposal, but today each and every one of us as a Councillor is being asked to vote in disposal of all affairs and actually I do not believe, certainly because our colleagues have not leaked the information to us, I do not think any of us know the terms of the disposal.

We did not want this to become a political – if you want – issue, and therefore I know our Leader discussed it with the Leader of the Council. *(Interruption)* Just listen, I am being fair. I thought some information was going to be provided and that is why I hesitated. I was given the understanding some information was going to be provided at the beginning by Councillor Carter. That appears not to have been the case.

We in fact wanted to move a Reference Back and we were told that could not be done either. We find ourselves in a real quandary because whilst you may think – or nine of you may think - this is a good deal and some of you may have told others or not, actually we do not know what the disposal value is, nor do we know – and I have to ask these questions and I ask them in a perfectly neutral way and hope that Andrew can reassure us when he stands up – if there has been any deal done about planning issues or planning gain or whether the Planning Committee of this Council will continue to have a totally unfettered right to determine whatever applications come forward. Nor do we know – because we have not seen the appendices – whether there have been any consequential arrangements like highways works or public transport works or anything like that.

I know people may think, for Heaven's sake, what on earth is he talking about? The fact is, I would have been reassured had I seen the papers and I think it is quite perverse to say to Members of Council you must vote on this today and dispose of a huge public asset when we are not going to tell you what the asset is.

I do not think that is a political point. I think that is a point of honour and a point of integrity. I think that is a point where the Executive Members owe us trust and democracy. I think we should go *in camera* if necessary and ask members of the public and others to leave so that Councillors Harris and Carter can tell us what is the deal and then trust us that we do not divulge it any further.

Indeed, I do not think it will be too long before one of them will go on the radio and tell the world what the deal was anyway, but we need to know today, if we are going to vote for this, what the deal is, unless I have misunderstood what we are being asked to do and I do not think I am. I really seriously ask the controlling group to play fair with us and to let us know what the terms of the deal are. We cannot continue, colleagues, with this inherent secrecy which is currently vogue in this Council. Nothing is being disclosed, be it from a small issue like Roundhay Golf Club now up to this issue. We have, I think, a democratic right to know before we vote. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: Yes, Lord Mayor, I also rise to object to the excessive and wholly unnecessary secrecy surrounding this decision. It is outrageous that one of the most important decisions ever taken by this Council is in the hands of a tiny cabal meeting in secret behind closed doors.

Lord Mayor, open decision are better decisions. I have served as a Councillor for Kirkstall for 28 years and in that time I cannot recollect even one decision that was improved by secrecy, but a great many that were damaged by it. No matter how distressing or embarrassing the circumstances, I would always advise Members to tell it like it is.

Lord Mayor, the more people that are involved in this decision the more aspects are likely to be examined and the better that decision is likely to be. One aspect that certainly needs attention is the issue of transport along the A660, the railway and the A65. Last year the Development Department reluctantly admitted that the A65 and the A660 are the most congested routes in Leeds and that they are totally incapable of carrying any additional traffic from the airport. There is an opportunity to improve the rail link and rather than frittering away any capital receipts on ill-considered, short-term schemes, it would be better...

THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES: Councillor Illingworth, I am sorry to interrupt you. Can I just give advice to Council? From the speeches of Councillor Gruen and Councillor Illingworth I think there is some misunderstanding of what the purpose of Item 7 is. Item 7 is to deal with the recommendation of the Executive Board in relation to authorising the Chief Executive to effect the removal of the non-executive directors before the transaction completes. All the other recommendations of Executive Board are Executive functions, so decisions in relation to the decision to sell or on what basis it is going to be sold and the information that was available to Executive Board on which to make that decision, those are all Executive functions and are not a matter for full Council.

The only thing that Members ought to be directing their speeches to is the recommendation that the Chief Executive be authorised to effect the removal of the non-Executive directors before the transaction completes. That is the only thing that is within the power of this Council.

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: As I was trying to say, Lord Mayor, before I was rudely interrupted, the Members can only go on the papers in front of them and they have to make the best decision they can on the information that they are given. It is very difficult when you are half way through a procedure to suddenly be told that it is different to the procedure you thought you were voting on.

However, Lord Mayor, what I want to say about the airport can be addressed to the Executive Board with equal relevance and I wish to complete what I was saying. It is much better to lock any potential developer into long-term arrangements to develop the local railway.

THE LORD MAYOR: It is out of order, please. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Can you tell me why, please, he is not allowed to speak? We are getting up to speak, if a speech is down in front of us that is all we can - can you please explain why this side cannot give their point of view?

THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES: If I can refer you to page 31 of the Council agenda, it sets out there at Agenda Item 7 the Recommendations of the Executive Board and it sets out there quite clearly in that report what full Council is able to consider.

In order that you can understand the context of the recommendation which you are asked to consider it does set out the report to Executive Board which contains a whole range of recommendations that the Executive Board have to take a view on. All those recommendations are within the remit of Executive Board only. They are not within the remit of full Council. The only thing that is within the remit of full Council is the appointment and removal of directors of the airport and therefore that is why there is this recommendation to full Council for you to consider whether or not to grant authority to the Chief Executive to allow the removal of directors if that needs to take place.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Can I just come back on this? I just want to ask you to look at the agenda – whatever you call it – that was sent out, the very first page of this book. Under Item 7 it clearly says:

“...in relation to Leeds City Council’s shareholding in Leeds Bradford International Airport.”

I think shareholding does not mean directors. Shareholding means shareholding.

THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES: That is the title of the agenda item. If you look at the report the report sets out the recommendation that you need to be addressing your minds to.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: First of all, I was Chair of Highways and Transportation Committee back in the 1990s and we were summoned to an appointed members’ decision where the three of us – and the Conservative member was Margaret Atkinson – were instructed by a Council officer to open a late tender in respect of Landmark Leeds. I have regretted it ever since. There are some people here who sit on the relevant Scrutiny Board today who interviewed me about what went on at that time and realised that I was uneasy and still am uneasy.

I am uneasy about this report today. Some people might say it is actually just about removing directors and that is it, that is why it is here. Actually it is not, in my opinion, and I am entitled to an opinion, as any other Councillor is. It is actually about the consequence of the decision to dispose of the shareholding. Why on earth would we be removing directors unless it was the disposal? Council members are being asked to take a decision without all the information in front of them.

Why is it with us today, because actually the Council has not got the power to remove those directors as a consequence of that change, because those directors were appointed by this Council.

Earlier on by the way, when declarations of interest were being made, some of the newer members of Council sitting around me said, "Why is Denise the only Labour member declaring an interest?" The reason, of course, for that is that when there was a change of control in 2004, the coalition was ruthless when it came to appointments to outside bodies. Forty per cent of the Council then and now was the Labour Group and, in essence, we had always treated the Liberals and Tories fairly on outside bodies, proportionately, in accordance with the sentiments of the relevant Local Government Act and they completely disregarded that. That is why there was only one Labour member. *(Applause)* Let us get it right.

Unease about this because the total package involves sacking the existing directors, if you want to use that term, and that lies with us. Therefore we are being asked to back a report with a covering paper – and I have to say as far as I am concerned the Green Papers represent the Chief Officer of the Council and have a certain status. I agree they are not the same as a White Paper sent out to us but they mean something and on the basis of that my Labour colleagues have already spoken, because this clearly refers to disposing of our shareholding.

I would say this is the most important decision for us to consider today. Some of those issues are actually very important but we do not necessarily have an opportunity all the time to influence central government policy, and this we all know. On this one we have a decision. We can actually say "No" to this today, members. If we really wanted to we could actually say, "No."

I do not think we should be taken for granted. I do not think we should be taken for granted. There are nine members of the Executive Board with a vote and there is one who is ex-officio without a vote. That leaves 89 others. This is about trust. It is about being responsible and we are not apparently to know what the deal is as councillors – we are not being told.

You know, if something goes wrong with this deal, if this somehow goes through, who will be blamed? It will be us that will be blamed to day for agreeing to the totality of the deal. It will not be the people on the Executive Board who will say, "Actually all we could do was make a recommendation to full Council."

I want Members of Council to be treated properly and there is a way forward for Councillor Carter and his administration, if he was prepared to use the relevant Council Procedure Rules, 13.2(j) and 22.1 and 14.13(h). That combination would allow all the information to be presented to Members of Council. Obviously to comply with the rules of access to information it would have to exclude the press and the public for the duration and it may be if that was acceded to it would have to take place in a little while to allow all the relevant paperwork to be reproduced for the Members to read it, but at least the Members here would know what on earth they were really voting about, otherwise we are just lobby fodder and we are not responsible. We may as well not be here in that case. This is about the use and possible abuse of power by a small number of people who should have thought this one through. The nine of you, irrespective of politics – and as you know the nine cannot share the information. It is not as though someone thought, Councillor Taggart, you could have a word with Councillor Wakefield. No way with either Keith or Judith or any Member because we would expect them to retain that confidentiality.

This has to be done properly, it has to be done honestly and it has to be done with a sharing of all the information and that is what we want today. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Lord Mayor, as a matter of fact the Leader of the Opposition, the Deputy Leader of the Opposition and Councillor Lewis were all fully involved and briefed on this matter. It is not nine people here. In fact, twelve, including three of yours, have been fully involved in this matter.

The system that is employed in this Authority is the system that you in control established. We are following that system. You have been clearly advised by the Chief Legal Officer the matter which is under consideration and why. Regrettably you have refused to accept that advice. I therefore ask that them matter be put without further debate.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we have a seconder, please?

COUNCILLOR HAMILTON: Seconded, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: The matter has been put and seconded. Can we have voting on the question now being put first. (*Interruption*) Members, it is a recorded vote request by Councillor Taggart. Secunder, please? Councillor Hamilton.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Just for the clarification of Members, the motion before the Council moved by Councillor Harris and seconded by Councillor Hamilton is that the motion be now put, namely the proposed resolution in Item 7 be voted on by the council. This is a preliminary motion. Do you agree that debate be truncated and that this motion be now put? That is the issue before you. If the Council agrees that, then Councillor Carter who moved this item will have the opportunity in the usual way to close before a vote is taken on the substantive item. I hope that has been helpful.

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: The system is not working. Let us at least be able to record our vote in this place.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: If we can move into that, then.

(A recorded vote was taken that the motion be now put)

THE LORD MAYOR: 91 Members present, 51 in favour of the motion by Councillor Harris, one abstention and 39 against. Therefore it is CARRIED. Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I am afraid I am obviously going to have to comment on what has been said rather than what is before us, but as has been pointed out very clearly, what is before us is a procedural mechanism for removing directors appointed by this Local Authority. I want to begin by echoing Councillor Harris's comments.

The system which has been used for this matter is in line with the systems that your party put in to this Council when Local Government structures were reorganised. You were the ones who put these structures in. Indeed, it was your government that made us actually do it.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Point of order, Lord Mayor. Is he answering debate? The question has been put.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Yes, I am.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Is he answering debate or giving another political speech? I consider he is giving a political speech. Answer the debate.

COUNCILLOR MCKENNA: The question has been put. You have to move on.

THE LORD MAYOR: Members, we have been reasonable to allow a wider debate, so could you allow Councillor Carter to continue.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I will repeat, this was the structure that you brought in. We are abiding by the structures of decision-making that you introduced. You clearly do not like them. Actually a lot of us do not like the way the government has forced us into the system that we now have, but quite frankly, you did it.

On the issue itself, somebody made mention of whether the figures in relation to the value of the airport could be disclosed. I had hoped that by today negotiations would have been concluded. They have not been concluded in terms of being able to give, in a public forum, the gross and net value of the capital receipt. Let me make that very clear. I therefore have no intention of doing so. You should know this is a highly, highly technical and sensitive business transaction. The one thing that you did say that was correct is that it is probably one of the most important decisions that has been taken.

Just let me come to the point of who knows what. This Executive Board system that your government has made us implement. At the Executive Board there are the ten, eleven of us plus the observer – in fact there are ten of us and we have the extra person because Councillor Wakefield was missing at the last Executive Board meeting. However, your Leader and your two Deputy Leaders know as much about this transaction, as far as I am concerned, as any other...

COUNCILLOR MCKENNA: They are not allowed to tell us.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Neither am I. Will you listen? They know as much about this...

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: You can override the advice.

COUNCILLOR MCKENNA: Why should we listen to you when you will not let us speak?

COUNCILLOR LYONS: You are answering debate, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we have order, please?

COUNCILLOR MCKENNA: This is a debating Chamber, not a silencing Chamber.

THE LORD MAYOR: Members, can we have order, please?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Let us just deal with that, then. What this is about, Lord Mayor, it is about the power struggle in the Labour Party to replace the Leader and the two Deputy Leaders. What you are saying, Councillor Gruen, is that you have no confidence in your Leader and your two Deputy Leaders. That is what you are saying. *(Applause)* This is nothing more than a blatant attempt to destroy three senior Labour politicians by the Labour Party's own Prince of Darkness. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Carter, can you continue with the item, please?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: We are talking about a very serious business here, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: Let us talk about it.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Your party on the Executive Board have been wholly supportive of the process from the time we took it up from where you left it. If you had been against it you should have brought a resolution to this Chamber but you have not.

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: I am against it.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I know you are against it. In that case I have even less respect for you because you should have spoken up six months ago in this Chamber and put a resolution down, but you did not dare do it. *(Interruption)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Members, can we have silence, please for a second? Members, can we have some order, please, and stick to the agenda. Can we continue with the agenda please. Thank you, Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: In moving this resolution let me say this. All we have seen today is a demonstration of why this lot are wholly unfit to run a raffle, let alone a city! *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: Recorded vote.

THE LORD MAYOR: Yes, it is seconded.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Whilst the Chief Executive is organising himself, can I ask some information of you, Lord Mayor, when we do move to vote, that we are in fact voting upon 3.1 on page 31 and the recommendation to the Council is that the Chief Executive be authorised to effect the removal of the non-Executive directors – is that correct, Lord Mayor?

THE LORD MAYOR: That is fine.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Well what has all the fuss been about?

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you, Councillor Cleasby, that is the point I was going to make in terms of clarifying what it is that members are now being asked to vote upon. All of the functions with respect to the shareholding in the airport company are identified in the Local Government Act 2000 as being executive functions, therefore matters for the Executive Board. Those decisions have been taken and are, indeed, being presented to you later for information.

The particular recommendation which is before you now is a recommendation to authorise me, if such action is called for, to remove all of the current Councillor directors to enable any final disposal to take place. That is the substantive item before Councillor and that is the motion moved by Councillor Carter a few moments ago.

(A recorded vote was taken)

THE LORD MAYOR: 90 Members present, 53 in favour, one abstention and 36 against. Therefore it is CARRIED.

ITEM 8 – AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: My Lord Mayor, I move Item 8 in the terms of the notice.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we have a vote, a show of hands, please? All those in favour? Any against? Any abstentions? That is CARRIED.

ITEM 9 – MINUTES

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I move Item 9 in the terms of the notice, my Lord Mayor.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Any comments?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: My Lord Mayor, I refer to page 91, Minute 210. Yet another item where the appendix is designated exempt under the access of information procedures, as is almost every single item on this Executive Board on the Council agenda these days.

I want to actually refer to the impact in schools, in particular of the new pay and grading structure. Very rarely has there been greater miscommunication or a lack of communication or a lack of support from the centre towards schools, headteachers and governors. This item has now been presented at the Schools Forum, at the Governors' Forum and at the Headteachers' Forum and without any fear of consequence everyone who spoke at those fora has criticised the centre for the way they have dealt with the pay and grading structure – not the fact it has to be dealt with, not the fact it is complicated, not the fact that it requires time to sort out, but the fact that almost no communications whatsoever have been held with people who are responsible for managing schools, headteachers, their senior management teams and governors.

In my mail this week I have received the first proper communication pay and grading review. Does the administration not realise that there are thousands of people in schools – thousands of people – between Scale 1 and Scale 6 and that those people have been left without any certainty for months now, but when they have looked to headteachers in staff meetings, when they have looked to the governing board to reassure them of the process, none of this has been possible. None of this has been possible.

Why could there not be better communication and why is it that even at this stage now the administration says that there will be no negotiation? Individuals, women, men on lowest pay within this wider Council on the lowest pay scales will simply get a letter and be told what the result is. They will have no personal involvement, none at all, no knowledge for months and months on end and right at the end these low paid people will be told whether they are a winner or whether they are a loser.

Can you imagine what will happen, or what would happen, if that were to be applied to directors of this Council? I will tell you something, it would be sorted within a week, never mind months and months and months.

The communication aspects of this have been sadly lacking and have been a disgrace to this Council and I certainly do not want to associate our group with the shambles that you are presiding over – the shambles that you are presiding over in terms of communications to individual, lowly paid people in schools who are not getting any support because the people running the schools are not being properly briefed and informed of what the situation is and have therefore no wherewithal to help them.

For months and months these lowly paid people who Councillor Carter certainly does not know – that is Les Carter – they having nothing but uncertainty and worry in their lives while they are still doing an excellent job supporting the school and the pupils and all that matters in schools. It is high time that this matter would be sorted sympathetically.

I understand the trade union stuff, I understand the complexities, all of that. I am talking specifically – and I am addressing really specifically Councillor Brett, if he can find time before feeding the cat – to actually talk to people in schools and make sure they get a better deal.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on page 91 Minute 211, which is really bound up with the large casinos, the super casinos issue. Just to reconfirm the fact that we are not supportive of either a large casino or a super casino. We do not believe that the regeneration arguments do stand up to close scrutiny. We are aware that certainly there is an outline application in terms of a casino floating around the Elland Road area. That would clearly have a significant impact on our local residents as well and we really do want to confirm the fact that as far as we are concerned, whether it is a super casino or a large casino, we think it is fraught with difficulties and the problems with it outweigh the benefits. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR ELLIOTT: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I speak on page 99 Minute 230. The Morley Borough Independents would welcome the proposed initiatives being approved and would urge that in respect of the Town and District Car Parking Study that the parking situation in Morley Town Centre be one of the areas looked at.

We ask this because there is a strong suspicion that the parking presently available in the Morley Town Centre is being used by people commuting to Leeds which, if correct, is preventing Morley shoppers accessing the shops. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harris to sum up.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Lord Mayor, first of all the point made by Councillor Elliott. I know it has been raised under my portfolio but this will be a Development Department issue, I am sure, but Councillor Andrew Carter has made notes of Councillor Elliott's request and the request that Morley be considered as one of the first Town and District Car Park Studies will be something his department will look at.

With regard to Councillor Finnigan's point, we hear what you say. I can only reiterate what we have always said on this side, that we believe that it is perverse that we have to rely upon the proceeds of alcohol and gambling licensing to make such inroads into the regeneration of this city but that is the position which the Labour government puts us in.

On balance we have always maintained that we feel the rewards and advantages will outweigh the disadvantages, notwithstanding that the whole thing needs to be very carefully controlled and monitored in any event, as we know the matter is currently up in the air and very uncertain. It is an absurd way – a doubly absurd way – to ask a city like Leeds to run itself when it is constantly stop-start, stop-start at the whims of what the Houses of Parliament do and the inability of the Government to deliver its key policies.

One minute we are going ahead with talking to casino developers, then we have to stop, then we have to start. It is a perfect example of why central Government's overwinning powers and control over Local Government need loosening and reversing.

Councillor Harker has passed me a note and have to say I cannot read it so I am going to give it back to him! That is unfortunate.

I now come to Councillor Gruen's point on pay and grading. Let me begin by saying that it is correct, whichever way you look at it, that irrespective of gender and, indeed, irrespective of whether you are able-bodied or not, colour or creed, that you should not be discriminated against when it comes to what you are paid and so it is correct that there is equal pay legislation. That is what the Council and every other Council in the country is endeavouring to implement.

It is a great shame, however, that your Government just dropped legislation like that on us with no thought whatsoever as to the consequences for us trying to deliver what has almost been dreamt up on a whim, and this is an extremely complex, difficult situation.

It was exempt because a significant part of what is happening is subject to due to legal process. A significant number of tribunals will be held in due course to determine claims in court and it is appropriate that those things are not aired in public because they are clearly sensitive and sub judice.

I can only say what we said earlier on the airports – your Leader was present at that meeting on the 14th, he voted for it. Look at the Minute – he supported what that Minute said. Councillor Blake was there. Councillor Wakefield was there. He voted for it. Councillor Blake was there. She did not speak against it. This issue has been to Executive Board time and time again. It has had support from all members of Executive Board. It is difficult and it is complex.

However, for you to say that it has just been foisted on people without notification, without discussion, without consultation, is such a distortion of reality it is incredible. We are working literally on a minute by minute basis with the unions, with all unions, and the unions rep and the unions (*Interruption*) – let me finish – the unions represent the employees. The unions represent the employees in schools. The governors have been consulted, senior management of schools are consulted. We are in virtual permanent session in terms of discussion, consultation, to try and find a way forward.

The equal pay legislation so far as cost this city £20m. That is not a bad thing. It is a good thing that people be paid equally. The problem is, we have had to find that money from nowhere at significant expense and there will be further expense yet subject to what happens with tribunal, subject to what happens with the final agreement through the unions or those being consulted.

It is disingenuous of you to raise the matter here in the way in which you have. You know the leaders of your group have fully participated in this process. I have said to you many, many times, that if I agree to something as the Leader of my group then I stand behind what I have done and if they try and disagree with me, it is for me to take it on the chin and to deal with it. It is frankly farcical that almost everything that your Leader and Deputy Leaders in observations on Executive Board participate in and agree to and you come here to Council and somehow make out that either they had no hand in it or they are an irrelevance. Either way it is a shambolic way for the opposition to behave.
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: Lord Mayor, I guess I should feel privileged to be able to stand on my feet and not hear that motion that the question be put, but I suppose if Councillor Harris does not like what I am going to say then he may well move in and intervene.

Lord Mayor, I would like to speak up for West Leeds - not just for Armley, for West Leeds. We have got David nodding his head vigorously as the Chair of Closing the Gap and on this item I am pleased to note that Leeds City Council has been granted £15.6m under the LEGL scheme. It is much to be welcomed.

The problem, David and Andrew, is that West Leeds are excluded from this. The bid focuses on 31 super output areas in Leeds which is in the worst three per cent nationally. West Leeds does not have any of these, so we do not qualify. If we did have, if it was the worst ten per cent, then we would have 31 areas and usually qualify. It is a problem for us but, Lord Mayor, there is a double whammy as well and I know we will hear, "That is the Government's scheme, that is how they presented it, that is how we have to implement it, it is nothing to do with us."

If we move on, Lord Mayor, we can see that West Leeds has only received 468k, which is just about five per cent of the total for our Council's regeneration service for spending on reducing worklessness. We only received five per cent of the total.

In comparison the North-West of the city have been paid £1.1m, which is eleven per cent of the total. The East of the city received by far the highest amount of funding - and I think I can understand that - and that is 34% which equates to £3.3m.

This is due to the fact that there are relatively low numbers of Job Seekers Allowance claimants in the west of the area although - and I have to make this point strongly - although there are many more than in the North-East which has received a considerably higher portion of the total fund available. They have received 23% which equates to £2.3m.

So David, Andrew, get off your backsides. How can you say that £468 for West Leeds is a good service? Start fighting for our area. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: I have got to say that, Jim, I think you misunderstand it. As I understand this there are some further papers to come forward on this, so we are not going to be left out. I can tell you as one of the persons - I think Janet was partly involved in it through the District Partnership, who helped to put together a bid from West Leeds, there is a lot more about it than is in this document, this present one that we have got here.

I have got to say I welcome we are making a start. I welcome getting the £56.6m and making a start. I will say exactly the same as Jim - we need in West

Leeds – all right, there are other parts of the city that may well be more deprived but to keep us going, to build us up and stop us going over the edge we need that support and I welcome it. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to comment on Minute 215 page 913 about the Elland Road master plan. You have probably read this is about potential proposals for a casino, hotels, police station, arena, over 200 new houses, retail and leisure on land next to Elland Road.

I would be grateful if Councillor Carter could provide us details on the consultation process that is mentioned in the report and can he reassure us that the consultation with local people will be better than the consultation with Ward Members? We literally walked into the briefing with a copy of the Yorkshire Evening Post with Councillor Carter all over it, very much as though it was a done deal. I would be grateful if you could outline that consultation process.

Clearly in Beeston, Holbeck and Cottingley there are different views on the proposals. There are some in favour, there are a lot against. Some support bits of the proposals and not others. What is clear is that local people want reassurance on a number of issues, in particular around the issue of transport, traffic and parking.

In our briefing we asked if any work had been done or would be done to assess the likely increase in traffic as a result of the potential different uses and also what impact a reduction in car parking space would have on parking in the area. Officers had not done that work. I would be grateful if Councillor Carter could tell us if that work will be done and if the details of it will be made public.

Also, the issue of public transport. Can he reassure us that genuine public transport will be provided and this is not just a tick box exercise to make the proposals sound good?

The second issue, a lot is made in the Executive Board report about the proposals assisting in the regeneration of the Beeston Holbeck area. If he really believes that, will he tell us today that any capital receipts coming out of the proposals will be put back into the local area?

Also on the issue of jobs can he reassure us and tell us what initiative will be put in place to ensure that people across South Leeds are supported into employment in any of the facilities that emerge?

Finally, sir, does Councillor Carter recall that when Leeds United in 1999, I think it was, came forward with proposals to build an arena next to the stadium, the Beeston Conservative Party and the Beeston Liberal Democrats opposed the proposals for the arena and effectively campaigned against any development at Elland Road. Can he tell us if that is still their position and whether he supports it?

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on Minute 232 page 99 regarding the deputation re bus services in Richmond Hill by the Bus Action Group there at the last full committee meeting.

I would like to give Members an update in my role as Deputy Chairman of West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Authority. I met with representatives of the group and with Ward members and also with an officer from Metro and someone from First Bus to review the bus services in that area.

The problem that they were experiencing was that there were two hourly services going through from – there was a 62 from Cross Green which goes through

to Leeds and then to St James's and then the 60 which went through from Cross Green and then looped round Woodhouse. During the evening there was not a problem with the service but during the day time, because of traffic congestion in Leeds, it was proving an unreliable service.

