

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Held on

Wednesday 20th June 2007

At

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
CIVIC HALL, LEEDS

In the Chair:

THE LORD MAYOR
(Councillor B Cleasby)

VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

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VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 20th JUNE 2007

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon, Council. My first instruction is to ask you to turn off all mobile phones because I am sure by now you are aware that it is traditional that £50 goes to the Lord Mayor's charity (*Laughter*) if your mobile phone goes off and if any of you can hear the Lord Mayor's phone go off you pay £100, because mine is on my bedside table and is definitely switched off. In fact, one of the peculiarities of this job is I have not used my mobile phone since you installed me. I switch it on occasionally and get a message and then it goes off again.

Quickly on to the agenda. I understand that there are no announcements officially from the Chief Executive, apart from an announcement that many will already know, that sadly Alderman Joe Kitchen, MBE JP, died on 1 May. Could I invite Members to stand as a silent tribute?

Silent tribute

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. I have some announcements that I am sure Joe would be pleased with. In the Queen's Birthday Honours list we were, I think, very fortunate in Leeds with the honours received and so congratulations must go to Councillor Atha on his CBE. (*Applause*)

At the same time created CBE was Freeman of the City Jane Tomlinson. (*Applause*)

Also receiving the OBE in the same list was Barbara Taylor Bradford, who I believe is from Armley originally; Dr Ian Lawson Blackwood received an OBE; Penny Julia Hemming received an OBE for services to business; Linda Campbell received an OBE for services to local government; Ian Winston Charles, an OBE for services to the community and the great cricketing legend Bob Appleyard – I think some may well remember him as a formidable bowler for Yorkshire during the 1950s, earning nine England test caps and the only man to take 200 wickets in his debut season for the county – he received an MBE.

Closer to home now, and moving more up to date, I understand congratulations are in order to Councillor Russell who has just become engaged. (*Applause*)

ITEM 1 – MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING HELD ON
24th MAY 2007

THE LORD MAYOR: We move on, then, to the Order Paper and item 1, Minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 24 May. Councillor Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I move that the minutes be received.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Could I then call for the vote and show of hands? Those in favour? Those against? Abstentions? I think that is CARRIED. Thank you.

ITEM 2 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I then move on to agenda item 2, Declarations of Interest. I think under the new rules we should all be correct now. Has any Member any problem or anything they wish to declare?

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Yes, Lord Mayor, I see some people have registered as being Members of an ALMO. I am also a Member of an ALMO, the West and North West ALMO.

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE GOVERNANCE): Lord Mayor, can I just point out that I do not think there is anything on the Order Paper in relation to housing-related matters that would require a declaration of interest, so you do not all need to start jumping up.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Lord Mayor, I learned at Standards yesterday that I ought to declare that I am a Member of the Children Leeds Partnership.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Lord Mayor, I have just been advised I should declare that too.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I invite Members to show by a show of hands that they have read the list, or the list as amended, and agree with its content insofar as they relate to their own interests? Could I have a show of hands, please, Council? Thank you.

ITEM 3 – COMMUNICATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Agenda Item 3, Communications.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: There is nothing that I have been asked to communicate to Members today, Lord Mayor.

ITEM 4 – DEPUTATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: I move on to Deputations at 4. We have three deputations. Chief Executive.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: The first from the parents of Fountain School; the second, Lingfield and Fir Trees Residents' Group; and the third Kommunity regarding the matters listed in the order paper, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Procter:

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Yes, Lord Mayor, I move in terms of the notice.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen to second.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Yes indeed, I second.

THE LORD MAYOR: Could I call for the vote? AGREED.

DEPUTATION 1 – PARENTS OF FOUNTAIN PRIMARY SCHOOL

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

MS A BROWN: My Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, thank you for allowing Fountain Primary School to be represented at this meeting. My name is Anne Brown. I am a teacher at Fountain Primary School. Ros Hanson is accompanying me – she is also a staff member. On my other side is Lynne Brooks, who is a representative from the GMB Union.

I am going to read the following statement written by staff at Fountain Primary School.

We are concerned about the future provision of education at Fountain Primary School in Morley. Fountain Primary was opened in September 2005 as a new school formed by the merger of Crosshall Junior School, Crosshall Infants School and Elmfield Infants School.

At this time all staff were served with redundancy notices and informed that they would be required to submit to a selection process for jobs in the new school. This experience was traumatic and we fully expected redundancies to be made.

It was acknowledged at the time by Education Leeds officials and at a recent meeting between staff and Chris Edwards that the amalgamation of three schools was unprecedented and occurred with unprecedented haste. Staff concerns that insufficient time and consideration had been given to the merger were brushed aside. Notwithstanding their doubts, the staff all worked very hard from Day One to make the new school a success and morale was high.

Fountain Primary School was opened on two sites and therefore has the financial burden of running two separate buildings. Despite this we have been told that we do not fulfil the criteria for split site funding. The new school was also formed with a very expensive senior staffing structure which was approved by Education Leeds. Everyone hoped and believed that Fountain Primary School would have an exciting and successful future. All staff at the new school, from cleaning staff to Headteacher, worked hard to build a successful school and the signs were that Fountain Primary School was indeed flourishing.

During the autumn term of the school's second year all staff were informed that, due to falling rolls which determine funding and a massive overspend, staffing reductions were necessary. The staffing losses would work out at about 20% of all staff and would include two full-time support staff, two nursery nurses, two lunch-time supervisors, one Member of the kitchen staff and five teachers. Staff morale has been in steady decline since then and this must have an effect on future progress and the children's education.

The school had already found that three Assistant Heads could not be afforded and one post was lost at the end of the first year. Staff at the school voted unanimously for industrial action and one day's strike has already taken place with 100% support. Further action, including strikes, is planned.

We submit the following for your consideration. Our concerns can almost be summed up with two related questions. One, how does the disastrous financial situation develop so quickly in a new school and what effect will it have on the education of the pupils? Number two, we need a full explanation for this situation and we feel that an independent inquiry into the setting up of Fountain Primary School is necessary.

It has recently been acknowledged by Chris Edwards that errors were made in predicting pupil numbers. Another local school, Newlands Primary, was recently allowed to increase its pupil number to two form entry and a brand new school, Asquith Primary, was built under PFI and remains unfilled.

Staff and pupils at Fountain Primary School are both being badly affected as a result of these events. We feel that a public apology to parents, pupils and staff at the school from those responsible for the situation is long overdue. This is a very difficult time for all involved with Fountain Primary School and we appreciate the opportunity to bring these concerns to your attention. In the interests of more than 400 Morley children and their families, we request that this situation be investigated thoroughly and resolved. We urge you not to let down the community that is Fountain Primary School.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, I move that the matter be referred to the Executive Board for further consideration.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Could I call for a vote, please? All those in favour? I think that is unanimous. Thank you for attending. The matter will be referred.
(Applause)

DEPUTATION 2 – LINGFIELD AND FIR TREES RESIDENTS' GROUP

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

CANON C DOBBIN: My Lord Mayor, Councillors. I am Canon Charles Dobbin. I am the Team Rector of the Moor Allerton Church of England Team Ministry. I am Chair of the Moor Allerton Community Association. With me is my deputation. We have here Chris Feetenby, who is Chair of the Pastoral Parish Council of St Paul's Roman Catholic Church in our area. We also have Sheila Collins and Danni Fox-Collins and Ian Greenberg, Chair of the Lingfields and Fir Trees Residents' Group.

The Leeds 17 area is invariably regarded as one of the most affluent, leafy suburbs of Leeds. However, the Moor Allerton estate suffers badly what we call the curse of the LS17 postcode, as most people outside it have no clear perception of the real social and physical deprivation suffered by some 5,000 residents of the Moor Allerton estate with one of the highest percentages of elderly folk in Leeds.

Examples of this deprivation, all backed up in the profile of Moor Allerton, are a lack of good houses and pleasant environment, minimal income, inadequate employment and poor health overall.

There is an absence of a location where Council officers would be near to their tenants to offer them support and advice. Moreover, we suffer too much crime and we are in the bottom ten per cent of the Council's deprivation index – note not just in Leeds, not just in Yorkshire, but in that of the whole country – the bottom ten per cent.

We must bear in mind the long-term needs of this deprived sector of our city. Life would be much better if we had what other areas had – a Sure Start Centre; a

Youth Centre with outdoor space for recreational activities; a One-Stop Centre; and a Community Centre to serve all ages, and particularly elderly and disabled people.

We need more than the limited one room community centre in Lingfield which we currently have and which we have fought so hard to get. We desperately need these facilities for the benefit of the whole estate. It is simply not reasonable to expect social behaviour in an area and then deprive it of the space for recreation and community facilities which it clearly requires.

The sad closure of Fir Tree School, provided it is retained for the community and not sold for housing, is the answer to the prayers of all of us. *This* petition which I have *here*, is signed by over 680 local residents and proves that in this locality we do not need even more housing – it is neither necessary nor desirable.

We cannot stress too strongly how vital it is for the whole Moor Allerton community that Fir Tree School building and its playing fields are retained for the community. This community has been deprived of resources for so many years – this is literally our last chance saloon because we have no other building or piece of land in the vicinity that can fulfil the urgent needs of our community. We hope our plea will not fall on deaf ears and that you will retain the site for the community of Moor Allerton. Thank you, Lord Mayor and Councillors. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, I move that the matter be referred to the Executive Board for further consideration.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Could I call for a vote, please? All those in favour? I think that is unanimous. 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 – KOMMUNITY

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

MS G ASQUITH: My Lord Mayor, fellow Councillors. Hello. My name is Gail Asquith. We are here today with Alan Procter, Mr Drakes, Mr Gill and Michelle Wishard.

I wish to speak for all the residents of Leeds 16, Farrar Lane and Reymel Way especially. This used to be a beautiful part of Leeds which the residents were so proud of. The new school looks horrendous, blocking people's beautiful views over green belt. Also, due to the education digging on the fields we have had to suffer noise, dust and now with the weather, landslides into people's gardens.

We the residents do not want new houses, new buildings on our doorsteps. Instead, let us get the area back to its original beautiful, historical site and get some pride back for our children and our grandchildren. Let us rebuild the Roman wall which is no longer visible for overgrown shrubbery. Also all the rubbish and broken bottles with animals are injuring themselves on. Also Ralph Thorsby has put not only fence around the field but two which has taken more land off Farrar Lane.

We have all got to take stock and look at these issues concerning us all and be able to go for walks in one of Leeds's oldest lanes and enjoy our heritage. Can we not revert to the original natural lay of the land as it used to be and no more artificial pitches? Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Procter?

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, I move that the matter be referred to the Executive Board for further consideration.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Could I call for a vote, please? All those in favour? I think that is unanimous. 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.

ITEM 5 – REPORTS

5(a)

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I keep this pace up, Council? Can I move to Agenda Item 5 and call on Councillor Driver.

COUNCILLOR DRIVER: Lord Mayor, I move that the Annual Report of the Scrutiny Boards, prepared in accordance with Article 6 of the Constitution, be approved.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: I second, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, I wish to refer to the report on planning performance which appears on page 14 and is part of Overview and Scrutiny's Annual Report to Council. It is a summary of a more detailed enquiry. Following Overview and Scrutiny's work, consensus did seem to be emerging about the need for compulsory training for Plans Panel members. When Councillor Andrew Carter gave evidence, I asked him whether compulsory meant compulsory, with those failing to comply being removed or at least not being reappointed and he said that was the intention.

If we look at Minute 94 of the Standards Committee held on 19 April, which is on page 48, we see something of an attempt at dilution with "attend training" being replaced by "undertake training", which might mean being sent a leaflet or a computer disk, though Corporate Governance and Audit on 16 May did seem more robust.

At first there seemed to be agreement that to be allowed to vote on an application at Panel a Member would have had to have been on any relevant site visits. Later there seemed to be a sliding away from this and yesterday evening at Whips' meeting we were told of a report in preparation which would say that some compulsory site visits might be more compulsory than others.

All this arose from a need to sharpen up Plans Panels when there was some risk of the planning service being put under an outside body, rather like Education Leeds. That risk has passed but we must press on with reform and help the Chief Planning Officer finish the job that he has been brought in to do.

By and large the Planning Service and Plans Panels do a good job, despite almost overwhelming amounts of work, but there can be no complacency. Further sharpening defined by clear and simple rules will bring great benefits. Those developers and land speculators out there are sharp operators. There is no place for bumbling amateurism in those shark invested waters.

Finally, we should remember that if we make a mistake at a Plans Panel the community might be stuck with it for the next 150 years. Thank you, my Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. It was not my intention to speak but in the light of Councillor Leadley's comments I think I need to comment. It is the administration's view that we should be moving towards compulsory site visits as part of the planning process. I had not, until Councillor Procter just briefly briefed me there, heard of what had happened that Councillor Leadley brought to light. We made a request at Corporate Governance that the Standards Committee should look at this and report back and advise us as to how it can be implemented. I have to say I am not best pleased to hear of this dilution. I shall be discussing it with officers after this Council meeting.

COUNCILLOR DRIVER: Chair, can I just take this opportunity first of all to thank colleagues who served on Scrutiny this year for all their work. I think Councillor Leadley has highlighted two aspects of the work of the past year of which I think we can be particularly proud. One is the establishment of high quality and systematic performance management, which is now percolating through the Scrutiny Boards, and which on this occasion gave rise to the sorts of recommendations to which Councillor Leadley has referred.

For his comfort I would also point out that another thing we established this year was the tracking and monitoring procedure whereby all recommendations are regularly reviewed by the Scrutiny Boards in question and I think that too will help us to deal with the sorts of issues that Councillor Leadley has highlighted this afternoon. Thank you very much, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Could I call for the vote? All those in favour? Against? That, then, is CARRIED. Thank you.

5(b)

THE LORD MAYOR: I move us on to 5(b).

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I move in terms of the notice.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I call for the vote? All those in favour? I think that is CARRIED. Thank you.

ITEM 6 – QUESTIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: We move to Item 6, Questions. Councillor Selby.

COUNCILLOR SELBY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The first question, can the Leader of Council please tell me and also all Members of Council how much Leeds

United owe the Authority in unpaid car parking charges from the beginning of the 2005-2006 season until the club was put into administration in May 2007?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: The total was £119,286.

COUNCILLOR SELBY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. By way of supplementary, given that £81,000 is outstanding for 2005/6 car parking charges, could Councillor Carter indicate and inform Council whether any other invoices were outstanding as at the date that Leeds United went into administration; when there are outstanding invoices outstanding were Leeds United allowed to continue to use the car parking facilities the following season; could he assist Council by telling us whether the Council or their representatives attended the CVA meeting and which way did the Council vote and were elected Members involved in such a decision; what other invoices were outstanding; how much were they for; how many invoices were raised after...

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Selby, is this a supplementary question...

COUNCILLOR SELBY: It is a supplementary question.

THE LORD MAYOR: ...or a series of supplementary questions? It sounds like a series to me.

COUNCILLOR SELBY: Just finally...

THE LORD MAYOR: We would like it to be answered today.

COUNCILLOR SELBY: Finally, how many invoices were issued after the decision had been made to grant relief? I am sure Councillor Carter has all the answers.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Selby. Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: My Lord Mayor, I am delighted that Councillor Selby is showing such a great interest in the affairs of Leeds United. I understand that Councillor Selby actually went to school for a time with Mr Bates. I am not sure whether Mr Bates wants to boast about that or Councillor Selby or neither of them. It is a pity, my Lord Mayor, in attempting to answer Councillor Selby's very detailed question, that he was not as diligent when his party sold the ground to Leeds United, because he will recall, I think, that as part of the deal which we condemned, we took shares to the value of £2.5m. At their height they were worth £3.8m and the then administration sold 3.75m of these shares for £871,000 and they then – indeed, in the dying days of the Labour administration – sold another 8m shares for 0.15p a share, which cost the Council taxpayers of Leeds between £3m and £1.6m, according to how charitable we are. We will, therefore, take no lectures from anybody over there.

I would remind Councillor Selby that it was his group that allowed the franchise of the car park to be let to Leeds United. We have made it crystal clear that we will not have a franchise on that car park again until such time as we have got our money back. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Council, can I remind you that it is up to the portfolio holder, whoever is replying, to give the reply they wish to reply. If you are not happy with it – Councillor Selby, you did overstep the mark by asking so many questions, so much detail. If you wish to get through the Order Paper today, let us move on. Councillor Bentley.

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. In the light of the recent review of the Leeds Children and Young People's Plan and the forthcoming joint Area Review Inspection, can the Lead Executive Board Member for Children's Services please tell us his views on the progress of Children's Services in the city? Thank you.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. As our Review Plan describes, I am pleased to be able to report some real progress right across Children's Services. We have seen a range of innovative pilot initiatives help us to lead the way nationally in making services more integrated and responsive to young people's needs, such as the budget holding Lead Professional Pathfinder for our looked-after children and other young people in need.

We are strengthening the way we engage with young people on issues and decisions that affect them, the involvement of over 40,000 young people in the Be Healthy Challenge, and the recent Catching the Bus Scrutiny Report being just two of many examples.

We are improving outcomes in key areas. We have seen our highest ever GCSE results and more people staying in learning beyond 16. Through out Children's Trust arrangements we are developing an approach to working together that addresses the national and local call for a more integrated approach in a way that reflects the unique challenges and context that we face in Leeds.

This is, as you will know, the tip of the iceberg of what we do and we can be very proud of the commitment, energy and professionalism of all the staff working for those who are growing up in Leeds.

Of course, we continue to face challenges. Our plan acknowledges these and makes clear our determination to address them. In my role I am particularly aware of the importance of ensuring our city-wide approach to safeguarding makes our children and young people safe in their homes, schools and communities.

We take this responsibility extremely seriously and that is why it continues to be one of our highest priorities. We also know there are other issues to address and in our preparations for the JAR inspection in December we will be focusing attention on doing so.

Overall though, we are delivering real improvements and we have a lot to be proud of. We have assessed our overall performance as 'Good' in recognition of this. The recent Local Open Forum Marketplace events that I have been attending and that I would encourage all Members to attend, have showcased the variety of excellent work being done by children's services staff. A lot has been achieved and there is clearly a lot of potential on which we can build. It is essential that we do so because every single child and young person in our city deserves to be able to say that they were lucky to have grown up in Leeds. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Executive Member for Development agree with me that the proposals recently announced on changes to planning rules by Ruth Kelly MP will result in less accountability locally and bring the planning system into further disrepute with the general public?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: The short answer to the question is yes. I think Members on all sides should have some concerns. As usual, the planning White Paper was dressed up in the usual jargon about community consultation ending the

bureaucracy of independent examination of separate statements of community involvement, etc., but then, of course, it comes on to the two issues which I think elected Members will be particularly concerned about. One is the proposals to remove a whole raft of minor applications out of the system and I would just say to Members – and this is not a party political point – over a series of years I think Members have often had as many concerns about some of the minor applications as they have about some of the major ones, because they tend to be the ones on which least attention is given and ultimately cause elected Members and residents the most amount of grief.

Perhaps the most worrying part is the proposal to move to this independent – if this government can ever appoint anything that is independent – panel to deal with major regional planning applications. It is merely, in my view, an attempt to curtail public debate and expressions of concern and I think that we need to be extremely concerned.

Think, if you will, for example, of prison proposals - that is something which we debated some time ago in this Chamber – or other similarly large projects, which are decided by a panel of people appointed by the Secretary of State and stuffed full of the usual suspects.

THE LORD MAYOR: Before the next question could I just tell Council that Councillor Harington inadvisably dismounted from his bike in a very inadvisable way and that is why you see him walking with the implements he does. My best wishes for your recovery, Councillor Harington.

Councillor Harington.

COUNCILLOR HARINGTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Member for Leisure please inform me what work the Council has done to champion the cause of the city's involvement in the 2012 Olympics?

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Leeds was one of the first cities to respond by setting up an Olympics Taskgroup in August 2005. In addition to that the Council has been represented by a senior officer on the Council of the Yorkshire Cultural Committee in relation to the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. A Programme Manager has been appointed, initially on a six month basis to co-ordinate the city's response and approach to the Games.

Leeds has also developed a draft prospectus containing all of the facilities that the city can offer and Leeds can host 22 of the 26 Olympic disciplines. The city has also hosted two visits by the Chairman of the London Organising Committee, Lord Coe, and also a visit by the Secretary of State, Tessa Jowell.

The city was also represented at the Sport Accord signing in Beijing in April of this year. In addition, we have hosted international sports delegations. The vice-President of the Chinese International Olympic Committee, who I was delighted to be able to give a preview of the swimming and diving centre to, and also the treasurer of the Delhi Commonwealth Games.

Councillor Harington is aware of all of these matters as he has received a briefing from my officers.

COUNCILLOR HARINGTON: By way of supplementary, Councillor Procter is quite right, I am aware of most of that and delighted to see all that work going on. In view of all that excellent work that is going on perhaps he could comment on the

words of his colleague, Councillor Harrand, who is reported to have said, "The London Olympics offers no benefit whatsoever to the people of Leeds."

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: I am not sure in what context my colleague made those remarks. What is clear, though – what is absolutely clear – is that Leeds, as with many other cities across the country, potentially will suffer because of the 2012 Olympic Games. It has been made crystal clear to us that organisations such as the Heritage Lottery Fund and many other funding organisations for which this city relies very heavily on support, that their funding is to be cut back precisely because of the Olympic Games. We have been told very clearly – very clearly – that if we are to submit bids to major lottery funders, we should do it pretty quick and if they are not already aware of our forthcoming bids, there is no prospect of getting a penny piece of them until after 2012. That is something which I have known and certainly all of my colleagues have known for many months. I presume Councillor Harington was aware of it as well.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Taylor.

COUNCILLOR TAYLOR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Executive Board Member for Environmental Services update us on the progress of the garden waste collection service pilot scheme?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Smith.

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I will not repeat the name of the scheme – it will take all of the five minutes, I think.

The pilot has been running since October of last year and I have to say the performance has been better than expected. Indeed, at the end of April we had collected 843 tonnes against a forecast of 691 tonnes.

Just to remind Members of Council, we originally chose five areas for the pilot and these were chosen for their different demographics. Roundhay has been the most consistently performing route. Gipton started off as the worst performing round, I have to say, Councillor, in terms of tonnage but it is now actually third behind Roundhay and Morley North, so Gipton has shown the best improvement.

The collection scheme has helped to contribute to an overall recycling rate for April for the city of 25.45% and a full evaluation of the pilot will be undertaken at the end of the summer.

COUNCILLOR TAYLOR: By way of supplementary, Lord Mayor, from what has been said it seems that Gipton has in fact made a very positive contribution to the recycling programme, so do I take it, therefore, that it is appropriate to congratulate the people of Gipton on this magnificent achievement? *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Indeed it is and you can add my congratulations to them. I am sure they will be encouraged. In fact we have seen a 473% increase in the recycling of garden waste during the term of the pilot in Gipton. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor David Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Bearing in mind the Government's wish to continue to further reduce the number of Post Offices, what is the Executive Member responsible for Development doing to help to expand the facilities made available to

the Leeds Credit Union so all neighbourhoods that lose banking or Post Office facilities are covered?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. As Councillor Blackburn knows there is a commitment I believe across all political parties for our work as an Authority in combating financial exclusion. Indeed, the staff responsible have received a Beacon Award only a few months ago for the work in this area and that includes, of course, encouraging and facilitating the opening of more Credit Union branches.

In 2007 we are hopeful of seeing Holton Moor, Bell Isle, Wetherby, Moortown, Otley, Pudsey and in 2008 Harehills, Chapeltown, Kirkstall and Garforth, so it will be the widest network of Credit Union branches, I think, anywhere in the country and that is to be welcomed but, my Lord Mayor, it would help us if we knew where the Government axe is going to fall because we yet we do not. I think it is fair to assume that of the 112 remaining Post Offices in the Leeds Metropolitan boundary, some are going to be under Government threat of closure.

My Lord Mayor, members, I think, should understand that presuming they get away with the present proposals to close at least another 2500 Post Offices, by the time of the next general election this Government will have closed over a third of the entire Post Office network. There is a list which goes on *ad nauseum* as regards the closures that have happened in Leeds and which we have done our best to oppose.

It is also worth noting, Councillor Blackburn, that the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry announced these closures on the same day that Tony Blair announced he was standing down as Prime Minister. Another clear example of burying bad news – burying bad news with good news for everybody, you might say!

My Lord Mayor, the other point I would make in answering the question is this. Some time ago we passed a resolution in this Council calling on the Chief Executive, as I recall, to bring forward suggestions as to ways in which we might help the Post Office network. I shall be writing to the Chief Executive reminding him of that resolution and pointing out that the situation is pressing as the Government's axe swings every closer. Thank you, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lyons.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Member for Environmental Services please tell me where his administration plan to site their proposed incinerator?

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Before I answer the question, can I thank Councillor Carter for entering into the spirit of the environment and recycling bad news rather than burying it! (*Laughter*)

The waste strategy is, of course, a very long-term strategy and whilst progress is being made, two months is not a long time in that process and I would refer Councillor Lyons to the question that he made in Council just two months ago and the answer that I gave to him at that point. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Thank you very much. Councillor Finnigan said back in April that in no way were they going to have this incinerator in his patch. Whether it is your patch – it is the people's patch. What I am asking is, can you assure me that it will not be in Temple Newsam or in any other part of East Leeds or, indeed, it will not be used as a satellite, some of the areas in Temple Newsam? We have already got a tip there. Are you going to use that as a satellite to store rubbish

and, furthermore, what are you going to do about the lorries that are coming through in all the districts with this rubbish on?

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. This is the verbatim, Mick. I do suggest you look at it. I will just remind you what I said just two months ago.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: What you said in the leaflet.

COUNCILLOR SMITH: I am not responsible, as I told you two months ago, for the leaflets of other parties, Councillor Lyons. I did make an offer to you to edit yours at that time. You have not been to see me yet, I must say!

What I did say was that:

“A decision as to where to locate the proposal sustainable energy park has not yet been made. The process by which the site will eventually be identified is still ongoing and is 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.”

Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Smith. Councillor Downes.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Executive Board Member for Learning welcome the recent HMI report on Cockburn High School?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harker.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Yes, I do welcome the report of HMI Tallboys and I would like to pay tribute to Cockburn High School by reading some of the comments made by the HMI on her visit.

“A school that is rich in data which middle managers use well to track pupils resulting in excellent monitoring resulting in a curriculum that gives clear routes and pathways; a school where teaching and learning is often good; where the pupils are well motivated and hard working; where the leadership and management are well developed and good; where staff morale is high; a school with a School Improvement Plan which is streamlined and clearly focused on future improvements and where attendance is up 2.4% above the target set by DfES and where the strategies are to improve attendance even further.”

Yes, Cockburn High School richly deserves this report from HMI Tallboys after the panning they took from an OFSTED Inspection only a few weeks earlier. The two reports could not be different. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Harker. Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I presume there is no supplementary. I am not surprised. Can the Leader of Council confirm that the Council is still committed to the ‘Narrowing the Gap’ agenda, particularly with regard to improving the lives of children and families in the most deprived parts of the city?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harris.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Yes.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: No surprise there, then. Can the Leader now justify and explain to this Council why the £20,000 grant to Relate has been withdrawn, which means that up to 450 children and families in the most deprived parts of the community will not get the service from Relate unless they pay £45 each?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harris?

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Lord Mayor, I am not sufficiently *au fait* with that situation to be able to answer it. Had I been given notice that that was the issue then I might have been better prepared.

What I would say is this, that as the Council's finances become ever tighter – which they did under the last administration, as they have under this administration – as we are driven to greater efficiencies and objectives set for us by central Government, it becomes harder and harder to make the money available to us go round everything which in a perfect world would be desirable.

There is nobody in this Chamber, I believe, who would begrudge a penny to any needy organisation, person, family, child in this city and when difficult choices have to be made and all administrations of any ilk have to make difficult decisions, it is not because there is any malice in that decision. It is because priorities have to be set to make the money available go round in a way that has the greatest effect to help the greatest number of people.

We are committed to narrowing the gap. You know full well that in a spirit of absolute non-party political activity I have invited Geoff Driver as the Chair of OSC and since has been reaffirmed as the Chair of OSC, to sit on the Narrowing the Gap group that meets in my office every Wednesday morning. There is good progress on all issues of Narrowing the Gap. We have made significant progress on – or we are beginning to make significant progress on – plans specifically to deal with problems of youth crime and entering the criminal justice system. We, as you know, have engaged two organisations in this city to bring additional resources to bear to help those families most in need in the most deprived parts of this city.

We are committed to Narrowing the Gap. We are committed to helping those families and children in the greatest need.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Townsley.

COUNCILLOR TOWNSLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Housing care to comment on the impact Labour's budget amendment would have had on Area Committee funding?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Les Carter.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: My Lord Mayor, I unfortunately was not at the meeting, which is why I have had to do an awful lot of research to find out what any amendment they proposed and what the effect of it would be.

As I saw it there was £100,000 claimed going to be put into the Area Committees. Fortunately Councillor Alison Lowe, when she was speaking, announced that that would be spent on street cleaning. Am I correct, Alison?

COUNCILLOR LOWE: I cannot remember.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Fine. Where was this £100,000 coming from? The £100,000 was coming because they were going to save this amount on anti-social behaviour legal costs. Unfortunately what they had not realised, they went over to Manchester to have a look how it is done there and their researcher did not know the difference between legal costs and court fees. Court fees are quite low, there is nothing to it. Legal costs are very high. So they saw this and thought, "Oh, we can save £100,000." If that had been carried there would have been a massive reduction in the amount of anti-social behaviour orders that we could have issued.

My Lord Mayor, to answer the question a bit further, let us for a minute say that £100,000 was there – and it was not. Let us say it was. Andrew Carter announced an injection of half a million pounds into the Area Committees - £500,000. £50,000 for each wedge. Too generous, somebody shouts over there. Half a million pounds of genuine, really money which was and is being delivered for the Area Committees to decide where it is going to go – not £100,000 which nobody knows where it was coming from and some nonsensical research. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Council, I am afraid that has exhausted the time for questions. The following questions will be received as written answers to all Council Members.

ITEM 7 – RECOMMENDATIONS OF EXECUTIVE BOARD

THE LORD MAYOR: Could I then take us on to agenda item 7, which is the recommendations of Executive Board. Councillor Harris.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Yes, Lord Mayor. Just before I move these recommendations, if I could just crave your indulgence as Leader of Council to welcome all the new Members to their first meeting of Council. I believe we have four new Members but I will stand corrected if it is more than that. I certainly noticed from the Order Paper that two will make their maiden speeches today and it might be the only opportunity they have to speak without being interrupted, as is the habit of this place. In any event, I welcome those new Members and I trust that they will enjoy their time with us.

Now may I move the recommendation, Lord Mayor, as set out in the Order Paper.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Could I call on Councillor Driver?

COUNCILLOR DRIVER: Lord Mayor, I am interested in this Council Plan insofar as it provides the services which are needed in the areas that I represent.

Just a simple example of an inadequate service that obviously is highly unsatisfactory to the people of Middleton is the grass cutting, which continues to be of such a good quality that, as you can see, it is up to waist high in the Westwood Estate. *(Photograph shown)* This is just a simple example of how we have a paper plan which does not relate to the effective service provided on the ground. Lord

Mayor, I do hope that the plan is taken back and looked at in terms of the actual realities we face in areas like mine.

COUNCILLOR RENSHAW: Lord Mayor, in the Council plan will there be an answer to the ongoing fiasco of grass cutting? In East Ardsley it is nothing short of a disgrace and an appalling stain on the reputation of this Council. If I may I will offer you a few examples. *(Photographs shown)*

Greenwood Road, Tingley. The grass has not been cut for over a year, leaving it long, untidy and a real eyesore for local residents. The uncut grass is situated in front of bungalows where the residents are mainly elderly, some with health conditions affecting accessibility. This creates difficulties and increases health and safety risks which are totally unacceptable.

I have made repeated calls over the last few months requesting that this grass is cut and yet still nobody has turned up from Glendales to finish this job. Even our library in East Ardsley has not escaped this chaos. Pay a visit, if you can find the library sign. Not very inviting, is it, to local residents or visitors?

An area of grass verge on the busy A650 has been omitted from the grass cutting while across the road the grass has, surprisingly, been cut. Can anyone provide me with an answer as to why this grass is still not being cut?

Is it because these areas no longer feature on the now infamous Glendales schedule? Is it in this case who is making these decisions? Is there anybody in your administration willing to take the responsibility for this fiasco?

We are now in the third year of your botched privatisation of this service and it is still a shambles. What the Leeds taxpayer needs is more action, not more apologies. Is it really too much to ask for your administration that the grass is cut on a regular basis? Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: On the same minute, Lord Mayor, I would just add *this picture. (Photograph shown)* You can hardly see me, and that might be a good or a bad thing!

I actually want to talk about an issue which I have touched on before in Council and particular to hold Councillor Harris responsible for the slow progress being made in the pay and grading review. Here we are months later and I have yet again to prick his conscience that these are the lowest paid people in the Council. I am told 24,000, mainly women, many part-time paid women who are still waiting, having received nothing more since I last brought this up. They have had one letter to tell them the matter is dragging on and they will hear nothing further until September. It will have been nearly twelve months – a whole year – since this sorry saga first kicked off.

So much does Councillor Harris care about these low paid people he now has to get his briefing in the Council Chamber. He does not know what is going on because he is never here. We really want some further action and some proof that Councillor Harris as the Leader, as he keeps telling us, personally cares about the workforce of this Council.

Can you imagine the anxiety caused to individual employees when after ten months they still do not know whether they are on the same pay, whether their job is being restructured so they can remain on the same pay, or whether they have no job?

Lord Mayor, if I contrast that to the presentation that the Labour Group had on Monday evening, it seems to me that there are several ways people these days can make money. One is to win the lottery; another one is to do some spread betting; the third one is to enter the exclusive club of being a Chief Officer or a Director of Leeds City Council. There seems to be no stop. Once you are in that exclusive club a restructuring will come along every so often – fairly regularly – and without applying for jobs most often you will find that your job description and your role will fit the one in the new structure which just happens to be slightly above where you are now. Of course, you then get slotted in.

When you get slotted in, of course, this attracts a higher pay of money. We were told that the bottom pay of the two has now been abolished and all directors are on the top one. Then, of course, comes the bonus, the annual bonus. I very much hope whoever is in charge of grass cutting is going to give money back rather than get a bonus. Then, of course, you get people who are now able to tell us two years in advance, or one year in advance, that they are going to retire. It is the first public body I know that does not wait for the public body to tell people when they go but lets the employees tell them when they are going to go.

Contrast that to the behaviour of Councillor Harris towards low paid women workers. What is his problem with low paid women workers? Does he not actually appreciate that they do the front line jobs up and down this Council and they are responsible for the reputation of this Council and for making the Council work.

It is high time, I think, that Councillor Harris spent some time to move this matter forward to ensure that people on low pay get a fair deal and this matter is sorted out. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Let me first of all deal with the first two comments on that. I will deal with all the comments on grass cutting. The first two pictures held up I did not get a particularly good view of but I did of the one that Peter Gruen held up. If, indeed, as I suspect, on Peter Gruen's picture that was him hiding behind the grass, I have to say I have never seen anybody who looks more like a goblin in all my life. I am sure that was a goblin hiding at the bottom of the garden.

Grass cutting. Certainly the first two instances that were given us – Peter Gruen did not say where his picture was from, for all I know it is his garden – we were told were housing land. That means they are the ALMO-controlled land and, although in conjunction with the ALMOs we agreed a joint contract for grass cutting, the areas to be cut, the monitoring of what should be cut, the monitoring of the contract on ALMO land is entirely the responsibility of the ALMOs – arm's length organisations foisted upon this Council by your Government. They have set up that system of arm's length housing management. It is their responsibility to ensure the contract is enacted. It is their responsibility to monitor it and, even more laughable, considering it is ALMO land, both Councillors Gruen and Driver are on the South Leeds ALMO, so why in Heaven's name don't you know what is going on on your own patch? Either you do not know what is going on or you are conveniently turning a blind eye.

Now we turn once again to Councillor Gruen's very ill-advised intervention on the issue of low pay and grading. I will start first of all with the issue of senior officers. Let me remind Council – and no disrespect intended – that the current Chief Executive was a single appointment by your administration. He is a good Chief Executive, indeed he is, but he was appointed by you, moved into the position, a single applicant. That is how it was done. Your administration did it. Have you got such short memories that you do not remember?

Let me ask you this – and it will happen one day, sadly, that one day we will not be in control of this Council. *(Laughter)* One day no doubt you once more will be in control of this Council and when that happens, if you are still a member, a senior Member of that administration, what would you say to the senior officer who may still well be in post that you today had previously denigrated and attacked in a most ill-advised way? What will you say to those officers? How will you work with those officers now you have spoken in such an intemperate way? It will make it extremely difficult and you will rue the day that you said things like that.

Now let us deal with the issue of low pay and grading.

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: We will spend some money on training them. That is what you ought to do. Ask them how much has been spent on them. Nothing.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I thought he was dead! *(Laughter)*

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Now let us deal with the issue of the pay and grading. The situation in which we find ourselves is because of national legislation. We are bound to try and seek an agreement with the unions on this. The matter is still under negotiation. It is a fact. It is a matter that is still under negotiation at a delicate stage. Work goes ahead on this almost on a daily basis. This is not the appropriate place to raise this issue. An agreement is being sought or attempting to be sought with the unions on a collective basis. We have had to face, because of decisions your administration made many, many years ago serious legal challenges which have been dealt with and some are still being dealt with and for that reason the issue is *sub judice*. It is inappropriate and ill-advised to discuss those matters here. At some point, hopefully, in the near future, the matters will be resolved. At that stage I will happily speak to Councillor Gruen about the process and about what people are or are not paid, but until we have reached that agreement, rather than prejudice the situation I am not prepared to answer in the way he expects. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Council, could I call for the vote? All those in favour? Those against? That is CARRIED, thank you.

ITEM 8 – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we move on to agenda Item 8? Councillor Kirkland.

COUNCILLOR KIRKLAND: My Lord Mayor, may I move the motion in the terms of the notice and take this opportunity to thank the independent Chairman for his hard work, guidance, neutrality whilst striving to move forward by consent.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, some people are born great, some achieve greatness and some have greatness thrust upon them. I will second these minutes but reserve the right to speak until I find out what it is about. *(Laughter)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Perhaps we could refer you to your Whip to ask why you are on the Order Paper then. I call upon Councillor Leadley.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: I hope he is not going to comment on my speech! My Lord Mayor, I wish to comment on the proposed Officers' Code of Conduct which is mentioned on page 77 as part of the Standards Committee Annual Report. This

seems to be work in progress and is long overdue in an Authority where more than 95% of all decisions are officer-delegated.

Proposals mentioned in Overview and Scrutiny suggested that only directors and Chief Officers should have to register interests. This was unrealistic because although decisions may be made in the names of directors or Chief Officers, almost invariably they are actually made by people of more junior rank.

I am not suggesting that officers should be beset by the nitpicking bureaucracy embedded in the Councillors' Code of Conduct but the public sector is different from the private. Much of private business works through networks of friends and relations but in the public sector everyone has to be seen to get an even chance. Thank you, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I offer Councillor Kirkland the opportunity to sum up if he wishes?

COUNCILLOR KIRKLAND: I thank Councillor Leadley for his comments and I am sure that they will be discussed at the next committee meeting. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Could I call for the vote? All those in favour? Against? That is CARRIED.

ITEM 9 - MINUTES

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I move us on to Item 9, the Minutes? Councillor Harris?

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Moved, Lord Mayor.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: I now wish to invite comments on the Minutes.

(i) Central & Corporate

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to comment on the Minute regarding the illegal money lending project. Lord Mayor, this is a project which was piloted in Birmingham and achieved £2m-worth of illegal debt written off, a thousand victims helped and twelve guns taken off the streets. It now has authorisation to work within the Leeds District and I welcome the initiative and hope that this will ensure that these parasites are taken off the streets of Leeds as well as they have been taken off the streets of other areas.