With these consultations what we have managed to do is, First are now putting on a half-hourly service which is the 62 during the day time and they will be providing a new route 58 which goes from the city covering the Woodhouse and St James's area, so it splits it up but increases the frequency of buses through the Richmond Hill area.

That starts with the new change in the bus timetables from 22nd April, which is this Sunday, which is the same date, I note as the St George's celebration in Morley which I would love to come to but unfortunately I am doing the London Marathon again, so please accept my apologies. I am running it for a local charity called ABSED in Yeadon. I am hoping for about four-and-three quarters. Thank you.

Really, I just wanted to give an update that those changes come into place this Sunday and hopefully there is an improved service for the residents there. We are also looking at the possibility of one or two additional bus stops that have been highlighted by residents and the information that one or two of the stops were wrong, that has now been corrected. I just wanted to give an update that things are happening there. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak to Minute 236, page 100, Leeds Bradford Airport. Lord Mayor, I was hoping to take the opportunity of this Council meeting to review the Councillor's involvement at the airport over the years because, as we know, the decision has been taken that we are going to seek private investors to help provide airport services for the city and for West Yorkshire.

I was therefore a little bit dismayed to see the display that we had earlier, particularly the comments from Councillor Taggart.

Councillors have been involved in the airport for quite a long period. I have to say that at the time that Councillors from the West Yorkshire area became involved in the airport, it was due to the fact that they were the best vehicle possible to take the economic and strategic interests for the people of West Yorkshire forward in this particular area. Shall we say they have the economy of scale.

During that period the Councillors who have served on that board in my own limited experience – but of course I know that Councillor Atkinson who is here today has done it for a lot longer – she has told me that throughout that time those Councillors have made sure that the best interests of the airport are paramount over party-political allegiances.

I have to say, though, just to correct Councillor Taggart's recollection of how the parties have worked at Leeds Bradford airport from the Leeds perspective in particular, it is not anomalous that Denise is the only Labour representative as the official opposition on the Airport Board, because I seem to remember when I was the only official opposition member of the Board on Leeds Bradford Airport and the first time that I came to a board meeting at Leeds Bradford Airport the Labour hunter, as I have to call it, of the combined five authorities actually met separately to the other parties. If you are talking about getting crumbs from the table right now, I literally had the crumbs from the lunchtime buffet after the Labour group had actually had their fill and we were called down to have our five minutes of voting. Can I just say, I am not going to accept that little bit of revisionism from Mao Tse Taggart. *(Laughter)*

To get back to the airport, as I was saying, the Council has been involved for a long time and it has a very, very good record of doing so, but the thing that the Council is doing in being involved in the airport is ensuring that the business of the airport is healthy and that it thrives and that it is able to provide the services for the people of this city and West Yorkshire but also, of course, to ensure that the employees within the organisation of the airport have their future safeguarded.

As I said, in the past the economy of scale meant that the Council was the best body to make sure that that happened. We are now in very different times. The airport industry, the aerospace industry, the airline industry are all now very major, multi-billion pound concerns and the amount of investment which is needed to keep pace as an ambitious city amidst an ambitious region, that level of investment is simply something which it has become clear the Council cannot support either ourselves or our friends in Bradford, in Wakefield, in Kirklees or in Calderdale.

I have to say that keeping up with change is something that we have to do as shareholders and as Boards and the decision to go forward and talk to private investors for the airport is one which is a responsible decision.

If we are to ensure that the people who are employed in that airport and who are our constituents – predominantly in North-West Leeds I have to say but across the wider city and, of course, other parts of West Yorkshire – if we have to safeguard their future we need to make sure that that airport stays competitive and that we can provide services properly for the people in our city and the surrounding district.

Maybe it is time, as I said at the Board meeting we had last, to realise that simply not being owners of the airport does not mean to say that we are not still very good friends of the airport. We are still there as a planning authority, we are still there in the local strategic partnerships – we are all there to ensure that the airport plays a bigger, brighter future for West Yorkshire and for this city. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Briefly, first of all, as regards Councillor Elliott's comments on the previous portfolio. I will be meeting officers, I think, next week about the extra money for parking reviews and such and I will make sure that we regard Morley as being a priority. I do appreciate the problems there as well as many other towns around the centre of Leeds.

LEGI. I am afraid, Jim, you have completely misread it. You have not read the background papers. LEGI is based on three hubs – East, South and West Leeds. Because of the way we have constructed our bid we are able to invest money outside of the worst areas, the super output areas, and that is what we intend to do. Quite frankly, I will take no lectures from you about investing in West Leeds. We are investing more in West Leeds - and that is probably what has got under your skin – than you were ever able to achieve and we shall go on doing that.

I would remind you, Councillor McKenna, when you were in power, if you had put this bid together for the LEGI bid, you might have been successful – I doubt very much if West Leeds would have been included because it never was under your administration.

Elland Road. If Councillor Ogilvie had been at the meeting I attended with the Beeston Forum, which was attended by Councillors Gale and Congreve, he would have heard the assurances I gave the residents there. In fact, I told the residents that this plan was going to come out for consultation before it appeared in any newspaper - indeed, before, actually, anybody knew because I thought it would look

not particularly good had I been to see them one week and a fortnight later they would have heard of this in the normal way.

I assured the members of the Beeston Forum - and I am quite happy for this assurance to be given to all the people of the areas – that there will be full and proper consultation as there was, indeed, with your leadership yet again and, indeed, they were briefed prior to anything appearing in the paper. I make no apology for appearing in the paper. It is a very crucial area of land for regeneration in the city.

There is a very marked difference between what is the series of options - none of which is fixed in our minds - that are now being consulted upon, and what you did in conjunction with Leeds United all those years ago.

The first thing is we are segregating by means of the way in which we configure Elland Road, the residential areas from what will be perhaps the leisure areas. I actually think that will be a very, very forward-moving step that will protect local residents from perhaps the downsides of large scale leisure development, but that is by no means decided. You mentioned yourself the fact that we have included the possible relocation of a large police station. There is the housing that I have already mentioned.

The proposals which are now being consulted upon – and they are being consulted upon – I have no fixed views whatever about. I am more than happy to listen to the views of the residents, as are my colleagues on the Executive Board. We think that the development that takes place there will ultimately be a huge benefit and must be a huge benefit to that area as well as a benefit to the rest of the city.

If I may comment on the airport. I had intended to and I still intend to make this comment first of all to the staff of Leeds Bradford Airport. I think we should record our thanks to the, past and present, for the way in which they have helped. They have been the major driving force in making that a very successful airport. What you have seen in the public domain and what we have all seen, is the fact that the private sector bidders, all of whom have got experience of running airports, are prepared to invest substantial sums of money in improving and moving forward that airport.

Stuart summed it up exactly correctly in terms of times moving on and times changing. We have to ask ourselves – and we all did ask ourselves, including your leadership – whether it was a core function of a Local Authority to be a major shareholder and therefore a major investor in an international airport, particularly when all around the world the public sector is getting out as fast as it can from the running of airports.

I do thank the staff very much indeed for putting us into a position where I believe we will come forward with an extremely advantageous offer for the airport and for the city and, indeed, for the five Local Authorities that are the current shareholders.

I repeat this. Some of the people who have indicated an interest in purchasing the airport have been prepared to commit millions – millions – of pounds in investment in that airport. If we were to have said to the people of Leeds, “Actually we are not going to consider selling it but we are going to invest, the five Local Authorities, £100m over the next five or six years and I am afraid that means two things. It means we are going to have to borrow it and the interest will go on your Council tax and some of it we are going to have to take out of our capital programme so we will not be able to invest in schools like we are doing, we will not be able to

spend the record sums of money we are spending on repairing roads and footpaths", I wonder what the people of Leeds would have said? I have a pretty good idea.

What the people of Leeds are going to get from what has been decided is the best of every possible world, and I repeat that, of course, we will make sure that the priorities of the people of this city are addressed in the way in which we spend any of the money.

I want to conclude by saying this. The display I heard a little earlier was the most regrettable and unfortunate display I have ever seen. I have never seen senior Councillors of one political party made such fools of by a raucous caucus of their back bench members who simply have not grasped or understood the process that we have been going through for a number of months. Councillor McKenna continued interjections merely go to underline the point that I am making. You have behaved today in a disgraceful manner...

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: No, you have. You have. Anti-democratic. You have.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: ... not only to this Council but to your own leadership whom you have severely undermined. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR HUSSAIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak to Minute 193 on page 86. As a Ward member for Hyde Park and Woodhouse I am delighted with the decision by granting a long lease the Council is safeguarding affordable housing for mature students with families for many years to come. These students and their families will in turn help to create a more balanced local community which benefits everyone. The need for balance communities is essential in this city. They bring vital economic and social benefits that aid regeneration and community well-being. This is a positive step by this Council and one that I am sure will be roundly welcomed by this Chamber. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking to page 86 Minute 194, which is about delivering affordable homes specifically to families.

Really it is just to raise the issue within the transfer and utilisation of 77 acres. There are, as I understand it, two sites in Morley we will be working very closely with other partners to provide affordable homes for Morley families. We are particularly keen on making sure that we grasp these opportunities as quickly as possible and we are also grateful to the administration for upping one of our sites from a Division 3 up to a Division 1 - or the Premiership – at this particular point and we look forward to some substantial progress that will ultimately provide affordable homes for Morley families. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR EWENS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I speak to the same minute as Councillor Finnigan, 194 on page 86 I very much welcome this increase of land being made available for affordable housing which we need in all areas of the city. For the last three years I have spent a lot of time talking about the difficulties of planning decisions which are not demand-led and which have not been family friendly, and I think that this gives us the opportunity to develop more with social housing partners.

It will relieve some of the strain on existing provision. We will go ahead, I hope also on work on empty properties which will also help to alleviate the difficult situation of housing in this city and I hope it will all be a good example that we will have far more affordable and social housing in the city. Thank you. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on the Minutes on affordable housing and EASEL, but first of all I think Councillor McKenna really needs to find out more about the indices of multiple deprivation, because he was saying earlier on that he in effect want resources to be taken away from poorer areas to be given to richer areas.

Please, Jim, go away and find out what the SOAs are all about. You are wanting LEGL money for your area taken from my area.

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: No, I said rightly so in East Leeds.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: I commend to Council the initiative for the Strategic Partnership model for delivering affordable housing. This is one of several ways in which the administration is seeking to provide more affordable housing in Leeds. If subsequent speakers from the opposition criticise it, I would point out that it ticks all the boxes from the New Labour Government's scheme of affordable housing and it is fully in line with New Labour Government's proposals for modernising Local Government. We all know what modernising Local Government means – it is code for privatisation of Council functions, but you know all about that because you were doing it as well.

At the last Council meeting Councillor Richard Lewis was speaking about affordable housing as well and it was a very well-received speech and was very interesting to listen to. It sounded at the time as if it was a shopping list of ideas picked up at a housing seminar for opposition Councillors, so I went back and had a look at what was being proposed.

Richard did say that he welcomed the initiative of the special purpose vehicle. He conjoined that with criticism of Plans East and the presumed lack of affordable housing in East Leeds, so I am not quite sure whether he was talking about the joint venture company, which is the EASEL initiative, or the Strategic Partnership, which is the affordable housing initiative, and perhaps he will enlighten us a bit later on.

On his shopping list he talked about using nomination rights. The administration does that. He wanted to identify appropriate sites in Council ownership for affordable housing. The administration has done that. He wanted to work with self-building organisations and housing co-ops. The administration has done that. He talked about homesteading. That is the only thing that I am aware of that the administration is not doing at the moment.

He also mentioned that he wanted the ALMOs to be on a secure financial footing in order to build Council homes. As far as I am aware, the ALMOs are on a secure financial footing and they can build Council homes if they so wish.

What is slightly curious is that if they are not on a secure financial footing, presumably we were misled when you were running the Council. There was some doubt as to whether the ALMOs would be able to afford the decency programme by 2010 but we are assured by all of the ALMOs that they can. Five out of six on Richard's list is pretty good for the current administration, I would suggest.

Moving on to EASEL, the Labour Party is in a bit of a mess on EASEL because it is moving to a position of opposition to EASEL. It is a shame that Plans East could not last week talk about EASEL due to probably officer mismanagement on that but we will cope on that anyway. Labour are in a sort of Vicky Pollard moment over EASEL – it is, yeah but no, but yeah but no, but yeah but no, but yeah.

The criticisms on EASEL from Labour at the moment are there is not enough affordable units. Councillor Selby has been very prominent in saying that. We have checked that out and starting at 15% of affordability on Phase 1, moving up to 25% of affordability on the later stages, that is the greatest proportion of affordable housing across the whole of the UK. Better that.

They criticise the fact that the deal is with a private developer and property speculators. That is what you proposed originally. They criticised that it is for profit – this from a party that has given us PFI where people are having to pay six times the actual cost of things. They are criticising the delay in doing it, saying that when the Lib Dems and Tories took over the Council the contract was ready to be signed. That is just not true because there was no-one to sign it with at the time. There is now.

They criticised that EASEL is not reserved for Gipton people or “our people”. I do not know what that is code for – who are “our people”? Is that Leeds people? Which Leeds people? Is it all Leeds people, or is it UK citizens or is it people entitled to housing in the UK? You really have to be a bit more specific. They have also criticised EASEL for not providing bungalows. We will, of course, come to that later. I will say, of course...

THE LORD MAYOR: Your time is up, Councillor Pryke. Could you finish?

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: There was no Council plan and no ALMO plan for bungalows. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: I think you said everything that could be said about affordable housing there, Ralph.

I am speaking to Minute 194 page 86 and page 97 Minute 227 – that is the Strategic partnership to deliver affordable housing and then the Leeds Affordable Warmth.

First of all can I welcome this delivery vehicle for affordable housing. I think we have done quite a bit through our Section 106 moneys to get affordable units but there is a lot more we have to do and this will be an opportunity of doing something where there is a major problem for people on ordinary incomes, so I welcome it very well.

On the affordable warmth strategy, I am happy to see this document and the parts that my colleague Barry Anderson and Mark Harris and myself through the Narrowing the Gap Group are getting up at eight o'clock – or meeting at eight o'clock – on a Wednesday morning has come to some fruition and thanks to Les for pushing it through.

It is a great start, this is. There is a lot more that has got to be done and we are not there yet but we are doing something more than has been done in the past and it is really, really welcome and it is going to do some good for the people of Leeds. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: We have debated the issue of the city's housing crisis on a number of occasions recently and I think we all share a view that there needs to be more done to create affordable housing in the city. I think the debate would be whether it should be rented housing or housing to purchase. I do welcome the paper.

However, I do feel there is a huge missed opportunity here and I would just like to say a few reasons why I am unhappy with what has been produced by the administration.

Firstly, can I say that the report was somewhat misleading. There is nothing in it that indicates that a huge chunk of the 77 acres identified as housing sites are sites which the ALMOs have already earmarked for housing, demolished homes from and paid out home loss on.

What is the payback for the ALMOs which have already done most of the work for you? Certainly there are sites within my Ward where the ALMO, Leeds West Homes, as was, paid out a huge amount of money, has done all the groundwork and I am not sure where the payback is for that.

One thing is clear - there is nothing to encourage ALMOs to be able to identify further sites for affordable housing other than pure altruism. It was to encourage ALMOs to think beyond decency and about regeneration that we allowed ALMOs to keep a portion of capital receipts when they cleared sites.

Now let us look at the biggest weakness of all. One of the basic lessons in housing is that people want to live in their own communities. The affordable housing crisis in Wetherby cannot be solved in Whinmoor and the affordable housing crisis in Kippax cannot be solved in Kirkstall.

If you look at the sites for affordable housing you will find there is not one in a Tory Ward. The Lib Dems do slightly better – there is one site in a Lib Dem Ward. Seventy-seven acres and just over three of those acres are in Wards represented by the Grand Coalition.

Andrew Carter often talks about postcode politics and I am sure he will talk about it again today. Here we have it with a vengeance. If you live in their Wards and you cannot afford to buy, it is tough. Not in my back yard, as one prominent Tory once said.

The reason for this is that the starting point was not where do we have the greatest pressure for affordable homes, but where do we have housing revenue account land? The thinking still is not strategic, despite all the comments about getting housing and planning to work together. It is not happening.

One senior housing manager from my local housing association complained bitterly to me that there was not a coherent approach across the Council and that it was still on the one hand selling off development sites in areas of desperate need of affordable housing for best consideration without considering any covenants for a percentage of affordable housing.

The word “regeneration” appears once in the report and the lack of awareness of its importance is a serious flaw. Let me give you an example. There are sites in the west of the city, which I will not identify, formerly occupied by unpopular Council housing and surrounded by an estate which still has a not wonderful reputation. Temptation is, unless you think strategically, that it is used for affordable housing for rent because it has a low capital value – easiest thing to get the housing associations building there.

Actually, that is the last thing you want because if you are serious about creating sustainable communities, you do not want to replicate what you have had before. You do not want to bung in affordable housing, particularly affordable rented housing, on cleared sites on estates that have not succeeded in the past.

A couple of other points. The involvement of local members is not mentioned once in the report. One of the strengths of the old Leeds Partnership Homes, which I realise most of you will not remember, is that local members did have an influence and I am sure that Andrew Carter remembers his influence over the schemes in Rodley and some of your older members will have similar memories.

This report does not mention how local members will be involved at all. Local members are the people who know best what is needed in their communities and how existing communities work. Housing associations by and large look at sites as development opportunities and that is why they often come a cropper. We should be giving hope to people across the city, even within the limits of the scheme. I do ask whether you have been challenging enough of officers. Could not one potential site be identified in the north of the city for affordable housing? Adel and Wharfedale, Calverley and Farsley, Guiseley and Rawdon, Otley and Yeadon, Harewood, Horsforth, Wetherby, Weetwood – not a single half acre is identified as an affordable housing site. I think that is a disgrace. I think it is something you need to address and I think you are letting down the people that you represent. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I also rise to comment on page 86 Minute 194 on affordable housing.

I think we are all, in this Chamber, in favour of genuinely affordable housing. Anybody who stands for public office cannot fail to be moved by the plight of young families just starting off in life who cannot afford to live in the areas where they grew up.

In Kirkstall we have a particular problem in that hundreds of former Council houses, initially acquired in the right to buy, have ended up in the hands of private multiple landlords and are now being let to the highest bidder.

I am therefore dismayed by the failure by the Development Department to insist on a reasonable contribution from the private sector to a solution to this problem. Guidance from the government, which this Council officially supports, is that all developments exceeding 15 units should now have 25% affordable housing.

Unfortunately on every opportunity so far presented to it, the ruling coalition has stuck to this issue. Sixteen flats at Headingley Station recently crept under the bar with the decision brought forward to dodge the April 1st deadline.

Far more serious is the current recommendation on the new Kirkstall District Centre, which will be discussed at the Plans Panel tomorrow. Hundreds of new units are to be constructed but the officer's recommendation is that none of these will be truly affordable because the developer cannot afford it.

Lord Mayor, this really will not do. It is no part of the planning system to look after a speculative developer who has failed to achieve good value or has paid too much for his site.

Lord Mayor, the only affordable houses on offer are those proposed for an area used by local children, an area of public open space. Meanwhile an adjacent site from the community centre, where affordable housing could have been achieved, was sold at auction for the very maximum the Council could get.

Throughout the inner city Wards much of our recreational open space surrounds existing high rise developments. It does our young children no favours

and will do nothing for their future health to sacrifice their playing spaces because this Council cannot extract a reasonable deal from the private sector. Lord Mayor, thank you.

COUNCILLOR DUNN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Members, like any other citizen I am proud of the affluence of this city and when you look round this city and look at the apartments, block after block of apartments mostly empty, affordable by the few or for the few. Go on to the outer limits and that is where you see the real Leeds and I ask you as members to come out to my Ward in Ardsley and Robin Hood and look at the area round Thorpe village, an area where new build is on par with any in the city, and ask those residents who want affordable housing whether they agree what is going on.

At this moment in time we have 59,480 properties in Leeds duly owned by the Council. There is a waiting list of around 31,000. The proposed build on the new Strategic Partnership is 375 dwellings per year. We would need to build 1,889 available units per year for the next six years to meet the demand.

Members, whilst I support fully a new initiative for dealing with affordable housing, I ask the Executive Board to look again at the targets they set for new build because at this moment the numbers that you have set are just not good enough and it is going to be a case of houses, houses everywhere but not a one to rent. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Speaking to Minute 195 on page 87. Could I start by saying that I welcome the paper on the South Leeds Regeneration Strategy and I am particularly pleased that, largely due to the efforts of Hilary Benn, the local MP, with regard to the application for the bid for the regeneration of the area, which amounts to some £90m, despite the set backs this has now been kept on the reserve list and we are hopeful that we will get this much-needed investment into South Leeds.

There is particular reference within the paper to the approach towards Middleton Park, my Ward, and particularly reference to piece of land that was due to be the site for a school to service the new Sharpe Lane development but subsequently different arrangements were made in terms of educational provision in the area. That site provides the opportunity for a really positive linkage between the new housing estate and the existing estate down in Middleton.

I want to refer, Les, to the strategy, the paper that has been mentioned today on affordable housing. Surprise, surprise, out of the total number of acres that have been highlighted for affordable housing, about 35 acres are in Middleton Park Ward, which comes to about 40% of the total, which I think completely reinforces what Councillor Lewis has been saying.

It does not take much imagination to look at the two and you suddenly find that the Throstle Road site identified as the linkage between Sharpe Lane and our estate was on the affordable housing list for development.

When you actually come to look at the maps and we got these last year, there is page after page on Middleton Park and, like Councillor Illingworth, some of the sites that have been identified are actually public open space and one are in particular we have just successfully worked to put a multi-sports area on for young people.

What I would like to know is, first of all, why our local members were not consulted on this at all before these maps were put together. There was no

consultation at all. The maps were not available at the meeting where it was discussed and I think one of the major concerns that we have, as is mentioned in the Strategy for Regeneration for South Leeds, a Regeneration Board has been put together working closely with the local community looking not just at the physical aspects of regeneration but also at education, other services, amenities, retail, community facilities.

We feel very strongly that there needs to be far more consultation but our major concern - and one that I did raise at Exec Board and I would seek confirmation from you, Councillor Carter – that the different parts of your department are actually working together and, in particular, that the local regeneration strategies that are working across areas with major involvement from different agencies on the patch will be given paramount consideration when we come to looking at the development.

We have a real feeling when we look at these maps on affordable housing that one arm of the department is going ahead in one direction and another arm is going ahead on the other. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR AKHTAR: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Can I speak on page 96 Minute 224 on the regeneration. Before I speak, it is sad to see the opposition Labour Councillor not present in the Chamber while we are discussing a very important debate about the future of regeneration in my Ward which has been deprived of the regeneration for many, many years.

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: He is at a funeral. Take it back and apologise.

COUNCILLOR AKHTAR: I would like to thank the Neighbourhood and Housing for the hard work they have put in in progress of this scheme, which will bring investments of hundreds of millions of pounds in Leeds, one of the largest regeneration schemes in the country which has also been supported by myself and Councillor Alan Taylor.

However, I think I should point out that the local Labour Council once again seems to have a different view and do not want this scheme to go ahead unless they can claim the benefit for themselves.

Can I just also point out, my Lord Mayor, just recently in my Ward the Yorkshire Evening Post covered an article about the private landlord, which has been disgraced property, one of the worst properties in the city. I hope Les Carter is listening to me and I hope that Les Carter will act upon those private landlords who are causing the mayhem and the problems for my residents in Gipton North and Gipton South.

Can I also add that this is an opportunity for me to say that residents up and down in Gipton North and Gipton South are demanding for many, many years the health centre and I hope over the future the people of Gipton will see a regeneration package with the health centre as well. Thank you, my Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR SCHOFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Just partly to echo what Councillor Akhtar said about us all welcoming the improvements that are to come in the future from the EASEL scheme.

In the Halton Moor/Osmondthorpe parts of Temple Newsam Ward, over the past three years we have seen lots of small scale but nevertheless significant improvements to the environment, to the state of the housing and to the reduction in the number of empty houses. I am sure we are all impatient to see much bigger scale improvements to make use of the empty land, the land that has been grassed

over and laid empty for many years created by the failures of the previous administration. In fact, I think members will recall that conditions were so bad in Halton Moor/Osmondthorpe that they are having to ship people in from London to try and fill up the empty properties.

Things have changed remarkably over the past three years and the scheme with Greenwich Borough was wound up because those people were no longer needed to fill the empty houses. We had got plenty of local people who would like to live close to their existing families.

We have got plenty of empty sites and we are impatient for work to begin, but it is rather sad to say what we heard earlier would perhaps blight some of the improvements to come. The private developer needs to develop sites and attract private owners.

Mischievous talk about incinerators – it started off as an incinerator, then it was a big incinerator, then it was a giant incinerator. The latest leaflet it is a massive incinerator. What is going to be next week's leaflet – a very, very, very, very, very big incinerator? The same incinerator has popped up in Rothwell, it has popped up in Morley, it has popped up in Garforth. It cannot be so big – it must be on a trolley, wheeling it round! *(Laughter)*

It is cynical politics at this time of year to create scare stories and blight the very people that Councillor Lyons spent many years representing under the old Richmond Hill Ward and those poor people who suffered under Richmond Hill and his contributions now have the benefit of sharing the Ward with two excellent Conservative Councillors and I can assure everybody in the room that many of those residents who suffered under the old administration welcomed the input that has been made, not only by the coalition as a whole but by Councillor Hyde and, humbly, myself. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. As people have commented it is very good to hear David Schofield's last speech. *(Applause)* If it is a question of a history of truth then he is the last person to tell anybody in this Chamber about misleading people on certain Wards. As somebody reminded me just – although I was thinking of it – I clearly remember a leaflet some years ago where he was saying Barnbow was going to be given to asylum seekers deliberately to wind it up. A bit like your recycling target of 60%, David.

I want to talk about EASEL because when it was a twinkle in the MP for East Leeds' eye, and he used to come in to our office I think with Richard and myself and a few others, we said that this was the biggest opportunity we had to transform that part of East Leeds. You get once in a lifetime. We said two things. Firstly, it is so important that we have got to do two important things. Firstly, it has to be all-party and, to their credit, Councillor Carter's, it has been all-party because this is something that we need to work together on. Secondly, it has to connect, this transformation of housing has to connect with the people of East Leeds who have the most super output areas of deprivation in this city.

We have had previous experience of successful interventions in training and I recall the partnership between the Council and Tesco that actually managed to get people into jobs from training. In fact not only did it get us Beacon Status in this city as a national award, which you have been talking about today, but it also transformed the unemployment figures from 15% to 7% and it made a massive difference.

Sadly, as I said at the last Council, the problem of unemployment and deprivation has not gone away from East Leeds and, in fact, unemployment has gone up 10% to 15% in the East Leeds Wards over the last year or two.

I am afraid if you look at the unemployment figures in this city, 60,000 what they call now worklessness, suffering from worklessness, most of them live in that part of the city. Most of those people need the assistance and help and support of the Council.

As I speak today, as I stress the importance of making sure a Council intervenes on Closing the Gap, be it postcode politics or whatever, this is what we must all agree. The East Leeds, the South Leeds and West Leeds training bases are being closed and 30 to 40 people are being made redundant who could offer assistance to those people in need in that part of Leeds.

It is no good Councillor Harris and the Liberals saying it is a Labour Government. I have got documentation that says that we lost a contract, a New Deal contract – and I have the documentation from Ministers and Civil Servants – through the incompetence of their administration.

It is no good if you are talking about Closing the Gap, and if you really mean closing the gap, trying to regenerate an area without a training and skills department. It is no good talking about the need to address inequality without a training and skills department. If we want EASEL to be successful, to transform the lives of people, Councillor Carter you have got to go to your Liberal leader, your boss, and make a plea to that part and tell them that if we really want to take this opportunity of a lifetime, if we really want to move people, then we have to put back in place in this Council a training and skills department which can address the needs of those people in East Leeds who deserve it and need it and should be a part of a local government commitment. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR MORGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Page 96, Minute 224. I would like to comment today on the EASEL Regeneration Area report relating to the outcome of the additional negotiation period and I am in no way, let me tell you, like Vicky Pollard. Somebody mentioned Vicky Pollard over here.

Two questions. When are we going to see the affordable houses for rent being built in the city? When is the endless rhetoric going to stop and action going to start?

I spoke several months ago of the 1,897 families waiting for a home in my Ward of Killingbeck and Seacroft. Since then those numbers have dramatically increased. We now have 2,440 people waiting for a home and very few properties available.

Whilst I welcome projects such as EASEL which will provide around 110 affordable homes to buy in the East Leeds area, admittedly an extremely small step in the right direction – what concerns me is the lack of affordable homes for rent. I have been told that discussions about affordable homes for rent through the EASEL scheme are ongoing, nothing has been confirmed, there is only a possibility of homes being made available for rent, so we do not even know for definite that there will be any for rent through EASEL.

I read with interests the article in the Yorkshire Evening Post a few weeks ago that saw Councillor Carter praising the 77 acres identified for affordable housing in this city, but were these sites not actually ALMO land and as a result of Council house clearance?

I am here to represent those vulnerable people in Killingbeck and Seacroft who need an affordable home to live but please, let us not forget those in other Wards across the city who are just as needy.

We need to sort this out, stop talking about it and get down to business. You have made plans for 1,100 affordable units this year but what about the 1,889 recommended by the Housing Market Assessment? How will you be tackling the shortfall? Will this shortfall increase in volume each year? Why has a decision not been made on how many properties will be aimed at the affordable rented market? So many questions that remain unanswered.

Lastly, let us not forget, people need help to live in an area close to their families, friends and support network. They need help to live in a house that they can afford and, as elected Members of Leeds City Council, it is our responsibility to help them, to listen to their needs and to deliver what the people of Leeds want.
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR SELBY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Same Minute, page 96, 224. First of all I listened with some interest to what Councillor Akhtar said, or the allegations and comments he made so far as Councillor Harington was concerned.

Can I point out to Councillor Akhtar that Councillor Harington is not here because he had to go to a funeral. He will be here later. I am sure that had you been aware of that before you made those remarks you would not have done so. Can I take it that you will now apologise and withdraw?

Councillor Pryke made some comments about the meeting of Plans East last week. Quite rightly he commented there was a problem insofar as the documentation was concerned. That is putting it mildly. In respect of each and every application for the EASEL sites, we found that the recommendation was to defer and delegate to the Chief Planning Officer subject to various conditions but including subject to receipt of revised plans – plans that no member of the Plans Panel had seen, no Ward member had seen and that, to say the least, was quite intolerable. I would hope that the Executive Member for development when he speaks to the Director will point out that so far as Plans Panels are concerned on an all-party basis it is not good enough to be asked to consider major planning applications of this nature when half the information is not available.

So far as the sites themselves are concerned, as matters have progressed, houses have been demolished but there are still quite a number of people still living in the area. Those people are living in effect in what could be termed bomb sites. The properties nearby are subject to vandalism, they are subject to arson attacks. One property last night was attacked twice, set on fire twice. The people who live there are suffering tremendously.

To that extent can I ask the Executive and Les to consider very sympathetically looking at the possibility of allowing rent freezes and rent rebates to those tenants who are still living there, who are living in those areas and who are living in those intolerable conditions, compensation of some sort to owner-occupiers who are still waiting to have their houses purchased by the Authority and also to look again at Council Tax rebates because, again, people are living in what can best be described as a bomb site.

If we can give financial assistance to Leeds United because of their problems, we can certainly give assistance to the residents living in the clearance areas who

are still there waiting to be rehoused, waiting for their houses to be bought by the Authority, so can we look at that sympathetically?

Further, so far as properties themselves are concerned, some people have been told that if they do not agree to selling their property at a certain point they are going to be threatened with compulsory purchase. Can I have an assurance that before we go down the line of threatening compulsory purchase, every effort is made to seek a resolution of the problems, hopefully by allowing the developers, if necessary, to talk directly to them?

I do not want to come on to the question of properties that are due to go on the site. Certainly residents in my Ward and I know in the Anderson Terrace area, were concerned that they wanted bungalows, not houses for sale to go there. Could the Executive Member and also local Ward Members tell us whether they agree with the view of residents that it should be bungalows and properties for rent to go there rather than properties for sale? That again is something that the local communities in both Wards and all Wards are particularly concerned about. With that, I look forward to hearing what Les has to say.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor J L Carter to sum up.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: My Lord Mayor, there have been 14 speakers so it will be very hard to give a comprehensive answer to anyone, but just let me try to start with.

May I say to Councillor Hussain, thank you for your comments. Yes, we are delighted that we were able to look after that property and buy it at the right price. Councillor Finnigan, thank you for your support and I am delighted that you supported us on that in Morley. I am really delighted because, regardless of what they say, you came in, you discussed, you negotiated for your people. They just want to stick their head in the sand.

Councillor Pryke - excellent speech, Councillor Pryke. Absolutely excellent speech because unfortunately I was not here when Councillor Lewis made his speech before and I think Councillor Ogilvie made some attack on me in my absence last time, but I will have him later, don't worry!

Councillor Lewis made points which you took away and you have found it was incorrect, incorrect, incorrect. Councillor Blackburn, I am not going to say anything on heating because the heating is there. You have worked very hard and some other people have worked very hard and I will not deal with that.

Let us to go Councillor Lewis. Councillor Lewis, I love it. He has read a book recently – he must have read a book or something - and found out what this affordable housing is about. I will tell you this, he did not know when he was in charge of it. He had not a clue. When we took over there was nothing. There were no plans whatsoever and when people over there start talking about we need time, too long it is going on – you have had 24 years and done nothing and you are a disgrace to the people you represent. I will tell you that. You are an absolute disgrace to them because you did nothing, nothing, nothing and I am appalled – I am appalled.

Of course it is going to take years. You cannot negotiate a £1.4b deal overnight. Do not be silly. What do you understand about business? Nothing?

The one apology I must make today is to Keith Wakefield. I am not a vicious man and I hope Keith will accept my apology when I make it to him. I said to him in

the Executive Board in his leadership, 59 houses were delivered through the planning system and through housing corporation grants. I apologise to you, Keith. It was untrue.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: 139.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: No, you were in charge of Housing at the time, not the Leader of Council. These are the people screaming at us producing houses. 2001/02 he is in charge – 59 houses.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Affordable.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Affordable. 59. That is scandalous. They should be hiding their heads in shame. I cannot believe it. I honestly cannot believe the hypocrisy of the people over there who cannot achieve anything and did not in all those years.

Let us go on to EASEL for a second. For God's sake, lift your eyes up and not down on the floor. Stop playing politics with it. Some day you will be running it. I will tell you what, I am not expecting to win one seat in the area other than Temple Newsam and that is the only ones we will win. Temple Newsam are the only ones. The politics of this for me is to look after the people of East Leeds which you have failed miserably over a long period of time.

Who made the stupid crack that the ALMOs own all this land? Let me tell you that the ALMOs do not own a house, they do not own the land. This Council owns every plot of land and it owns every house. If you do not understand it you should not get up to speak, but you must talk to somebody about an understanding of this. This land is Council's land – nobody else's.

Somebody said down here – it was Councillor Blake – about departments not working together. Do you know the biggest headache he had and I had was making them work together. They were so dysfunctional when we took over it was unbelievable and now they are working together. Now they are producing plans and now they are coming forward with affordable housing plans.

Somebody mentioned that we are looking for 1889 units. That is correct and at the moment we are up to, the way we are trying to do it, 625 units through Section 101 agreements, 50 units through Regional Housing Fund Board, 370 units through the Strategic Partnership using the 77 acres, 50 units a year through the ALMO returning long-term voids.

My Lord Mayor, that still leaves us short. Some of that will be achieved by planning. A lot of it will be achieved by planning so let us go on to planning for a second. This lot talks about no houses in Adel and Wharfedale, none in Wetherby, none here, none there – you flogged the land off. There is land in the middle of Thorne that was to be used for affordable housing you sold. You sold to the highest bidder. Fine, but let me tell you this now – when planning applications are coming in round the city – and they will be in those areas – there will be a requirement for affordable housing within the planning itself, so just because the land is not there does not mean to say the houses are not going to be there. They are not all going to be piled in one part of the city.

I think, Lord Mayor, honestly, I find it is absolutely appalling that anybody sitting over there can talk about helping the people in East Leeds. I am sorry, you have been a disgrace to them.

Let me just go back to the history of EASEL. This fellow talks about the history of EASEL – it was all there and we are talking along and we are doing this. They did not want to know it. You did not want to know it. I have found the document behind the cupboard gathering dust. That is how well they have done. They were doing nothing with it whatsoever. It was like pushing a great big rock stuck in mud up a great slope. Now it is at the top and it is starting to go over – “We were all involved with it, we were all doing this, we were all doing that.” What a load of nonsense and you know it is a load of nonsense.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: It is a load of nonsense.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Finally, my Lord Mayor, let me just put this to you. In the short space of time that I have been doing this job, your government has stolen over £100m from our tenants. They have taken this year £37m from our tenants. That £100m, I could have been building thousands of houses – or several thousand houses – with that, if I had had that back, if I had not have taken it.

Do not just say they will return it back because when we sell property the government take 75% of that so the capital return is coming from the sales.

Let me just say this. If you believe it is right to take all that money, I am going to give you the chance to do something about it. I think we should start a campaign, this Council start campaigning first of all with all the Councillors, then with all the MPs, then with the tenants and the housing associations, to say come on Mr Government, we want to keep out money. We do not want you to give us some more. Let us keep that £37m and I will plough that into affordable housing and I will be able to buy some old folks' homes. Are you going to join with us? I throw the challenge out to you because if you are not, you are not but I will tell you what, the rest of this Council Chamber is and I think over *there* they are, to say they are not prepared any longer to see the government stealing £37m a year from our tenants. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Comments on Children's Services. Councillor Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: My Lord Mayor, speaking to Minute 196 on page 87. Just as a bit of background, this is concerning the Play Strategy that has been put together and one of the key drivers to this strategy is so that we can access the money that has been put aside in the big lottery so we can put a bid of £1.6m in in September. This gives a 50% potential for renewing play activities but also 50% of the bid is for new areas.

At Executive Board we were quite interested in this potential bid that is going in and it came as a bit of a surprise to us that the sites for this have already been identified. We asked how the sites had been identified, where the consultation was that had put this together and I have to say, Lord Mayor, we were met by a stony silence. We asked if Councillor Brett had been involved – no, he did not know anything about this. Councillor Harker did not seem to know. Councillor Procter in Leisure did not seem to know.

So here we are sitting in a situation where the Council or whoever has put together a bid for £1.6m-worth of investment in our much-needed play facilities in the city and it would seem that there has been no member involvement in this at all. With a bit more looking into it, we decided that there had been some consultation about 18 months ago about existing play facilities than the ones that were needing investment and the ones that were probably needing to be taken out.

I would like to ask Councillor Brett, have you managed to get an update yet on this situation and can you tell us who put the bid together, where the investment is likely to go, when Members will be informed and, please, above all, can we have an input into these important decisions?

I have to say, surely, this is a good news story. If we manage to get the bid for £1.6m I think all of us will be very pleased but I would like to know why we have been excluded from this important decision-making process. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR BARKER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak to Minute 197 on page 87. Firstly, I would like to warmly thank the Executive Board for making this decision which brings the investment into Broadgate Lane School. This investment and the benefits from it are going to greatly benefit the area and not just the school as well.

I met with Sue Scholes, who is the Learning Mentor of the school two weeks ago and she took me round the school to show me the building, where it is going to be used and everything like that. It soon became apparent to me that she wanted to do a bit more and go a bit further with things. She wanted to also involve it as a community use building as well, which we wholly support.

There is a school next to the Broadgate Lane School, St Mary's, and this building is adjacent to their land and they are in talks with St Mary's to see how they can benefit from this investment as well.

Because of the catchment area of Broadgate Lane School - it is rather large – it means that other children, parents and guardians will benefit as well. Not only from Horsforth does it draw its children; it draws them from Leeds 16 and Leeds 5 as well, so this will mean that the benefit will be spread even wider. We think it is a brilliant use of the school, the school thinks it is brilliant. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Minute 197(c). You will be pleased to know, Councillor Brett, that unlike Councillor Blake I am not going to complain about anything, particularly I am mesmerised that anyone should complain about putting in a bid for £1.6m. If they do not want it we will have it, thank you very much.

In fact, I am saying thank you to you and to everybody else involved in the provision of the Children's Centre at Queensway in Yeadon. It is a positive contribution to the area. It is a sign of our continued support for that particular school and that particular community and I think it would provide a valuable service to the people in that area and particularly the young people.

I would repeat – though you are probably going to get some more complaints later on this afternoon – thank you very much on behalf of that community.
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR AKHTAR: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Page 88, Minute 200. Unlike a lot of other areas in this city Harehills does not face falling numbers in local primary schools. It is more that we do not have enough spaces in our local schools. I would therefore like to welcome the decision to increase the entry number at the Harehills Primary School, along with the additional funding and promise to look at the ways in which land can be found to enable this hardworking and popular school to expand. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR FELDMAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Item 202, sub-paragraph (d) page 89. I am speaking on behalf of my fellow Councillors to save time.

On the face of it this seems an innocuous statement - that the Fir Tree site in Alwoodley Ward be declared surplus to educational requirements and that the capital receipts generated from the site be used to fund educational improvements proposed on the Archbishop Cramner site which is also in Alwoodley Ward – but this is not the case.

It is a well-established tradition in Leeds that consultations take place with local Councillors and the public who will be most affected by important decisions. We fear that the long and successful consultations taken with the governors, headteacher, staff and parents of the pupils prior to the closure of Fir Tree Primary School, has been mistaken as consultations on the next moves.

The local residents have made it clear that they do not want any steps taken to dispose of the school and its playing field before they have had the opportunity to express their strongly held views. It is no secret that there is a lack of communal facilities in both the Lingfield estate and around the Fir Tree School site. The Fir Tree and Lingfield estates are home to no less than 1300 adult Council tenants who have one room in which to meet and socialise with friends and neighbours. Surely this is unacceptable in 2007.

When adults are using the room, there is no opportunity for youth, nor for the ladies of various ethnic groups who live in the area to use it, so the young people congregate in groups on the pavement to the detriment of the many elderly people who live in the vicinity. The police appreciate that this is a potential problem which must be addressed.

Bearing all these problems in mind, I ask the leader of Council to ensure that no steps are taken to dispose of the school building and attached playing fields until full consultation with the local Councillors and residents has taken place; that serious consideration is given to providing community provision for all the residents in these estates.

The closure of Fir Tree School is a once in a lifetime opportunity for us and it must be grasped firmly. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on Minute 205 page 89. Some good news on this Minute and I would like to take the opportunity to welcome the progress with the Building Schools for the Future bids, in particular the financial close of the agreement for the funding, and thank the hard work of officers both in the public and private partnership unit and Education Leeds. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, I would like to speak on Minute 222 on page 95. This is certainly not good news as the last speaker mentioned. This is about the Stanhope Community Centre.

Community Centres are, of course, very important to communities and it is not often I have that much sympathy for Conservatives or Tories and Lib Dems when they come together head to head, but the confusion that exists on this particular centre must be driving poor old Andy Barker, Councillor Barker, to the edges of his sanity.

On the one hand we received a first-class deputation which was referred back to the Executive Board. Then we have a deputation that Councillor Carter, Leader of the Council – the Conservative Leader – meets these lovely people and is his usual charming self; he really leaves them, when they leave this Civic Hall they believe that their community centre is safe. Of course, when you read between the lines that is not what Andrew has said at all. What he has said is about consultation.

Those people left here believing that their centre was safe, just like the people in Rodley believed, when Rodley was part of Andrew's ward, of course Rodley village school was going to stay open. Once, of course, they moved the school or the boundary changed and it came into the Bramley ward, things changed a bit then. It was of no real use then, there were no voters there. I really do think that the same thing will happen after we get through May 4th.

Councillor Cleasby, soon to be our First Citizen, has a totally opposite view. He says – just like a Tory, in actual fact – what we should do is close it and we should grab the 470,000 quid for it. That is more of a Tory philosophy and policy than something that would suit your own party. It is absolutely disgraceful.

The position that you put your candidate in, your Ward colleague - at the moment he is your Ward colleague – is absolutely appalling. It is disgraceful. I sincerely hope that the people of Horsforth will retain their community centre, that you will restore it, that you will put it to good use and I hope you do this soon. I hope between you that you can at least come up with a half decent sort of story between you. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, thank you, page 88 Minute 200. I am so sorry to see Councillor Akhtar is not in the Chamber. Perhaps somebody would like to run and get him and tell him I am going to say something about him.

I would much rather that my colleague Councillor Harington were able to be here to speak about the Harehills demographics and the situation that this administration has allowed to occur in the last three years, because actually it is nothing to be proud of. The fact that there is such a squeeze on numbers and that there is such an over-population unable to find school places in Harehills is a situation now specifically due to the lack of knowledge, investment and intellectual thought by this administration.

He is proud that we are going to stack them in and stack them high in a three form entry, Harehills Primary School. Isn't that fantastic? We are going to get little kids into a school environment of 600-plus when every other area in this city is getting brand new primary schools. Why shouldn't Harehills get a brand new primary school? He is proud of that. What limited thinking about you people in Harehills. Certainly Councillor Harington, had he been here, would not have gone along with that and we do not go along with it. It is a lack of ambition, it is a lack of forethought about the people in Harehills. They deserve better. They deserve schools and school places in an environment fit for purpose.

Even when you do the improvements it will still not be fit for purpose. It will not have enough play areas. The only reason it will succeed is because of the dedication and the professionalism of headteachers, teachers, staff, governors and community. That is the only reason and that shows you what schools are all about. They are about people. Of course Councillor Harington and the next Labour Councillor for Harehills know that and some of you sad people do not know it. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I wish to speak on the same Minute as Councillor Hanley, page 95 Minute 222, Deputation to Council of Stanhope Youth Centre. Perhaps I could add some truth to the situation, Lord Mayor, and some more information.

It is a pity that Councillor Hanley forgets to mention that he is in fact a candidate in an election in Horsforth in the coming month. What a pity you forgot to mention that, Ted, so perhaps you have got a political axe to grind, or perhaps the political axe you have got to grind is that you want to protect the MP for the area, because during all of this I and my colleagues have been made fully aware that the MP is receiving information from the Council, the truth of what was going on and then he was feeding it to members of my community in a different way. He is the one that got the community alerted to the fact that they were going to have, could well have three and four storey blocks of flats on that site. No, they could not, because we were very careful when we went about an exercise which was simply to find the value of the site, nothing else. Simply to find the value of the site.

Whatever happens in the long term at Stanhope Drive – and the only thing I have positive said, Councillor Hanley, and you are probably trying to paraphrase something that was misquoted in the paper.

It is a lie. It is a lie. He did not write it, if you read it. He did not write it.

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: Howard Williamson. I suggest you take up the business with him, not with me.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Yes, exactly. It is a lie. All I have said is, if we do not do anything with this centre it will fall down. There is the problem. There is the dilemma. We have to do something in Horsforth about that centre, about our only community centre.

Are you going to deny us the opportunity as Ward Councillors to look into all the aspects of that?

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: I am the only Ward Councillor in Bramley at this moment.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Yes. I sat and I listened to you, Ted. When I told the truth you pretended you were unaware of it, just like some other residents, and just like Ray Agar, the MP's assistant who has been ferrying these people around. He sat up there during them talking here, during their deputation. That is the mischief that the Labour Party have been trying to do in my Ward and it has not worked. It is the mischief that you are trying to do now and it is not working. It is a lie, Ted, and I will tell the lie to that. It is a lie.

He used the word "must" when I said, "it will" and there is a very distinct different. It will fall down. It is not that it must close because it will close and, as Councillor Carter quite rightly told the deputation when they came to him, all we have done, Lord Mayor, is tried to find the value for a site and, because that value has not come up to where we thought it would be, nothing is going to happen at the moment. Now we have to look at other ways of enhancing the Stanhope Drive site if we can find the money. Where do we get the millions from? Maybe we get it from your Ward, then, Councillor. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Last comment, Councillor Pryke.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: I will forgo it.

THE LORD MAYOR: In that case, Councillor Harker. We have got one minute.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Lord Mayor, please could you confirm what you said – I have got one minute? I have been reduced to one minute - is that what you are saying?

THE LORD MAYOR: You have just managed to get your name in so you can speak.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: For as long as I need?

THE LORD MAYOR: You can speak. For the normal time.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Are you sitting comfortably? Then I will begin! I want to start first of all by placing on record, on the Council record, my thanks to some spectacular officers that we have – Shirley Parkes, Dave Outram, Dave Paige and their teams – for the signing off of the Building Schools for the Future contract. We are the only Authority so far in Wave 1 to have completed and to have completed on time.

There is continuing good news on this front. Another officer working for Education Leeds, because we pointed out to Ministers and other people that the PFI high schools had not benefited from the ICT investment, that the Building Schools for the Future have got, they have given us £12m which we can now spend on ICT elsewhere.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Labour Government.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: It is not just down to the Labour Government. If we, this administration, had not had the sense and taken the opportunity to go and ask.

Now lets us pick up Harehills. It is amazing how Councillor Gruen can twist facts. Yes, I think there have been some errors in calculations in the Harehills area and they go back to the last administration. Totally back. If we look at Bankside, Bankside is a relatively new school that should have been built and I would hope that at some point today Councillor Gruen – it was Bankside that started causing the problems under the chairmanship of its governing body by taking more children than it should have done.

I hope that very soon more investment can go into that area. The investment is not available at the moment but it ought to. I do not think, Peter, you can do what you are doing over three form entry and get away with it. I do not know where you are coming from on that. I do not know why you say that a good school cannot be three forms in primary sector, or half a form.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I will tell you later. I will tell you.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: I am sure you will. I would also like just to pick up a little on the Stanhope site. My interest in it and the reason it is on my portfolio is that it is a Youth Service provision. Youth Service. The community use which comes out of that is also there and I appreciate that, but my portfolio is not responsible for community provision. I want to expand and extend the Youth Service within the Horsforth area and currently I think we could provide better services by expanding the radius of where we operate from into better facilities.

I agree with Councillor Carter that this has got to be looked at. I supported him in Executive Board and I support him today, that we should now go back and look at this question but from the Youth Service point of view I want to push forward with an expansion of youth provision and I do not want this discussion to hold that up.

Ronnie, Alwoodley, yes, let us have the enquiry. The trouble is we get bogged down with technical language which perhaps we do not always understand. We had a good example of that at the beginning of this meeting today. The school is surplus to education requirements, therefore I shall hand it over to Development Department. It merely moves. I am sure and I agree that we do need to have a community discussion about the future of the site.

Harehills, Alwoodley are Children's Centres, yes. We should hardly be surprised at how efficiently Leeds is again rolling out this programme of Children's Centres and I would like to thank the head of service, Ali Turfell and her team, for the amazing way in which it is going and how smoothly it is going. We have the best Early Years provision in the country – not in West Yorkshire but in the country. In the country. I would like to congratulate the Early Years Service too.

I think, Lord Mayor, I will sit down on that. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: The time is up for the comments. Now it is Councillor Carter to exercise the right of final report.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Lord Mayor, first of all can I just comment on the situation at Fir Tree. One of the interesting developments we have been able to really start work on over the past couple of years whilst Mark and his team have been looking at Closing the Gap, is that we have established – more than just established, we are prepared to invest in areas where perhaps there is just a modest, a small area of deprivation as well as those bigger areas that we can all see. When we all visited the Fir Trees School, it was obvious to us, the people we met, there were some serious problems in that relatively small community, so I am delighted to be able to give you an undertaking, Councillor Feldman and, I have to say that Peter and Andrew have both mentioned this to me, that before any disposal takes place we will look at what facilities could be provided there for the community, we will listen to what the people say and we will properly consult with them.