Taking into account the comments that have been made previously, it is worth mentioning that our poorer neighbourhoods feel in many cases that they have no other recourse than to go to illegal money lenders because of the desert that there is within their local areas in terms of financial institutions offering them help and advice. We know that that is due in many cases to financial corporations such as banks

withdrawing in the interests of the profit margin, but I have to say that some of the responsibility has to be taken by central Government in terms of its programme of Post Office closures over the years.

One thing that I can say, of course, is that this Council has been very good – whether it be the previous administration of this administration – I do know that this administration in particular has been building on the foundations that were laid in terms of making sure that this Council has a close relationship with credit unions and Councillor Carter has already pointed out the rapid expansion which has occurred within our local areas and I have to say that hopefully, with our commitment from this side to ensuring that local centres, whether it be through our Town and District Centre Investment Scheme to make sure that local centres are vibrant, through to our expansion of the One-Stop Shops and the incorporation of credit unions branches within those shops, hopefully through those efforts we will be able to make sure that the first port of call for the poorer members of our communities is not the illegal street lender and is the credit union. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking to Minute 12 of the late papers submitted for the Executive Board on 13th June.

I would like to welcome this report that shows that the Council was saving an additional £22m through debt rescheduling saving in interest and cash flow. Our Treasury Management Team has bought in tens of millions of pounds in extra resources for the city. Without their efforts we would not have been able to increase council spending in key areas like social services and highways.

As Lead Member for Corporate Services last year I know just how hard the team worked and they deserve the thanks both of this Council and the people of Leeds for their success in raising these additional funds. I am sure the Leader of Council and the rest of the Chamber would wish to join in in offering our thanks.
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I rise to speak on Minute 12 of the 13th June meeting. People in the Chamber will know that I have been an ardent supporter of Leeds United for over 40 years – in fact going back to 1963. I have followed them all over. I think there might be one or two of us left in the Chamber. I can see Roger and James here. This Chamber was full of Leeds United supporters when we were winning in Europe and winning titles. We could do with some of them now at Elland Road because times are really dire.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: It was under Labour.

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: It was under Labour, as the Leader correctly reminded me. It is true. Maybe when Mark refers – I remember him saying as sure as little eggs are little eggs we will be in control, it will be good for Leeds United again.

It is a serious matter but just the same, Lord Mayor, there are also issues involved that really need answering.

Councillor Selby attempted to get some answers and he put a list of questions and really the reply he got was it is all down to his administration and a ridiculous amount of money that I cannot even calculate was given. We know the circumstances of that. It has been well discussed and it has been open and transparent.

At the time it was unexpected that Leeds United were going to go to the wall. For the last four years there is not a Member in this Chamber or a member of the public out there could not have been aware that Leeds United were facing hard times and could have folded up at any time. Therefore it is more difficult to understand the present situation. I am pleased Councillor Carter has come back to the Chamber.

As usual he blames the former administration which I think perhaps is a little – it is a route that we all do. We have only stopped blaming Margaret Thatcher, haven't we, and nobody would go there now, and we had a winter of discontent in 1979 for years and years.

It is interesting, Andrew, that I got an e-mail from a spokesperson when I was attempting to see the contracts that allowed Leeds United to collect moneys on our behalf and that person blamed former officers which you will know, three very famous leisure service officers – and I am not going to name them in the Chamber because they are not elected. Interestingly enough, it was said that 16 years ago when Councillor Mudie and Councillor Trickett were in control. We know they have long departed and they are MPs so it seems like it has taken your brief down that line, Councillor Carter. Never mind.

I do hope we are going to get answers to it. We really need transparency. We need to know what is happening behind the scenes. We need to know why people who represented Council did vote for the consortium that took control of Elland Road. It was only just over 75% so it is undoubtedly that our votes pushed it into the present consortium. There were better offers on the table. There was a 20 pence offer, as I understand in the pound; there was a 40 pence offer in the pound.

I know these are very difficult decisions for Members to deal with. I know that. No matter whether Conservative or Labour or Liberal or – he is not here, I was going to pay tribute – a Green, we would have had difficulties coming to terms with it. It is no excuse for not keeping the Council informed Members informed and the Leeds public informed.

There are lots of small businesses that are facing real, real hardship because of penny in the pound. We had known that we have not received any money from Leeds United since August 2005 and it would never come to anybody's attention until they went into administration in May 2007. There are a lot of questions we need to answer. We need to know how we are doing in fairness to Leeds.

As I say, I am a Leeds United supporter. I do not subscribe to the chants of getting Chelsea out of Leeds. I understand what Mr Bates has done for the city, I understand how important it is to have a very successful – even a football team, we cannot talk about successful at the moment. On the other hand, these questions are serious and I would like to ask the Leader of the Council if he would support a call for the District Auditor to look into this and report back to us. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor McKenna. Council, I was leaving it to this point to welcome the new Members to this Chamber and to the Council and that is because one of them will be making his maiden speech, Councillor Dobson, so would you please give him due deference as he is making his maiden speech.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Also in relation to Minute 12 of the Executive Board meeting of 13th June. The Labour Group has serious reservations as to the attempt made to recover moneys owed to us by Leeds United

pre-administration. We feel the need to raise these concerns with the Leader of the Council.

This Authority has a record on debt recovery to be proud of. Be it Council tax, business rates or sundry debts, structures are in place and have been refined and developed over many years to ensure this Council collects its revenue speedily, vigorously and effectively.

To collect 96.3% of Council tax accounts raised is actually quite remarkable. This makes the question of the £211,000 owed to us by Leeds United pre-administration all the more difficult for this group to either accept or fathom out. To allow Leeds United's debts to drift up to the point of administration is disturbing against the backdrop I have outlined.

We question whether ordinary charge payers from both the residential and business communities have been treated equally and, indeed, fairly when compared to Leeds United. This is not an attack on officers and I do not feel this is the time to trawl over every aspect of the recovery action. However, there are questions that must be raised and assurances that must be given regarding this Council's future dealings with the club.

On car parking charges from 2005/06, the six month time scale between the raising of invoices and referring of the debt to Legal Services does seem inordinately long. Extensions were agreed that were neither met by Leeds United or indeed sufficiently pressed by this Authority. That said, one must question why the year after, in 2006/07, we instigated exactly the same set of procedures with the club, particularly the car park fees on our behalf.

Whilst the Council were receiving verbal assurances from the club that – and I quote – “substantial amounts of money were to be paid to us any day”, we were busy signing off the claims of business rates hardship relief. It is hardly a ringing endorsement as to the club's financial health and surely the alarm bells must have been ringing.

Indeed, £74,000 of the debt does relate to business rates and the argument that I have heard many times that it is central Government money and somehow less significant, does not reflect the potential impact that rates uncollected has on the Revenue Support Grant. I trust we will not hear again in Council the administration's charge that Leeds is somehow under-funded by central Government. A small revenue pot has obvious knock-on effects to the size of the grant and this administration has hardly helped this Council's cause.

Like Councillor McKenna and many Members here today, I am a Leeds man and I have been a supporter of the club all my life, but I do not hold with this romanticised notion that Leeds United are somehow our club and therefore exempt from the vigorous recovery of debt owed to us.

I think we have a bigger responsibility to honest Leeds' chargepayers who settle their Council accounts on demand. There can be no sacred cows, no special privileges and no changes in our usually high standards of debt recovery.

I think it will be that much harder to be tough on non-payment of debt now if there is a perception that this Council has favourites when it comes to debt recovery. Bear in mind this council will continue to have financial dealings with the club and I suggest we must no longer allow invoices to remain unpaid *ad infinitum*.

I notice there are plans to police Leeds United on a pay-per-play basis next season. Lessons have clearly been learned and I suggest we learn ours very quickly. There must be no repetition of the events of the last two years. Leeds United is a business, it must be treated as one and as such cannot and must not be seen by the chargepayers of Leeds as an untouchable special case. To do so would be a betrayal of every honest chargepaying resident to whom we are ultimately all answerable. Thank you, Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. It would appear that even new Members of the Labour Group have picked up the habit of their more experienced colleagues of continually wanting to skate on thin ice.

The Leeds United saga is a long and sorry one. Councillor McKenna at least had the good grace to comment that the car park arrangement appears to have gone back some 16 years. Let me just say to Members opposite, it will serve them no good whatever to try and cast aspersions about this administration's dealing with Leeds United because their record up until three years ago is full of holes and has cost the Council taxpayers of this city dearly.

That in no way – in no way – is said as an excuse for the fact that it is my view that we should have been seeking to get our revenue back from that car park over the past 16 years a lot faster than we did.

There seems to be or have been an ethos – and it does date back to George Mudie, Jim, you are quite right – in this place that somehow Leeds United were a special case. Let me say that as a successful football club they bring a great deal to this city in terms of status and kudos as well as a lot of inward investment and you people over there seem to forget the levels of money that can be generated and are generated in Leeds when that football club is successful. At the end of the day we have one overriding responsibility and that is to protect the interests of the Council taxpayers.

We instructed the agents who acted for us at that meeting as far as I am aware – and nobody has contradicted me in this view – they were instructed to vote in a way that best protected the Council's and therefore the Council taxpayers interest and that, as far as I am concerned, is what they did.

Let me turn to the car park. I have made it clear already, as far as I am concerned, that car park is Council land. There is no question of us entering into the agreement that you entered into all those years ago that allowed Leeds United effectively to franchise that car park. That car park will now be run by Leeds City Council and the revenue will be - all the revenue – for the benefit of the Council taxpayers of Leeds. It is right and it is proper. We have reached the stage now, regrettably, with Leeds United where, as much as we want to support them, as much as we want to help them and as much as we recognise their importance as a football club in this city, the Council taxpayers' interests come first.

So to Councillor McKenna and Councillor Dobson will I say this – from us you will get no more purchases of shares that prove to be worthless and cost the Council taxpayer millions; no more Councillors tripping off to the box that your party negotiated as part of the sale and put an 80-year... (*Interruption*) Yes indeed, it is still there and do you know why it is still there, Councillor McKenna?

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: It is always empty.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: It is still there because when you lot did your deal with them you did not tie it up in such a way that that box passed over to the city

regardless of who bought the club. You really need to check up. You are on very thin ice. For us the Council taxpayers' interests will come first. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: I welcome Councillors Golton's and Downes's contribution. I am not able to comment on the current issues of Leeds United for reasons of which Council ought to be well aware. My declaration of interest is fully up to date in this matter. I have not participated in any of the discussions or decision-making process with regard to Leeds United for a considerable period of time. I have not sat in on either management discussions, Exec Board discussions, Cabinet briefings or anything else. Andrew Carter has dealt with the whole thing entirely.

I can however, I think, comment on two issues which have been raised. One is nothing to do with the current circumstances but does refer to something Jim McKenna said about Leeds United a long, long time ago and this is just a matter of fact and history. The Council stepped in all those years ago because Leeds United was in danger of going under. In actual fact contrary to what Jim said the Council did put the money of this city at risk to protect Leeds United all those years ago, knowing full well that the club could go bust, so that is just a matter of fact all those years ago.

Councillor Dobson, it was a very good maiden speech, I must say. It was very well delivered and he should be congratulated for it. I suspect he will make a telling impact in future debates in this Council and that is always a welcome thing. As for the content, I do not want to name other organisations but I can think certainly of a famous rugby club in this city where we have consistently not collected money owed by it to the Council in order to protect it because we regard it as a community facility and important to that part of the city. There are many organisations where we have made incredible allowances in the face of some very odd financial irregularities. I can think of a horse riding organisation, for instance, where we were prepared to go along with the for years in an attempt to assist them because we felt it was in the best interest of the city and in the best interests of the residents of this city.

I think what I would say to Councillor Dobson is, it is not a black and white case of money is owed, collect it, that is the end of it. It was never the case under your administration, nor is it under ours. Every situation must be judged on its merits and a decision taken as to the consequences of pursuing debts set against what the implications may be for the Council, for the ratepayers, for the residents of this city, for the communities in this city. It is appropriate that we treat each situation on its merits and take all the facts into consideration when considering what to do. We ought not to make a single song and dance about the current position of Leeds United. I am confident that Andrew Carter will pursue this matter and if there are issues which need to be aired in public, in due course they will be.

(ii) Development & Regeneration

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we move on now to (ii), Development and Regeneration. Councillor Graham Hyde.

COUNCILLOR G HYDE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I just wish to speak on Minute 13 Executive Board 13th June.

While welcoming the proposals outlined and the general thrust of EASEL, ward Members have one or two concerns, Andrew, on practical issues, particularly around the round ten notices that have been issued at the moment, particularly in the Seacroft and Killingbeck Ward.

These are in Phase 1 and Neighbourhoods and Housing are actually seeking possession of these properties and they are actually very vulnerable people. I know

the ALMO has been involved with that but it is the issue of vulnerable people being issued court orders to have them evicted, if you like, for houses that we are demolishing as an Authority and it is the bad taste in the mouths of those people that is really upsetting the communities.

The other matter that I am really concerned about is about affordable housing, which is around the reduction from the original 25% that was agreed and mooted in the consultation documents. It has now been substantially reduced in the first few years. Part of EASEL, as we all know in this Council, is to bring people out of rented accommodation into home ownership, but we are not going to have the critical mass if we are not going to have sufficient affordable houses for people on low income to buy.

I would urge Andrew or the administration to have a re-think about affordable housing and the percentage that we are going to ask our proposed partner because I do not know whether we have signed the agreement yet and I hope Andrew could allude to that particular point, because it is one of the things that is still flying around at the moment.

The other matter is about construction jobs and jobs in general and local agreements. I hope we are not just going for construction jobs overall. I hope we are going to involve all the commercial development within EASEL and within the proposals that are mooted in the AEP documents at this time

My final point is regarding ringfencing jobs for East Leeds people in the first instance. I hope, therefore, that will be included in the AEP consultations for all Ward Members in the east of the city because it is important that we get our people back to work. Thank you very much, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR HARRINGTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. This is on the same Minute. It is very encouraging to see the way that the EASEL process seems to be developing. We are now on to the next stage of consultation. I went to a meeting this morning to see where people, local residents, have an opportunity to come and express their views but there are a number of things that need to be sorted and dealt with very soon for people to feel still encouraged.

The consultation process has started and that is good, but local residents must often feel that this is a consultation that begat a plan that begat consultation that begat and plan and so on and so forth and action is not begotten, so it is an obvious point that something needs to happen soon to show people and convince people that their being consulted is leading somewhere.

There is, I have to say, a weight of cynicism about the proposals which I am sure can be dissipated soon once people see that something is happening on the EASEL sites.

Secondly, there are still, as far as I know, a couple of people living in EASEL sites and that will obviously delay the EASEL process, Beltway's ability to build on that land if those people are not given a satisfactory deal so they can move.

The third thing is as I understand no contracts have yet been signed so obviously in terms of confidence in the project, investment to proceed and so on, contracts must be signed soon.

Yesterday I went to the Manor estate in Sheffield. Some people may have been there. As I understand it, it was very similar to Gipton some years ago. I only was there for a few hours so I do not want to make too large a claim for it, but they

must have got something right in that going round yesterday you would not know that it did look like Gipton eight, nine years ago because of the way it appears in terms of Streetscene, gardens state of houses and so on. It is worth looking at not least because Bellways were operating there.

Just to pick out one other thing. They obviously seem to have managed to involve local people in social enterprise which involves, amongst other things, the growing and selling of food on the estate, growing and selling of seeds for flowers, which particularly make the estate look more attractive, and also recycling projects. In terms of being able to provide something for local people to increase self-confidence, which we are always talking about, something has been got right.

There is encouraging process but I do hope contracts will be signed soon. I do hope that the deals can be found soon so that the residents who have not yet moved from the particular sites can be sorted and I do hope that the residents not only can feel that it was worth while taking part in the consultation but something can be seen to result because the phrase “quick win” is often used at the moment but to some residents – or many residents – it must too often seem like a slow defeat. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I noted particularly Councillor Harington’s comment, he used the word “cynicism”. I am not surprised there is some cynicism because there are a number of examples in that particular area of failed regeneration attempts which, when I have visited, residents were very keen to show me and say, “I hope we are not going to have any more like that.”

It is not helped of course, Councillor Harington, by leaflets that refer to ‘WEASEL’ rather than ‘EASEL’ and the constant carping comments from the Member of Parliament.

What I will say to you is this. I very much regard this area, like any other, as a place where people live and it is people’s homes and future homes that we are talking about.

Councillor Alan Taylor makes a point of talking to Councillor J L Carter and to me about the parts of EASEL which fall under our different portfolios. That same offer is and always has been open to you and to Councillor Hyde and to any other Ward Members who are interested. I would strongly suggest you take us up on that and it may stop you from misinterpreting some of the things that we are trying to achieve and help us to combat some of the cynicism that is going on.

Councillor Graham Hyde mentioned jobs. Let me give you a comparison with the Aire Valley. The last but two Aire Valley Steering Group Meetings, we got some statistics about job creation where indeed we were hitting the targets that had been set for job creation but unfortunately it was not the people in the locality who were filling the jobs. That cause us all some concern.

A lot of work has gone into that and at the last meeting we, in fact, have hit the targets not only for job creation but for actually getting local people into those jobs. That is what I want to see happen in the EASEL area, but again constant carping and seeking to undermine the process – let me remind you, actually, that you started the EASEL process and the trouble seemed to start when some people did not get their preferred contractor and did not get their own way over every house that should be left standing and which should be knocked down. I am not necessarily pointing a finger at anybody in this Chamber but you are all well aware of to whom I am referring.

We want this to be a success over this next number of years and I do strongly suggest that you all show the commitment to it and the desire to make sure we reassure local residents, who I freely admit are going through a time of uncertainty. It is inevitable with a gigantic regeneration scheme of this nature.

Support us in what we are trying to do. We will certainly take on board your suggestions but do what Councillor Taylor does – talk to us about it. Let us not be trying to frighten vulnerable people all the time, which seems to me sometimes it is all you are bothered about. *(Applause)*

(iv) Neighbourhoods and Housing

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I move us on to Neighbourhoods and Housing portfolio. Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. On Minute 246 page 93, the matter of the extension of the ALMO contracts.

If we are to have confidence in the ALMOs long term, the Government's arrangements need to be robust and we need to be very sure of them. The strategic landlord – which is the Council, us – should be doing its utmost to create strong boards and panels to oversee those ALMOs. I am very concerned that that is not happening.

When we set up the ALMOs a few years ago we did a huge amount of work to create a democratic and transparent structure that enabled all tenants to put their names forward as potential board members. That was part of our philosophy for the ALMOs to make them a partnership between the Council and tenants and we would happily have dispensed with the independent members of the board at that time but that was not an possibility. It was key that we got tenants involved and that we gave them the opportunity to vote for other tenants as board members.

As a result of our efforts, our boards were larger than the preferred model of 15 because we did our best to ensure that every tenant's vote was equal and that a tenant who lived in Pudsey voting for a board member would have a vote that was equivalent of anybody in Alwoodley or Rothwell or wherever. We were very pleased with the arrangement that we came up with.

When the ALMOs combined one of the good elements of the package – and I know some of my colleagues might say there were not any good elements but one of the good elements – was it created more opportunities for tenants to be involved at a local level through the Area Panels. To me the opportunity that that created has been thrown away because there are not going to be elections to fill those places. Instead, people will be nominated or invited to apply for places. Then they will be selected as to their suitability, so instead of election it is selection.

I also must express my concern that getting information about the new process has been incredibly difficult. We have had a report to Member Management Committee, we have had a report to Exec Board and I have to say both of them were incredibly skimpy in terms of laying out the details of the electoral process to be followed.

One report – and it is an internal one – talks of "Selecting so that there is a balance of tenants that reflects each area's diversity." I have to say, that is a recipe for tying yourself up in knots. It would have been far easier to have had elections, to have given tenants the vote and allow them to decide about who is the person who is best able to represent them.

What you have come up with is good practice in tenant involvement circa 1985, not circa 2007. In that time, giving tenants any voice was seen as fairly revolutionary. Now we have got practically everybody in the Tory Party believes in giving tenants a greater voice, not just your floppy Leader.

You might have some kind of excuse for what you have done if the panels had had to be set up quickly. You were in real undue haste, I think I would call it, to close down the old ALMOs and set up the new ones. In terms of the panels, they are not even going to meet till August. You have had a huge amount of time to go through a proper process of trying to encourage new tenants to put their names forward, to have proper elections and to encourage a whole raft of new tenants to come and put their names forward and get involved in the ALMOs. As it is we have got a wasted opportunity which there may be a review, they may give us an opportunity to think about it again, there may elections at some later date, but why not now? Why do we have to wait for a year, two years for elections to take place when the perfect opportunity was a couple of months ago?

We had a chance as a city to be ahead of the game in giving our tenants a voice instead of which we have slipped back decades. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: The next Councillor will be making his maiden speech. Could I welcome Councillor Lamb.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I refer to Minute 249 page 94 concerning the Executive Board Report on Area Delivery Plans and Area Function Schedules for 2007/08.

Since September 2004 Executive functions have been delegated to Area Committees. I am delighted that this seems likely to go further still. Every Ward in the city has benefited from this new approach. We live in a diverse city and it is essential that we acknowledge that the problems and challenges that Wards such as my own face are entirely different to those faced by the inner city areas. There is not a one-size fits all programme for the city and we should celebrate and embrace this diversity.

It is clear that the members of the Area Committees are in the best position to set the priorities for their communities which again is reflected in the Executive Board Report. Since 2004 my Ward has benefited greatly. There are many small businesses in my Ward who contribute a great deal both to the community and the city as a whole. They depend on visitors from outside of this area for their livelihoods and the look and feel of the towns and villages plays a huge part in whether people visit or not.

A combination of this administration's policies and the priority-setting of the Area Committee has led to great improvements for all the people I represent. We now have five PCSOs deployed. As with every Ward across the city we are seeing how effective the PCSOs are in tackling low level crime and anti-social behaviour as part of the Neighbourhood Policing Teams. The NPTs have been boosted locally by the provision of equipment such as bikes and speed guns.

Tackling the enormous backlog in road maintenance was rightly a priority for this administration. We have benefited from this and a properly thought out and funded programme for adopting and repairing private roads. I am delighted that many more of the worse roads in my Ward will be repaired as part of the programme.

We have seen a sustained boost to our community centres, a more effective support for young and old alike. Such as WISE - Wetherby in Support of the Elderly – have been supported and left secure and able to do what they do best. Partnerships between community groups, the police and others have helped to curb anti-social behaviour in Boston Spa by providing more activities for young people. An environmental fund has been set up to support and enhance the wonderful work of the In Bloom groups, Parish and Town Councils and other voluntary groups, in improving our environment. Wetherby in particular has benefited from the Town and Village Regeneration Programme with work on the market place very near completion.

Few if any of these things would have been achieved by the old top down centrist approach. We must continue to recognise the importance of investing in the outer areas for if we do not, they will ultimately become less desirable places to live and visit and the entire city will be the losers as revenues fall.

It is clear to me that this administration is not only committed to talking about delegating powers to Area Committees but actually to delivering it. It is entirely right that those most closely accountable to the people who are affected by decisions taken are the ones taking those decisions. People throughout this city have benefited from this change of policy and I am delighted to see that the opposition has seen the light and recognise the success and further potential of Area Committees as developed by this administration.

My Lord Mayor, by demonstrating a clear commitment to devolve key decision-making to the Area Committees, this administration has indeed recognised, embraced and encouraged the diversity of our many different communities. The objectives and results are clear. Year on year we are improving the quality of life for everyone across our great city and we will continue to do so. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. May I first of all congratulate Alan on his maiden speech? It was a good maiden speech with much content contained within it. We will obviously be debating a lot of those things later in the day but congratulations.

I wish I could say the same for Richard. I suddenly wonder why Richard has gone on – Richard does not go on an outburst, he is too laid back to go on an outburst, is Richard. He says everything quietly and calmly. Have you been asleep or something? What happened? Where did this suddenly appear from? If you wanted that why did you not say it six months ago? You never said a word, you have never put a White Paper down, you have never come to say, “Look, Les, I think it is time we did this, we did that, we did the other.” You have said nothing. All of a sudden like Rip Van Winkle, by God, he is awake again.

The actual minute does not even refer to panels, as you know it does not, but that is nothing, I do not mind you hanging anything on, I have done it for many, many years.

I think there is a time when you have got to take action. He talks about rushing things through. This ALMO quite honestly was giving me palpitations. I would have done it in six weeks if I had had my way. It went on and it went on and it went on basically because the group over there want consultation, consultation, consultation and then today on EASEL I hear them saying, “We do not want too much consultation.” They cannot make up their mind.

Richard, we are going to get on, we are going to appoint these panels. When these panels are appointed more tenants than ever before – ever - will be involved in

housing and running the housing, far more than when under Richard. It is all right Richard talking. None of these tenants were involved before. You elected them to the board, Richard. You know what you elected them to – the board, not to panels, which are far greater in number. The elections will at some stage take place for those board members as well, but we are not talking about the odd one or two that you put on a board - the many, many, many that this administration is putting on to these panels.

My Lord Mayor, all I can say to Council is I do not know where Richard has been for the last six months. I think he must have dropped asleep or something in this exercise, but we are going to ensure those panels are set up, we are going to ensure the tenants of this city have a real say in housing. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Carter.

(v) Children's Services

THE LORD MAYOR: Could we move on to Children's Services portfolio and ask Councillor Bentley to speak.

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: I am speaking to Minute 15 on the Executive Board Minutes of 13 June 2007.

I am delighted to note the proposal to establish an Integrated Youth Support Service in Leeds from April 2008. This will bring together all aspects of the Youth Service and the Localised Connection Service for our young people aged 13 to 19.

The integration of these services will provide a universal offer which is a key feature in the Change for Children Programme to transform services to achieve the Every Child Matters outcomes.

Our young people should receive a more effective streamlining of services, resulting in efficiencies which should provide more resources from our front line services. This can only be good news for our young people, who should benefit from these improved outcomes.

The Integrated Youth Support Services combines several components, one of which is the youth offer, which is another important aspect of this new service. In Leeds it will be branded as the Breeze Youth Promise. This promise will offer our young people youth work, leisure, education, information, advice and guidance services.

Today some of our young people have a really tough time out there because there are so many pressures on them, ranging from the advertising, celebrity lifestyles, internet chat rooms, to cheap and easily available alcohol and drugs which can end up changing their lifestyles and have an adverse effect on them in future.

They have to make hard choices and the wrong choices can lead to a disastrous future. Not only that, they have to contend with adults who do not necessarily understand these problems and do not want them hanging around in their neighbourhood. Let us face it, we are not a child friendly society.

We should be encouraging young people to find more useful and meaningful activities which will give them confidence and greater self-esteem. I think the Breeze Youth Promise will do just that with the opportunities for sporting and constructive

activities, volunteering, support for vulnerable young people and, most importantly, somewhere safe for them to spend time and socialise.

Of course, this service will be nothing without our young people's involvement and it is their participation which will help shape and change the service for their future needs.

I believe this new Integrated Youth Support Service will lead to better youth services across the city which should help to enrich the lives of our young people and give them opportunities which they may never otherwise experience and I welcome it wholeheartedly. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR LOWE: I am speaking on Minute 14 of the Executive Board Meeting on 13th June.

Councillor Brett has just reported in this Chamber that the Children and Young People's Annual Review demonstrates real progress right across the city in delivering the Every Child Matters agenda. My question is, how can you tell?

This document, I am sorry to say, is amateurish in the extreme, full of contradictions, lacking data and it makes judgments without having the empirical evidence to back those judgments up. This Annual Review should be one of the keystone documents received by this Chamber, not just because it represents around £1.5b of expenditure, but because every Councillor in this Chamber has a statutory responsibility to ensure the safety, wellbeing and achievement of our children as part of our corporate parent role. This document does not give us the assurance we need to deliver our obligations to this city's children.

On page 9 of the report, Councillor Brett claims that this report will allow the learning from implementing the plan to improve outcomes over the coming year and yet performance for 2006 is never consistently reported in this document, so how can we use this 'learning' to improve outcomes?

There are lots of examples but just for one, page 19 numbers 8, 9 and 10 show no data for the last three years, so how can you build on that to evidence improvement and progress?

So much for Councillor Brett's assertion that this report proves that he is delivering real improvements. Some aspects of the report are actually not even true. Page 18 under the Stay Safe category claims that the Council's performance in delivering assessments is a strength and yet the data shows that this is not true. Actual performance is 58% against a target of 70%. In the narrative of the first report that I read – I should add that this report has been re-written three times since Executive but in the first report that I read – the narrative said that actually performance was only 56% and that is shocking.

If bad is good, what else can't we believe? The report assesses the Council as 'good' in relation to enjoy and achieve, yet we know that 800 children every year leave school in this city without one GCSE and only six out of 38 schools posted positive CVS scores last year. I know that because the Yorkshire Evening Post told me. Thank you for that, Dave.

The data that is used in this report to assess performance has no integrity and therefore cannot be relied upon for us to be able to say to our citizens and our children, we are giving you the very best services that we possibly can, we can hold our heads up high and we are doing the very best for you as corporate parents. We

cannot do that because this report does not have factual information that has integrity that we can rely upon.

Where the Council does have access to data this is not always reported. For instance, page 32 has no information on performance at all in relation to the Be Healthy category at points 20 to 24 and there is no information in reducing tooth decay in under fives, yet on page 35 the narrative refers to a known statistical document, an analytical document, that the Council has prepared itself, so why can they not use the data that they have got in this report so that we can be assured that the information is actually right?

Page 24 target 28, there is no data for achieving the 13 week waiting time target, yet I could fill it. I got it. I pulled it off the internet of the Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust, so if I could do it, why could the officers not do it? Why could it not be in this report?

Councillor Brett, if I were you I would not be so smug. You hold the future of thousands of our children in your hands and yet you are cavalier about how you assess your performance to their detriment. I will give you my own assessment of your performance – D minus, must do better. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I want to share some of the concerns that Councillor Lowe has expressed today, but firstly I want to congratulate Councillor Bentley on praising the Labour Government for the new Youth Services. It was one of the best speeches I have heard from her and I welcome her comments about the new changes.

I want to talk about the Children's Plan, because, quite frankly, at the last Executive Board – where I was grateful for the support of Councillor Harris and Councillor Carter – we had an extremely frustrating experience.

The Children and Young Persons Plan, as Councillor Brett said, is the most important document that can be produced by us, not just for inspections because the Children's Services spent £700m of Councillor taxpayers' money. We always had reservations about the Trust but nevertheless this document is meant to hold this Councillor to account and the Executive Board Member for the delivery of services.

When Councillor Brett introduced the document he said all those – "This is the most important document you can read. Read page 9." Actually there were 100 pages and clearly he had not read any because when you got to the document there were huge areas of information missing. I will give you three examples which everyone in here is concerned about.

First of all, looked after children. Looked after children and Afro-black Caribbean children's educational performance is going back. That is something that all of us, I know, care about. It is actually in reverse. When you look for the benchmark, when you look for the data, when you look for the target, there was absolutely nothing there.

The other topical and major issue in this city is about bullying. This is something we should be able to do because it is reporting bullying in schools and the community. There was absolutely no information as a benchmark, no information on the target, and no information on the outcome.

Every one of us here is a corporate guardian. Most of us are on Governors where we can make a contribution to that debate and yet there was nothing there.

Finally, as another example – because we debated it here and I know Councillor Illingworth feels quite strongly about it – it was about the access to sporting facilities for young people and obesity. When we debated this in February we pointed out that 97 schools in this city had closed their facilities for the communities and this was creating a real problem and a barrier for young people and exercise and sport in their own community. We asked for progress and as yet we have not got any from Councillor Harker or Councillor Brett and yet again the document said nothing about this issue.

I have to say, because I know officers are here, I think they have worked extremely hard. I am aware of the pressures of getting information; I am aware of the template but the important point about this is that every one of us in this room cares about Children's Services, every one of us is a corporate guardian and I think when you heard Councillor Brett's comment after these deficiencies – and this is where we got support from Councillor Harris and Councillor Carter – he promised to read it after the Executive Board. He promised to read the document. Frankly, that is totally and utterly unacceptable for an Executive Board Member to come to the Executive Board where elected Members are there to hold this Council to account and say we agreed the document and a document that was not fit for purpose for that debate I think frankly is disgraceful. It is.

What I would say is this, what we want to hear today, Councillor Brett, is how you are going to empower us, inform us on information - not just on Scrutiny because there are 99 here – on the progress of all those key issues. Yes you are making progress but every one of us is democratically entitled to be kept up to date with information and data on all the key issues that we have raised here today.

Lord Mayor, I expect better. I want to hear Councillor Brett say how he is going to address that, otherwise the children in this city are being totally neglected by this administration. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harker to sum up on the Learning portfolio.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to thank Councillor Bentley for her comments on the new plan for the Youth Service and I would also like to pay tribute to the work that she did over two years in helping to put meat and muscle on to the initial skeleton that was outlined.

I think the new Youth Service Plan is exciting and I think it will contribute to all aspects of giving our young people information that they need to make the right choices as well as helping towards providing the sport that Keith has mentioned – and I share with him my concerns that Governors still close schools despite being asked and I can only ask Governors, I cannot tell them, unfortunately, I do not have that power and neither does this Council and you know that. We are working with schools to get them open and the Youth Service will work with the sports people to provide more and more access to sporting activity for our young people who want it. Advice in all areas of those difficult years which are the teen years.

I was with the Youth Service on Saturday at their fourth conference here in Leeds. It was an exciting and vibrant conference. I had a great time with them and we discussed a number of issues. One of the outcomes of that meeting is that I am going to spend a considerable amount of time working alongside the Youth Officers in South Leeds, particularly inner South Leeds, to try and get an understanding of what the challenges are in that part of the city so that this plan does address those needs. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Can I start by congratulating Councillor Lowe on her new position?

How can I tell that we are making progress? That was the first question that she said. I have to say, Councillor Lowe, that one of the reasons that I can tell is that I have been so far to three Market Place Forums where I have listened to enormous numbers of people who work on a daily basis with young people and it saddens me enormously to have to say that in the South Forum in Morley, the West Forum in Pudsey and the North-East Forum, not a single Labour Councillor from each of those areas took the trouble to come. Yes, they were invited.

The evidence is incomplete. I will happily admit, Councillor Lowe and Councillor Wakefield, that the traffic light system has a new colour. Until I saw this report I was not aware that blue was a colour that traffic light systems used, but blue in this report indicates that we have not yet got the information that we need. There is no data for any of the educational information for the current year because the current year is still in progress, so we have an impossible situation there. You cannot look at what the data situation is in that particular situation.

I would accept that certainly in the early drafts of this important report there were some difficulties with some of the data. There were certainly some difficulties early on which is why the draft that came to the Exec Board I will readily admit was not the finished product and no officer at that meeting was prepared to say it was a finished product.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Councillor Wakefield told you.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Most of the things that Councillor Wakefield raised at the Executive Board were not part of the main document.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: You have not read it.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Yes I had read it and what I promised to do following the Executive Board was not to read it for the first time, but to read the amendments that were necessary following the valuable points that Keith and others made at that meeting.

I have been called many things in my time, many four letter words, but I honestly do not think 'smug' applies to me in this context.

As Councillor Wakefield knows, we have a new unit that are putting together a report of a type and scope and breadth that we have never had to do before. We knew it was coming, we knew that we had to do this review which, for the first time, is part of the Joint Area Review, so this debate today and the verbatim report will form part of what the inspectors look at when they come to see us in December, which is why it is right and proper that I am challenged and that the work of officers is challenged and that the whole Council has the chance to hear.

We knew we had to do it but the final guidance only came on 1 April. It was something that the officers were undertaking under a great deal of pressure.

I could go on and I could accept that what we had at an early stage was incomplete. I have already said – and I do not think Councillor Lowe was listening carefully – that there are areas of weakness and I will accept that. I am happy to talk to you and other Councillors further about the things that we are working on. We have to talk openly about them in this report because if we do not, we will not be able

to have a high grade on the ability to improve in the future and that is one of the things that we are hoping to achieve.

I would hope, if I can make one final point to all the Members of this Council, the Government would say that we are all 99 of us corporate parents. That is the Government's term. Could I suggest that wherever possible in Leeds we use the term corporate carer, because that is what our looked after children tell us. They say to us, "We already have parents", so in this Chamber and other areas in Leeds I am trying to encourage everyone to talk about corporate carers. I thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

(iv) Leisure

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we move on to the Leisure portfolio and Councillor Elliott.

COUNCILLOR ELLIOTT: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I refer to page 95 Minute 254 concerning the New Leaf Leisure Centres. As you will be aware, the replacement for Morley Leisure Centre is one of the New Leaf schemes. My Morley Borough Independent colleagues and myself are pleased that the report in question has been approved. We look forward to continuing our discussions with user groups, interested parties and officers to ensure that the New Leaf scheme is a success.

The new leisure centre will bring obvious benefits to Morley and a wider catchment area by introducing state of the art facilities. It is particularly interesting to note that service users as well as interested parties have been given the opportunity to be involved in discussions and workshops concerning the design elements of the new facilities. I am sure that these discussions and workshops will help make the new leisure centres a great success.

I now move to the same page and Minute 255, Lord Mayor. As Treasurer of the Leeds Branch of the Royal Society of St George, I can say that on behalf of the committee how pleased we are at this board's willingness to consider proposals for the celebration of St George's Day and its indication of support for these celebrations. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR WILSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak to Minute 253 on page 95. As a Ward Member for Rothwell I welcome the investment of £520,000 in Rothwell Sports Centre. It is for the refurbishment of the two wet changing rooms.

Rothwell Sports Centre, for anyone who does not know it, is an extremely well-run sports centre, it is well attended and is one of the most successful sports centres in Leeds. Way back in the early 1970s I was as member of a fundraising group that agitated against the old Rothwell Urban District Council for a small swimming baths for the local children. We were singly unsuccessful because every time we approached them we were told there was no funding.

Rothwell Urban District Council, when it discovered it was going to be taken into Leeds, decided at one of the last meetings – I can only believe it was in a fit of pique – that they would not pass plans for the swimming baths, they would pass plans for a sports centre. On that occasion they passed the plans and Leeds picked up the bill. I might suggest that the old Rothwell Urban District Councillors are still making Leeds pick up the bill!

All I would say it is an extremely well-run centre, it does an extremely good job and the money that we did raise, £3,500, the group that was agitating for the

swimming baths, I can tell you on that occasion the £350,000 was collected by Leeds City Council. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Lord Mayor, thank you. I wish to speak to Minute 9 with reference to the June 13 Executive Board paper. I was expecting that the Ward Members from Otley would be speaking before, but we still have not heard from them and certainly at Executive Board we did not receive any formal comments from the Ward Members at the meeting.

Can we start by asking Councillor Procter to apologise to Council for his comments on the Otley River Fence at Council on February 21st, explaining that the need for fencing in Wharfe Meadows, you said, and I quote, that "The issue is incredibly simple and incredibly straightforward. The Authority had an instruction from a Coroner's Court." Can you confirm that this is simply not the case, it is not true, that the Coroner made no reference to Otley or to any other site apart from Roundhay Park? Can you explain why you misled Council in this way and further can you explain why you put forward a scheme before the Council had done a full risk assessment?

Lord Mayor, the handling of this whole situation has been a disgrace. We were all shocked and deeply saddened by the tragedy in Roundhay Park Lake and I am sure all of us take our responsibilities for safety seriously. However, since February when the scheme to fence off the River Wharfe first came to Exec Board, we have been subjected to deferrals, changes of advice and information, last minute tabling of Executive Board papers and a stream of comments in the media from both the Tories and the Liberals trying to blame the Coroner, RoSPA or the residents of Otley for the mess that you have presided over. This included the fiasco of Councillor Procter trying to suggest that Leeds could pass responsibility of the river to the Town Council to try and get them off the hook. Surprise, surprise, even if Otley Town Council had taken over management of the park, Leeds would still carry the liability. What a complete shambles.

Lord Mayor, we had a deputation from the action group from Otley here at Council. No-one in this Chamber was left in any doubt about the feelings against the fence in Otley which were backed up by 6,000 signatures on a petition.

The situation got so fraught that Councillor Harris then felt duty bound to get involved I have to tell you, he went to Otley and told campaigners there that this whole situation had been handled so badly that he was stepping in personally to take full responsibility. Badly handled by whom? I am fairly sure he was talking about you, John.