Additionally, there are playing fields there as well and unlike the party opposite, we have a much better record of ensuring that playing fields are kept in public ownership and kept as playing fields.

Now let us turn to Stanhope Youth Centre. I would like to see them all lose their seats but last on the list, really, would be Ted. He gives me hours of endless amusement. When he talks about Stanhope Youth Centre it does give the opportunity just to put what is happening in perspective.

The Ward members identified that in the new library, underneath there is a great opportunity to provide, I think, a very good facility for young people in Horsforth – not just young people, other groups as well. I went round there with Councillor Barker and Councillor Cleasby.

There is no intention to move ahead and just close the Stanhope Youth Centre. Councillor Hanley, unlike your party - let me just give you a little history lesson. You lived in – I will come to Rodley in a moment – you lived in Horsforth at the time, I think, so you might recall that back in the early 1990s the Community Benefits and Rights Committee of this Council - of which Paul Truswell was a Chair

and, indeed, was still a prominent member of the administration at the time - proposed to close the Stanhope Youth Centre – not provide a facility elsewhere but close it and leave the children of Horsforth without a youth centre. It was only because there happened to be this peculiar scheme we had at the time called RATS money that the then members – one Conservative and two Liberal Democrats – put money in to improve it and keep it open.

McCavity Truswell, of course, has conveniently forgotten this. I do not know whether you have noticed in the Pudsey constituency now, we never see the MP but we see his agents. He seems to have them in different Wards and different people, but you can never actually pin it on him.

Good old Ray Agar. I said to him, “Your fellow as a Chairman of CB&R. He was still a leading member.” “Ah, but that was a long time ago.” I said to Ray Agar, “But I have got a very long memory!”

It would be interesting to know who did say that they are going to build flats on the green space at the back, which was absolutely untrue. Who said they are going to chop down the memorial trees, which nobody ever said and is not going to happen. Furthermore we are going to consult with people about Stanhope, its future, and we are going to consult with a wide range of the young people in Horsforth to find out precisely how they want this enhances youth provision that you mentioned.

A letter is coming round. (*Handed to Councillor Carter*) Who sent it? It is from Paul Truswell! (*Laughter*) My God! I am really pleased to get that. I shall have a response out tomorrow. I will read it shortly. I cannot read it now – it goes on for ever, like his usually do.

Just let me say in closing on this issue, Rodley Primary School, which I fought extremely hard to keep open. Unfortunately, of course, the Bramley Ward members prior to them losing power had scuppered the original proposal which was to close Aire View and Ted Hanley did nothing – nothing at all – to keep Rodley School open in his ward.

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: That is totally untrue.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: We think it is true.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: My Lord Mayor, we clearly have a difference of view. Now, my Lord Mayor, let us turn to EASEL. Keith Wakefield keeps on making these statements about we all agree we are working together with EASEL. The trouble is it has become apparent that when he says he is working with us, what he means is Judith, Richard and him are working with us and the rest of them will do whatever the hell they want. That is no way to engender good partnership working. I am sick and tired of hearing you lot snipe at EASEL, most of it emanating from George Mudie who, let us face it, let us get right down to it – George has not got the deal he wanted with EASEL. He has not got the deal or the contractor or the consultants. That is what is wrong with George Mudie, so let us not beat about the bush any more.

My Lord Mayor, EASEL is going to be – it will be very difficult but - a great success. I appreciate that we have to make sure that improvements are seen on the ground and seen as quickly as possible, particularly the provision of homes for rent. Les know that, I know that and that is what we are working towards.

The job opportunities that are going to be created in the Aire Valley for people in that area cannot be under-estimated. Today I was at the Aire Valley Working

Group. Unfortunately there was not one Labour member present but we had some very good news and that was that the outputs in employment which we are very concerned about if you remember, Geoff, we actually for the year have exceeded our targets in making sure residents who live in the area get jobs in the area. What was happening was we were well exceeding the total number of jobs created but they were not going to the people in the area. That is clearly now being addressed.

I really do get sick and tired, Councillor Lyons, of you talking down the Aire Valley, going on about incinerators, scaring off investors. You should be ashamed of yourself. What you should tell us about, Councillor Lyons, is this little fellow here. This is the Traveller Transits Sites Study. That was prepared under their administration, David. They talk about newsletters. There are two sites in here within sight of Temple Newsam House – within sight of Temple Newsam House. Did they consult? Did they tell anybody? Of course they did not. No. There they are, all the sites they were looking at and I have got them. *(Applause)*

So, Michael Lyons, you tell your constituents about all these transit sites because if you do not, we will. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR LYONS: You are here telling lies.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I think the point is made, ladies and gentlemen. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lyons, sit down, please.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Here it is, Mick. What can't speak can't lie.

Now, low cost home ownership. Really, Richard, you are almost as mealy-mouthed as your mate there who spluttered over trying to say at least you are doing something. Les made it very clear the progress this administration is making, but I want to emphasise one particular point. When we took over there was no coherent inter-departmental discussion going on about the strategy for low cost homes, whether to own or to rent. There is now and it is at least a move forward. I am the first to say a lot more needs to be done but Les was right again, when you were in power you flogged land off all over this city and that is why we are now limited as to where we can actually do any building. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Members of Council, can I call for a vote on the receipt of Minutes, please? Show of hands from those in favour? Those against? Any abstentions? CARRIED.

Members of Council, before we adjourn can I just invite the members of the public for the tea. We are going to adjourn for 30 minutes so hopefully we will see you in 30 minutes and if you can join us for tea in the Banqueting Hall. Thank you.

The Council adjourned for a short time

THE LORD MAYOR: Before we start we have one announcement to make. Can I pass over to the Chief Legal Officer, Nicola Jackson, please?

THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES: The announcement is in relation to the car parking arrangements which we have new today. Any Member who has parked in Woodhouse car park and who did not take a ticket when they parked in there, you need to get a ticket to get out. Can you get a ticket from the porter's desk, otherwise you cannot get out.

For all Members who are parked in Woodhouse car park, the car park will close one hour after the close of the Council meeting. I will remind Members of that at the end of the meeting but if you are planning on going somewhere else after the close of the meeting can you please move your car because the car park will be locked one hour after the end of the Council meeting. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. We will start the Council business, Item 10, White Paper Motion on Leeds Children's Hospital.

COUNCILLOR HAMILTON: Lord Mayor, I would like to vary the order of business, please, by taking White Paper 15 after White Paper 10 and then White Paper 12 and then continuing as per the order paper.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Seconded, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we have a vote whether people agree on that? Show of hands, please. Those in favour? Any against? Abstentions? Therefore it is AGREED so we will proceed with White Paper Motion on Learnings and Skills Council, which was number 15. Is that right, Councillor Hamilton? Item 10 first. White Paper Motion 10 first, please. Councillor Lewis.

ITEM 10 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – LEEDS CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Lord Mayor, thank you, Members of Council. I am going to start off my speech by appealing for this issue not to be used as a political football. I know I am about the hundredth person who has said that this evening but I do believe that this issue is far more important than to be used for a bit of political knock-about.

Like many people I was shocked to hear at the Scrutiny Board the sudden decision by Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust to set back the Children's Hospital. They never, through those of us here or Making Leeds Better, through any of the elected representatives, indeed through their own forum, through the consultants, through the parents who had been campaigning for it, they had never indicated that there was any problem with this programme going ahead. They always said all along that this programme was OK. They never showed the amber light until they slammed on the brakes at the red light. I think we were all shocked and saddened to hear about that at the Scrutiny Board.

At that Scrutiny Board all of us demanded that the Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust came back with more information to try and get to the bottom of how this sudden decision has been made. None of us were satisfied with the information they gave to the Scrutiny Board and we all want to know how these people, who are effectively unaccountable to this Council, unaccountable to MPs, unaccountable to many people, came to this decision. I look forward to that coming to a future meeting.

This Council, it has to be said, has backed the children's hospital all the way along. As far as I recall these have always been unanimous decisions that this is what we want to do.

Indeed, I think it is important to bear in mind that the Government too, our Labour Government, has backed the children's hospital. I turn to the Yorkshire Evening Post of 4th April and Health Minister Andy Burnham said:

"There is a high level of commitment to it"

- referring to the children's hospital –

“and we would like to see it go ahead as soon as practically possible.”

I think that is pretty much full commitment from the Government. I think the problem here is the Teaching Hospitals Trust and I think questions must be asked about how these unelected bureaucrats can make decisions like this and why they make decisions. We all know that the Teaching Hospital Trust has received a 67% increase in its budget since 1999. That is an extra £41m a year every year since 1999. Leeds Primary Care Trust has received a 9% increase in its budget, taking it over £1b. Questions must be asked where this money is going.

Sadly – and I must turn briefly to the amendment that has been put down by some members of the opposition - it is not in our power to create a children's hospital. I would love it if it was up to us to work it out but we cannot. We cannot make that decision here. However, the one thing we can do in this Council Chamber is speak with one voice on behalf of the citizens of Leeds – speak with one voice on this very important issue. That is why I believe that political point-scoring brings nothing to the campaign for a dedicated children's hospital for the city.

I had hoped the city's elected representatives – I am glad you find it amusing, Brian. I am glad you find children's health amusing there. That is why I had hoped that the city's elected representatives could all work together to keep the pressure up on the hospital Trust to get their house in order and to respond to the overwhelming demand in this city that we all know about as we go round our Wards for a children's hospital. However, I have no doubt that we can have a bit of political knock-about to follow. I have no doubt that it will provide very amusing, entertaining stuff for those of us who are stuck here for the evening, but surely, surely what people in Leeds want us to do is for our focus to remain on campaigning for a children's hospital and our focus to remain on the need of children and parents in Leeds and the need to improve their services.

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

COUNCILLOR GRAHAM: Lord Mayor, I formally second the motion and reserve my right to speak.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Lord Mayor, I am sure Council is all familiar with the adage there are lies, damned lies and statistics. I have got a similar little adage about this White Paper. There is nerve, damned nerve and then there is chutzpah – that good old Yiddish word for staggering, bare-faced effrontery, because that is what this White Paper is – bare-faced effrontery.

You try and deflect criticism from the reality of the situation by saying let us all be nice little people together and put on a common show and say, “Well done, Labour Government, it is not your fault, it is somebody else's.” I am afraid that just does not rub any longer and, as our amendment clearly points out, there is a pattern now to the way this Government treats this city.

Let us just for a second, before we visit the question of the children's hospital, look at the Supertram situation. Supertram was a promise given to this city by successive Governments and it was a promise given to this city. When Andrew Carter and I and several others went down to see the good old Cockney geezer McNulty, then Transport Minister, he said to us, “Look, geezers, look guys, do not rock the boat. We do not want anything like goes on in Manchester. They are really behaving badly. Just you keep quite, then everything will be OK?” So, like good

'uns we went away and we did not rock the boat. Then everybody from Manchester got down to Westminster and started kicking the doors down and screaming and yelling and what was the upshot? The upshot was six months later we went back again – Andrew was not available, Les came with me – we went to see another nonentity whose name completely escapes me and the new Transport Minister said, “We are not too sure about Supertram but we would like you to look at buses, and do not worry because after you read this into the situation we are going to put in some sort of a state-of-the-art transport infrastructure for you in Leeds.” So, like good 'uns we go away. We did all the work to try and justify our position and then what happens? Then we are told no, you cannot have Supertram.

Andrew and I had a personal meeting with Alistair Darling. Alistair Darling promised us faithfully – faithfully – we would not be blackmailed in the future about road charging or demand management and that we would get investment for a state-of-the-art bus system. What have we got now? We have got the latest bloody marauding idiot, Ladyman, comes up for half an hour to speak to the Chamber of Commerce, treats everybody with absolutely contempt, tells us we do not know what we are talking about and demand management or nothing – and it is nothing, no investment, nothing.

What did we get for all keeping quiet and all trying to speak with the same voice? The answer is we got shafted.

In the same breath let us remember this is a question of choice. It is not as if the Labour Government have not invested elsewhere. Of course they have invested elsewhere. £350m for Manchester, £300 for Nottingham, £320m for Edinburgh – that just happens to be Darling's constituency – in the same breath as we did not get the money for Supertram. A question of choice and priority by the Labour Government.

Then we come to the children's hospital. I dare say the Government is spending more on healthcare, though that is no consolation to the children of this area. Leeds and its conurbation is the largest conurbation in Western Europe without a dedicated children's maternity hospital. It is scandalous. It is no good saying to those people the Government is spending this on healthcare, that on healthcare. They are not spending it on children's and maternity services in this city and it was a promise.

All right, let us just suppose it was because they had completely run out of money and they had chopped everything. Had they chopped everything? Oh no. They had not chopped everything. On the same day that they announced and promised the money would originally be available for our children's hospital, the Health Minister announced a series of other investments around the country. On the day that we were told that Leeds was not going to get this children's hospital, what was confirmed?

Let us see. Pinderfields' rebuild was confirmed. I wonder what is so special about Pinderfields? Who is it in Pinderfields or in Wakefield who has got the ear of somebody. Oh yes, it is Balls that has got the ear of the Treasury. They are going to get their new hospital. Bristol is going to get their new hospital. These were hospitals announced in the same spending round as the Leeds children's hospital and they are going ahead. That is a decision of choice by this Government. They have chosen to give those cities money. They have chosen not to give this city its money.

There is a common thread to this, a simple common pattern and the people of Leeds must be absolutely fed up to the back teeth with it. It is no good any longer us all playing the nice, decent people and keep quiet. It is no good us going down on

these sham trips to Westminster and speaking nicely and pleading with the Ministers. The time has arrived for everybody to stand up and say quite clearly, this Labour Government is treating the city of Leeds with utter and total contempt. It is choosing to spend its money anywhere but not in the places where it promised for this city.

It has promised us between the children's hospital and Supertram £750m of spending. It was a promise given and it is a promise taken away and broken in the same breath as they have kept promises to other cities. The people of Leeds know this. These are petitions we have received in Moortown since Monday – just since Monday. The people in Moortown are absolutely fed up to the back teeth with the way in which Labour are treating them. The days of nice consensus are over. The time has arrived now to stand up and say they are a shower down there, those seven little dwarfs who call themselves Labour MPs. They are an ineffectual shower and it is time this city got what it is entitled to – not got something extra but something it is not entitled to - just got its fair share of resourcing and that is what we are going to fight for and you are not going to hide any longer. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Second, my Lord Mayor, and reserve the right to speak.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. We have put on record before and continue to put on record our support for a children's hospital in Leeds. We have been absolutely clear and consistent about that consistently throughout the time that it has been discussed and debated.

What we would like to explore is the issue of Leeds' continual poor settlements. We did raise this when we were discussing the budget earlier this year and the way that Leeds, compared with other Local Authorities, did very, very poorly. Certainly when you look around at places like Manchester, when you look around at places like Nottingham, they seem to be consistently at the front of the queue where Leeds is not even at the back of the queue – it is not even in the same building. I think that is a consistent picture that we paint across the piece.

Certainly the Fire Authority that I sit upon has a similar problem where other fire authorities tend to do better – and again Greater Manchester is one that comes to mind. It is often bemusing to try and understand at a point where, as I understand it, Leeds has seven Labour and one Lib Dem MP and West Yorkshire has one Tory, one Lib Dem and the rest are all Labour MPs, that we seem to consistently do very badly, whether it is transport – and we will not go on about the Supertram because people know our position on that – or whether that is financing in terms of Local Authorities or whether that is financing in terms of fire authorities or whether that is financing in terms of spending and giving us what we do deserve, which is a children's hospital.

There are consistent poor settlements across the whole central Government approach to Leeds and I think that is something that we have to have significant concerns about. There is no argument, trying to be fair, that a lot more money has been pumped into the NHS. As to whether that has all been effective, whether renegotiating GPs contracts and what that has done to the out-of-hours service has been value for money is another discussion and another debate. We do need seriously to think about why we are doing so badly in terms of getting a children's hospital for Leeds.

I think, Lord Mayor, what we need to think about is tweaking Balls. This is what is required at this particular point if we are going to move the issue forward. Getting to Ed Balls is the answer. We saw that that was the case in Pinderfields. We can safely issue, taking into account the fact that he is operating a lot in Morley at

this particular stage, that he is keen to win favours in Leeds and it may be an opportunity and it may be something that we wish to take up to try and influence Ed Balls and to try and persuade him of the argument that we have got in terms of a children's hospital in Leeds, because he clearly has a lot of influence on the Government. Bar a very strong independent candidate standing in Morley and being able to defeat him next time I suspect he may well be a Leeds MP, he may well be a most influential character.

Taking that in mind, I think we do need to take the opportunity perhaps to lobby very firmly and very vigorously to see whether he will take this matter up directly and see if he can do the same for Leeds as he has done for Pinderfields. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR SHEL BROOKE: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I think the whole Chamber was shocked and surprised at the announcement on the Leeds children's hospital and I think what comes as a biggest surprise to a lot of us is that the PCT have made absolutely no plan or effort to even start to ringfence the money or have any sort of project plan in place which actually would move this city anywhere towards having a children's hospital.

It is a situation which I find deeply disturbing because one of the answers we received is the fact that we have a pot of money which we have to use to deliver a health service to this city. With a £7m deficit this year, savings of £31m to be made next year, I ask you all where do we think that this money is going to come from to build this children's hospital?

What equally stuns me is that we have had briefing papers come out as Councillors from the new PCT saying which posts are trying to be filled, administrative posts, manager's post etc, and then we see a report to the evening post that the new cancer unit at Jimmy's may not be able to recruit the 400 medical practitioners needed for it. We have not got money to take on new nurses. There are 100 graduate nurses for this city next August and no jobs for them to go to. That is £39,000 per nurse in training and no jobs to go to. The priority seems to be on the management and not on the actual delivery of health. I find that exceptionally disappointing.

Indeed, it is almost like a scene out of Yes Minister where they are spending the whole time putting administrative posts in place but not actually any patients or any doctors to treat them. It really is rather worrying.

We have to say that where are our MPs going down there supporting this city? We need support at Westminster for this city and we patently do not seem to have it.

What I want really to focus on today is that we can sit in this Chamber and I get the feeling we are moving on that politics is starting to come into this debate and the PCT also, I think, need to wake up and realise something. What we are talking about, and what we really talk about here, is sick children. We are not talking about where is the money coming from, which management plan we are using, "We plan to do it this way and we did a good process here." Sick children are suffering.

I grant you, many people who use the children's hospital may be going in for sprained ankles, a broken leg, etc, and have every right to be in an A&E area away from, maybe, the Saturday night revellers who could be causing a right old rumpus. I am sure that some of my colleagues may be able to describe some of those stories.

What we are also dealing with are children with terminal illnesses and these are children who may be young children or teenagers and I think one of the things we have to remember is that they are not adults. The point is that especially in teenage years, children can be exceptionally shy and exceptionally worried about people seeing them and their dignity, etc. As parents who, having spoken to some parents who have dealt with sick children, they will tell you that one of the most heartbreaking things you can sit through is if you are nursing a child who is seriously ill, your child, and you can hear the child next door may be dying. That is something which we should all take on board because the one thing the children's hospital will achieve for us is that everybody will have a separate compartment to be in, a separate room, where they will have the staff around them and they will have that privacy and dignity they deserve. When they are being put into general Wards in hospitals they do not have that.

I urge everybody in this Chamber during this debate just to remember one thing – that what we are really talking about is sick children. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I just wanted to add a couple of notes that ties in a little bit with some of the things that Councillor Shelbrooke said. We have got a lot of money going into the NHS now – about £90b a year – so for every working man and woman in the country that is probably about £3,000 per person. There should be plenty of money in the pot for a children's hospital.

We know, as Councillor Shelbrooke said, that the current management of the budgets is not good at all here in Leeds. I do not think it is a Leeds-only problem but it definitely is not good here.

Historically the management of some of these large projects has not been good. There are projects such as the Scottish Parliament which had massive overspending and with this we have seen the costs shoot up from £230m to, the last estimate I saw was £690m. The thing that we must not get away from is that we all want this children's hospital and we all think the city needs this children's hospital but we have got to have some more confidence in the budgeting because if we are going to put forward a serious case as a city and we want this children's hospital, we have to be confident that not only is the estimate that we are putting out correct so that it is affordable and it can be budgeted for, but also that ongoing the running costs can be covered as well so that we do not end up with a situation where we could end up with cuts elsewhere in the local Leeds NHS which people would not want.

Really I just want to say that I think we have to make sure that as a city we work with the Government to make sure that we get funding that we need for a children's hospital but also that we make sure we are comfortable, that we have faith in the work that the Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust and Primary Care Trust do to make sure that the budgeting is accurate and realistic. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I add my voice to the belief that the problem is in London and not in Leeds. The business case that was made three or more years ago has not changed. Three years ago Ministers found the case compelling and said, "Go ahead."

Let us remind ourselves what is actually at stake here. Many of the very sick children that we are dealing with have more than one thing that is wrong with them. They need more than one specialist. They have to go from one place to another in Leeds at the moment to get the treatment they need. That is what we are talking about.

Four leading doctors said in the Yorkshire Post on 27th March:

“Services for young people which are split across the city are already deteriorating, leaving children at greater risk than we feel is appropriate.”

To me it could not be clearer. This is not an optional extra facility. This is something which I believe is essential.

So what has gone wrong? Great Ormond Street, Alder Hey in Liverpool, Birmingham and Sheffield Children's Hospitals I understand all have special grants to allow those hospitals to be run. Our Labour MPs have failed to persuade the Treasury that we should have such a special grant. They have said to Leeds, “You must find the money from savings.” I rest my case. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Over my lifetime and, I think, over the lifetime of all of us round this room, we have seen considerable advances in medical care. We are all living a lot longer – you only have to look round here this afternoon to see that (*Laughter*). In fact the one area where there does not seem to have been the same sort of progress is in infant mortality. If you look at the infant mortality figures within Europe, England is probably not at the bottom of the league but a long way down and, in many ways, our record in dealing with illnesses in young children is absolutely appalling. I know it is easy to say it is Third World but actually for a country as rich and as well-developed as ourselves, our services for young people and particularly for young children and their mothers are absolutely disgusting.

Councillor Brett touched on the main point and I think that it is this. Dealing with the illnesses of young children is a very specialist system, regime. It can only be provided within a specialist unit. In other parts of the country that has been accepted. In other parts of the country we have specialist children's hospitals. We call them specialist children's hospitals – no, actually, it is just a facility for children which provides a certain amount of specialist care that somebody like myself does not need.

If you are doing that in the rest of the country, then that is the sort of service that the people in Leeds deserve. OK, it is very easy to attack the Government and it is very easy to attack our MPs, but I have to say that the buck has to stop somewhere and the buck can only stop with the people who are providing the direction and who are providing the money. Quite frankly it is the Government who are providing the money. Actually it is our money they are providing but they are providing the money for this particular service.

What they are saying to us and, more importantly, what they are saying to the people in Leeds, is, “We do not believe” – we do not believe – “that services for young children in Leeds is a priority. If we did, we would fund it, as we have done in all those other places that have been mentioned this afternoon.”

I know that within the Government system it is all about lobbying and it is all about getting the ear of the right person and in many ways you are right about Ed Balls. It has come to that. If you are talking about Third World, let us talk about Third World politics because that is what it is about. It is about who can you influence, who have you got the ear of, who can do you the deal? That is the legacy of this particular Government. It is not a legacy about clear thinking, it is not a legacy about planning for the future – because there is not any – it is not even, I do not actually think, a legacy about what is Blair's inheritance. It is not even about that. It is about how can you fiddle a deal? It is all about short-term fiddling a deal.

At the moment we have not got anybody in Leeds who is prepared to go and talk to the Treasury and do the deal. If they are not going to do it, with the best will in the world to Councillor Lewis, just sitting here and saying all of us agree it is a good thing and all of us think we ought to have it is not going to get anything for poorly young children in this city.

It is time when we have to say to ourselves no, enough is enough. You have done for us in the past. I have been here a long time. I remember the promises we got on Supertram, which is our experience. I remember the promises we got on that children's hospital, none of which have been fulfilled.

I know politicians have a bad name and about keeping their word, but these are big promises that are made to us and they are big promises that have been broken. It will not affect us but everybody in this room – everybody in this room – has family somewhere who will be affected by the fact that we do not have a children's hospital or even the prospect of a children's hospital in Leeds. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR LANCASTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Yes, at the Scrutiny Board we were told the PCT, the LTHT and the Strategic Health Authority and the Department of Health will be working to find an affordable solution. That really worries me – an affordable solution. It sounds as though they are going to dilute what we were originally promised.

I believe we should continue to ask why was approval given for a £230m with inadequate funding? Why has the cost risen so much? The next question, the longer that this scheme is delayed I worry that it will cost even more. We all know why – the increased costs of building.

I would say just for members to remember as well that the campaign that the families spent a lot of time on, time they could ill afford, especially as they are looking after their own very sick children, they were delighted when they got that positive response from all that work that they had put in and we know now they are absolutely gutted for their own children and for future children.

Is it acceptable that - we have mentioned about the poorly children – when you have gone through years of not being able to conceive a baby, to go to the Assisted Conception Unit, which we cannot fault – there are a lot of people I know who have gone to that unit – but is it acceptable after you have had a very painful experience under the procedure to be put in a small room with your partner and your family with a flimsy curtain between for another couple who are waiting to go through the same procedure? No privacy. Also, is it acceptable for couples who have lost children, either miscarriage or still births, to hear other people's babies crying further down the corridor? I would say that let us demand that the Department of Health, the Secretary of State, we have a meeting with them that we must be involved in those discussions that they are saying to try and find an affordable solution. I would say that Leeds needs to play a big part in those discussions.

We were told we were going to get a hospital. We want one and that is the only solution, the outcome to this, that we must have a children's and maternity hospital. Thank, you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR ANDREW: Thank you, Lord Mayor. At the beginning of this debate Councillor Lewis said, "I am sure we will have an amusing debate." Frankly, I find nothing amusing about this debate. For seven years of my working life it has been a privilege of mine to work with families within which there is a child who is seriously ill or, sadly, has a terminal condition. Over those years I have learned that

the care of children has to be sensitive and it has to be holistic. Clinical care, of course, is crucial and extremely important, but it is much more than that. Children are very susceptible to the environment that they are surrounded by. Hospitals can be by their very nature imposing and quite scary places. Even for adults they can be quite terrifying experiences, but for children often the case is far worse.