Has anything actually changed? No. Last week Executive Board approved a scheme of fencing and hedging for the Wharfe in Otley that is not supported in the town. Many of the people in Otley do not even know what the fence is going to look like and there remain serious doubts about the effect on safety in the area.

The much-promised consultation has been a complete sham and has caused immense anger in the town. People now see all the delay was just a ploy to defer the decision until after the election in May.

Lord Mayor, this whole fiasco raises serious questions over governance in this city. The Otley part of this situation is going to cost at least £165,000. How much more will all the other site assessments cost in the future? We are demanding a full enquiry into the whole sorry history and I hope that all Members of Council will support this. The question now being asked in Otley is whether this administration is

fit to run Leeds. The answer coming back is a resounding “No”. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think Councillor Blake is right to talk about the wider implications of this issue because although we saw a very emotional and very angry presentation about Otley, this issue is going to play city wide. Every area that we have with water will have to be risk assessed. That will cause no doubt reaction by the local community, so it is important.

Despite being misled at Executive Board about who recommended the risk assessment – and I think that is acknowledged by the Executive Board that Executive Board Members were told through a paper that it was the Coroner that instructed the Council to do a risk assessment. Despite Councillor Harris's comments shifting the responsibility to RoSPA on 7th March in the YEP, we always said this – and I will say it again. We agree that the Council had no other choice than to do a risk assessment following the Coroner's report and, indeed, following the tragic case. That was right and proper for the Council to do. We have never had any debate about that. We have always stood up.

We have also said that really the debate is about two things. One, the promises of consultation which I think Councillor Blake was right, has been a shambles and pushed through until after the election. Two, the issue that affects us all – was the fence or any proposal proportionate to the level of risk identified in that assessment? That is a real difficult and complex debate on any area which, frankly, I think some of us are probably not qualified to make that judgment.

When it came to 16th May we were told through a paper that something had to be done. We could not wait any longer. Personally – and I think Councillor Blake was saying we said, “Why don't you do the children's area if that is a high risk area?” We also thought the weir and the rest, frankly, I think was open for debate and discussion. I think they would have got broad agreement if they had gone to consultation on that.

When they came back – and this is why we would not agree to the proposals last week – on 13th June, there was some hidden information which none of us had been aware of. First of all we had an Executive Board tabled on the day. I then found out that no action had taken place – I know people are going to say due to consultation – but around the children's area there is no fence and nothing has been done. I also find out that Councillor Harris had been down to say what Councillor Blake has just done, that he blamed the council for handling this badly.

He also said at the Executive Board it was because of the elections. When Councillor Procter went down – I think he went down on 10th May, which is well after the elections. I think if you want us to support serious action, I think it is right and proper that Councillor Harris clarifies who he thinks is to blame, who he thinks is responsible, was it an officer, was it a Member, and what he intends to do, because I am still none the wiser from the comments he made at a public meeting. I think it is very, very odd that the three Ward Members who were tabled to speak will not stand up and say anything. Is that political gamesmanship? It must be because we were told at Executive Board the three Ward Members have very strong views. I still do not know what they are. None of us know what the views of the Ward Members are and I think it is right and proper – Councillor Campbell is here and so are others - that they stand up and say do they agree with the leadership of this administration in the response to that risk.

I also think that when you look at the words of the MP you can tell where the political games are. They are being played by the Liberals who are trying to blame

the Tories for where they are now and I think if you are going to take this issue seriously it is time to be clear, to be honest and let us have an honest debate about the response in this Chamber because we will not sign up to anything where we clearly see political games being played. I move, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It is always interesting to hear what your constituents think, is it not, and I am thinking of particularly one of my constituents who spoke this afternoon. Usually, of course, when constituents want to speak to you they come to your surgery, so what I will do is I will pass over the details of my surgery for my constituents if they need to come and talk to me about that.

It is interesting – I will just say we were addressed by the Wharfedale Action Group, it did bring a deputation to Council. I have to say and I would like to put on record what an effective campaigning organisation they have been and they have been an effective campaigning organisation in my opinion for the simple reason that they did not bring politics into it.

At the moment we have just gone through the election process and I can produce for you - because I know you all enjoy reading political leaflets – political leaflets that say this is definitely going to be fenced, areas of water in the Otley and Yeadon Ward, of which there have been no suggestions of any safety measures whatsoever are going to be fenced.

It strikes me that from a comment that came earlier today this appears to be a Labour tactic, that from now on every candidate in a Labour Ward is going to go around and say if there is a pond, a stream, the administration is going to fence this and this will be their big story.

Let us go back to what reality is. Judith in her usual inimitable style said that she did not agree with any of the proposals. I find that strange, really, because what you are doing is saying to us something that I have constantly supported and that is there is a children's play area next to the river. I have to say to you, who in their right mind would say we do not wish to put a protective barrier between a children's play area and the river? Nobody except, perhaps, this comment. We have touched on it.

Keith did touch on it and I will admit that Keith did say this – there is an area there which is surrounding the weir. The weir, I think those of you who know about it, there is a steep drop, it is a dangerous drop and I think most people have been convinced that there needs to be some measures there. There are other areas of the park so, for example, the majority of the park will have no fencing whatsoever. I suppose in some ways many people could say it is because of the effective campaign that has been run by WAG that that solution has been arrived at by the City Council.

I think – because I might well be running out of time – I appreciate the controversy that has been caused by this. I think the Executive Board have made a decision and the Executive Board – and I am prepared to accept the Executive Board made that decision on the advice they were given and if Councillor Blake and Councillor Wakefield did not feel able to support that advice, that is a decision they made. I have no qualms about the integrity of the Executive Board and the integrity of their decision.

I would, however, comment that there does seem within the community of Otley that there is some concerns about that particular decision. I think I would like to ask on behalf of the Ward Members, rather than the Middleton Ward Members, that the relevant board members look at the process the Council went through to see

what changes can be made so that residents better understand both the decision-making process and the decision itself. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Point of personal explanation I hear shouted.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Colin, it was quite hard to hear what you were actually saying but I think I heard you say that I did not agree with protecting the children's play area. That is completely untrue, I did not say that at all and, indeed, at Executive Board the comment I made was that even fencing off just the river in front of the children's play area was not adequate because the play area is open and on the other side there is open access on to Farnley Lane, as you know. What I suggested at the Exec Board was that the whole play area itself was fenced off and I think Councillor Carter actually agreed that that would be a sensible way forward as well.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Will you withdraw that?

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: I am sorry, I will accept the comment Councillor Blake made. Again perhaps we have a problem because we are standing side to side but it appeared to me from your comments that you said you did not support the proposals and I am sorry if I misinterpreted that.

THE LORD MAYOR: I think Councillor Campbell's advice that a constituent visiting a surgery of the appropriate politician will be sensible, so can we continue? Councillor Procter.

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: I hope my time is going to start again, Lord Mayor. First of all can I thank Councillor Elliott for her kind words in relation to the New Leaf Leisure Centre. I am pleased that matters are progressing. I am pleased that she and members in Morley feel that matters are progressing satisfactorily in that direction and also I am pleased that Executive Board back the support for the St George's Day celebrations in the future and we are to look and see what we can do.

I am also pleased that Councillor Wilson and the Rothwell Members are content if not elated with the half million pounds that is being spent on Rothwell Sports Centre. It is something that is well overdue and I am pleased that we are able to fund this piece of work at a centre which is exceptionally well used and generates a substantial amount of money for the department.

Let us move on to the vexed issue of fencing, shall we, and Wharfe Meadows? I have to say, Judith, perhaps you should be a little more measured in your approach as your colleague to your right was. I am sure I do not need to remind you of the process but maybe I do. Maybe Members do need to have a bit of a lecture or a training session – perhaps Councillor Latty can organise a training session for elected Members – in the decision-making process, because Mr Rogerson is very clear about this matter and on occasions reminds those of us who sit in Cabinet and also those who sit on the Executive Board. It is the right and indeed the duty of officers to bring reports. We might not like the reports that they bring, we might not like the words they use, we might not like the style in which they are written, but this administration does not – does not – re-write officer reports.

I know in previous years – I might say before the present senior officers at the top table were there – I well remember the occasion where Councillor Atha had re-written a report and had not put his name to it and it did give the appearance as

though the report had been written on behalf of an officer. That is not the way these days those report...

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Can I ask, Lord Mayor, that my protestation be registered and he be forced to put it in writing and specify the occasion, because quite frankly this time it is scandalous smearing will not go down anywhere here.

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: Lord Mayor, it is in the verbatim already, it is not a point of personal explanation because he has not spoken, so let us move on, shall we?

THE LORD MAYOR: Just one moment, Councillor Procter. Can I just remind all Council this is the one committee of this Authority that has verbatim minutes. Anything said that you do not like you can always use those verbatim minutes later. Let us proceed. Councillor Procter.

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: As I was saying, Lord Mayor, we do not re-write those reports. We are not able to do so and there are many instances that I can think where reports have been written where I would rather they came in a different way, but indeed they do not.

The opportunity is afforded to elected Members to disagree with the recommendations of officers and vote accordingly. As I recall when this matter came to Executive Board, Councillor Wakefield and, indeed, Councillor Blake supported the original proposals. I do not recall Councillor Wakefield voting against the original proposals to install fencing at Wharfe Meadows when it first came in. Indeed, I seem to recall that he did say that in his professional life he had got experience of health and safety matters and he thought it was important that we followed a certain course of action. He seemed content with that.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Subject to consultation.

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: For my part what I did say at that Executive Board and I stressed and gave the comfort to all Members of the Executive Board and also to the representatives of WAG as well, was that we would go back before anything was implemented to RoSPA and seek further advice from them, we would go away and consult further, we would take legal advice. That is what we duly did. Subsequent to that there was a whole range of other activities that happened. There were public meetings and legal advice was sought and all kinds of things did happen.

I do think it is rather strange that initially when a report comes to Executive Board the Labour Members on that Executive Board offer up supportive words and indeed do vote in favour of the proposal, then in the run up to an election a storm erupts and they think hold on a minute here, we might be on the wrong side of this argument, we had better change our position and when it comes again to Executive Board, "On this occasion we are not going to vote in favour of it, we are going to abstain and reserve our position." It all seems rather opportune to say the least, Lord Mayor.

If there is something that was handled incorrectly and inappropriately and if there is blame to be attached, the blame rests quite firmly and squarely – and Councillor Gruen chunters away, "It rests with you" – it does not just rest with me at all. As I have explained already the report is written by the officers. It comes to Executive Board. It is then the duty. I cannot change it on its passage to Executive Board. It is the duty of yes, me, and all the Members of Executive Board to question that report.

In hindsight what I should have done and what indeed all members of Executive Board including Councillor Wakefield and Councillor Blake should have done, was to have asked the question of the officers, "Is this the only form of fencing that can be applied or are there other alternatives?" That is a question which we did not ask and it is a question which clearly – clearly – with hindsight we should have asked. We were more concerned, quite understandably – as, I might say, the action group has been as well – with the issue of do we have to implement fencing, yes or no? Yes or no. We were looking for a clear simple answer, "Do we have to implement it? Yes or no?" when really what we should have been concentrating on is, what style and type and height and design of fencing would be appropriate to implement in this area, would be appropriate for the people of Otley to accept and which areas specifically were appropriate to fence as well.

Lord Mayor, political opportunism is nothing new to this Council Chamber – certainly not from the party opposite here anyway. I have to say the vagaries of politicking in Otley are something that I have not quite mastered, even though I spent a number of years involved in the North-West Leeds Conservative Association. I am still not there and I still do not quite understand all of the things. Indeed in the public meeting that was held I think there was more in code actions spoken than at any other meeting I have ever been to. It was most bizarre and complicated but I think that is something quite peculiar to Otley.

We are moving ahead, Lord Mayor, with a decision that has been taken. We stand by that decision. I have expressed on previous occasions as I express again, if this matter had been handled in a way that people feel is inappropriate I am happy to take their representations. I am happy that we take on board Councillor Campbell's comments and do look at the process, but I have to say Members opposite should not be so naïve as to think that Members on this side, indeed a Cabinet, can simply change officers' reports just because we do not like the phrasing of them. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Procter. Now, Council, a rare treat. We move on to Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Councillor Pryke.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. This is probably the first time we have ever got to OSC in this Council, so thank you for bearing with us.

I am speaking to the Minute 94 on Narrowing the Gap on page 97. As Members will know, OSC visited East Leeds – indeed it used East Leeds as an example to look at whether Narrowing the Gap was working or not when OSC was there last year. I think most of the Members of Council from East Leeds, especially from the EASEL area, have noticed that the gap is narrowing. EASEL is a particular project aimed at narrowing the gap and it appears to be working.

One of the principal aims of EASEL in improving the lives of people in East Leeds is to tackle poor health and I did note at the weekend that a number of doctors have said the single most important action to improve public health and promote health is about to happen on 1 July when smoking in enclosed places in England will be formally banned. England, of course, is very late doing it. It has been very successful in Scotland and Wales and Ireland and I congratulate the Labour Government on belatedly doing this.

Of more immediate concern to the people in East Leeds who want the gaps to narrow because they see extremes, is the matter of unemployment and take-home pay. Members may possibly have accessed the information that is available on the intranet and seen that the latest worklessness statistics, the unemployment statistics for Leeds show that Leeds is ahead of the region, the core cities and the rest of the

UK in reducing unemployment and in this last month – the statistics are available for May – the greatest reductions in unemployment have happened in Gipton and Harehills Ward, Burmantofts and Richmond Hill and City and Hunslet Wards, which bears out what Andrew Carter was saying earlier on about the Aire Valley effect. At last the employment that is available close to those Wards is being targeted at the people who live in those Wards and I will congratulate all officers and all of our partner agencies for working towards that.

Unemployment is the good news for the city. Take-home pay is the bad news for the city. Members will have noticed that in the most recent budget the Chancellor – soon to be Prime Minister – abolished the ten per cent tax rate. That had the effect of increasing tax on everybody paid less than £22,000 per annum and that particularly affects women, particularly affects part-time workers and students. It particularly affects the people in Burmantofts and Richmond Hill who do predominantly have part-time work or they are under-paid women workers.

Who voted for that measure? The seven Labour MPs of Leeds voted for it, including Hilary Benn and George Mudie. George, by coincidence today, is in the Select Committee looking at private equity arrangements. If you do not know about these this is an arrangement where Gordon Brown allows people who invest their private equity in companies, saddle them with massive debts and then pay tax at ten per cent or less, get away with it. Of course, the Chancellor – soon to be Prime Minister – allows this for the very wealthy individuals who are paying themselves sometimes millions of pounds in take-home pay while at the same time he and his party, the party opposite, are only too happy to make poor people in my ward pay more tax.

That is something the Government can deal with. I hope the Prime Minister-to-be will look at it. Please encourage him to do so. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, I wish to refer to Minute 95 of the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny held on 2nd April, which is on page 97. It is to do with Leeds' bid for a large casino. This looks to have taken off a life of its own. Officers and Councillors close to the project seem to assume that Council is fully behind a large casino and that it will be of benefit to the city.

In fact it has not been debated here openly at length and there do seem to be members in different parts of this Chamber who have misgivings. For example, the assumption that a large casino would be vital to regeneration and Narrowing the Gap is questionable. Creating minimum wage jobs for people to wait on those who may very well have more money than sense seems to lack worthwhile economic or social purpose.

Legal action by existing casino proprietors who were trying to stop the Government allowing more to be opened looks to have failed so the pause agreed at Overview and Scrutiny may have come to an end. We should have a full debate on a full report to Council ending in a free vote before taking this any further. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR DRIVER: Lord Mayor, I think the point that Councillor Leadley has just made was something that we did in fact discuss at various points when we were, on behalf of the Council, doing a first run at the issues that the Government's policy raised. Members will recall that we did at a subsequent Council meeting come to a fairly unanimous view about the issues and the difficulty of identifying just how we would implement the policy, agreeing, however, that we were faced with the reality of a gambling legislation nationally which we had to implement locally.

Councillor Pryke's points are very interesting insofar as they were never made during the course of lengthy discussions at the time of the narrowing the Gap Enquiry. I find it interesting that he now raises them but, of course, they were not part of our terms of reference. Our terms of reference, Councillor Pryke, if you recall, were that we would look at what we were doing as a Council, as a set of services, to respond as effectively as possible with the resources that were available in those three areas and that, indeed, is what we did. We came to the view, as you will recall, that in some parts of the city – one part of the city that we looked at – we were faced with services that did not link up well with one another. In another the prime theme was that whereas we had commissioned one particular service to do a fair amount of work on an important issue, it was not in contact with many of the other services that could also contribute to making an effective response to the needs of, in that case, young people whose prime need was for jobs, as you say. In the third area, we looked at services that were disconnected in other ways, out in Micklefield.

I could warmly recommend to all Members of this Council you go and read that enquiry report. It is, I believe, largely an attempt to look at the way in which we have operated historically in the recent past to respond to the needs of one third of our citizens. We are not talking about a small number and we are not talking about them all being in one area either. They are scattered very widely and there is clearly a further amount of work to be done by not just the services of the Council working individually but working together with the Leeds Initiative and with other organisations.

I think there is a great deal to do. Thank you for the opportunity to give that publicity to the report and I hope everybody will read it. (*Applause*)

(c) Scrutiny Board (Children's Services))

THE LORD MAYOR: We move on to Scrutiny Board (Children's Services). Councillor Leadley.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, I wish to speak on Minute 130 of the meeting of Scrutiny Board Children's Services held on 19th April, which is on page 110, and is a note of the Young People's Scrutiny Forum entitled, "Catching the Bus." Not surprisingly the youngsters highlighted reliability, cost and thinning of evening services as particular problems.

This shows the mountain we have to climb if we are to convince people that public transport is a sensible choice. It might be suspected that Forum Members will get driving licences and cars as soon as they are able.

Fares have gone up tremendously over the past few years. Recently both the major West Yorkshire operators abolished cheap off-peak evening and weekend fares for ordinary passengers. A monthly bus Metro card costs £61 for an adult or £25.50 for an under 19 in full-time education. Two or more people travelling together might go as cheaply by car.

Reliability, certainly of Arriva services which I use most, has improved tremendously since they had a reorganisation in January 2005, but that followed several years of extreme unreliability which no-one seemed to do much about. It may be recalled that under Councillor Mick Lyons's Chairman ship Metro used to claim that more than 98% of all advertised bus services actually ran – rather like a people's republic announcing bumper harvests in the middle of a famine.

After many years of buses not turning up at all the public's perception of unreliability remains. Sometimes perception is more powerful than reality. If we are

to sell bus travel to young people or to anyone else, we must have a reliable, affordable product which people will want to buy. Thank you, my Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Thank you, Lord Mayor, good afternoon. I refer to Minute 142 on page 119 regarding Youth Services in Leeds. In order for the youth services to work better throughout our city, it would appear that the answer might lie in devolving the running of youth services down to a more local level. In the first instance this could be via the Area Committee and then down to the Town and Parish Councils if that was felt necessary.

Local residents know the requirements of people in their area and are best equipped to deal with the issues faced by their communities. Local community groups are often more successful in delivering diversionary tactics for the youth in their own areas than are the paid professionals. Recently I was asked to present the trophies at the annual prize giving of a local kids' football club in Morley. It was started running 30 years ago. Around 200 Members of Glen Juniors were presented with prizes for their footballing skills. The players were made up from all different kinds of backgrounds and they had both boys and girls playing. They were kept busy by the activities provided for them by a dedicated band of volunteers who run Glen Juniors. Perhaps the future for youth services lies in tapping into the invaluable resource of local community groups and working with them to provide excellent facilities for our young people.

Only by looking at things at a local level can we deal with the issues and I am sure that this would be a great benefit not only to our paid officers, who sometimes work in very difficult situations, but to the community groups and the wider community in general. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR BALE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am grateful to Councillor Leadley for drawing attention to the Young People's Scrutiny Forum Report, Catching the Bus. This was the second year that the Scrutiny Board invited the Leeds Youth Council to choose a topic for themselves on which they wished to carry out a Scrutiny enquiry with support from the Scrutiny Unit and from youthworkers. The young people chose public transport and invited other young people from ROAR which, as you will know, stands for Reach Out and Reconnect, to join them in this enquiry.

It was a very valuable enquiry. The young people carrying out the enquiry conducted a survey of bus usage, they involved 130 young users of public transport in that survey. They met with bus operators, with Metro and they made some very valuable conclusions and recommendations, many of which relate to the things that Councillor Leadley referred to – the inconsistency of fares, the high fares for relatively short journeys, the question of reliability, the question of security, which is clearly an important issue.

The report was signed off by the Scrutiny Board in April. Members were certainly very impressed by the quality of that work and I think this process of involving the Youth Council in Scrutiny will continue I hope year by year because it has two important values. One is that it involves young people in choosing what they think are the issues that we should be looking at in Leeds. It involves them in bringing a younger person's perspective to the enquiry and also brings young people into the democratic processes and makes them aware of the work of the Council. For all those reasons it is enormously valuable.

I move to Councillor Grayshon's points about the enquiry into youth services. This is one of the major pieces of work undertaken by the Scrutiny Board in the past year with input from over 20 witnesses and nine visits to see youth services – and I emphasise 'youth services' not the Youth Service – at first hand. That indeed

included some specific input about the local youth network operating in Morley which was promoted in the report as a model of good practice. The aim of the enquiry was indeed to inform the development of a youth offer for young people in our city, a youth offer of the kind referred to by Councillor Bentley earlier; a youth offer which is integrated but which is also local. I take Councillor Grayshon's point and I do not think those objectives are in any way inconsistent. We want something which is joined up across the city but we want something also that draws on local needs, local resources and the work of the voluntary sector.

One of the important findings of the enquiry was the need to some extent to go beyond statutory age limits. We found that it was very important to look, for example, at the eight to 13 year olds who are too young, as it were, for the formal work of the youth service but whose needs are very important because unless people are engaged at that sort of age, unless habits of involvement are cultivated at that age and unless the problems of deprivation are addressed with children of that age, then it is very difficult to do things later in a remedial way. I believe that was a valuable enquiry, as was the young people's enquiry and I know the new Scrutiny Board under the chairmanship of Councillor Bill Hyde is thinking of doing some more in depth work on that eight to 13 age group in the year ahead. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

(f) Scrutiny Board (Health and Adult Social Care)

THE LORD MAYOR: We move to Scrutiny Board (Health and Adult Social Care), Councillor Campbell.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I do not know if those of you who are of an age remember when you were unwell somebody gave you a sweet to make you feel better. I have to say the hospital were handing humbugs right left and centre here on page 132 Minute 130 because most of the comments they appear to make directly contradict statements they made to myself and Councillor Kirkland when we were at a meeting with them.

I refer to a couple of the maxims that you always get from the Health Authority and the health officials when they report back on bad news.

The first one is, it is always about – if you notice the third paragraph down they talk about closing Ward 1, which was the Old People's ward and you remember they did it at very short notice without any consultation to anybody, but they said it is to provide a more efficient model of care in short transition period.

Actually it is nothing to do with that. It is because the Government told the Health Authority to save £30m and they were not on target. Having said that, they have told them to save £38m this year so it is likely that we are going to see more cuts in this particular area.

I would also like to go on to page 33 and if you look there it refers that Mr Boyle explained that closing Ward 1 would create more space for new services and part of an older people's strategy care models for treatment for patients in their own homes were being developed.

So it is another maxim of the Health Authority. It is very easy to close down a service and talk about a new one but actually providing a new service seems to take two or three years but unfortunately you close the old service down before you provide the new one. I would advise Scrutiny Board to take this particular set of comments with a pinch of proverbial salt.

COUNCILLOR TAYLOR: Minute 133 on page 134 and in particular reference to the Children's Hospital. I am expressing my concern as the delay from central Government in providing the Children's Hospital. It also seems that no-one from the other side has made an effort to speak on this matter. I would hope that when the Apostolic Succession takes place – in other words when Mr Brown takes up residence in Number 10 from Mr Blair – that he will be far more proactive about the whole of this matter of a children's hospital for the city.

I think that central Government really cannot wriggle out of their responsibility for health services not only in this city but throughout the rest of the country.

As far as we are concerned it is central Government who appoints the board, it is central Government who appoint the Trust and it is central Government who provide the budgets and then they demand with the other side of the coin that savings are made.

My Lord Mayor, the residents of Leeds have already seen further delay in the delivery of their children's hospital and according to the minutes that I am speaking to, there still seems to be no firm date or timetable for the children's hospital actually being in place in the city.

I am sure I speak on everybody's behalf here when I congratulate the Yorkshire Evening Post on the campaign for a children's hospital. I hope that that campaign will continue. To delay the hospital, which I hope will be built either in my ward or very close to my Ward in Harehills, is going to help many families not only in Gipton and Harehills but in the rest of the city.

I hope, my Lord Mayor, that the new Scrutiny Board will take up the issue and would therefore the retiring Chair urge her successor to treat this as a priority. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR LANCASTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Taking on board what both my colleagues have spoken about, I just bring to members' attention, it was this year at a February meeting the Scrutiny Board received the report from the Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust about the decision to close Ward 1. This has followed several issues that have been brought to the Scrutiny Board's attention where we have had to react rather than be involved in part of the consultation process.

Also because of this closure there were concerns about the long-term plans for the hospital, a ward closure, what is going to happen to the rest of the hospital.

The progress to date, our report, is a framework for the development of the strategic direction of Wharfedale Hospital has now been developed jointly by the Leeds Health Trust, Leeds PCT and the Wharfedale Forum. This was formally approved by the Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust in April and the PCT Board in May. This is in the public domain and will be made available to Scrutiny Board Members for information. That was an update.

Before I refer back to the hospital I just want to reply to the comments made from Councillor Taylor. It was in March this year that the Scrutiny Board learned that the application to fund a new children's and maternity hospital could not go ahead until a compelling financial case could be made. We were told that all concerned were working to find an affordable solution.

On Monday this week at the first meeting of the new Scrutiny Board, which my colleague Councillor Golton chaired, they were told that work is still under way to

identify a way forward to improve children's and maternity services for Leeds. I accept that that is not the answer we want. We want some action, do we not?

I now have an update that was released at one o'clock today. Following the reappraisal work by independent consultants, it has become clear that the NHS organisations in Leeds need to carry out further work to develop a suitable solution which meets the needs of local people and delivers best value for now and in the future. This work will build on the Making Leeds Better Programme to invest in children's services and bring together major adult hospital services. It is expected this work will take four months to complete. I do believe that is sooner than we anticipated but it is very wordy and it is not action, is it?

This briefing is from Christ Outram and Maggie Boyle and they are saying they are happy to answer any further questions anyone may have. We welcome at this late stage so I could report this to you, but in summing up if Members have read some more of the Minutes, the Scrutiny Board did ask the Leeds Teaching Hospital Trust to come to a meeting to re-visit the protocols and we felt that this was very important and one of the recommendations was the establishment of a smaller working group of the Board to meet regularly with NHS bodies and adult social services to discuss forthcoming proposals.

Before I finished as the Chair of the Scrutiny Board, we had a run at it, really, a draft term of what we thought we would want to look at and they have listed several issues that were coming forward within the next year and then they put in another column what they felt was substantial, minimum change etc. Even then we found a few that we could dispute. I think that was just presenting a process to us as to whether we would agree with that.

I understand this Monday that the Scrutiny Board have agreed to set up that working group and I am sure that my colleagues taking over will keep these at the top of the agenda, both the Wharfedale Hospital and the children's hospital and we look forward to some more definite news as quickly as possible. Thank you, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: It is now 4.45, Councillor. At this point Council Procedure Rule 4 kicks in, so that is the end of discussion on Minutes. We move now to Councillor Harris to reply.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: What expectation, eh? Things can only get better. When one has high expectations things can only get worse. Councillor Taylor, those were points very well made. I can tell Council that I met with four or five of the Leeds MPs about four weeks ago and this was one of the issues that was high on the agenda, what we could do to try and resurrect the issue of the children's hospital and make sure that one was delivered as quickly as possible. The MPs have been written to and as far as I am aware they are all on board in trying to act in unison with the Council and the local Trust to make sure that we do get a children's hospital. It is important.

Councillor Leadley and the casino. I will only reiterate, I think, what Andrew Carter and I have said so many times. We agree it is somewhat perverse that we must rely upon the proceeds from a casino to help with regeneration of parts of our city, but that is what we have offered. It is hard to come by cash in other ways. Obviously we do now need to see exactly what Government is saying but there is concerns and debate. If you want a debate put down a White Paper and we will have the debate. That would be the appropriate thing to do and indeed it could be debated here and views of all colours could be expressed.

Some time ago Councillors Lowe and Wakefield talked about the Children's Services Plan. It is correct at Executive Board that when we saw some of the omissions from the report that we all wondered exactly why that was and indeed Andrew and I – if Keith wants to put it this way in support of Keith I do not mind putting it that way – did ask whether it was possible to delay voting on the plan until the missing statistics had been filled in and we were told no because there was a deadline submission and the problem was in order to get it to Executive Board it was the way Executive Board fell then, the submission which was the following Thursday to OFSTED – I believe that is correct – it had to come incomplete to Executive Board and apologies were given by officers and they said that they information was in the process of gathering.

It was at that point I wish to correct what may have been a misunderstanding. It was at that point that Councillor Brett offered to make sure that he read the document again between Executive Board and its submission to make sure that everything that was added after Executive Board was read by him personally. The suggestion that he was offering to read the report for the first time I think is mischievous, quite honestly. In any event, that was my understanding. In the end it is quite right that as opposition you should question and you should hold us to account for this but in the end the important thing is what will happen with the review when it takes place. That is the important issue and the verdict that is then given as to the state of our children's services, and I am sure there will be a debate to be had later in the year or early next year on that matter.

Councillor Harington. When Andrew responded to what Councillor Harington was saying he raised the issue of what was contained in leaflets and very usefully, actually, Judith Elliott raised the question of the New Leaf leisure centres. It is worth pointing out, Andrew, though he mentioned the leaflet in Gipton and Harehills that talks about WEASEL instead of EASEL, but since Judith Elliott has raised the question of the New Leaf sports centres, perhaps Councillor Harington also forgets that a leaflet went out in his name in which they described what was then the proposed new PFI sports centre in Gipton and Harehills as a private leisure club for rich commuters, not for the people of Gipton and Harehills. It is the content of leaflets like that and the misinformation that aggravates the public and creates misunderstanding.

That then brings me to the question of Wharfe Meadows. There are many issues here which need clarifying. Let me first of all deal with the meeting that I attended in Otley Civic Centre. That in fact was a private meeting, not a public meeting. I offered to attend a public meeting but I was asked instead that it be a private meeting and those attending were Members of Otley Town Council, two of the city Councillors, representatives from WAG, myself and the MP for Leeds North West.

I do not demur from the comments I made. I do not withdraw those comments but it was, nevertheless, a private meeting and it does not make discussions and the attempt to reach an agreement helpful when comments made in a private meeting are then publicly commented upon.

The question was asked who takes responsibility for this. I will tell you very clearly. If I am Leader of Council I take responsibility. In fact when I was Deputy Leader of Council I similarly took responsibility. Andrew and I jointly take responsibility for this administration. It is Cabinet responsibility. We all signed up to a course of action. If there is something that a Member of that Cabinet does that is so impossible and so unacceptable, then Andrew and I should sack that person. If we do not, then it follows that we take responsibility collectively for what is agreed. I take responsibility. That is what I said to the Wharfe Meadows Action Group, that I

took responsibility. In actually somewhat unusual circumstances, which again has not been made clear, John Procter was not going to be at Executive Board when the matter came on 13 June so somebody had to take the lead and it seemed appropriate, because of the controversy, that as Leader of Council I should do that and it was in that context clearly that I took responsibility and I still do.

Yes, it is correct that I said that I think overall the matter has not been particularly well handled and I did say – and this comes back to the question of leaflets – that one of the complicating issues was the way in which in the course of the election campaign leaflets were put out which clearly aggravated and scared the public of Otley. Certainly the Labour leaflets did but I will say quite openly, because I spoke to Andrew, I was not amused by the Conservative leaflet and what it said. Their leaflet was blaming the Otley Lib Dem City Councillors for the Wharfe Meadows situation. The election campaign raised the temperature, made things worse and all sorts of absurd things were put into the equation – six foot high palisade fencing. It was a nonsense and it is in that atmosphere and against that background that we have found ourselves in difficulty. It is correct.

The issue of the Coroner. It has been suggested that somebody was misled or that somebody in this Chamber misled other Members of Council. 'Misled' is a strong word and I think it is right that the process be scrutinised to understand how we have got to the point that we have reached, because things have been said - and I am not absolutely sure how they came about – which have not added to the clarity of the decision-making process. However, in the end we have had to make a decision based on health and safety assessments and clear legal advice – a difficult decision.

I want to finish off this point because it has been suggested that because the public do not like something we must automatically agree with them. I just want to refer to the responses to the questionnaires on both fencing the weir and fencing the children's play area. Actually there are a clear majority in Otley opposed to fencing the weir and fencing the children's play area and yet health and safety, it is here and we are all agreed that must be done. Do we then pander to what the public say? Maybe the public have been misinformed. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Harris. Could I call for a vote, please?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, I am taking the unusual step because of the Wharfe Meadows situation and the lack of a children's action plan under Council Procedure Rule 16(3)(b) to call for a recorded vote.

COUNCILLOR : Seconded.

THE LORD MAYOR: Council, could I just warn you whilst we are preparing for the vote, as soon as we break, which hopefully will be as close to five o'clock as possible so your tea and coffee is fresh, you only have 20 minutes - and I mean 20 minutes – and we will be back. Thank you.

(A recorded vote was taken)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Russell, can I ask how you wish to have your vote recorded?

COUNCILLOR RUSSELL: I wish to abstain.

THE LORD MAYOR: We have the vote, Council. Present are 94 Councillors. 'Yes' 49, abstain 4, 'No' 41, so I think that is CARRIED.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: Councillor Gettings, Lord Mayor, did not press the button.

THE LORD MAYOR: Unfortunately I have now declared the result.

Can I now at this point, Council, suspend the meeting so that you may have a tea break and remember, 20 minutes.

(The Council adjourned for a short time)

THE LORD MAYOR: Council, can I welcome you all back, or as many of you as have managed it in 20 minutes. I think you have been very good today. I came prepared to crack all the whips and if necessary, I was prepared to use my gavel. *This* is your Lord Mayor's gavel! I thought I might have to come out to talk Tyke, so if anybody is thinking it is a language I do not understand, I have got a dictionary.

I have to tell you the September Council, I understand, will not be happening. *(Applause)* Put it in your diaries, plan your overseas trips and then we will call you back! No! *(Laughter)* I have corrected all my mistakes.

ITEM 10 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – AWARD OF CONTRACTS FOR ADULT SOCIAL SERVICES

THE LORD MAYOR: On to White Paper Motion 10, Award of Contracts for Adult Social Services. Councillor Coupar.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am moving this White Paper in the hope that the administration will take my concerns seriously. Contracts, privatisation, social services and this coalition all seem to add up to a recipe for disaster that lets down service users and carers time and time again.

The privatisation of Homecare Services is a prime example of this system not working to the best interests of our citizens. After a protracted and detailed process where companies were put through their paces, or so we were told, we ended up with Care UK who, I might add, have failed miserably to meet service user standards. We can all remember the fiasco last year when they failed to meet the requirements of the contract and social services had to fill a considerable gap.

It should be remembered that this company failed to visit 60 service users in one weekend alone, even though they were under a contract to provide that service. There were also mounting complaints about this company at the time.

Colleagues, this administration is determined to privatise Homecare, even more than they have already done so and in fact have set aside in this year's budget to do just that. You have to ask yourself why, when their first stab at it was not exactly award winning now, was it?

Recently in South Leeds, where we have been particularly well blessed with your privatisation policy the Homecare contract was re-tendered due to the provider having a monopoly in this area. Councillor Harrand, your department held a closed tender which was only open to existing providers. Some of these providers by this time had received CSCI inspections and the reports did not make for good reading and a number of the providers were found to be failing. Why were you even

considering offering another contract to companies already under-performing so badly?

It demonstrates that quality of care is far from the top of your list when providing services to the people of Leeds. I understand that eventually the contract was awarded to Claymar, a company that is yet to be inspected by CSCI.

Another example that privatised care failing would be Summerfield House, which is due to close after the owner cannot be located. This is a residential home for people with learning difficulties. Social services are now in the position of having to find homes for 17 residents. Given the lack of residential care homes for adults who are not elderly, I would imagine this is going to be a difficult task. I seek assurance that the places found will be suitable for both need and age.

Lord Mayor, I would now like to turn to Terry Yorath House which, for those of you who do not know, is a residential care home for people with physical disabilities. Some of the residents are severely disabled and need 24 hour a day care. I was contacted by a concerned parent of a resident back in December who told me that a modernisation review of the home was to take place and that a meeting had been arranged for early January with social services.

Parents and carers have told me of some of the comments that were made at that meeting – comments that your officers, Peter, made. They include, “There is no longer a need for residential care in Leeds” and irrespective of what the outcome of this meeting is, the provision at Terry Yorath will change.

They also advocated independent living as the way forward. They were further told that there were no guarantees that the current residents at Terry Yorath would be given a place in any new facility.

I must state that the Labour Group are not opposed to independent living and in fact would welcome this improvement for many disabled people, but it should be a real choice of whether to live in an independent environment or residential care. We do not believe in a one-size fits all approach to care and would like people to be free to choose residential care if that is what they are happy with.

Terry Yorath House was inspected back in January this year by CSCI and was given a clean bill of health. The building is clean, modern and generally a pleasant place to be. Carers and some residents have voiced their concerns to me. They are happy with Terry Yorath House and the service it provides but are seriously worried about its future especially when a Council spokesperson is quoted in the Yorkshire Evening Post in February this year saying, “We want to improve the layout and the house will be remodelled, possibly demolished, depending upon our findings and what people want.”

The concerns raised by carers – and they are real concerns, not alleged concerns, as Councillor Harrand said in the YEP in May. On 18 April we heard first hand their concerns demonstrated during the deputation to Council. To call this very real distress and worry that your decisions, Peter, have caused “alleged”, shows a total lack of respect and disregard for the very people you say you are trying to help.

The fact that this statement came after the deputation to Council and before it was considered by the Executive Board, only serves to further the belief that the future of Terry Yorath House has already been decided and any attempt at consultation is a sham. It is an insult to the residents and parents concerned and you should apologise for this remark.

We then had a decision published on election day - and, colleagues, they dare talk about Labour spin or burying bad news - when we were all otherwise engaged – and I must say some of us more successfully than others. The decision was to extend the contract for Terry Yorath House for twelve months but it had a four month notice period included in one of the clauses which in effect meant that the home could close in four months' time, in spite of the fact that the consultation with service users and carers was still in draft form and the Council had yet to respond to the deputation.

This decision was called in due to this and a number of other concerns, one of which was the timing of the decision. The contract with the Disabilities Trust had expired on March 31 2007 and so they had been running the home without a contract since that time. When the decision was resubmitted, your department tried to excuse the lapse in contract by saying that there was no disruption in the standard of care at Terry Yorath House once the contract had expired. This is a reflection of the dedication of the staff at Terry Yorath House and not a reflection of good practice by social services, a department that appears to be spiralling out of control of the Executive Member.

You would expect Councillor Harrand to be aware of these failings and act on them to ensure that contracts are awarded and renewed in good time and with transparency, instead of which we get off the cuff remarks and accused of being political.

Councillor Harrand, you should be putting the people of Leeds at the heart of everything you do as the Executive Member for Social Services. How many other contracts have expired or are about to without a renewal in place, leaving the people most in need of care not knowing what the future holds for them?

You wanted to be in control of this Council. You are responsible for this department. You are accountable to the people of Leeds for your actions. The buck stops with you and I urge you to take that responsibility seriously. Lord Mayor, I move the White Paper. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: I would like to second the White Paper, Lord Mayor, and reserve the right to speak.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harrand to move an amendment.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: Lord Mayor, sometimes in social services before Council meetings we start to speculate about what the opposition might want to bring up and what is the topic of the day, what are people anxious about. We thought it might be the children's hospital and we will talk about that again in a minute. We thought it might be the miserable spending allowance we get from the Government for social care. We did not think there was much chance of that. We seriously thought you might want to talk about the 15,000 people in this city who cannot find a dentist. Pretty critical stuff. We were completely wrong, weren't we?