Many of the children develop sicknesses that mean they need to go to hospital probably late at night and that is one of the crucial problems with not having a children's hospital. Yes, at LGI we have an A&E for children but it is only open until nine o'clock. What happens after then? They have to go in through the same door as all the drunks, all those who have been involved in violence. It really is not a place for children.

Having spoken to a lot of the families at Martin House, they can give you some terrifying experiences that they have watched their children endure. Going past in their stretcher from the ambulance past drunks, people who have been fighting people who are swearing, makes the whole experience ten times more terrifying but, more importantly, it has a lasting effect not only on the child but on those parents.

The clinical care, as I say, is absolutely crucial. The other problem with not having a children's hospital is that we are short of paediatric staff within the main hospitals. The reason for that is very clear. Paediatric staff like to work in a children's hospital, a dedicated environment for children. So some of the children have to have junior doctors helping them late at night and not the experts that they rightly deserve.

Having spoken to so many parents, they say that a hospital is an environment that these children spend a lot of time in and, sadly, not having a dedicated specialist children's hospital here means that sometimes these seriously ill and terminally ill children have to travel long distances, even to London, just to get a diagnosis.

As I said earlier, the service needs to be holistic, a suitable environment where the child's and the parents' needs are taken into account. The parents want to be close by their children in a comfortable environment and that really is something they should deserve.

They also say to me that when they find out how seriously ill their child is, their whole life gets turned upside down. It is full of worry and anxiety. Putting their children in these bad environments makes it so much worse. They also talk about broken dreams – what they wanted for their children and their children's future they have to readjust because of the illness. That is why I think this decision and this announcement is so appalling, because these parents who suffer disappointment after disappointment have now been let down by being promised a hospital and then having it taken away. It is hardly surprising, as Councillor Shelbrooke said, when they have got a £7.7m debt and they need to save a further £13m. All that money that has been put into the National Health Service and has been wasted and still the children of one of the largest cities in Britain do not have a hope of a hospital.

Enough is enough and it is about time we had a fair deal for Leeds.
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR AKHTAR: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Can I first of all thank the Yorkshire Evening Post for running a good campaign which goes alongside with the campaign that some of my colleagues and myself are running over the last few weeks to make sure the people of Leeds are fully aware of what the Government is doing to this city and this city's children.

What the Labour Government has done to those who need care and treatment, they have built a hope and they have taken it away from them, and that is what you have done. What is really saddest about this occasion is the Labour MPs are silent. They are not speaking.

What you have got to understand, I will tell you what sense is. When you have a poorly child who is suffering from a serious illness and you take the hospital away from them, that is a sense and that is something that you have got to understand. *(Interruption)* Jim, calm down. We are talking about a serious issue here now. I am not going to allow anyone to come between those children and any politician who is trying to make life misery for those parents who have suffered years and years of the pain and the anxiety and then the promise was broken.

The nearest hospital that we have closer to Leeds is Sheffield and Leeds itself is one of the major cities and we are deprived of that particular hospital. Can I also make my opposition colleagues aware of something? The people out there are angry. They are angry because your priorities are wrong. Your priorities are Iraq, Iran and across the world, not the hospital. I rest my case. Get the priorities right and speak to your Members of Parliament.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Lord Mayor, I will tell you why the people out there are angry – because they are angry, Councillor Akhtar. It is because people like you, people like Councillor Harris and the Kirkstall candidate has lied to the people of Leeds about the status of this hospital. In their leaflets today – and I am sorry that Councillor Andrews made that comment about it going because I think by and large the comments made by Councillor Lobley and Councillor Shelbrooke and yourself, by and large, were very sensitive and very important. The comments made by the Liberals today have been absolutely disgraceful – deliberately misleading people, deliberately lying to this Council, deliberately lying to people and whipping up anxiety, so I am not surprised that people are angry because people do not like to be lied to on an issue like this. *(Interruption)*

Let me finish – I did not interrupt you. You have said enough, because for you to say that the MP has not been involved is another lie because the YEP have given very good coverage to the work of Paul Truswell who has been working quite hard trying to deliver...

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Lord Mayor...

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: No, I will not give way

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harris has a point of order to make.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Lord Mayor, the space of two minutes Councillor Wakefield three times said I have lied. That is a very strong thing to say and I wonder whether it is appropriate in this Chamber, Lord Mayor, for one member to call another member in no uncertain terms a liar, and whether that is conduct that is acceptable.

A COUNCILLOR: It is when you are lying.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I carry on because, as I said, it is funny how Councillor Harris likes working parties on incinerators - he likes working parties on incinerators - he likes working parties on

cemeteries but on this one because they see a political opportunity to mislead people and give anxiety, we do not want a working party. I am really sad that we have not had an all-party motion, as we did in 2004. We did in this Chamber because we heard the case...

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Lord Mayor, I specifically wish to know exactly what I said that was a lie. I am not going to be called a liar in public. Now, Lord Mayor, this is unacceptable behaviour in this Chamber. We have sunk to a new low when members can with impunity call other members liars.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Very easily both you and Councillor Akhtar have said that the Labour Government has stopped the children's hospital, has axed it.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: That is correct.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Yes he did and it is in your leaflets as well in Kirkstall and I have got them to prove it – and Moortown as well. Even in your own Ward you are peddling that which is totally untrue. *(Interruption)*

If I can get back to the issue – we know you are desperate but there is no need to mislead people in this city. *(Interruption)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Members, can you let Councillor Wakefield speak, please? Thank you.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Because in 2004 we heard the case by the parents of children who actually do not live – Carol Maddox and John Abbott who did not actually live in Leeds.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: What does that matter if you have got poorly kids?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: It does not matter at all. It does not matter at all. What I am trying to prove is that in 2004 we all supported the case for a children's hospital in this Chamber and we all supported the case for a feasibility study which went ahead in 2004.

Just to correct people – that is what I say – I think not once did Councillor Harris mention what the purpose of this debate was about. All it was was a railing against the Labour Government for transport and others. At least Councillors Andrews, Loble and Shelbrooke mentioned the very purpose of this debate. We all want to see better facilities in this city for sick children. That is what we are here for and that is what we should be seeing and frankly, if those parents were watching this and listening to the way, we can see it is transparent, people are using it to exploit politics for local elections, I think they would be ashamed.

I want to go to what I think is the truth of the situation.

COUNCILLOR AKHTAR: It coming from your mouth, is it?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: You will not be in politics much longer, Councillor Akhtar, so enjoy yourself.

I have got a statement from the Minister dated April 4 and what the Minister said, he said:

“The decision whether or not to proceed with the hospital would ultimately be taken at local level but the Department have aimed to offer some reassurances about the level of funding. There has been a long-held ambition to deliver this project in Leeds and to benefit the rest of the region. There is a high level of commitment to it and we would like to see it go ahead as soon as practically possible.”

That is that the Minister said. It does not sound to me as if he is saying, “It is axed, it is closed, we are not having it.”

I will quote you another letter from the Strategic Health Authority which says:

“Neither the PCT nor the Strategic Health Authority has been able to respond to the Trust’s concerns and thus no decision has been made to delay or defer any element of Making Leeds Better plan at this stage.”

That is dated 2 April. That is quite recent.

What we should actually be doing is saying that Making Leeds Better, which is the plan for the overall services in this city, is doing its best to reconfigure the finances, reconfigure the building and deliver a children’s hospital in this city and what we should all do, instead of trying to score meaningless points in this, is get ourselves all together, support those parents, support the YEP’s campaign, support the organisations and do our best to deliver a children’s hospital in this city for the children of this city and this region. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES: In relation to the points raised by Councillor Harris in relation to remarks made by Councillor Wakefield, I can advise that there are two options that are available. One is that a Member may refer any other Member to the Standards Board in relation to a potential breach of the Members’ Code of Conduct if they consider that that Member has breached any of the paragraphs, including the paragraph to treat others with respect.

The other avenue is under Council Procedure Rule 20.3. It is open to any Member to move that the Member named be not further heard and if that is seconded, then that is put to Council and it is a matter for Council to consider.

There is a default position that allows the Lord Mayor to move that the Member named be not further heard but it is not the experience or the custom and practice of this Authority to date for the Lord Mayor to get involved in that sort of nature.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Point of information, Lord Mayor. Surely there is another course of action and that is Members in this Chamber have very limited protection from making defamatory statements and surely it is open for any Member of Council to take private legal advice and the appropriate action if they deem it necessary. I am just asking for clarification that we have only limited protection in this Chamber.

THE LORD MAYOR: We will continue with the Council business. Councillor Kirkland, please.

COUNCILLOR KIRKLAND: Lord Mayor, the quality of a society is directly related to the way it looks after the very young and the very old. We all know - and I know particularly because I was a GP for 35 years – that children can get extremely

ill very quickly indeed. They often need intensive care. That is something which does exist but would be much, much better in a children's hospital. It is no good dashing across to Manchester or Liverpool or Sheffield where they do have these facilities, because that is simply not on, taking dangerously ill children on the M62 or the M1.

We can save lives by having a dedicated hospital and those lives will be of good quality so that it is very well worthwhile. I am afraid I have to say that a lot of the senior staff at the Trust seem to be treating the children's hospital as a guaranteed loss leader and not as a desperately required facility for Leeds and district. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR GRAHAM: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Let us look a little closer to home, shall we? I myself remember questioning Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust in 2004/5 when I was Chair of Health Scrutiny. We were made aware of the financial difficulties they faced. At the time we were all concerned about the impact these difficulties would have on the plans for the children's hospital but were reassured that steps were being taken to ensure the finances would balance. This enquiry should have followed the next Health Board.

Councillors Andrew Carter and Mark Harris tabled a White Paper in December 2004 highlighting their concerns. Councillor Carter had weekly meetings with Adam Cairns and Neil Mackay to monitor the situation. I want to ask when these meetings stopped and why, why did Councillor Carter's interest in the future of the children's hospital suddenly stop? Did he no longer think it important enough for his attention, or did he decide he would be better off not knowing so that when the situation became public knowledge he could be as shocked as everyone else?

I also feel duty bound to question the role of the Scrutiny Board in this mess. Why was the Trust not called in on a regular basis to give updates on the financial situation so that some warning could have been given as to the likely future of the hospital plans? For us all to find out through the pages of the Yorkshire Evening Post was an absolute disgrace. Scrutiny should have been fully aware of the situation and I find it extremely disappointing that in this instance Scrutiny seems to have failed. I would hope that we can all work together in achieving the children's and maternity hospital. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: My Lord Mayor, I am glad Councillor Graham was the last speaker because it reminded me of the fact that she was the one who, along with Councillor Jarosz, who tried to make our all-party agreement that we needed a children's hospital into a political football back when she was Chair of that particular Scrutiny Committee.

COUNCILLOR GRAHAM: That is untrue and you know it.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: You have already spoken, Councillor Graham. Councillor David Schofield, I recall – I think he was a member of that particular Scrutiny Board – raised some issues about the financial structure of the proposals and was immediately attacked by Councillor Graham for being against the proposal, which he was not, resulting in a fairly robust exchange in this Chamber.

Let me tell you, Councillor Graham, there is nobody keener than me to see a children's hospital in this city. I do not know whether you have any experience of taking a sick child – in my case our son – down repeatedly to the LGI for treatment and on many occasions, as Stuart Andrew has rightly pointed out, after the hours at which there is a children's Accident & Emergency team available. It is traumatic for parents. It is devastating for the young children. I am afraid to say they have to go

through – and I have been there and seen it – the sorts of people who have got themselves blindly drunk or drugged out of their minds on a Friday night, they are vomiting on the premises. Quite frankly medical staff should not have to deal with some of the people who they have on their hands and through that situation to have young people to go.

Councillor Graham, for your information up until very recently the Health Authority had come to Leader Management Team to give briefings and have kept us updated. At no time did they ever intimate that they were about to say they were going to pull the plug on the children's hospital. Indeed, our stand-in Director of Adult Services rang me when he found out and said, "I am afraid this is going to come as something of a shock to you. Tomorrow they are going to announce..." and gave me a briefing.

Do not try, Councillor Graham, in your usual way to offset blame and liability for this tragedy to other people. It is ill-becoming on a serious debate of this nature and once again calls into question your ability to sit fairly as the Chair of a Scrutiny Committee. *(Applause)*

My Lord Mayor, let me just remind all Members here about what Making Leeds Better is about. What the Health Authority said was there would be more care and treatment closer to home, modern facilities in the community, better and faster care out of hospital, new and updated hospital facilities and a new children's and maternity hospital. Those were the pledges.

What we have had is decommissioning – to you and me cuts – in the number of Wards at the LGL, decommissioning of a Ward at Wharfedale Hospital – to us, a closure. We have had the dialysis and renal treatment transferred to Seacroft where there is not a chemist available and where people suffering multiple illnesses because of their dialysis requirements are unable to get other treatment resulting in many of them not receiving their full dialysis treatment. A lot of these are elderly people. Then we come to the cruellest cut of all, the fact that the children's hospital, we are told, is on hold.

I would believe that that means we are in grave danger of not getting it. We are certainly committed on our side to joining with everybody and anybody to try and get this facility back on track but, you know, you cannot duck away from the fact that your Members of Parliament have signally failed to deliver for this city and they have done so here.

I hope that nobody is going to be misled by statements by the one that we got from Paul Truswell in 2004 when he proclaimed to every one of his constituents, "We have got it", across a newsletter. In point of fact he knew full well that all that we had got was the agreement of the Government for the first stage of a PFI process. That is grossly misleading information to give out and that is why I am afraid the days of trusting your MPs and your Ministers have gone. We now want to know, we are dealing fairly and we are going to get dealt with fairly. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Whilst the debate, if that is the word to use this afternoon, has taken place in this Chamber, within a few hundred yards of this building there will have been children who have been in immense pain with their parents. Some of those children will probably have passed away. One of the things that concerns me about Council day is sometimes the behaviour of people in this Chamber and I am very sorry to say that instead of an adult conversation taking place this afternoon, it seems to have turned into some kind of, "Yahboo, it is not us, it is them" kind of Vicky Pollardesque, if you want to use that phrase again, behaviour.

Some of the Members in this Chamber will know that one of my brothers died rather young in an accident and I can tell you my mother and father never recovered from that shock. I think it is a despicable act of anyone to say that they are going to help someone in their time of need and then to withdraw that offer and it appears to me that the Minister responsible for this behaviour or, indeed, whoever it is, has been rather like Robert Helpman when he played the Kid Catcher in Chitty Chitty Bang Bang, where he promised the children lollipops, ice-creams, all free today, and as they climbed into the carriage it turned into a prison and those children were somewhat disappointed, to say the least. It is a despicable act this Council should be united in getting a children's hospital and a maternity unit in this city and I for one would like that to happen.

I would also like to comment on an earlier episode this afternoon where I have noticed before when Miss Jackson has given her legal advice to Members in this Chamber, instead of people saying Miss Jackson is a qualified solicitor and she is proficient in her job, there appears to be an element of bullying Miss Jackson into trying to get her to change her opinion because some Members do not like what she has said. I think that is despicable and as an employer I would remind you all that we have a duty of care to our employees and I do hope this kind of behaviour stops. I think it is disgusting. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR AMANDA CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am appalled at the way some members have conducted themselves in this Chamber this afternoon. This is a very, very serious debate. *(Interruption)* You see, you are at it again. You cannot help yourselves, can you? Councillor Graham was even talking when Councillor Andrew Carter was speaking. I am going to tell you a story. Please listen, Councillor Graham, you might learn something.

I will tell you a story about a mother and her son in the LGI. The child was very sick – in fact he was so sick she dare not even wait for the ambulance coming in case it was late, so she put the child in the car and she drove to the LGI, running the lights at red as she approached the city centre.

When she got there she carried her sick child into the hospital and she was accosted by a drunk. Fortunately there was a male nurse at hand who sorted out the drunk and unhanded the man. She took the child into the cubicle and she waited for some help. It was very busy because it was a Saturday night and there were many drunks there and many people had been fighting. Eventually they got some help and the nurse said, "This child needs to go into resuscitation." By this time the child was in great distress and he needed a cannula putting in his vein. There was nobody there qualified at that time to put that cannula in, so the mother had to hold the child down while a junior doctor attempted to insert the cannula into a small child's vein. Those of you like Councillor Kirkland over there will understand what a specialist job that is. That child's screams could be heard throughout the whole of the Accident & Emergency.

If we had had a children's hospital in Leeds that would not have happened because there would have been qualified people at hand to deal with that. That child was first dealt with at one o'clock in the morning. By five o'clock he was about to go into Intensive Care. Fortunately they managed to get the cannula in and gave the child that drug. I know this to be true because I am that mother and that child was my son.

Instead of squabbling here – and I am sure absolutely everybody in this Chamber agrees that we should have a children's hospital – can you all stop squabbling, get behind your MPs. I really do not think they have sat down seriously

with *(Interruption)* Shut up and listen, Jim, you can talk in a minute. I do not think that they have had that serious talk with members of the Government because if they wanted to do it, they could do it.

I say to you in the words of Nike, just do it. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Lord Mayor, if there is one thing I am dead sure of, I am glad I live in Great Britain, I am glad I live in England and I am glad I live in Leeds, because the care that a lot of people get from the National Health is unbelievable. Make no mistake about this, we are in one of the finest cities in the world.

I will go on to the children's hospital. I think as far as we are concerned what has happened this afternoon, we should not have had it at all. We should have given it to the mothers and fathers to get in touch with the MPs because what has happened, we have got an amendment down to a perfectly good White Paper. What everybody wants, as Amanda says, is a children's hospital. There is nobody in this room is not going to vote for a children's hospital, so why are we bitching and fighting and arguing about going to solicitors and going here and going everywhere? What we should be doing – and I am sure a lot of you have – is talk to your MPs, from whatever colour. Talk to them like I have, write them letters if you have not been to see them and say, “We need you 100% behind us to get this children's hospital.”

They have told me face to face that they are going to do. I will keep on to them until I find out for sure that they will carry out what they have said but, Mark, all the MPs that I have spoken to – and there is only one that I have not been able to get in touch with – have promised me faithfully they support the children's hospital in Leeds, because I do not think that there is anyone that can argue against the children's hospital in Leeds. We have been - how long? - half an hour or whatever on this, fighting one another. We all ought to say what are we working at here? Whatever vote comes today we are voting for a children's hospital. Please remember that you are Councillors, that these parents are in dire need. They are not interested really in May in what is going to happen and what is not going to happen to any individual Councillor. They are interested in the wellbeing of the children and, as far as I am concerned, I am interested in the National Health.

I have good reason to thank the National Health and, as far as I am concerned, I do not want anybody running it down. There are breaks in the National Health, of course, it is under tremendous pressure all the time are the people that work there. We ought to be all backing them and saying to our MPs, whatever your colour of politics, and say listen, “Get your finger out.” We have not been turned down for the hospital. They might have put it in politicians' words to say we are going to look at it. We have all to make sure – let us make sure – that the MPs that we have put down in that House of Parliament carry out what they said and the Ministers carry out what they said and let us get before any more arguing and get this children's hospital up and going.

I do not care about what points you scored in here. I will be arguing later on in White Papers but on this point it is so important. You know your differences, for God's sake. Everyone of you have got families that have been in trouble one way or another, so for God's sake let us forget what has happened and let us get the children's hospital built. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I will be very brief. Lord Mayor, we have heard the offence about accusing each other of lying and so on. Councillor Wakefield, if you would care to look at page 157 you will see quite clearly that my colleague on my left here was actually quoting from the Minutes of her

Scrutiny Board. Councillor Graham, if you look at the same thing you will see a statement from Jill Copeland, who is quite an important person, she is an Executive Director of Strategic Development in Leeds Primary Care Trust. There she says clearly when it became known to her that the financial context of the situation, so there is an answer to the accusations that both of you levelled against the Liberal Democrats. Thank you very much.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Lord Mayor, can we go back to the beginning and the reason in this city that we had such an intense and passionate debate about the need for a children's hospital and that was simply that children's services in this city are not good enough. I say are not good enough because, quite frankly, they are still not good enough. That situation remains. It is not just about a hospital dedicated to looking after very sick and poorly children. It is about the services that they get at A&E, for example.

I was quite heartened, I have to say. I had to go to A&E quite recently myself and it was a very busy time and I was actually put into a specially separated part of A&E that has been put aside to deal with young children. They have special booths that are completely away from the rest of the A&E department.

Myself and Councillor Peter Harrand have been the Council representatives on the MLB programme board and we have been to many, many meetings where the reconfiguration of services and the children's hospital have been discussed. I take issue with the comments that have been made that senior members of the Trust have not taken this seriously. I think both the clinicians who are represented on that body, the administrators, the GPs from the PCT and all concerned have worked flat out to try and put this business case together.

With regard to reconfiguration of services, Andrew made a very emotive point about the renal services. The renal services were taken away from the LGL because of health and safety reasons. There is an intention to bring a dialysis unit back to the LGL and possibly to expand to other dialysis units closer to the community.

Lord Mayor, I have recently been appointed to the Board of the PCT and with that in mind I would just like to really get down to the basics of why this motion has been put forward in the name of Councillor Lewis. That is the simple truth that no decision has yet been made on the future of the children's hospital. It is down to us, all of us – to Brenda working through Scrutiny, to all of us as representatives of children and families in this city - to get together, work with Making Leeds Better, work with the Primary Care Trust and the LTHT and work with our elected representatives at national level to make sure that we put forward a case that is compelling, deliverable and will deliver the services for children in this city that they deserve. Thank you, *(Applause)*.

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, it is almost 50 years ago believe it or not – I look much younger- when I was taken into a children's hospital in Dublin. It still exists to this day and the full-back from Leeds United, Gary Kelly, and Niall Quinn raised something like £3m to keep this hospital going on their testimonials.

I find it incredible, living in a great city like Leeds, that we do not have a children's hospital when I enjoyed it so many years ago. I had septicaemia from an accident and they stuck some penicillin into me and I discovered I was very allergic to it. I did survive and I am sorry I am here to torment you.

To be honest, I listened to the debate very carefully and there was a lot of sense made. Amanda as a mother made some very fine points but you have come

to the wrong conclusion. You said to the right conclusion but you are supporting Councillor Harris's amendment. You said we should be lobbying our Leeds MPs. I agree we should be united and we should be doing that.

I am father. I have had four children – only three are alive. In spite of the nonsense we get from Councillor Akhtar, recently I had my partner's granddaughter who was rushed into hospital with a police escort, St James's, because she stopped breathing, aged four weeks. We have all had these experiences. I had a premature grandson who was eleven weeks in intensive care. I had a son who was treated with skin cancer. We all have these – we all have these experiences and that is why we should have a children's hospital.

I am not surprised that Councillor Akhtar – we always get that nonsense from him and it is election time and he is trying to hang on and he has let his politics take over, but I am amazed at Mark. Mark's wrecking resolution – it is a wrecking resolution. If we do not fight for this we are not going to win it. We should be putting more pressure on MPs. Believe me, in other places – not in here – I have criticised Leeds MPs. I have challenged Hilary Benn and said why do other MPs appear to fight more for the city than you lot? We say it in our party meetings. I have said it to Hilary Benn. I have said it to John Battle, who lives next door to me. I have said it to other people. They have to do more for our city. We have got to put them on the spot.

Look, it is dead easy, Mark – if you do not like this resolution that congratulates the government, do not do that – do not – just amend it. You have the power, you have already done it and stopped the speaking by moving Standing Orders so stand up now and after the third line says, "but regret", just put, "This Council regrets..." and pass the rest of the resolution.

It is important to this city, it is important to the people we represent. It is important to our children and our grandchildren and the children who are not born. Let us be united and fight for it and let us get away from this nonsense – nonsense, Mark – wrecking resolution that does nothing for a children's hospital even now, in the in the near future or in the distant future. It is the wrong resolution, it is wrong headed. Make it, stand up, move Standing Orders, do not congratulate the government, they do not expect you to but fight for your city, fight for a children's hospital, fight for something that my city, Dublin, had 50 years ago and still has today. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I was just waiting a moment there to see whether Councillor Harris would rise to the challenge of being a civilised human being but quite clearly the Lib Dems are sticking to their strategy of making political points, misleading and untrue statements about this children's hospital.

The status of the children's hospital is absolutely clear. The Trust has not submitted a bid. We all want them to submit a bid. The Trust has not submitted a bid. It is not that the Government has turned them down.

I am sorry, Councillor Akhtar, I have quite a lot to say and I would be grateful if you would shut up and listen to me for a while, because I have been saddened by much of this debate. I have to say that some of the speakers from all parties – I am trying to praise some of your colleagues, Stuart – have raised genuine concerns that all of us have about the way that children are treated by the health service in this city. However, I am saddened that none of these concerns about sick children appear in your amendment which Councillor McKenna has quite rightly called a wrecking amendment.

You have included Labour MPs, you have included the Prime Minister but you have no time in your amendment for sick children in this city and it is from your wording of the amendment that we have drawn the conclusion that it is all about point scoring and not about a constructive amendment.

Like I say, it saddens me because I do not honestly think that point scoring reflects the views of this Council. It certainly has not reflected the tone of much of the debate, the tone of some of the sensible contributions that we have had from Brenda Lancaster, from Amanda Carter who talked about their experiences of mothers. I am saddened that none of this has come through in their amendment and I have to say in coming to a conclusion, we are calling for this children's hospital to go ahead. Nowhere in your amendment does it call for a children's hospital to go ahead. Nowhere in your amendment does it say we want this children's hospital. You point the finger, you blame, you score political points but nowhere do you say, like we do in our amendment, "for the speed construction of a children's hospital."

I am going to ask that we all come together and say that we want this hospital, we all come together and say that this is this Council is speaking with one voice on behalf of the citizens of Leeds and I move my White Paper, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Ok, Members can we have a vote for the amendment in the name of Councillor Harris, please.