Instead we have a White Paper on the date a contract was signed. Members will understand the contract was signed later than it should have been. Quite right but there was not a moment's gap in service, there was not a single meal missed, there was not an hour of homecare lost. No problems to the service users and, I have to confess, this has happened before.

The Deaf and Blind Centre at Centenary House is one of the largest suppliers of services to social care and operated for 20 years without a contract of any sort until we started asking questions about it. We could give you a list of organisations

which have been supplying services to social services since the 1980s who never had a contract. Absolutely right, the contracts had never been renewed on time because there was not a contract to renew.

Then the Paper refers to distress. The real distress started when Labour Party Members started to turn up at the site and started spreading distress. There is no evidence of anybody at Terry Yorath House expressing any concerns until they heard from the Labour Party saying, "You ought to be distressed." This was Labour-induced distress. They have bags of the distress at the office on the fourth floor. They go distributing it round to people saying, "You want some of this, you are distressed." The people at Terry Yorath House knew nothing about the contract being late, it did not affect their lives, it never was going to affect their lives. It was feeding off a small group who do not want change at Terry Yorath House – and I will say that quite clearly. Most people at Terry Yorath House do want change. We have got the numbers, we have got the names. There are nine of them and we can go through it if you like but that is not appropriate for this afternoon. It is a small group of – if I say politically motivated, that is not true any more – a small group of people who do not want change and Mrs Greenwood is one of them and she is probably right on behalf of her own son but the rest of the people there are quite prepared to discuss it with us.

This going around spreading distress over West Yorkshire is not the first time this has happened. Another Labour Party politician turned up at Osmanthorpe Resource Centre in March, stood in the middle of the room and told the service users there that the place would be closing in two years and all the staff would be losing their jobs. He was the Labour Party candidate at the May elections. One hundred per cent totally untrue.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Name him.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: What was his name? He stood for Morley Council. What was his name? We will remember it. He came bottom of the poll at Morley Town Council. Tim McSharry, yes. Tim McSharry turned up at Osmanthorpe Resource Centre which, as you know, is used by people with learning difficulties, stood in the middle of the room and said, "This place is closing in two years, you will all be out, you will all be losing your jobs." Distress sprayed around the place and we thank Stuart Simmons...

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: I hope you have got evidence to back up that statement.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: We certainly have. We have written to him, he has not objected, we have had meetings with him. The staff at Osmanthorpe who brought this to my attention have done a wonderful job in placating people about that sort of spreading of distress.

It is dead easy in opposition to prophesy the end of the world. A contract was signed late at Terry Yorath House – absolutely right – but of all the things we do in social care services to have a White Paper on this seems odd.

Brenda referred earlier to the press release this morning about the children's hospital. If you read it – and I am sure you can read it – the whole thing is permeated by the consultants, McKinseys, who have looked at this for the last four months, shaking their head. It cannot be done, it is a big problem. Go and read it. It is the most important thing facing health service and social care in this city and it is not going to happen. That is not anything that social services in Leeds is responsible for but it is what we ought to be debating in this Chamber today.

Our amendment says that Terry Yorath House provides a good service. We want to know if it could be better. That is all we are doing. We are asking the question. What is happening now is like some of those football managers who complain about the referee's decision before the game has kicked off. Nothing will happen to the residents of Terry Yorath House; they will tell us what they want and we will do what they tell us they want individually. It is not a big unit of nine or ten people. There are nine individual sets of circumstances. We will react to every one. I move the amendment, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Before I call Councillor Kendall, could I ask Councillors if they wish to have private discussions would they leave the Chamber and do it? Let us get on with the business, please, and concentrate on it. Councillor Kendall.

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

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, following the Overview and Scrutiny call in last month I had a briefing from a senior social services officer about Terry Yorath House yesterday evening and I believe that Councillor Grahame has had one similar. What I was told yesterday did seem to be at odds with what other senior social services officers had said at Overview and Scrutiny five week ago. It may be that they did not know the answers to questions which were asked and did not like to admit it; it may be that yesterday I was told what the department thought I would want to hear; or it may be that policy on Terry Yorath House has changed since the call in.

What seems to be the real cause of disquiet is that Terry Yorath House might be pressed by social services into bringing in an independent living regime which some of its severely disabled residents would not be able to cope with. At Overview and Scrutiny one of the officers did say that the aim was to bring in independent living so that resident could decide who passed through their own front doors and he was unable to answer when I asked what would happen to those who were not competent to make such a decision. Similar concerns do seem to lay at the heart of the controversy and not a muddle over contracts. The muddle over contracts is really a complete red herring.

Councillor Harrand's amendment does try to deal with the matter at hand, though it could be interpreted to mean a number of things. It certainly wants watching closely by Councillor Harrand and by Scrutiny to make sure that the agendas of the social services department do not take precedence over the needs of their clients. Thank you, my Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR LANCASTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. It is always interesting when we have these debates in Council because the majority of the work to resolve issues are usually done quite amicably by all Members of different parties and certainly I have quite enjoyed working with Councillor Coupar in a working group looking at homecare issues and other issues and we worked very well together on the Scrutiny Board.

The reason I am referring to that is because some of the voluntary sector did approach the Scrutiny Board about the time it was taking for them to re-tender. Sometimes not all the problems are not always apparent until you look at it. The local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure best value is being obtained for all services. Normal practice for testing best value where an external service provider already delivers a service is through open competition. Fair enough and obviously the Council has a procurement system.

What I have gone on about and what people have accepted, I understand, is the fact that we probably need a different procurement policy for issues such as this and that is something that I understand the department have made a commitment to go away and come back in September. There is an acknowledgement between departments and procurement to look at how we can adapt this and once that problem was raised, it was resolved that the re-tendering process has been extended and I believe that they have a three year contract and they can extend that for five years, so that is what they have done. They have extended it another year to give them time to revisit that.

So sometimes we do have problems and I am sure we can all get together and work out to improve the system, but that is something we will always do. We should never, ever be satisfied – we are always trying to make things better. Now, as I go on to be the Lead Member for Social Services, it is something that I will be working with Councillor Harrand and social services and officers to always improve facilities and services for our most vulnerable people. I would always expect that all our Members in here want to do that and work together. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think actually Brenda has touched upon a very important issue and that is the issue of contract culture, certainly as well as the issues that Councillor Coupar addressed. In our ward I can see that because of that contract culture (a) you introduced an element of uncertainty and, (b) were beginning to disconnect the service from the community because the same people that used to do it for public service and know the community and live in the community are now being removed as we bring in new contractors and I think that has started to add to the stress of people's lives. I would welcome Councillor Lancaster's suggestion to look at that and I have already made that point to the new Director of Adult Services. It is that very contract culture that I think has started to introduce uncertainty at the Terry Yorath House.

I have been up and I think Councillor Lobley you were due up as well only recently. What I saw were the very things that Councillor Coupar said. I saw actually a better conditioned home than I expected. I met people and, as Peter said, there are only ten people, a couple of places for respite. Some people have been there eight years, some people have been there eleven years, a couple of people have been there a couple of years and I met their parents and carers.

I plead to people to view this through the minds of the carers. We all know, anybody who has got caring duties is deeply committed about their sons or daughters and about the care. I think that is understandable. When people go up and talk about change, it is understandable – very understandable – that they should start to worry, even if there is nothing to worry about. When there was talk of modernisation in December, there was a consultation process starting in January.

I think it is a duty of an elected Member – and I have a lot of time for Peter Harrand except on this issue because I think he has been quite insulting to the carers and parents. *(Interruption)* I do. By and large I think you are genuinely committed to your portfolio but these people wanted reassurance.

In January the consultation process was with a group called the Leeds Centre for Integrated Living who Baroness Chapman is chair of. Already those carers could see there was an agenda to push independent living towards their way. That is what they said to me, that they would have preferred a more neutral body to take part. I have a lot of time for Nicky Chapman as well, I think she has done some fantastic work on encouraging independent living.

In February we saw the comment, the 27th, by a senior officer – I will not name him – 27th February in the Evening Post saying, as you said, Councillor Coupar, this place could be demolished. At the same time on 27th February we read Councillor Baroness Chapman say to people, “Go for independent living.” That is one concern and created anxiety. In March, as Peter said, the Disability Trust Association that provide the services and have the building lease, did not have their contract renewed and as you said, Peter, it was not until on election day that that contract was renewed. That is six weeks. Now can you understand why people are getting concerned and it happens on election day? There again, that was the cause for it.

In April the consultation period which finished was deferred to after the election. Now you are a parent and you have witnessed and experienced these. Can you understand why they start to get worried about it? When they came up to 18th April they invited elected Members here and I have to say only Debbie Coupar – I blame myself only I went quite recently. I think, Peter, I do not understand why you have not been up because I think that the job of an elected Member is to actually reassure these carers, these parents, that their voice will be heard. That is the duty of an elected member. It did not happen. I can understand why they are still anxious and I think it is deeply insulting to those people to say that somehow they have been politically manipulated by a Labour Party and they have not got genuine concerns themselves.

I encourage you, Peter, to go up there, listen to them, reassure them and tell them because their perception is this – and the majority of them – that this Council has a pre-determined agenda to close them. Whether it is true or not, that is not material. Our job is to reassure them. Our job is to say to them, “Here is the evidence that your voice, your views, your future is going to be looked after by this Council” and it has not been done, Lord Mayor. I move the amendment. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR GRAHAME: Lord Mayor, regarding the White Paper, I agree with Councillor Wakefield and Councillor Leadley but also the comment I made was on reading that report on describing Yorath House you would not think that was the same building when you go and visit it and see what it is like.

I would just like to comment on Centaur House, Peter, because in the Transforming Services Board, which was later abolished, it came there from Centaury House because there were proposals to cut the funding from the Council. Councillor Elliott will remember, Councillor Taylor. Centenary House, sorry. Centaur is the one opposite. We went to visit because if that funding had have been cut they would have had to close and there is exactly the same anxieties as what has happened at Yorath House. I have got the papers where they thanked us for saving and the Minutes where they attended the Board meetings. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: I believe Councillor Dowson wishes to exercise the right to speak.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: Please, yes. I think it is really interesting the way this debate has actually turned because if you actually read the White Paper it talks about contracts and it talks about timing, it talks about transparent. It does not mention Terry Yorath House at all.

What I would like to do is, I would like to broaden the debate into the contracts side of things because there is more than just Terry Yorath House that are actually suffering. I have got some statistics actually here. In 1998 12,600 people received Homecare. That figure is now 4,631. That is a cut. In the last two years

1,034 people have had their services completely cut and 704 had their reduced. That is a cut as well. This is a direct contradiction to the demographic estimates and the over 65 population of Leeds is projected to rise to 114,000 plus by 2012.

It is not the case that elected Members should lead officers. The officers are there to advise us and to implement the decisions that this Council actually makes. Elected Members are there to set priorities and to set the budgets for each department, so a lot actually rides on what we do in this Chamber and what is done in the Executive Board.

We will always argue for more money but it is up to you now to decide where those resources go. Any shortfalls are down to your priorities and down to your choices. We are all aware that social services are relying more and more on the voluntary sector and just look at the way you treated those organisations and thousands of Leeds citizens who week on week and year on year volunteer, saving this Council thousands of pounds.

In the 2007 budget there was only a 2% increase in grants to the voluntary sector organisations when inflation was actually running at 3%. Is that not a cut? Even if contracts for funding were renewed on time, voluntary groups would have suffered that cut in funding in real terms.

The story was the same in 2006 when voluntary organisations again received 2% but this was only an inflationary uplift. In February 2006 inflation was running at 2% so in real terms that was not any increase at all.

I am going to give you a quote now:

"Every voluntary organisation receiving grant aid from us will get a 2% increase this year and if anybody wants proof positive of our commitment to social justice, helping people to help themselves, Narrowing the Gap, this is it."

Any guesses who said that? Admit it, it was actually Councillor Harris in the Budget Meeting 2006.

I am going to give you an example so judge for yourselves if this is commitment and this is social justice, and I will refer you to an investigation into concerns outlined by VOLITION. VOLITION, for those of you who do not know, is an organisation who are the voice of mental health in the voluntary sector in the field of social care. In January this year they wrote to the Scrutiny Board to actually voice their concerns. In March a report came back to the Health and Social Care working group and it actually made shocking reading. I am new to this portfolio and I read it and I was horrified. In 2003 contracts were negotiated with the providers and these contracts were designed to last until March 2006, which is a three year funding stream and I am sure we will all recognise that that is actually a good idea for voluntary groups because they do know where their funding is coming from and they can plan ahead.

We will zip forward to June 2006, which is three months after the end of that commitment and the providers were told after much negotiation that the Council was going to offer the contracts through open competition, which is the procurement process that Brenda was talking about. This is three months after the end of their contracts.

These social service providers cover over 20 vital area – day care, support, advocacy, crisis, counselling – there is a whole list here. These involve dozens of voluntary sector providers.

In August 2006 the Executive Board considered a report...

THE LORD MAYOR: Would you finish the next sentence?

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: I am sorry. I have got heaps to say but I will just finish on the last sentence. (*Interruption*) This outlines the disarray contracting and commissioning is in. You expect these organisations to provide the essential services and care when they do not know where their next penny is coming from. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor. Council, I asked Councillor Dowson to finish the next sentence and I believe Councillor Dowson did just that. Could I call upon Councillor Coupar now? Councillor Coupar, would you wish to sum up?

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Yes, thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to first thank my colleagues for their comments and Councillor Dowson is quite right to point out that the voluntary sector are also suffering at the hands of this administration's inability to get things right.

Councillor Wakefield has mentioned the people at the heart of this debate and that they are the ones who suffer most because of your decisions. You may well put your head in your hands, Peter. Councillor Leadley mentioned the Scrutiny process and I thank you for your support on that, Tom, about the call in decision.

Councillor Lancaster, I was pleased to hear you say that we have worked well in the past together through the Scrutiny process and otherwise and I hope that we will continue to do so in the future.

Councillor Harrand, your amendment is ignoring the serious issues I and others have raised during this debate.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: I can hardly write the amendment before I hear the debate.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: It does say in the White Paper about the contract process and the transparency, Peter. If you do not understand that then perhaps you need to go and do a bit more training yourself.

If I might start again, your amendment ignores the serious issues I and others have raised during this debate. What about the contract renewal process or the awarding of contracts? It does not reflect those points at all.

There is a problem with the way contracts are either given out or negotiated for renewal, as I mentioned earlier. The point of the White Paper is to bring those issues to light so that you can act on them, although I am sure you are already aware of them, or you should be.

For instance, Claymar. I have been looking into the Council's contract with Claymar, the company awarded the 200 hours South Leeds contract for Homecare. I have been trying to find out which of the three registered Claymar branches we have a contract with – something you would think would be relatively straightforward but something which has only prompted more questions. The Claymar based in Leeds

has not yet been inspected by CSCI and it only registered with them in December 2006. As I am sure Members are aware, it is a criminal offence, I believe, for the company to provide a Homecare service unless they are registered with CSCI.

I have tried to find out which Claymar our April 2006 contract is with and the information is very sketchy, to say the least, but the answers I have been given have only served to increase my concerns. I hope my worries will prove to be unfounded – and I seriously do – but at the very least this demonstrates the complete lack of transparency with regards to contracts. If I cannot find out about it, how the hell do you expect the people out there to find out about it?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: They are a lot brighter than you!

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: I will just ignore that and give it the contempt it deserves, Councillor Carter.

Councillor Harrand, you are on record saying that the Breese was not going to close when in fact a week after that statement you announced its closure. Tell me why these people should believe you this time?

It would be almost laughable if it was not so serious a subject to suggest this group would use these people as a political football. I suggest you go and speak to them to ask if they see it that way. The fact that you have not met with them or responded to their requests suggests you do not have a clue about what they want and let me inform you that seven of the residents – and there are ten – have contacted me and told me their concerns, so I would like to know where your nine come from.

I would not have thought that you needed a lesson in democracy, Peter. We are the opposition. It is our job to hold you to account for your actions and decisions in this chamber and while ever we are in opposition we will continue to do so.

Councillor Harrand, I ask you to remember that the Government White Paper you are always so keen on quoting is titled, “Our Care, Our Say.” The Government obviously recognises that service users know best what is needed. All I ask is that you give them the same courtesy.

This is your third year of office now and it is about time you took your responsibility for what is happening out there to the people of this city seriously. If you cannot do the job of administration after that amount of time, step aside – we will show you how it is done properly. I move the White Paper, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I call for the vote first on the amendment in the name of Peter Harrand. *(Call for recorded vote)* Is that seconded? Seconded by Councillor Taggart.

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: I am a bit concerned about the way the debate has developed. I would like to declare that my wife is Chair of Becklin Day Centre and if that the debate has moved in a direction that I did not expect it to.

THE LORD MAYOR: Accepted, Councillor Illingworth, thank you.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: I am a VOLITION Director. I just thought you should know.

(Recorded vote taken on the amendment)

THE LORD MAYOR: The figures - present 93, 'Yes' 51, abstain 2, 'No' 40, so I think that becomes the substantive motion.

That being the substantive motion, therefore show of hands. All those in favour? Those against? I think that is CARRIED.

ITEM 11 - WHITE PAPER MOTION – REDUCTION IN PACKAGING

THE LORD MAYOR: We move on to Item 11, White Paper Motion – Reduction in Packaging. I call upon Councillor Anne Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Lord Mayor, I think most of you here will remember the days before the plastic revolution. I remember as a child my mother always taking a shopping bag with her when she went shopping. In those days the only shop on the local parade that provided a carrier bag was the butcher's and that was made of brown paper with string handles which cut into your hand. There were no supermarkets and packaging was minimal.

When I was a teenager in the 1970s the throwaway society started. Plastic was the 'in' thing. Plastic bottles were lighter to carry than glass so they became more popular and so it went on. Now supermarkets have free plastic bags for you to put your purchases in, many of them putting the goods in their plastic bags for you.

Recently when buying a bottle of shampoo from Superdrug, the assistant put it in a small plastic bag, which I gave her back. A lot of fruit and vegetables sold in supermarkets have plastic packaging - in some cases I believe to encourage you to buy more. For example, eight tomatoes on a plastic tray covered in plastic; mushrooms in a plastic container covered in plastic – though why a lettuce or a cucumber has to be covered in plastic is beyond me.

If you go to some fruit and vegetable shops – and I would include in this Leeds Market (a very good place to go) – the only packaging of tomatoes and mushrooms will be the bag that they put them in and in some cases – and this includes the market – it is usually a paper bag.

I have here, just to bring a little bit of interest into this – just if you are not taking any notice...

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: I wondered where my Father's Day present had gone!

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: A Father's Day present for my husband. A size 16 white shirt. (*Produced*) As you can see, plastic packaging here and inside it it has plastic round the collar, plastic fasteners and also cardboard at the back. Why, I wonder, is it the case that that has that, yet invariably ladies blouses do not have packaging? You just buy them off the hanger.

Just while you are all still interested in that, ladies knickers! (*Produced*) (*Laughter*) The men are all going to waken up at this point, I think. This was actually a pack of five and it was only £4 as well, so of course people are going to buy them, aren't they? I must say I do not usually buy them in this packaging but it is just to demonstrate. No, they are not thongs, no! There we are. Calm down now, do not get too excited. As I said, I think you can see why at £4 for five I can imagine them selling a lot of those.

It is too easy to buy packaged items and then throw the packaging away and most people do this and encourage their children to do this without batting an eyelid. In most cases the plastic used is unrecyclable, not being the 1 PETE or the 2 HDPE or the 4 LDPE which we can put in the green bin.

If each child in the country received five of the most popular games this Christmas, enough packaging will be produced to tower above the largest skyscraper in the UK, Canary Wharfe, a staggering 428 times. If all 11.6m children in the UK had just one plastic bag each to carry their toys in, the petrochemicals in the bags would produce enough fuel to drive a car 7,929 miles. The 2003 Packaging Essential Requirements Regulations is supposed to deal with unnecessary wrapping but invariably people do not report cases, and when they do - like a case recently in Westminster – the head of Trading Standards there stated that it could be argued that the packaging is necessary for “consumer acceptance.” Yes, I was surprised as well, but there we go. So, the matter went no further.