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: Recorded vote please, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Is that seconded?

COUNCILLOR HAMILTON: Seconded, Lord Mayor.

A recorded vote was taken on the amendment

THE LORD MAYOR: 85 Members present, 52 Members voting for the amendment in the name of Councillor Harris, one abstention, 32 against. Therefore the amendment is CARRIED and becomes the substantive motion.

Is it a recorded vote again? Yes.

A recorded vote was taken on the substantive motion

THE LORD MAYOR: 84 Members present, 52 Members voting for the substantive motion, two abstentions, 30 against. Therefore the substantive motion is CARRIED.

ITEM 15 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – LEARNING AND SKILLS

THE LORD MAYOR: We shall move on to the next item which is Item 15 on your Order Paper, which is White Paper Motion on Learning and Skills. Councillor Harris.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Lord Mayor, on 29th April this year it will be the eighteenth anniversary of my losing my vocal chords and therefore losing, shall we say, the normal, natural power of vocal communication. I am sure there are a lot of people in this Chamber who wish I had never got it back again, but nevertheless, for somebody who has always found it very easy to talk and communicate it was a salutary experience for me for about a week-and-a-half when I was bedridden as well

and unable to do anything for myself. It was almost impossible for me to communicate with those around me. They were, as far as I can remember, actually all English nurses and, in theory, I speak English, but just losing my voice made communicating with them almost impossible, with all the frustrations and the anxieties and the fear that flows from that.

Also as many of you know I am privileged to go away on business a lot and go to some fairly odd far-off, exotic places where it is not that easy to speak the language of the country you are visiting. I fully understand this principle that if you cannot verbally communicate with people you are effectively disabled. It is a clear form of disability.

We are told by government, by the Prime Minister, by Ministers, that to be able to speak English in this country is an absolute requirement – it is a desired requirement in order to demonstrate one's Britishness but, of course, not only is it a means of demonstrating one's Britishness, it is just very simply a means of getting on and succeeding in this country. If you cannot speak English, just as I was disabled by losing the power of speech, if you cannot speak English in an English-speaking country where frankly the majority of the population do not speak any other language, because we are appalling linguists in this country, then if you do not speak English you are at a severe, severe disadvantage.

What this White Paper seeks to do is to highlight the point that we have got an incredible contradiction in circumstances. On the one hand we have politicians, we have the audit commission, everybody saying that to be able to speak English is crucial in order to succeed and prosper and settle in this country, and yet in the same breath one of the principal agencies responsible for assisting people who do not have English as their mother tongue, that principal agency is reducing the amount of financial assistance available for the teaching of English.

That seems to be a bizarre situation. It is bizarre, it is wrong, it is fraught with difficulty, it is unfair, it is prejudiced, it is disabling people, it is stopping people succeeding in a way which otherwise they may be able to do.

There is no point us saying that we are not going to have people in this country who do not speak English as their first language. Immigrants have come to this country for ever, wave after wave after wave and we have a long, long, rich history of welcoming people to this country and them contributing to the prosperity and the wellbeing of this country and of the city.

My great grandparents came to Leeds in the 1970s and spoke not a word of English. I am not absolutely sure what they did speak, I do not actually think they spoke Polish or Russian even, though that is where they came from. I suspect they only spoke Yiddish, of which I am left now only with a bare smattering myself, but nevertheless however one wants to look at it – and you may say maybe it would have been better if my family never learned to speak English - it does not alter the fact that over three generations from an uneducated non-English speaking family somebody has been able to rise in this city to become one of the leaders of the city and it is that progress that has been enabled by the fact that you have the command of the language and you can properly communicate more or less. If I was unable to speak English, clearly I would be at a total disadvantage.

If it is that we want people already resident in this country or still to come to this country who do not speak English as their first language, if we want them to contribute, to prosper, to add to what we have got, if we do not want them to feel second class, if we do not want them to be, it may be in some circumstances problematic for us because not being able to communicate easily must be

problematic – if we wish to avoid all of that then we must put in place the resources to enable people to learn and speak the language of this country correctly.

That is the issue that is at stake here. The funding has been reduced. Those eligible for funding to learn English, those numbers have been reduced. Their eligibility has been curtailed and, as I have said, you cannot have the Prime Minister, the Home Secretary all eulogising about the need for everyone to speak English if in the same breath we do not put in place the resources necessary for people to learn the language of this country.

It is important therefore, Lord Mayor, that that decision is reversed. It is important therefore, Lord Mayor, that resources be adequately put in place so that this discrimination, this creating a disability, is once and for all ended. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Thank you, Lord Mayor, I second this White Paper and reserve the right to speak.

COUNCILLOR BEVERLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I will begin by just pointing out an interesting fact. I actually have a qualification in teaching English as a foreign language that I got a few years ago, so next time the Lib Dems want to field a candidate who cannot speak English, by all means get in touch with me and I will see if I can help.

The motion today is broadly speaking a pro-immigration, pro-migrant workers motion and the implication is that both these things are virtually a good thing. We have heard Mark give his opinions on why that is the case.

For his party, for the other parties in here that may be a given that immigration and the influx of migrant labour may be a good thing. For me it is not a given. I do not believe that is the case and I believe there are vast numbers of people out there that also disagree that that is the case. The very fact that I am standing here as a British National Party Councillor should be proof enough of that.

Migrant workers and the subject of immigration are two separate issues, really, but they are related. Obviously the issue of migrant labour in the UK is a big one at the moment due to the large influx of workers from the new EU states in particular and these are all basically, the vast majority of them, decent, hardworking people. I do not have anything against them. They are the kind of people who, if they settled in this country and lived here for a few years, they are the kind of people who I would imagine would end up voting BNP one day.

The simple fact is that migrant workers are good for some people and the people who benefit basically from this are the bosses who benefit from cheap labour and from low labour costs, which is fine, that is good for them but unfortunately low labour costs is another way of saying this and it is low wages. I do not believe that low wages and every spiralling wages in this country are a good thing for our economy, I do not believe that they are a good thing for our people.

As regards immigration, I am not even going to speak about that. I think that we have heard today of some of the supposed benefits of immigration. I believe the cons far outweigh the pros and I would oppose anything that encourages migrant labour coming to the UK and also encourages immigration, which is why I will be opposing this motion today.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Certainly, shall I say, my view is not the same as Councillor Beverley's but I will go on and pick out a couple of things he has said in a minute.

I will say that it is vital that people that live in this country can speak English, as I would say it is vital for, for instance, if I went to live in France that I would be able to speak French reasonably well – I can speak it a bit but not as well as I would have to do if I went to live there.

What we find is that obviously children tend to pick up a new language relatively easily and so people that come to this country, the children go to school and they tend to pick up the English and are bilingual. Many a time it is the children that actually translate for the parents. I am sure we have all seen this. Yes, it is the parents that need the help to speak English to integrate in to the community and at work, so we do need this help of EASEL to help us to do this because, as I said, the children definitely get the help, it is the adults that I am concerned about, no matter where they come from – whether they are Polish or wherever they come from – to integrate.

What worries me is some comments that have just been made by Councillor Beverley there. If we have people who cannot speak English very well, it is easy for them, shall we say they have a problem because they can talk with their fellows, for instance if they are Polish. My son has seen it when he has been working temporarily, when he has tried to speak to people who are Polish and tried to help them with the language as he has with certain words, but it is easier for them to talk with maybe a fellow Polish worker, yet they do want to talk to the other workers as well but there is this breakdown, the language breakdown. We see it in communities as well when maybe you can get a mother that wants to talk to other mothers but there is breakdown.

What worries me is sometimes you can find that people might say they are different because they do not speak our language and that is the real worry because that is when we have Councillor Beverley and the ilk then trying to take advantage.

If everybody who comes here as the chance to speak English, then they will integrate better and it will help them to integrate into the community and at work.

Just quickly about the point of employers getting cheap labour. I do think you have got a point there – a very good point there – but there again, if one can speak English then I think they get involved perhaps with the trade union movement and such and start speaking up for themselves, so that they do get a decent wage. That is all I have to say, thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR DRIVER: You will have noticed, Lord Mayor, that we on this side are not opposing this resolution. Amongst members of the Labour Group there were a lot of people who certainly shared some of the views that Councillor Harris has just expressed and we have been campaigning both within the Labour Party and through Educational Services to ask the LSE, who were responsible for making this decision back in October, to reconsider the situation. The facts are that in the last three, four years, the amount of money being spent by the government on ESOL has gone up three times. This has been a period of great need for training and effective communication in all sorts of work-related training. It is quite obvious – and I think we would all agree round this room, perhaps with the exception of one individual – that it is important that people can communicate and understand and work effectively with one another.

The good news is that Bill Ramell, the Minister of State for Higher Education and Lifelong Learning, I think it is – something like that – has already called for a review of the LSE's decisions and particularly in order to perhaps modify the very hard line which was taken and the original decision of the LSE so that, for example, there is not going to be the withdrawal of full fee remission for all ESOL students if they can demonstrate that they fall below a certain income category.

It is also the case that they have asked for a major review of the particularly disadvantaged groups such as ethnic minority women who were particularly - I know here in Leeds in areas like Harehills and Headingley – likely to be victims of the change.

Finally I think, as far as what Bill Ramell had to say, he stressed that asylum seekers are not going to have that remission given back to them except in the case of those in exceptional hardship. I think the examples given were people who are waiting for a decision being made about their long-term future, whether they can stay in the UK.

I think what is important about that is that people are thinking through the issues and trying to review them in a sound and practical way. Some of us will continue, I am sure, to fight for what we believe is the best deals for most of the people.

What I do want to say is that I think here in Leeds we have a particular commitment, as I think Mark Harris was saying, to having an open city where people can communicate with one another. That open city idea is not just about caring for the old and the young. It is about caring for the poor and the needy and the strangers within our gates. We have a proud history. One of the reasons why I am really proud to be a Councillor in this city is that we have this great history of welcoming strangers of many kinds within our gates and we are the opportunity city we are today very largely because of the skills and the energy that was brought by some of those, some of the temporary visitors to begin with. I think we have all recognised that to be part of a single community where we all speak and understand one another and where we seek each other's benefits, is going to be the best for everyone, including those who come from generations of Leeds Loiners. All of us benefit from the diversity of culture and opportunity which living together brings and given ESOL working well, we can hope for that future to continue to be one that is of great prosperity. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR TAYLOR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Perhaps I should have declared an interest on this one because I have just realised that at St Aiden's we do have classes for people who need to be taught English because they speak other languages. All of this came about simply because of being where we are in Harehills and perhaps I represent one of the most multi-cultural and most multi-diverse communities in the whole of this city. I know a few years ago you could go within three or four hundred yards and come across ten different nationalities. To take that on a wider scale nowadays and perhaps we are well into double figures – well over 50, I am sure.

Harehills had had, I think, a remarkable history of showing hospitality to people when they have come to this city. They have done it for many, many years with first of all the Jewish community who came, the Polish community, the Irish community, the black community, the Asian community and now the community of a wider Europe and also the Far and Middle East. I hope that Harehills and all that goes on there in the way in which people have been treated in the past, that this kind of welcoming hospitality will continue.

With the ESOL problems - there are many. Twelve months ago we started with four people attending classes. We now have three sessions a week. I am pleased to say that Neil Taggart's sister also comes and volunteers and uses her professionalism and her expertise in teaching. We now have three sessions with 30 students. All of this is paid for by volunteers – volunteers from the local churches and, in particular, our own and we do it because we see that it is a need whereby we are supporting people who more often than not have come from a very traumatic background with some experiences which, when you hear them the first time, they could be quite unbelievable.

I very much support this White Paper from Mark. The people who come to us have got no benefits. They are at the bottom of the pile and the only way really that they can get over this – and it is a disability, as Mark has said – is by all of us standing together on this one and I am pleased that we do here today, have a common mind on this subject and that I welcome. I think that only good can come out of it. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR MORTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I always remember – but never quite accurately – that quote from the historian AJP Taylor. He said that before 1914 the only agents of the state that an Englishman was likely to bump into were the postman and the policeman. The story of the 20th century in many ways, politically at any rate, has been of a colossal growth in state expenditure. We are taking now 42%, 43% of GDP and that has made all sorts of things possible. Good stuff like the NHS and some stuff that perhaps some of us would question whether we need to spend - intrusive state-like ID cards would be an example.

The kind of philosophical question I ask on this subject is simply this. If we cannot afford to teach people who rightly live here English, then what on earth is the state for? There are a number of reasons for that and that is because the centrality of English in people's welfare and the exclusion that people who often do not speak English experience.

Before I come on to that, I just wanted to respond very briefly to what my colleague from Morley South said. I spent a very pleasant afternoon a few months ago with a group of people who were learning English, already of an excellent quality, who were all preparing to take citizenship ceremonies. If you look around it is often the case with people who almost want to exaggerate and become more English than a lot of people who were perhaps born here in terms of the questions they asked about political history, the role of the political process, what the Council does, English culture. I just think you need to be very carefully, really, when people cast aspersions on immigrant communities. The rate with which people absorb some of our traditions often shows higher incidents than perhaps people who have the right coloured skin, which I think is the real issue for some people.

Let us talk about the benefits then, very briefly. As somebody who represents a community with a growing immigrant community – and I use that phrase inaccurately; many of the people who are moving in are second, third, fourth generation immigrants and therefore, in my view, as British as anybody else – the people who do not have very good language skills exhibit why we should make this a priority for state spending, considering some of the things we do.

Teaching people English is a pro-health measure, because people's health outcomes are much worse if you are socially excluded. It is an anti-crime measure. Crucially, to go back to some of the points that were made earlier, it is an employment measure as well, quite frankly. We will often dress up all sorts of initiatives on those things quite rightly, but let us look at the core. If you do not speak the national language, which nearly everybody else speaks, you are not going to be

as successful in life and I think the figures bear that out. People often want to learn and charging poor people for English classes is only going to act as an economic disincentive for a group that is already economically marginalised.

However, there is one final and more important point, and again I think it needs making, given some of the comments that we have had today. That is that English is something that we can all rally around because unlike French it is not a defensive language where the French government has a special unit that invents words to get rid of Anglicisms. It is an open language and it has grown enormously. Because we are an island with a story of almost continuous immigration over 2,000 years going back to the Romans, it is a language that has developed enormously and so it can be a source of unity.

It is highly unlikely – and in my view undesirable – that we are ever going to be a nation where we have racial uniformity. I would not want to live in a country where there was religious uniformity and I suspect we are never going to live in a country where there is class uniformity, although some people may argue with that.

It might be, although nobody has mentioned Welsh yet, that we can rally round our national language, the language of Cranmer and the language of Shakespeare but also the language of the internet now as well, an open and inclusive one, and that mirrors an open and inclusive society, which I think nearly everybody in the Chamber would want to defend. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR MINKIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think it is an important subject and I like the tone that people have discussed this subject today and I agree with what everybody has said and I would like to support the resolution.

Just to reflect for a moment on the complex mixings and history that we have within just this Chamber. Mark has referred to his own background, which is actually similar to my husband, Lewis, and the immigration that came because of the Russian Pogroms at the end of the 19th century. Myself too, born and brought up in Birmingham but I did not speak English until I went to school. An example of a real foreigner. When I did learn, as Councillor Blackburn said, because I went to school and picked it up straightaway.

I think that that kind of mixing that has happened over thousands of years – it is not actually the Romans – remember it was the British language, the ancestors of the Celts first, then it was the Romans, then the Angles and the Saxons and all the rest of them and the Danes came over, so the whole history of Britain has always – always – been one of flow and mix and comings and goings and that has quite rightly, Councillor Morton, informed the very character of English itself. It would not be English if it was not for the fact that we had not had the Normans, particularly, from 1066, and long may it be.

Finally, I would just like to point out the irony that the leader of that National Party lives in Llan-erfyl and I doubt that he has ever had the courtesy of thinking of learning Welsh, which is the language of that village. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I will keep this brief because I know people want to get off home. *(Interruption)* If you want me to carry on for some time I am sure I can accommodate you!

Listening to people's debate I think it is interesting in the fact that when my grandfather came from Germany, obviously fleeing some persecution there, he learned to speak English and integrated. I think it is extremely important that wherever you go you learn the language. I know when I went to Sri Lanka after the

tsunami and did some work out there which involved buying some land for what is now a community resource centre Tharakurval (?) there were very, very few people who spoke English and I do not speak Tamil or Senalese, so it was a bit of a pantomime at times in more ways than one.

I decided if I ever went for any period of time I would need to be able to speak the language because I found it incredibly frustrating that I could not understand what the majority of people were saying there.

Obviously I think one of the things that we need to bear in mind is that we need everyone to have an acceptable standard of English, both written and spoken, and some people who were born in this country do not possess a very good standard of English and that is obviously something that I think should be looked at at a higher level than this Chamber.

I am pleased that Mark asked me to second this resolution and I am very pleased with the response that it has been given. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: My Lord Mayor, in the spirit of a very constructive debate I do not really want to raise the temperature, but if I may – and with your permission – I am going to ask if we can do something, and I will include you in this if I may. If we can just, following Liz Minkin's line, if we can just not play a little game but have a little experiment. Can I ask anybody in the Chamber who can trace non-English blood in them – non-English blood – in the last 150 years, to stand up? Non-English blood in the last 150 years, stand up. Non-English blood. *(Councillors stood)* Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think the point should be well made to Councillor Beverley. This was not a debate about immigration but as it was his prerogative I suppose to raise the issue, then it is my prerogative to answer in the way that I see fit and I have just demonstrated the sheer absurdity of the BNP's position.

I would simply say before we conclude on the debate itself – and there is a difference of opinion, I know, amongst people in the way in which we should deal with the BNP. There are many, maybe even a majority who say, "Say nothing, do not confront them, you are only fanning the flames." History teaches me that when you are faced with extremism then you have got to stand up to it and I will simply say to Councillor Beverley, sadly – I think sadly – he may have experienced some electoral success, his party may experience a bit more electoral success but his party will go the same way of all Fascist parties in due course – they will be swept away and they will just become a footprint of history and thank God for that because this is a fair-minded, stable country and that is what this White Paper is about. It is about reinforcing that point of view and allowing everybody who comes to live here to participate in our great city, in our great country, giving them the tools to participate and to help us become increasingly prosperous.

We just have to look round this city, look at the building we are in, look at the Town Hall – built with Irish labour. Look at the prosperity of this city built on Jewish labour and I know from my grandfather who never had a job, who worked as a peace worker all his life for tuppence ha'penny on low wages, that with those desperately low wages he helped add to the prosperity of our city which we all enjoy. That is what this is about. This White Paper allows everybody to participate, to become better, to become whole, to be come part of our inclusive society and that is the way it is going to continue. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I call for a vote on the motion, please. All in favour please, a show of hands.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Recorded vote, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Seconded, Lord Mayor.

A recorded vote was taken

THE LORD MAYOR: 88 Members present, 87 voted in favour of the motion in the name of Councillor Harris, zero abstentions and one against. Therefore the motion is CARRIED. (*Applause*)

ITEM 12 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – CEMETERY PROVISION IN LEEDS

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I pass you over to the Chief Legal Officer before we start Item 12, the White Paper Motion on Cemetery Provision in Leeds.

THE DIRECTOR OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES: Members may be aware that Council Procedure Rule 12.2, which restricts discussion on a motion which is similar to a matter which in the past six months has been rejected at a Council meeting, Members will recall that on 17th January of this year Council considered a White Paper Motion entitled, “Request for a Muslim Cemetery”, which related to allocating an area for a Muslim cemetery on the Whinmoor site. Members therefore need to ensure that in accordance with Council procedure Rule 14.4, that they direct their speech to the motion under discussion which relates to cemetery provision across Leeds generally and that they do not stray into the debate which took place on 17th January which related to a site-specific issue.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. If I remember that Council debate in January I think it ended up in some chaos and confusion and controversy and I did not think it did the Council Chamber any justice at all on an important debate.

I actually think that the amendment put in by Councillor Procter again does not try to address what is an extremely important issue, as you say, across the city for all faiths and for all communities, because no-one on this side would criticise officers as part of this debate. Indeed, the officers of this Council ten years ago now, in 1997, warned this Council that if we were to avoid what they call double-decking, like they do in the rest of Europe – and none of us had an appetite for double-decking burials – then we would have a crisis and we would run out. If I have got the verbatim right in 2004 Councillor Procter actually challenged those officers for the predictions they were making and I have got it here.

What we have got now in this city, because we have not gone double-decking, because we have reached an impasse, there is a crisis, as I have said, across the city in places like Morley, which is full, Rothwell, Horsforth, Farnley and many more. They are officers’ statistics, not mine.

I put it down to really what is now inertia inactivity and lack of commitment to try and find a long-term solution. I know that there has been some accusations and allegations about the history of this debate and I just want to put on record for new Members, given this is now nearly six, seven years old, how we have arrived where we have about this debate.

In March 2003 the Executive Board and the subsequent Council reaffirmed the decision taken by the Recreation Committee in 1998, the Executive Board in 2001, which was to establish a 50 year strategy on larger sites. That is where we had gone in March 2000. In between time we had a Scrutiny Board where one or

two Labour members were on and were critical of this strategy which, in December 2002, rejected the Executive Board's decision of 2001. It did so on the grounds that it did not believe in the 50 year strategy large sites and it did not believe in the Whinmoor site as a provision for East Leeds.

What we got in March 2003 Council is more or less a reaffirmation that all the other options had been looked at – all the other options had been looked at – and as officers were telling us, the only way was to go for a large site at Whinmoor which would accommodate a different burial site for a different group, separate.

As we all know in June 2004 the new administration – that is the Conservatives, the Liberals and the Greens – rejected that strategy and I think it is right you could actually say they are entitled to reject the strategy. They were elected, they wanted to review it and they rejected that. What they were not entitled to do – and this is where we are now – is to create anxiety across this city about finding appropriate burial space for the long term.

We now have only 5,800 places left in this city, which is just about three years before we run out of space in this city. That is where we are now. I think this logjam, this impasse now that we have reached is largely due to a willingness to come out with a proper funded alternative strategy. So we have got the worst of both worlds. We have neither got community provision nor have we got large sites. I think that is best exemplified by the proposals that are on the table costing this Authority £80,000 in feasibility studies. The one which is in passing is in Greenmount, which is a two-and-a-half acre site, and actually is condemned by social, environmental and geological reasons and it would cost this city £1m to put right.

We have already got Environmental Agency reports saying this is not an appropriate site to extend, the Harehills cemetery. We have also got what they call Killingbeck 'A' site, which again is prevented by highways access from being a reasonable, practical solution. It would cost half a million pounds. Yet here we have Councillor Procter, when we suggested Whinmoor, criticises us in 2004, because it goes like that:

"It is interesting and how we see on pages 20 in the Minutes that officers are asking for £700,000"

- that was for the Whinmoor site –

"for cemetery provision. I am not quite sure how many Members opposite are aware cemetery provision is not even a core function."

I ask you, what is it? Who else is going to provide? Who else is going to take this issue importantly?

He says:

"...and yet you are happy to spend £700,000 on it."

The two sites that I have just referred to are costing us, the Council tax payers and the Council, £80,000 to look at and yet we already know they are not practical and not feasible.

It would cost this Authority £1m if it was the Greenmount site to actually provide and, frankly, I think it is totally unacceptable that for those of us in East Leeds we are now fast running out of space. I do not mind having a debate about where

should it be community, should it be large scale? I think in certain parts of East Leeds – and I refer to Kippax – we have already argued it should be some of both, some community and some large space.

If we are going to solve this problem across the city, then I do think we need an appropriate working group. This debate was called last January. The suggestions that we should have a working party came last January. Guess what? Just like the incinerator, no working party meeting has been called. No reference to representative has been called. We put forward Councillor Roger Harington as our representative to go forward and if it has met I would like to know when and where and why we have not been informed because nobody on our side has been informed. It makes me rather suspicious that this working party is not just a political fix.

I will tell you what makes it even more suspicious. I received a letter here from constituents in East Leeds and this is dated April 3rd which, as you all know, it is in purdah. It has a Leeds City Council heading. We have been through this before out of purdah and we were fine. We now know that Councillor Procter has sent this letter out during the last three weeks to people who signed the petition in order to talk about a so-called working party and to gauge the views of people who signed the petition.

I say to the Chief Executive this – if it is not right and proper for us and we need to be fined, then it cannot be right and proper for the administration to be abusing their position during the administration in order to fix it for a political reason. There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that this is abuse.

I say to people, what we want is proper burial provision for all faiths, for all communities right across the city and reassurance for people. If he does not think this is a crisis then I will tell you this, he is not listening to people who want to know where to be burying their loved ones in the next ten, 20, 30, 40 years. I say to this Council, it is time we had a proper working group, that we work together on this with proper representation across the city in order to solve this problem. I move the White Paper, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Could I move under the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 22.1 that Procedure Rule 3.2 be suspended to allow all White Paper motions to be debated.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Seconded? Can we have a show of hands, please, Members? All those in favour? Any against? Any abstentions? It is CARRIED. Thank you, Members, Councillor Rafique.

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: Lord Mayor, I second the motion in the name of Councillor Wakefield and reserve the right to speak.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, thank you very much indeed. Shall we start dealing with some of these issues? It used to be the tradition that Members would issue a press release after they had spoken in this Chamber. However, Councillor Wakefield's new way is to issue the press release in advance of speaking in this Chamber and I notice he has revised his wording today from what he said in the press release.

He talked earlier and made accusations about untruths and lies and all the rest of it. I have to say, Keith, if this is not a lie it is very close to a lie. It certainly is an untruth when he says in the first bit of his quote in his press release that:

“This is a very important issue”

- talking about cemetery provision in Leeds –

“for everyone in Leeds. I am extremely worried because unless something is done in three-and-a-half years’ time there will be nowhere left in this city to bury the dead.”

Untrue, a lie, not correct – call it what you will but, Keith, you have got it very, very, very badly wrong indeed.

Why has he got it very badly wrong indeed? Because the Labour Group and their cohorts who choose to find out this information, asked the wrong questions. When you ask the wrong questions, I have to say, you get the wrong answers.

He asked the question asking what was the total number of burials a year. He was given a figure. He then looked at the total number of graves available and thought, “Ah ha, it must therefore mean that it will run out in this number of years.” I have to say, how wrong can you get?

There are 1,439 burials per year. The number of new graves required, however, are only 514 per year. Why is that the case? Because he did not take account of many, many different issues, such as baby graves, public graves, cremation of remains and also the use of family plots.

He talks about double-decking. It just shows his lack of understanding of this entire subject – the entire subject. My family has a family plot in Harehills cemetery. There is enough space to bury another ten members – ten members – of my family in that plot in Harehills cemetery. That is not designated as a new grave, that is designated as an existing grave. I have to say that is true of many families in this city and also true of many families I suspect also in this Chamber.

Can I further quote from some of our officers in this particular service? It is a service that is far from being in crisis. There are actually eleven years’ worth of space provision within our cemetery facilities but also, if you listen to the Chief Cemeteries Services Officer, he does say – and I quote from his exact words:

“We have thousands of existing graves across the city but I cannot estimate how much space is left within those grave spaces. That is a matter that families only would know.”

If you add into that a stand-still position in terms of the 5,800 or so new graves that we still have available, we also have on the blocks an extension to Lawnswood which you should know about – it has been through Executive Board enough times – which would provide another 60 - 60 - years’ worth of space at that particular cemetery; an extension to Garforth, which would provide another 20 - 20 - years’ worth of provision at that particular cemetery; an extension to Horsforth which would provide another 50 - yes, 50 - years’ worth of provision there also.

In addition to all of that in the next five years we are also considering extensions to Rothwell, Cottingley and Morley, all of which he is well aware but he chooses to mislead the people of Leeds in a very sad attempt to gain political favour.

Lord Mayor, if we can now move on, if we have dealt with the space issue, let us deal with the Whinmoor issue yet again, shall we? I have to say when he says in his weasel words, “Well, there were one or two Labour Members who did not perhaps agree with it”, there were more than one or two Members. There was Roger Harington who did not agree with it and voted against it. There was Councillor

McGee, the Chair of the Scrutiny Board at the time, who voted against it. There was Councillor Atha, a Member of that Scrutiny Board who voted against it. There was Councillor Bruce – some of you may remember Councillor Bruce – he voted against it, as did Councillor Langham as well. In fact, there was an all-party agreement – an all-party agreement – from a Scrutiny Board.

In addition to that the Member sat to his immediate left did not really like the idea either, because when she was the Chairman of Plans East Panel for a number of years, we considered the application on two occasions – two occasions – and she was happy for it to be deferred on each of those occasions – quite rightly, Judith, as well, I may say.

As if that was not enough the Leader-in-waiting even voted against it when it came to the Plans East Panel. Yes, Councillor Gruen voted against the Whinmoor Grange Farm cemetery proposal. Why did he do that? Because he wanted to safeguard his seat, that is why he voted against it. In fact, Lord Mayor, what people forget is that it was a hotly contested planning application. There were many people who objected to it and quite rightly, in my view – quite rightly. Peter Gruen reflected their views at a Planning Panel. It was only won - that application was only won – by one single vote. Let us not think that in some way there was universal agreement for a cemetery provision at Whinmoor Grange Farm because there was not.

Let us look at who else is in favour of smaller cemeteries and more localised provision. Councillor Parker – you are in favour of smaller cemeteries, are you not?

COUNCILLOR LYONS: He is not going anywhere yet” (*Laughter*)

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Councillor Lewis, I hope he is in favour of smaller cemeteries as well. Councillor Wakefield, I know full well you are in favour of smaller cemeteries.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: In certain places, yes.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Exactly, in certain places. Where are they in favour of it? In Kippax, that is where. They want a small cemetery in Kippax and their CIT money was spent buying up land adjacent to the existing cemetery site so they can have a small cemetery there. That is what they want. “We are all right, we can afford to buy a cemetery for our folk. The rest of you, you have got to go to the extreme side of the city just to bury your dead away from your local communities. We want our people buried in our community. To hell with the rest of you.” That is the message that we are getting from Members opposite, Lord Mayor.

We are given the advice in terms of what has already been spoken about previously about a Muslim burial ground and it not being appropriate to speak about that at this time. Lord Mayor, I always read these documents with interest. Lord Mayor, you should be more careful who your picture is next to, actually! I am told *this* is the latest – no, sorry, *this* one is the latest now, I think.

Lord Mayor, I read with interest all the time these leaflets just to see what the latest edition is saying in terms of the latest inappropriate comment relating to these matters. Councillor Wakefield talks about, in his news release, “We need a solution that is acceptable to all the people in Leeds.” I agree with him. I agree with him. That is why when a petition was received, quite appropriately as the Executive Member responsible I did write to those petitioners to let them know that the petition had been received and to show that this administration was taking this item extremely seriously.

I have to say not all the people on that petition would appear to be genuine. Indeed, this is just a small selection of the returns. I have to say it is pretty typical the comments on these returns – “Not known at this address, never lived here.”
(*Laughter*) Lord Mayor, that clearly is and should be of concern to all of us.

When he talks about something being appropriate to all the people of Leeds, it is, and that is why I felt it was appropriate that we form a working group to look into this entire issue and find out what the Muslim community actually want, what they actually require. It is OK saying, “I know.” What did become very clear was that there were different groups within the Muslim community who did want a say and many groups who were being excluded and I did not think that was appropriate and that is why that working group was formed.

As of now there is no Labour nominee to that working group. If you tell me there is, Councillor Wakefield, officers of this authority are not aware of that nomination. I understand that the Whips were written to. I can only presume that yet again your Chief Whip, Councillor Hanley, has not dealt with the matter appropriately, but as far as officers of this Authority are concerned, there is no Labour nominee. Because of that, this working group has not met. I did not want to move matters forward without that nominee. Your Chief Whip did write and suggest it was inappropriate that I chair it.

Lord Mayor, I believe that we do need appropriate burial facilities for all in this city and that is what this administration is determined to do. The only crisis around here, Lord Mayor, is that in the Labour Group. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: I will second and reserve the right to speak.
(*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR TAYLOR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. As I said earlier on, perhaps I am one of the people who visit cemeteries more than anyone else in the course of my duty. What I do know about the notion of death and death when it takes place, the majority of people who face death first are the elderly, so within this group here many of us will be nearer to the grave than others!

I do know that when a person does die the person who is left more often than not is also elderly and those people who are of this nature do not want to have to travel distances way beyond out of their reach in order to visit their loved ones. They want cemeteries to be close at hand, they want cemeteries to be local. They do not want to have to take a bus out to Dewsbury or wherever. They want the burial plot to be close to home.

John, I think probably your family has got a better life history than mine because in my family plot in Hunslet there are four spaces left and when I buried my father about ten years ago I thought, goodness gracious me, I do not think I am going to make it. We will have to dig a little deeper when it comes to my turn.

Yes, we it is part of our families and families plan for the future. Little did I know that when my mother died in 1943 she was catering for me whenever that is going to be, and people planned ahead. The figures that are being thrown around are very arbitrary and I do not think they have got much substance to them.

What I also know as well is when a young person dies – and I had the sad experience last week of burying a twelve-year old – for young people – this was a young guy who died under very tragic circumstances in Seacroft and the people in particular of Temple Moor School were absolutely distraught about this – there have been daily pilgrimages from young people at that school to that particular grave,

because it is local, because it is within the heart of the community and because it is accessible. I think this is something that we really do need to bear in mind.

I do not think I would want to say anything other than that. If there is a working party I would be very happy to be part of it and I know that people in the diocese would be happy to be a part of it and I am sure I speak for them on this occasion.

Yes, we do need it to be local and I am pleased indeed that the extension of the Roman Catholic Killingbeck cemetery is also on the books and I hope that when that land becomes available, which was the former nurses' home in the Killingbeck Hospital, that the Roman Catholic community will have an extension to their cemetery, because it is local – because it is local. If we can think in terms of Harehills being a place where there is potential for an extension, here again it is local and it can serve the needs of local people. If we believe in that we would be ready, Keith, to pay the price. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR SHEL BROOKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would very much really like to echo the comments that Councillor Taylor has just made. I really do believe in small community graveyards, for many of the reasons that Councillor Taylor has just outlined. People draw a great deal of comfort from being able to visit the grave of a loved one who has died. It does not matter whether it is an expected death or a sudden death is always a terrible thing for families to have to bear.

Last year I was on business in New York and when you land at the international airport and you drive into the city, you pass some absolutely enormous graveyards. They are huge. You cannot see the end of them. What I did spot in them were three separate funeral processions taking place within the one graveyard, as I was driving along the motorway. I personally do not think that that is what we want over here because it almost industrialises death. It takes something away from the period of mourning and therefore when the group meet and when we talk about these things, from the position of the area I represent, I have got many small villages and larger villages in my Ward and many of them have a church which has a graveyard and that graveyard has been used and some of them are still used by the local community. I certainly do not want to see one of these massive graveyards catering for communities from all over the city in the middle of nowhere, because I think it takes something away and, as Councillor Taylor rightly points out, people draw a great deal of comfort from being able to visit the grave of a loved one or a close friend who has passed away and it is very important that they can do that easily and in comfort within their local surrounding. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: When I first became a Councillor for Burmantofts I took an interest in the Harehills cemetery because it was in my Ward. It still adjoins my current Ward. I too am a fan of small, local cemeteries in the city.

Councillor Shelbrooke has pre-empted me slightly in talking about the industrialised way of death because I was going to draw an analogy between the Labour plan for the mega-Whinmoor site and the Evelyn Waugh and Jessica Mitford books on the American Way of Death in particular and the way everything is turned into an industry.

With the Harehills, the extension – or proposed extension – for Green View Mount, Keith – not Greenmount – which used to be called Brander Mount, it was a notable housing failure of the Labour administration – that has stalled because the site is supposedly waterlogged and we have had some examples of distraught relatives, of waterlogged graves in Harehills cemetery.

I am a member of the Regional Flood Defence Committee of the Environment Agency and when I came across the criticism of the Green View Mount site for it being waterlogged, I took it up with the Environment Agency and asked all about it. I was told that it is not waterlogged, it is not at the bottom of a slop, so it does not get all the run-off. It does, in fact, have natural springs which cause the water there sometimes.

If you do not want to bury people in England you need to choose a drier place, I am afraid. It rains in England and it rains in Gipton. In fact, the Environment Agency told me that if that standard of 'You cannot bury people in waterlogged ground' applied evenly, Leeds should not have built the Gipton housing estate because the natural springs occur throughout the Gipton housing estate, all the way down the hill and especially at the bottom. The Calcotts, the Beeches, even North Gipton, is technically waterlogged and should not have been built on, but it is. That is a fact of life.

The other thing about the Green View Mount site which is, of course, adjoining the Harehills cemetery, is that it suffers some contamination and the contamination is from building foundations and disconnected services.

Already other Authorities throughout England are building or extending cemeteries on to areas that formerly had housing. They are extending their cemeteries to cover areas that still have building foundations and I cannot see why Leeds should not consider doing so as well.

Of course, the difficulty in finding small local sites for community cemeteries in Leeds is due entirely to the constraints – and the very rigid constraints – from the UDP - the UDP you bequeathed to the city from your 24 years in power.

I support the administration's view that small cemeteries are the way to go and I have confidence that Councillor Procter's officers will be able to deliver that for us. I am a little surprised at the numbers quoted by Keith in his press release – at least the numbers that appeared in the evening paper I think last week – the very small numbers of spaces left for Harehills cemetery.

There is quite a bit of room right up to the fence even before an extension is considered and there are other parts adjoining it which could serve as extensions to the cemetery. I am thinking, perhaps, of the areas on Brander Road where the shops have been demolished. Anyway, pause for thought. Thank you for the small cemeteries. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR DAVEY: I am delighted to hear that Councillor Procter has plenty of spaces left in his family plot. I am not convinced, though, by his cavalier comments that there is no crisis in cemetery provision.

Can I suggest maybe, given that I am sure everyone in this Chamber wishes Councillor Procter and his family a long, healthy life, that maybe he offers his spare places in the family plot via the letters page in the Yorkshire Evening Post.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Willingly. I am going to be cremated.
(Laughter)

COUNCILLOR DAVEY: Because I am sure they would be snapped up immediately.

Turning to his amendment, I challenge him to visit Hunslet cemetery and see whether he still stands by his comments that Leeds offers a high class cemetery

service because I certainly do not and I have family that are buried in that cemetery. I further challenge him to visit Killingbeck cemetery and still stand by his comments that there is no crisis within the service because there is not a single plot left in Killingbeck and the Catholic community have been pushing for years and years and years.

I fully agree with what Councillor Wakefield is saying that there is a growing crisis and it has been for a number of years and I cannot agree with your comments that there is not a crisis in Leeds. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: Lord Mayor, in 2001 the Council cemetery and crematoria 50 year strategy was developed. This examined the relative merits of large and small cemeteries and reached the conclusion that larger cemeteries represented best value with greater flexibility and choices for users.

Under that strategy a separate section could be created for different religious communities. We all know the people of this city favour large, multi-religious cemeteries which would serve all communities of this city. Given the very sensitive issue of vandalism in some cemeteries, large cemeteries would have the potential to base a security and entrance team on site.

Discussions how to resolve the various space across the city began as far back as 1997 and plans for a large new cemetery in Whinmoor Grange incorporating a Muslim burial ground and extension to Lawnswood cemetery in North West Leeds and a new large cemetery to replace Cottingley in South Leeds were considered.

Councillor Procter, in one of the very first meetings I attended in 2004 you said - and this is on record – that, given that you made reference to Muslim burial and Harehills and Councillor Pryke as well – you said that there were 86 spaces left which will last the community two years. That was nearly three years ago.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: How many spaces are there now?

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: The 86 spaces have long gone, so where do you get the rest of it, if you said 86 spaces? You are actually making estimates as you go along and passing people from pillar to post. There is not any space left in Harehills, if you actually go and see it.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: We have got new figures, not what you tell us.

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: You said that. These are your numbers. You said it in this Chamber when the Lord Mayor asked you in relation to a question. You replied. That was nearly three years ago and you are...

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: You have got an up-dated figures. Stop moaning.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: It is good news, be happy.

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: Anyway, ten years later you have taken us back to where we were in 1997. You lot refused, when I put this debate about the Whinmoor Grange, you lot refused to have a proper debate on the issue and voted down my proposal in full Council earlier this year. Your current proposal to set up a working party made up of just the political parties is a gimmick to get you past elections, nothing more than that.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: You are wrong.

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: You can say that but that is the truth. The wishy-washy letter, Councillor Procter, if you are listening, the wishy-washy letter you sent out to the thousands of people who signed the petition did not tell us anything new. Just because you got 20 or 30 letters back does not mean that the 4,000-and-something people who signed it was a fake. That is what you just suggested, that a lot of people who actually signed the petition were fakes. I wish people were in the gallery again to listen to that. It is just another way of twisting the real issue, Councillor Procter.

The amendment you proposed, which reads, "congratulates those who provide a first class cemetery service to the people of Leeds and notes that there is no crisis..." is absolutely despicable. It is deplorable.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: You do not think our officers provide a first class service then? That is what it says.

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: No, you are talking about yourself here. You are the administration.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: I do not dig graves. Officers do.

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: You have not got a clue where you are going with this.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Rafique, just a second, Councillor Davey wants to speak, point of order.

COUNCILLOR DAVEY: I am sorry to interrupt, Councillor Rafique, but it is a point of order because Councillor Procter obviously was not listening to what I was saying in my speech. He is asking the question do you not believe that there is a first class service, that the officers of the Council are not giving a first class service. I can tell you now there is not a first class service in Hunslet cemetery. Please go to Hunslet cemetery tomorrow morning and if you feel that it is a first class service I will come down with the Evening Post and I will take them round and I will say obviously I am wrong and Councillor Procter is right.

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: Take up the challenge, John.

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: Lord Mayor, I am not sure if these lot have a clear long-term strategy on creating burial space in the city. We actually talked about the importance of having a children's hospital, which is a very important issue. The burial of our dead is equally important and the issue of children's hospital is not actually completely in our powers. The burial space is in our powers. You are messing around with the people of this city. That is because you are far more busy with your internal power struggle and bickering than putting first the interests of the people of this city. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR HUSSAIN: Lord Mayor, I was not planning to speak on this debate but I felt it is important to raise some issues. For a number of years the Muslim community here in Leeds have been calling for extension of hours. Under your administration of 24 years you have never delivered that, I am afraid. Under this administration we have delivered and we are listening to the needs of all our communities. *(Applause)*

Secondly, the Death Registration Service here in Leeds, we manage to deliver that on Bank Holidays and weekends for both Muslim, Jewish and other communities here. We are listening to the needs of our communities here.

I think in terms of provision you have your priorities wrong. Furthermore, I think the working group is going to identify and try and find the right provision, so let this working group carry on, let us do our job and stop making political points.
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think we were doing quite well until Councillor Rafique stood up. It had, I was going to say almost degenerated into a sensible debate about the merits of large and small cemeteries and I appreciate Keith's point of view and I think probably he was listening to the points made on this side about the type of cemetery provision that people want in Leeds.

Then unfortunately – I really have a problem sometimes with the way Councillor Rafique harangues us, if that is the right word to describe it, because what you appear to be saying to us, Councillor Rafique, is you have made a decision, you personally – I am not sure the rest of your group has judging by what Councillor Procter said – about the desire for a mega-cemetery out at Whinmoor. I think the point that we have all been trying to make relatively quietly and calmly is that we are dealing with a situation, when we are dealing with death we are dealing with a very personal situation, and that personal situation is made somewhat more bearable by the fact that you can deal with that in a small and intimate atmosphere.

I have to say to you, I hope that in the near future I will not have to attend a funeral and I will not have to attend a burial. It is not a pleasant experience, none of us really relish it. I would also say that I would like to have to drive all the way out to Whinmoor to actually take part in that burial ceremony. I would also be extremely concerned for the people I represent in the north-west of the city if we were saying to them the only place you can bury a member of your family is out in Whinmoor. As Councillor Taylor said, many a time the partner of somebody who has died is elderly, not as active as perhaps they might be.

I would have to say to you, how could they possibly get from Yeadon out to Whinmoor by any other means than a car? Public transport is non-existent. The whole ambience of a mega-cemetery is not the sort of facility we...

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: Point of order, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Point of order, please, Councillor Hanley.

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: Lord Mayor, the Legal officer has made it perfectly clear (*Interruption*). Lord Mayor, can I complete the point of order, please?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hanley, point of order, continue, please.

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: The Legal Officer made it perfectly clear before the beginning of this debate of where you could stray and where you could not stray. The six month rule applies and therefore you should not be making the comments that you are making. I would like you to rule on that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Members, could you follow the Legal Officer's advice and Councillor Campbell, could you continue, please?

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I think they should have followed it as well.

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: You should have got up and said so.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Can I have an extra minute, Lord Mayor? Thank you, Lord Mayor, it is very kind of you. All right then, large cemeteries in the east of Leeds which, for the purposes of discussion we will say the name begins with a 'W' but I will not say the word. The point is we are talking about a large cemetery, a large, impersonal experience.

I cannot see – and anybody I know has never indicated to me that they wish when they lay one of their loved ones to be rest to have anything other than a small scale, intimate atmosphere. I cannot understand the rationale of Councillor Rafique, who seems to insist that we all wish to be buried in a mega-cemetery somewhere within the metropolitan district. I think that is arrogance beyond compare simply to say to people, "We have made this decision. We have decided we want a big cemetery here and you will go there. Whether it is anywhere near where you live, whether it is anywhere near where your family are based it does not matter. You will go." That is not how you deal with it.

Councillor Procter has been quite open with us, I think, that there are still spaces but the working party, it seems to me, sensibly looking at the problem by actually saying what do people really, really want, not what are we going to tell them they are going to have. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR GRAHAM: Lord Mayor, once again it seems the Executive member has different information to what the Board has received from Denise Preston. You are answerable to the Scrutiny, remember. Councillor Wakefield, your information is correct as to what the Board had and we had members on that Board from your side and others who were concerned about the cemetery provision. We had a small meeting where they were happy with myself and the officers to meet with Denise Preston, where we got the information – I have said this to you before as well, Councillor Procter.

Councillor Hussain, your name might appear as a Board member but we will not go into whether you actually attended a meeting or stayed the full time. You are happy with the provision that has been given? So would you be happy, then, where you are told because your flowers and things are floating where they have just been buried, there is a pile of soil over there, you can put that on and the only thing we can do to alleviate this is to cover it with wood bark? You are happy with that? I am afraid I am not and neither are my residents who are buried in Garforth and also in Harehills. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Yes, my Lord Mayor, once again I find myself speaking immediately after Councillor Graham and yet again I have to raise the issue, she is the Chair of the Scrutiny Committee. No doubt at some stage again she will be asked impartially to chair that committee and discuss the burial policy of this Council and yet again I have to question whether she is capable of doing that impartially.

My Lord Mayor, I listened with interest to Councillor Wakefield. There he was, like the cosmetic mortician covering over the cracks in his own party. My Lord Mayor, what makes me very concerned, however, is that we have had mention of Councillor Harington apparently – or maybe not – the member of a working party depending on whether the Chief Whip of the Labour Group actually remember to nominate him. Is that the same Councillor Harington who you, my Lord Mayor, wrote to specifically requesting him not to print any more pictures of you as Lord Mayor in a Labour party leaflet, and yet he appears to have done so again.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Disgraceful.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Then we come, my Lord Mayor, to the more specific and even more worrying issue of this petition. Councillor Rafique, I did not hear Councillor Procter rubbish the petition. What I heard him do was to question some of the signatures on the petition when he very wisely, in my view, instructed that a return address was marked on the correspondence so that any that did not go to anyone who did not live at the addresses presumably that were on the petition, were returned. Not only have we got these returned, I understand there are even more now returned. We are receiving phone calls from irate residents of the area saying, "What is this you have sent me? It is not in my name and the person you have written to does not live here." I am given reliable information that on this top envelope here – and I am not going to give the address – the residents are one Jowitt and one Mitchell, not the name that appears on the letter and so presumably appeared on the petition.

My Lord Mayor, I would respectfully suggest to the Chief Executive that when it comes to postal votes in certain areas of the city we have a very close look at some of these names and some of these addresses and just make sure nothing even more untoward has been going on. Councillor Wakefield, I am afraid your colleagues have made your whole debate into a complete joke. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield to sum up. I am just checking if there are any more contributors eager to contribute or take part in this debate.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I always like Councillor Carter with his smoke and mirrors and sand in your eyes because not once – not once – did he address a very important breach of protocol at this Council and that is the letter sent out by an Executive Board member to people who have given the petition in. I am beginning to question now if there is a petition coming in, who should it be given to and what should the response be? I think that is a question if I encourage people to give petitions, should they not respect or should we not respect the integrity of those people who have signed that petition? I think that is a fundamental question that I want to ask.

In terms of the press release, I have to smile. I have to smile. Every time we get Executive Board on a Wednesday the press releases have been out from Thursday, Friday and Saturday before we even sit down to discuss and debate it, and both the Carters are experts at that, seeing their faces over the weekend on Executive Board papers that we have never even discussed or seen up till then. Do not give us lectures about press releases. You both abuse them. You have done so and, frankly, we all have consistently in this Chamber always put out early press releases, so I do not need lectures on press releases, thank you.

Let me just go to the issue of John denying these figures. I, Machiavelli, put these figures together and somehow have arrived at a conclusion that is not true. I have to tell Council, those figures, that projection, was given to me by officers of this Council who I highly respect as being very professional. That is why for years they kept telling us that we could not do community burials. I think my colleague is right. There is an interesting debate about large burials and small ones but consistently when we were in administration officers were saying,, "We have trawled East Leeds, we cannot find enough small ones to accommodate the 50 year strategy that we want, we need a big one." That was the purpose of the Whinmoor debate.

I have got to say that Councillor Procter's reassurance about East Leeds is not true. I went to visit Harehills. I went to see where they could extend last week

and, frankly, it is a worry. It is a worry about the site. You are actually knocking over old gravestones to extend it there and I think Councillor Davey is right about Harehills. If you have got all those spaces you had better start sharing them out.

Equally so we have a person in Garforth, a fellow you may have heard of called Mark Dobson, who is our candidate.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Has somebody buried him alive?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: No, I will tell you what – he is going to be burying Mark Phillips alive, that is for sure! Here we have a cemetery that already the extension is boggy. We have concerns from a member of your own side, Councillor Bill Hyde, who is worried about Whitkirk, so it is not true that everything is rosy in the garden.

If officers say we have only got three years spaces for the city I believe them, and I hope we all do. I see no reason why they should give me duff information and I am happy to share it with you, John.

One other thing she did not do – let me talk about the working group. Councillor Hanley has written to you about our nomination and I think it is right he has already given that nomination. Councillor Harington was our nominee and I think it is right and proper there should be a debate about who sits on a working party. I think it is right and proper that there should be a discussion. I have not been part of that discussion but I think we should talk about who should...

THE LORD MAYOR: Point of personal explanation, Councillor Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Believe it or not, Lord Mayor, we do not often get these but this is a point of personal explanation in relation to what I said about the nomination to that particular working group. I did receive correspondence from Councillor Hanley. However, it was to suggest or to demand that I stood down as Chair of that working group and that it should not meet until after the election.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I would like to continue because I think this is a debate for elsewhere. What I raised at the time is about the working group that has not met yet, to my knowledge. In fact it is due to meet on 20th April. Does that not make you suspicious that from January to now we have not had a working group and neither you nor Councillor Carter have answered why you have breached protocol of this Council in sending out a letter in purdah to everybody who signed that petition? I have got the letter here. It is letter headed - Councillor Procter is not allowed to send – there are only Leaders allowed to send to other parts of the city and I am afraid that by any definition this is a gross breach and it is costing the Council taxpayers money.

All we want on this side is a proper working group. You would be dangerous if you had a brain, Les. All we want is a proper working group to look into the issues of something that is growing as a problem city-wide and for all the smudge, for all the smoke and mirrors, for all the things you have dodged the central issues that the people of Leeds deserve to be reassured about their long-term future of burial spaces for their loved ones. I move, Lord Mayor, thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Members, I will be calling for a vote on the amendment of Councillor J Procter on this motion. Can I have a show of hands for the vote on the amendment in the name of Councillor Procter. Those against? Any abstentions? That is CARRIED and therefore becomes the substantive motion.

Can we have a show of hands, please, for the substantive motion? Those against? Any abstentions? The substantive motion is CARRIED.

ITEM 11 –WHITE PAPER MOTION – SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES BILL

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 11, White Paper Motion on Sustainable Communities bill. Councillor Anderson.

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: Lord Mayor, everybody will be pleased to know I will not be going through the litany of failures of the previous Labour administration or its Government and why things like this are important. However, I would point out that this bill, which has come as a private member's bill and is signed cross-party, has actually been signed by some of our MPs, namely Colin Challon, Paul Truswell, Colin Burgin, Greville Holland, John Battle and Fabian Hamilton.

That sounds great. It actually sounds as though they are going to back this. Earlier on today we have heard, I think it was Mick Lyons said that we should get in touch with our MPs and let them know what we think. Yet again great, they have expressed their view that they are going to support this, but, as they say, they have got previous on this. They often say things to make it sound good for their electorate, but when it comes to the actual vote itself, they troop through like lambs to the slaughter and go wherever the Government Whips tell them. This is happening far too often for us in Leeds and I do fear that again the Labour MPs that are representing us are going to do exactly the same thing again.

Why have this bill? Because of the years, OK, some people may say it may have started before 1997 but certainly since 1997 there has been a decline in our cities and it has not been helped by the policies of your Government.

What will this bill actually do? One of the important things it will do is set up something called a Local Communities Account, which will basically mean that all the money that is being spent by central Government and by local Government goes into one account so that the electorate of Leeds will be able to see how much money is being spent on the services.

That leads to some very interesting things for the citizens of Leeds, because what they may find out under this current Government, for example we are already aware that the Local Authority settlement is less than comparable cities and we have already heard about the poor state of the transport funding.

For example, were you aware that spending by the Department of Transport per head since 2000/01 in London has been £1,637 per person; in the West Midlands, £969; North-West, £918; South-East, £882; Eastern, £810 – you will notice the direction I am going in, I have not mentioned us yet – South-West £802; East Midlands, £780 – I am suffering here – North-East, £577 and then, lo and behold, Yorkshire and Humber, £571. That is all your Government think about people in Yorkshire and Humber. That is all your MPs think about the citizens of Leeds, spending only £571 on us. That is why we have got to do something.

Is it something I have said that everybody is leaving?

There are a lot of the problems. What is going to be the great legacy of this Blair Government, because Blair is going to be leaving soon – at least if we are to believe. It certainly is not going to be greater social inclusion. It is most certainly not narrowing the gap between the rich and the poor. It most certainly is not greater participation in civic and political activity. It is most certainly not effective protection

of the local environment or the prudent use of natural resources. I think, as some people's report cards may have said in the past year, they can do a lot better on these issues.

OK, so let us talk about what has this Council done, because that is probably more important. It is OK to criticise but what have we as a Council done? We have done quite well in the last three years. We have developed a lot of policies to seek and address these issues. For example, in terms of planning and transportation policies we have come up with a number of ideas. We have also focused development on Town and District Centres. We have also stated very clearly – I know that Councillor Gruen was a late convert to it – protecting the green belt. Things like that, we have actually set out policies. We have also done our best as a Council to try and protect Post Offices. Leeds has seen the closure of 50 Post Offices since 2002 and so the Council has done a number of things. We have also done a lot to promote financial inclusion and access to affordable and good quality financial services. As some of you may or may not be aware, under the leadership of the Executive Member for Development, namely Councillor Andrew Carter, we have actually been awarded Beacon Status for our financial inclusion work, so we as a Council are doing things in terms of sustainable communities.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Keep telling yourself you are good.

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: But we are! We know! It is only you that are in self-denial. I am sorry you are in self-denial. Maybe if you speak to a psychiatrist he might be able to get round that sort of thing for you. He is a bit of a case, I know that, isn't he?

Then as we have already heard today there is the Town and District Centre Partnerships that we have developed and the money that we are putting in.

Just to conclude, this Bill would enable a genuine bottom-up response to what is going wrong in our communities. The measures proposed would significantly alter the balance of power in favour of local Councils and local communities, reducing the reach of Whitehall and its unelected quangos. Certainly getting rid of the Yorkshire and Humber Assembly would probably be the greatest thing that anybody could do because I know I have to sit and suffer and listen to the inane chatter that goes on in trying to interfere in local politics all the time.

Finally, my Lord Mayor, I would like to remind Council of the following. The Government keeps saying that they want to devolve power downwards, but we have not seen anything from probably the most centralising Government that there has been - and Margaret Thatcher, she did some things but believe you me this Government has got nothing on her – that we actually achieve this fundamental, democratic reform.

This Bill is an excellent start and I would ask you to support the White Paper.
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR SHEL BROOKE: Second and reserve the right to speak, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: My Lord Mayor, I will try and keep my remarks brief, given the late time.

I am delighted that Barry has brought this standard national motion to this Council. It is going through a lot of Council Chambers. Maybe he is trying to

convince Tory Central Office that he is a 'Yes' man so he will get on the 'A' list for the next round of parliamentary selection.

I think there are many, many serious issues. Barry is quite right that the Sustainable Communities Bill has had all-party support because it covered very many serious issues. However, it has not been a bill without controversy. In fact, to quote a local Tory MP – and, of course, you have to go as far as Skipton and Ripon to find a local Tory MP – David Curry says:

“There are bound to be questions about the administrative cost and complexity of the policy which could ironically end up giving vastly enhanced roles in practice to the Government’s regional offices.”

Clearly for something that has not been contested, Barry’s far as his fellow conservative’s are concerned about the administrative burden. Of course, Leeds want to get on with delivering services on this side.

I think the bigger point that Barry missed about sustainable communities is the impact that unchained and unfettered market forces have on our local communities. We have seen plenty of examples. Our colleagues here to the right have fought off a Tesco store in Chapeltown and have powered the big supermarkets to price gouge, to under cut to force through and force themselves into a market, force local businesses out of competition, out of business and then move on. It has a serious impact and I am glad that our Labour Government has reversed out of town shopping centres. We all saw the effect that the White Rose Centre, which the previous Tory Government approved, has had on many of our local communities.

Other areas – privatised bus companies, outside any regulation, there to make profit. The privatised bus, companies privatised under a previous Conservative Government had a devastating effect when they made service changes on local communities.

Also I would like to refer back to something John Illingworth spoke about earlier, which is the power of private landlords and profit there.

I hope that Barry does take on board these points, about the fact that the wider market forces have on sustainable communities.

I would just like briefly to conclude by talking about a couple of things that this administration has done – withdrawn funding for supporting village design statements. It has withdrawn many services that would normally be provided centrally and insisted that Area Committees use their Wellbeing fund, which is there for, I thought, local communities. It now seems to be to subsidise this administration on basic things like providing neighbourhood wardens with vans, like providing litter bins, like providing other services.

I hope this administration gets its house in order on sustainable communities and I look forward to the conclusion of this debate. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Lewis. Before I ask Councillor Blake to second, can I announce that since the meeting is going to run a bit late and we should have a comfort break but we will not – bad news. The catering staff have gone home, so there is no provision for food but some members for various medical reasons who may be diabetic need a hot cup of tea or to calm their nerves maybe, some people, you can go individually, but the Council business will continue. If you can go for a quick few minutes, have a cup of tea and come back but you cannot

bring the cups into the Council Chamber. If that is OK with everybody. There are no catering staff, otherwise the Council would have adjourned for ten or 15 minutes. If anybody wants to go individually you can go to the Banqueting Hall but we will continue with Council business. Thank you. Councillor Blake.

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

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Good evening or good night, whichever way you look at it.

I think I really ought to comment on that James Lewis said about Barry Anderson not being selected as the MP. I am sure that Barry would have made an excellent MP and he is better than the one that we have got in Morley. *(Applause)*

This Bill – it seems very laudable and anything that returns activities to local communities and will regenerate areas must be made welcome. It has the support, I am sure, of my colleagues and obviously myself and we would welcome its introduction. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Council will no doubt remember that a similar White Paper was brought forward last year, in June, and I am very happy that Barry has brought this up again so that we have the opportunity to debate the same issues almost twelve months on.

It is interesting because you talk about the fact that we have done less for communities but the very examples that you have actually brought up actually show that we are more interested about decisions being made on a local level. The Area Committees which, of course, I think most people admit here, are not ideal structures since they were formulated under your administration, we have actually been able to reform to some degree to ensure that for once they actually have a decent budget to look at, they actually have more responsibilities to take on board and, thirdly, they were actually asked to make decisions with the local communities that they are meant to represent.

So, for instance, you talk about the Area Design Statements. That is a good news story. There has been £50,000 made available to each Area Committee to enable you in your area to be an active Councillor in your area and get design statements done in your area.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: It used to be done centrally.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: It should not be done centrally because the whole point about design statements is about local communities deciding on their own local priorities and their own local future.

COUNCILLOR LEWIS: They are funded centrally. It is another cut, Stuart. It is another cut.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Lord Mayor...

THE LORD MAYOR: Let Councillor Golton continue, please.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: It just goes to show, Councillor Lewis, that you do not actually appreciate what localism actually is.

I will just give you an example of what happens in Rothwell so hopefully you can look and learn. For instance, we are about to have an Area Design Statement

set up for Oulton, which is going to be funded, hopefully, by the money that you have supplied through the £50,000 for Area Design Statements. We have also, as an Area Committee, been able to decide that we want the town centres of Morley and Rothwell to thrive. We did not need somebody in the Civic Hall to tell us how we did it either. We decided that we were going to employ a Town Manager and we also went out and had forums in Rothwell and in Morley and we involved local traders and local people so that they actually made the priorities for that Town Manager to pursue. That is local decision-making and it is local activism and it is a local budget and that is something that this administration has actually given.

As well as that in Rothwell I can say that the town centre, after a low period which started under your administration, is actually beginning to have some kind of rebirth. One of the reasons why it is having a rebirth is because there has been investment in community building, such as the Blackburn Hall which hosts community events, but more importantly the Town and District Centre fund, which has been set up under this administration, has ensured that the car parking area for Rothwell is pleasant, it is accessible for disabled people and it also means that more people will come in and trade within the Rothwell area. That is local decision-making, local priorities.

Unfortunately, Lord Mayor, when I first debated the Sustainable Communities Bill last year, it was brought on board and it was a much shorter debate precisely because it was supposedly having all-party support not just here in this Council Chamber but also, of course, in the House of Commons. Since that date, of course, what happens is that the warm words tend to dissipate, do they not, and after it has been for its second reading on 19th January, as soon as it goes to committee stage the Government decides to put in some amendments to try and wreck the Bill. Unfortunately we are handling a situation whereby the all-party consensus which you are always so keen to have has once again been let down by our local MPs who – I am watching this as well, I am going to see how they are going to vote for this Bill because their Ministers are going to tell them not to. We will see whether or not they are interested in local communities in Leeds, and there is going to be proof there.

As well as that, of course, over the past twelve months we have had to deal with several other things that the Government has done. They are supposed to be really interested in having sustainable local communities. We have, of course, the Post Offices fiasco, where the very nubs of any local economy, the Post Office, which brings people into any local centre, are being cut. That is down to your Government and do not try and explain it off to anybody else.

We also have the Government's continued love affair with breweries which means, of course, that we have to handle their licensing which, of course, is a threat to our local centres. We also have the Barber Enquiry into planning, which will have even less say for local people in planning and more for big business.

Finally, Lord Mayor, we come back to the old chestnut which is the Government settlement, which means that every time that that Government gives us less than our fair share, we have less than our fair share to pass down to local communities, to local Area Committees, to local people, to have it spent according to their local priorities. That is a bad deal for Leeds.

Unfortunately the Labour Party is not going to be able to support this with any kind of – the red light is on. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR BARKER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I firmly believe that central Government should not be able to dictate what happens in our local communities and areas like Horsforth. Local people know what is best for the local

area. The Sustainable Communities Bill would allow everybody to have their say. What works in the centre of Leeds does not always work in areas like Horsforth and the outskirts. The Liberal Democrats in Horsforth have been working hard to find out what matters to the local people on local issues such as the night-time economy of Horsforth, which used to be taking over in certain areas of Horsforth. I am not against private enterprise or anything like that, but it is just changing the whole character of the area and there are a lot of planning issues as well that we are really concerned about that local people should have more say in local issues. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR RUSSELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The Sustainable Communities Bill is vital piece of legislation that will hopefully provide the mechanisms by which we can stop the reverse and decline in many of our local communities. We are all concerned about many of the issues this Bill seeks to remedy. Closure of Post Offices, for one, is an issue I am sure we can all agree on. When a Post Office closes it can have a knock-on effect to neighbouring shops which contributes to the decline of locally based shopping areas. These are often focal points of our communities and the loss of these is a tragedy.

With regards to increasing participation in local democracy, I am sure again this is another issue that we can all agree on. The more we can engage with people and make them feel part of the process of Local Government, the more likelihood that they will participate and this can only be to the benefit of us all as elected representatives.

When we talk about the environment and protecting it, it can often be in abstract terms that people do not feel a connection to. By focusing more on local environmental issues, it can not only help to protect the local area from environmental degradation but it can also give people a greater understanding and connection to the wider environmental issues that face not just Leeds, not just the UK but the planet as a whole. This motion clearly outlines the problems we face and the ways in which the Sustainable Communities Bill can help us to address those problems, so I will be wholeheartedly supporting this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Lord Mayor, three very quick observations on this White Paper from Barry.

There is mention of civic participation in environmental degradation and I have not heard so far in this meeting of Council any congratulations of City Services on grass cutting this year. I have not heard a single complaint in Leeds this year over the grass cutting so congratulations to Councillor Smith, who is not here, on a mission accomplished. (*Interruption*) No complaints in my Ward, Pauline.

Aiming to increase local participation in democracy. This is usually interpreted to mean something about turn-outs in local elections, but democracy is Parliamentary elections as well and it has to do with confidence in Government – big ‘G’, little ‘g’. I particularly mention postal voting and inherent fraud in readily available postal votes.

I was quite concerned last year when we went to West Yorkshire Police with the case of a gentleman who was in Pakistan from October onwards but somehow managed to apply for a postal vote in March, although he was not in the country to make the application. When it arrived one of Councillor Harington’s helpers turned up and invited a lady in the household to hand over the four postal votes in the house to this helper, which she did, unopened.

That was one instance where last year West Yorkshire Police declined to investigate too much because they thought they would not be able to find the evidence, but they have told us this year that if something like that happens again, they will investigate such an allegation fully.

Postal voting fraud is one of the problems we have got in other parts of the country as well, of course, and it bears quite heavily on the reputation of Local Government and National Government, particularly Labour's style of Government, because Labour on the whole does not really want to know what people think because you govern now by policy groups. You as a party are not allowed to make your own policy. Your policies are made for you by focus groups. The other parties still have more robust measures of making policies and connecting with voters. Unfortunately the Labour party is in decline because of this.

You do not have to take my word for it. Just listen to this:

"Right across Leeds in urban and suburban, working and middle-class areas, we"

- that is you, Labour –

"are losing touch with our national supporters and losing elections as a consequence."

James Lewis. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR MORTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It is a pity, really, that this debate has come up at the time that it has because it brings together so many things that we all talk about and we all get in our post bags and I suspect that the impact on our local shopping centres and town centres and local shops has a salience for electors for greater than we can really do justice for at this time of night, so on those grounds I will try and keep it brief.

The single-most important fact about this is it is a private members bill and, if the Government gives it time and supports it, it will become law, and if the Government does not give it time and does not support it, it will not. It is one of these things that I know a lot of Labour MPs have signed it, I know that we have got almost all-party support tonight but as with a lot of things we have discussed today, it will rest with Ministers.

Never any harm in going back to first principles. Like a lot of people of my generation my formative political experience was having a father who was involved in the miners' strike in the early 1980s and that had an impact on my thinking about mass market capitalism. On the other hand, I had never really doubted the power of free markets, and we will come back to what we talk about for free in a minute. There is that famous quote from Adam Smith about people getting their dinner not from the benevolence of the butcher and the baker and the brewer.

The question I would ask – and I think a lot of people are asking the same question – is the classical view of free markets by a thinker like Adam Smith, who I think is misunderstood by a lot of people on the right of politics, the same as the sort of mass market capitalism that is increasingly disfiguring a lot of local economies in 2007. I think the answer to that is no, there is a difference between mass market capitalism and free market economics.

I think we would all agree that markets have to operate within a moral context. Most of us would agree that markets have to operate within a local context. We are a

country of distinctive geographies, identities and traditions. Where the most disagreement perhaps come is where the markets have to operate with or against the grain of human psychology and that is where I think this issue is so interesting, because although many people – including me to an extent – are happy to get in cars or a bus and to go Tesco's and the reason they are very successful is because they are good at what they do, the volume of public complaints that we seem to get about the loss of our Post Offices, the loss of the butcher, the baker, the candlestick maker, the disfigurement of our town centres, I think accurately represents a feeling that something is not quite right in the way our society is going.

I give you a positive example before I come on to some of the negatives. We have for the last six months or so now what we call a Delimarket once a month in Headingley – the extension of the farmers' market type of operation into Headingley has been on my 'to do' list for the whole of the seven years I have been a Councillor. It is an interesting mind set that I have fallen prey to as well, that nothing would even happen unless it was organised by the Council.

Local residents have done that. I know some people will dismiss it as a bit of a middle-class obsession but it is genuinely moving - and that is a strong word – but I think it is moving to go there, to see the level of social interaction on the street, to see people walking up and down the shopping centre in a way that they do not outside the night-time economy, talking to producers, seeing the pride that the local producers – they have to be within the Yorkshire area – have over it. People who would never normally come into Headingley because it kind of seen as a bad place now, the town centre, for local residents. It is a destination, people come from across North Leeds but crucially you bump into people you would never, ever normally see.

I know that sometimes that is dismissed as pie in the sky and in the real world we all go to supermarkets and I know that is true, but we have lost something and I think this is what this Bill is trying to tap into politically.

What has gone wrong? Headingley town centre certainly has a number of things that we will all recognise – monopoly ownership, we have got shops that have been empty for over a year now because the developers would rather have them empty and increasing in value than have low rental – what they see as low rental – usages. We also have the clone town phenomenon but more importantly the lack of power in planning because we are constantly governed by national frameworks which I think this Bill will do something about.

I will finish with this point. There was that famous quote from Chesterton about when people stop believing in God they do not believe nothing, they will believe anything, and I think something similar can apply to the sense of identity. If we allow these market forces to erode all of our national and local identities, people will not believe in no identity. They will turn to other people who offer other forms of identity – nasty identities, hateful identities, racial identities and authoritarian identities and we must as a political class do something to meet these concerns that we all get in all our post bags because if we do not there are some other politicians a lot less pleasant than ourselves that will do it for us. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Lord Mayor, all I would like to say is welcome back, Barry, we have all missed you, I have to say.

Would anyone in this Chamber seriously stand up and say, "I am against sustainable development and sustainable communities"? I am glad, Councillor Golton reminded us that it had come to Council last June and here we are going through it again. So far so good. You have asked us to support the concept outlined in the Bill and I think a lot of the work that David Miliband has done on double

devolution actually works towards helping us to deliver on the ground. Could we say, Lord Mayor, that sustainability, like charity, should begin at home?

What I fail to understand, Barry, with all your obvious enthusiasm that you portray every time you stand up, and your passion, is why you have failed so singularly to influence your own Executive Board members and their policies that are undermining sustainable communities in this city as we know it.

Just highlighting some of the things we have raised today. The promotion of local economies, one of the key strands. How does the decimation of our Jobs and Skills Department and the loss of skills and expertise built up over the years help towards that? Three training bases being closed, 40 redundancies. Protecting the environment. The wholesale support of this administration for incineration, just one thing, as opposed to maximum reduction and recycling. Our newest recruit to the environmental agenda, Councillor 'I'm an Environmentalist' Carter - which is Andrew Carter - welcoming in the same breath the expansion of Leeds Bradford Airport with no serious discussion about the resolution of the access that will bring. Reduction of social exclusion. How can you actually say that when the actual reality of home care cuts to 1700 people across the city is increasing isolation?

On the issue of increasing involvement in the democratic process, all I would say is, try telling that to the protestors who came into Council today to talk about the fence in Otley, who came last time to talk about the Stanhope Community Centre Group and came again today to talk about the Terry Yorath Centre.

By all means let us show our support for this Bill but remember it is action on the ground that counts. Barry, get your own house in order before you come lecturing us on ours. Thank you. (*Applause*)

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

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: Lord Mayor, again because of the lateness of the debate, I think this is a very serious issue and I think if the debate had been held earlier we probably would have had some other contributions as well.

A number of issues that have been raised. For example, James. I think James to me encapsulates why this Government is out of touch. He had nothing positive to say. He has got connections with the transport side of things. He did not refute the figures so obviously you agree your Government is under-funding transport in this city and that your colleagues as Labour MPs are doing absolutely nothing to reverse it.

COUNCILLOR LEWIS: I never said that, Barry.

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: No, but you did not argue against it. You did not argue against it so by not arguing against it you must obviously agree with it.

To answer some of the other issues that have been raised. Turn-outs since you came to power in 1997 have been going down year on year. That surely shows you how disillusioned people are becoming since your Government takes things forward.

Garden development. You did not once mention the damage your Government is doing by pushing forward garden development week in, week out – another example of where your Government does not know what sustainable communities are.

You did not mention the investment that has been going into the city parks that we have got throughout the city as well. Again, a positive message you did not care to mention.

You also did not say that you would undertake to speak to your MPs and to put a bit of backbone into them so that they would actually, when it gets down to Parliament, just put... *(Interruption)* Invertebrates, OK.

Some other serious things. Judith said about the economic thing. It is because of the actions of this administration that we managed to secure the LEGL funding. We learned a lesson from the previous one and we have got the LEGL funding in.

Also, I do not know if it has passed by some people across there but one of the major supporters for incineration in this country is actually the Labour Government itself because you can argue about incineration and you will get varying views, but your Government actually believes it is probably the way to dispose of waste. Just go and ask your own Government. They are the ones who are promoting it. You keep banging on about this the whole time and it is your Government that is providing the support.

Finally can I just remind everybody, and particularly Councillor Lewis – Richard Lewis this time – PCSOs. Thanks to this administration we now have the PCSOs in every single Ward, which means everywhere is sustainable, unlike with you where you would not have them in every single Ward. *(Applause)* I do not think you are being misquoted there.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Personal explanation.

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: You did not speak in the debate, did you?

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: I have never said there should not be PCSOs in every Ward but what I do say is that... *(Interruption)*

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: You have not spoken in the debate.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Yes you did and it is going to lose you the election.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: You yourself have not got equal representation for PCSOs across the city. You give certain Wards more PCSOs than others.

THE LORD MAYOR: Silence, please. Silence. Councillor Anderson.

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: On a lighter note I just wish that, based on the support that I have received tonight from all parties, we had gone for an open primary and I might have actually got selected! Anyway, all the best to you all and please support this paper. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Members, can I call for a vote on the amendment in the name of Councillor J Lewis? Those against? Any abstentions? That is LOST.

Therefore can we have a vote on the motion in the name of Councillor Anderson? Those in favour? Those against? Any abstentions? Therefore the motion is CARRIED.

Members we will take a five minute only comfort break. Five minutes only. Then we will resume again. Just a minute, Members. (*Interruption*)

We are going to carry on. Members, be patient and be co-operative and let us have unity at last again. We will move on to the next item, which is number 13.

ITEM 13 – WHITE PAPER – PRIMARY SCHOOLS IN Leeds

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 13, Peter Gruen, White Paper Motion – Primary Schools in Leeds.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, I would like to formally move this White Paper and I am happy to accept the amendment in the name of Councillor Harker. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: No comments? Councillor Davey to second.

COUNCILLOR DAVEY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: What am I supposed to do at this point? I move the amendment, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR W HYDE: Seconded formally, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Shelbrooke, your contribution noted. Councillor Gruen to sum up, please.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I am very grateful for the debate, Lord Mayor. (*Laughter*) I hope all Members will support the amended resolution.

THE LORD MAYOR: Members, can I call for a vote on the amendment in the name of Councillor Harker? That was an easy one, Councillor Harker.

Show of hands, please? Unity. Anybody against? Any abstentions? That is CARRIED.

ITEM 14 - WHITE PAPER MOTION – BRITISH FORCES POSTAL SERVICE

THE LORD MAYOR: White Paper Motion – British Forces Postal Services. Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I move in the terms of the notice, my Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Seconded, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Carter to sum up.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Show of hands in favour of the motion in the name of Councillor Carter? Any against? That will be easy! Any abstentions? Therefore that is CARRIED. This is the best part of the Council meeting, isn't it?

Since it is my last Council meeting, you have been very generous and kind and finishing it off with unity because I am the unifier, trying to bring everybody together.

ITEM 16 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – IDENTIFICATION OF KASHMIRI AS A
SEPARATE CATEGORY WITHIN THE 2001 CENSUS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 16, Identification of Kashmiri as a Separate Category Within The 2001 Census. Councillor Hussain.

COUNCILLOR HUSSAIN: I would formally like to move the motion, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Akhtar.

COUNCILLOR AKHTAR: Second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hussain to sum up?

COUNCILLOR HUSSAIN: Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: Lord Mayor, I would like to support the motion on behalf of our party.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Rafique. It is noted.

Can we have a vote on this motion, please? A show of hands, all those in favour? Any against? Any abstentions? CARRIED.

Fantastic! What a wonderful lot you are.

(Announcement re car parking arrangements)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you for your co-operation, Members.

(The Council meeting was closed)