We Greens believe in the four Rs – reduce, reuse, repair, and recycle as a last resort. Therefore, I urge you to support this White Paper to prevent much of the packaging in the first place. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR RUSSELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Firstly may I thank people for their warm congratulations earlier on on the announcement of my engagement.

With regard to the motion, I think we can all agree today that we are surrounded by masses of packaging on nearly everything that we buy. While some of this is justified and, indeed, a requirement due to issues of health and safety, much of it is nothing more than convenience to us, the manufacturers and the retailers. I am a young man – the youngest Councillor in this Chamber, I believe – yet I still remember being able to go to one of many local greengrocers, for example, to buy your vegetables and you could buy all this loose and not bother with plastic bags and such to package them.

These kinds of places, unfortunately, are becoming incredibly hard to find. I was in the supermarket the other day looking for some vegetables and it was appalling how much of it these days is excessively packaged, as Councillor Blackburn mentioned with plastic trays and then plastic packaging on top. I try where possible to buy it loose and avoid getting a plastic bag but sadly it is very difficult on occasion.

We need in the long term to switch to more sustainable ways of packaging food but I do appreciate once again that it is in a lot of cases impossible because of the situation with how they are supplied to us as goods.

There are plenty of alternatives to using plastic bags to put, for example, all your carrots and your mushrooms in. Paper bags are one option - this comes from a renewable source and you can also get some see-through plastic-type bags which are made out of renewable materials – corn starch, I believe being one such material.

I would give Government and industry and particularly some of the supermarkets their due, they are making some efforts in reducing the amount of packaging on products but sadly it does not go far enough. Much of the problem does seem to lie with the manufacturers and their suppliers who see no reason to change the status quo. This is where Government needs to lead more and bring in improved legislation to make manufacturers and retailers use less packaging. Where they do again it must come from renewable sources where it is technically feasible.

With the problems we are facing with regards to the disposal of waste in this country, this is a vital part of the solution in reducing the size of the waste stream. Recycling is all well and good but it should always be a last resort. Let us not create the waste in the first place, I say.

I hope we can all pull together on this and ask the Government to make industry do more so that this country can do what it does best and lead by example so that not only we make changes but other countries follow our lead. It is my sincere pleasure to second this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ogilvie to move an amendment.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. In speaking to the amendment in my name on behalf of the Labour Group, you will be pleased to hear I have not brought any underpants or any shirts!

With around 10m tonnes of packaging waste produced in the UK each year, most of which ends up in landfill sites, it is clearly unsustainable and must be addressed and whilst it is the case that a number of organisations and companies are starting to take the issue seriously – Marks & Spencer's, for example, are spending £200m to make all their stores carbon neutral and the Co-op have introduced 100% degradable plastic bags – a lot more needs to be done and we therefore support the call for the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State on this issue.

The reason, however, that we have put down an amendment is that we believe that if we are going to be taken seriously on this issue we have to demonstrate that we as a Council are doing all we can to encourage recycling in this city. One of the things that we could be doing is recycling as many plastics as possible. Currently Leeds City Council only recycles certain types of plastics. Plastics such as yoghurt pots, margarine tubs and food trays cannot at the moment be recycled and as one of the largest Local Authorities in the country, we should be taking a positive lead on this issue and looking for alternative ways to reuse and recycle these products.

Also with hundreds of Council buildings and over 33,000 employees, are we really doing all we can to reduce waste and increase recycling as an organisation? I would suggest not. Just as important, we need to dramatically increase recycling amongst our residents. I know many Members will have communities within their Wards that, unless they have a car and are able to drive to one of the waste disposal sites, do not have access to recycling facilities. I give the example of Cottingley in my own Ward which, because of the way it is designed, does not even have black bins let alone green bins and the current black bin system is at best inadequate and at worst a complete shambles.

Residents here and in other communities, as I am sure are many Members across the Chamber, are crying out for recycling facilities but officers, I am afraid, are saying that there is nothing that can be done and that is simply not acceptable in this day and age.

If we are serious about tackling recycling the Council needs to start thinking out of the box and allow local recycling solutions in places like Cottingley and the many other communities currently without facilities. We need to dramatically increase kerbside collection services, particularly foodstuffs and other household organic matter, and properly resourced community engagement to get residents and community groups to actively engage in recycling. That surely is one of the most powerful tools, if you can get neighbours talking to neighbours and community

organisations talking to community organisations, that is a really good way of increasing recycling rates.

Lord Mayor, we are calling on suppliers and manufacturers to get serious on these issues and if we are to be taken seriously we need to show that we are being proactive here in Leeds, so let us be bold and demonstrate that we are serious too. I move our amendment. *(Applause)*

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

COUNCILLOR BEVERLEY: Lord Mayor, I came here today prepared very briefly to speak in support of the Green Party, something I have done before. Maybe that is why they have moved over here to come and sit with me, I do not know. *(Laughter)*

However, coming here today and listening to the amendment I will actually be voting for the amendment. At the last count in Leeds we recycled about 22% of our total waste, which is better than some places but however you look at it, it is not as good as we want it to be – it is certainly not where we want to be right now.

Clearly we do have a problem dealing with our waste. Local Authorities all throughout the entire country are having problems and Leeds clearly is no exception to that and as has already been discussed before, even better than recycling all your waste is actually not producing the waste in the first place. There is nothing else I wish to say on that other than that I supported this motion but I also support the Labour amendment. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I do not intend to speak for too long. I do not think that there is anybody in the Chamber who thinks that excessive packaging is not both wasteful and unnecessary.

I am going to come first to Councillor Ogilvie. I understand he is going to sit on the Leaders' Waste Management Group and I look forward to seeing him at that venue.

We are not actually going to support the amendment that you have put down and I would just like to tell Council why not; because I do not actually think it adds to the thrust of the motion. The thrust of the motion is about reducing the waste stream and recycling is taking action on matter that has already entered the waste stream, so it does not reduce. In fact, it is not my argument but there are arguments that if you recycled it then it would be even less incentive for manufacturers to reduce it, so we will not be supporting that.

That is not to say that we do not take recycling seriously and I welcome certainly some of Adam's comments. He did say, "Let us be bold", so before I move away from it I will say that quite fortuitously, I am sure, I got an e-mail today from Leeds Friends of the Earth welcoming the figures which see Leeds placed at the top of the big city recycling league, so we do take recycling seriously in this city. *(Applause)*

Of course, domestic waste only counts for something like 9% of the total waste and we do spend a lot of time talking about domestic waste and not a great deal of time talking about commercial waste which is far, far in excess of that.

Adam called upon us to be bold in the Council offices and I can tell you that recycling across civic buildings currently stands at 26%, which is slightly higher than

we achieve in the community. It is predicted to be 30% by the end of the year and we are aiming for a 50% recycling rate in our civic buildings by 2010, so to answer your question, Adam, are we being bold, I think officers tell me that there are only two councils in the country who have set a target on this and Leeds is one of them, so I will leave you to decide whether we are being serious about it.

Moving on then to some other things that we are doing in the Council. We are currently looking at producing a green purchasing guide for the Council and excessive packaging will be part of that. It is a draft and I am sure it will come out in due course.

In its recent strategy update the Government looked to reducing the amount of household waste – not reused, recycled or composted. That target can be achieved through recycling and composting and we are all keen to do that, but it would not lead to an overall reduction in waste and again that is one of the reasons why I really think that your amendment takes us away from trying to look at the reduction strategy rather than the recycling one. Actually a straightforward target on overall waste prevention would be more effective than increasing recycling.

The Government really should put regulatory and financial pressure on manufacturers and retailers much as it does on local Councils. We hear a lot of regulations for us but not a great deal for manufacturers and retailers, so I really do think that it is about time that the Government makes a move in that direction. We could also look to producer responsibility being placed on more products. At the moment with the new electrical regulations there is a responsibility on manufacturers and retailers for the cost of recycling. Again I think we need to up that.

The Government has really failed to place the same expectation on producers and retailers as it has put on Councils, so I do think it is time that there was a little bit more legislation in that away from what at the moment is a largely voluntaristic approach to that sector. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The danger of speaking towards the end of a debate is that much of what I wanted to say has already been said. I saw a very worrying statistic a few months back that over 90% - and it is probably a bit higher than that even – of all plastics ever made are still in existence. They do not biodegrade, they just stay there for ever. That is very worrying when you consider that plastics make up a considerable amount of the packaging that we use in today's society.

Going on to what Councillor Russell was saying about hard to find greengrocers these days, fortunately in my Ward of Otley and Yeadon there are some very good greengrocers in both Otley and Yeadon – small local businesses – and I would urge people to support them wherever possible because you can still go in there and buy your fruit and vegetables and taken them out in brown paper bags, which are not brilliant but better than the plastic and better than having to buy six tomatoes, you can go in and buy two, so for individual meal preparations it is good.

Councillor Smith mentioned about the draft Green Purchasing guide that is currently being drawn up and whilst it is only a draft guide, at the heart of it is the principle that we prefer the purchase of recyclable and environmentally friendly products wherever they perform satisfactorily. I think that is important, that whilst we do petition the Government to put in more legislation, we act locally as well and do whatever we can within our power so that when we purchase goods from suppliers we do so with the minimum of packaging.

Just for an example, when we buy paper in and it comes delivered on a pallet, what happens to that pallet? We need to make sure that that pallet is reused wherever possible and not discarded and burned or whatever. We should be looking at our suppliers to take that back away and then reuse that the next time they deliver to us.

A lot of it is down to education and we need to make sure that we are addressing it locally as well as calling on the Government nationally.

As regards the amendment, we are actually doing something in Leeds. There has been a trial in four offices so far and actually our Group Office has been one and that has helped to increase the amount of recycling within the office. The pilot scheme aimed to reduce the waste produced by the staff has been conducted over recent months and we are looking hopefully to roll that out now because it has been a very successful trial. We are already doing it with the improve and recycling in civic buildings and hoping now that the trial has been conducted that can move out and so that is why I am not going to support the amendment but support the original because I think it is a very well thought out White Paper. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: I will try not to be long. They are handwritten notes so it may take some deciphering unless there is a chemist or perhaps Councillor Kirkland in his doctor's guise could help me read them if I get stuck.

We have heard comments regarding the throw-away society. The amount of packaging on items has now reached a ridiculous amount. Supermarkets use large amounts of packaging in order to serve their own needs rather than the needs of customers. Small independent retailers, as has already been touched upon, use less packaging and the product they sell is arguably fresher than the stuff you can get in supermarkets.

I think by visiting our local town and district centres to shop rather than going to out of town centres and supermarkets, we can actually do a number of things with regard to recycling and the environment. We can reduce carbon emissions if we leave our car at home and if we actually walk. We can help the small independent traders in our own towns to get their businesses to flourish. We do not use as much packaging by sourcing products locally. For instance you will know that Morley is in the Rhubarb Triangle, as I am sure you are all aware. It is! The rhubarb in Morley, as far as I am aware, is delivered in cardboard boxes. Rather than being flown in from China, it simply comes from the Rhubarb Triangle just up the road. If we source product locally we can save on packaging and, as I say, carbon emissions.

Most of the modern packaging used is simply not necessary and is used to enhance the look of products. Anne has produced that rather nice £15 shirt from Marks & Spencer's which has a number of bits and bats with it simply for what they call in the fashion industry hanger appeal. It serves no real purpose and it is there to help with merchandising in the store.

Having said all that I am sure Councillor Blackburn will be highly relieved to know that I am going to support your White Paper. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Years ago – it must have been about 1990 or 1991 – I was a young whippersnapper in those days and I was Chair of the Environment Committee and I accepted an engagement to speak with Claire Nash. Claire had appeared long after that when she was a Councillor, of course, but at that time she was a sort of whippersnapper in the Green Party in Leeds and a rising star, no question about it, in the Leeds Green Party.

The way the leaflets were giving out for the meeting was an invite to a political punch-up at the Playhouse. It was part of Environment Week and I accepted the engagement and went along. I think Claire and I surprised everybody because on just about everything we said...

COUNCILLOR : What were you doing? *(Laughter)*

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Please, if we start talking about my private life, Lord Mayor, we will be here a long time! We agreed on just about everything we gave our speeches on and then there was a question and answer session and we agreed a great deal. I think both of us were surprised at how close somebody in the Labour Party could be to somebody in the Green Party on environmental issues. Remember in 1990/91 the environment was not the red hot issue that everybody now talks about. David Cameron was still a twinkle in his mother's eye probably and had not even been invented and we have moved a long way since then on environmental issues.

You only have to read yesterday's front page of the Independent – typical of lots of newspapers – another paper published by a leading world scientist telling us there is a crisis in the way the climate is going and the world is going and there is increasing unanimity about all of these kind of issues.

I think it is fairly easy in these circumstances for parties to come together, overcome their political differences and support one another in White Paper Motions at Leeds City Council.

There has been quite a lot of talk about supermarkets but some of them, I think, as they have been criticised – and of course they can be – some of them really do deserve to be praised. For example, the Co-op have introduced 100% degradable plastic bags, packaging and they also offer a bag recycling facility. I make sure now I have got my pockets full of plastic bags because – sad, I know. I know Denise has got this image of Neil Taggart walking round Bramley with his pockets filled with plastic bags but it is true. Also, Aldi, Lidl and Netto all charge for carrier bag usage in their stores and actively encourage reuse of carrier bags.

Many large manufacturers, including Nestle, Coca Cola, Mars, Tesco, Sainsbury's, Asda and Boots, have all agreed to reduce their packaging on a large range of everyday products. All of this must be good news for everybody everywhere, it seems to me. Marks & Spencer's – founded in Leeds, of course – have gone even further and have announced plans to spend £200m implementing a plan to make all their supermarkets carbon neutral and aim to send no waste to landfill at all by 2012. Well done, Marks & Spencer's, I say. They are also reducing the use of packaging by 25% and becoming fully biodegradable by using corn starch-derived plastic. All of that is good news.

The question is, why should we just be asking the Government to do things? People in the wider community, business, are already doing it. There is a role here for the city Council to show leadership. We are the elected tribunes of the people. We are the only people – it is true. There are 99 of us, different parties, elected by the people. The people can sack us and the people can put us in power and we are the only group of almost 100 people with a position of potential leadership and that is what we want from this Council, is it not? That is what we want. We should be a beacon working with all the industries, all the employers including those small retailers, many of whom are having a really difficult time struggling but we should be giving them advice. Steve Smith should be a star! He should be a household name! Everybody should know him. He is sheltering under the bushel created by John

Procter! John Procter is in charge of recreation and if you can find bushels anywhere it will be in the Parks Department!

John Procter gave the game away earlier on. He said it was not his job to change officers' recommendations or reports. How could he possibly do that? I am sorry, if you are in politics and you have got power it is there to make a difference and sometimes you can improve on what officers have done and sometimes you can disagree. I bet Margaret Thatcher never ever said, John, when she was Prime Minister, "Oh I am sorry, civil servant, I do not agree with it but we will have to do it because you say so." Did she hell! (*Laughter*) I did not like Margaret Thatcher or what she did but she knew about leadership and achieving what she wanted.

This Council should be showing leadership. We should be working with all the retailers, we should be working to recycle. We also should be working to reduce the amount of stuff that even needs to be recycled in the first place, but it is about working in partnership and it is about seizing that leadership role. If you do not want the leadership role, we are quite willing to take it from you, by the way, whether it is now or next May.

Finally, I will say this. At least two Liberal Democrats who no doubt in their election leaflets said how much they care about the environment – by the way, hardly any of them mentioned they were in the same political bed as the Tories, I notice but that is another subject. Who could possibly disagree with these words...

THE LORD MAYOR: Finish your next sentence, Councillor.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: "...and therefore urge the Council to do its utmost to increase recycling in our city and all municipal building." Who could possibly disagree with this? I urge all Councillors to support the amendment. Thank you very much.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, I simply welcome Councillor Taggart to the Thatcher fan club. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I call upon Councillor Anne Blackburn to sum up?

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I must say that I have taken into account what Councillor Ogilvie says and I can understand him wanting more recycling in Cottingley and also I have taken into line what was said about the waste in civic buildings but, having said that, I feel that this is something separate to what I am saying in my White Paper and I think it should be maybe put as a separate White Paper and I have mentioned this to the opposition, because the thrust of my White Paper is to cut down recycle is to cut down the packaging in the first place, so that it does not come down the stream to be recycled.

I want to stop it. I want to stop manufacturers and suppliers providing us with all this packaging which, as I have said in a lot of cases cannot be recycled, really, it just gets buried and it is going to be there in hundreds of years' time because it is not going to disintegrate.

I would say the same comments as well – I welcome what Councillor Taggart said but again, I feel that the amendment should be something separate to what I am saying here because I will reiterate something that I am sure Claire said at that meeting all those years ago, that the Green Party believes in recycling as a last resort. We should reuse, we should repair and, as a last resort, recycle.

Councillor Smith mentions about there is even less chance of manufacturers and supplies taking us seriously if we recycle their waste. I think he is correct there. That is the case. Of course to recycle it it costs us money to be doing all this as a Council. Why should we be paying it? Why should we have all this unnecessary packaging to start off with? To me it is up to the suppliers and the manufacturers to do something about it. It lies at their door.

Councillor Downes mentioned about plastic not disintegrating which, as I have said, it does not, it just lies there in landfill and there it will be long after we are gone. Councillor Grayshon, I welcome his remarks. I agree with everything he says and so there we are.

I would urge you to all vote and I think it would be great if all the Council could vote on this White Paper to send a very clear message to supplies and manufactures that we do not want this packaging in the first place. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Before we go to the vote could I be sure that the verbatim shows accurately what happened. I believe I am now the Lord Mayor in the infamy of this city where, whilst conducting a Council meeting, one of the lady Members showed her knickers to the entire Council! I would like the verbatim to show that they were still in their original packaging! *(Laughter)*

Could we move to the vote, please? Call for a recorded vote. Is that seconded? Recorded vote on the amendment in the name of Councillor Ogilvie.

(A recorded vote was taken on the amendment)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor David Blackburn does not appear to have voted and Councillor Lowe - she has gone.

In that case the voting is present 91, 'Yes' 40, abstain one, 'No' 50. That fails and we move then to the original motion in the name of Councillor Anne Blackburn.

Could I have a show of hands of those in favour, please? Can I ask if anybody is actually voting against? Any abstentions? In that case that is CARRIED unanimously, Council. Thank you. *(Applause)*

ITEM 12 – WHITE PAPER – DELEGATION OF POWERS TO AREA COMMITTEES

THE LORD MAYOR: On quickly to White Paper Motion 12, Delegation of Powers to Area Committees. Councillor James Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Lord Mayor, I will keep my opening remarks brief so everyone who wants to speak can get into this debate. Members of Council, we believe in the Labour Group Area Committees are growing up. Area Committees, Area Management was something that was conceived by Members of the Labour Group but they were brought into the world under this administration with Les Carter as a midwife, so we have all played a part in the upbringing of Area Management so far. We believe it is now time for Area Management to grow up, for Area Management to take more responsibility, to have more resources and be able to look after areas better.

Much of our work – and I say 'our' because every single one of us is a Member of an Area Committee – on Area Committees has been as advocated and lobbyists for our areas and trying to influence and trying to make differences to

services. We believe in the Labour Group it is now time for Area Committees to move on from that role and it is time for them to take some leadership and be able to take a lead in the way that public services are delivered in each of the Area Committees. This is our purpose in bringing this White Paper today. We hope that rather than us all standing up here and giving a shopping list of all the different functions we believe that Area Committees should and should not have, we should go away, have a long, hard think about it, we should all work together and come up with a consensus about where Area Management should go from here.

I think we all believe – and I genuinely believe that everybody in this Council Chamber believes – that at time we are one Council, we are 99 Councillors in one body working together, but at other times we are ten Area Committees, we are 33 Wards and we are the hundreds and hundreds of communities that make up this city. We have to get it right to make sure that decisions about services and decisions about communities are taken at the right levels and at the right area that are appropriate to local residents so people feel that they are getting the level of service tailored to meet their community. What might be right for Kippax could be wrong for Armley; what might be right for Middleton Park could be wrong for Crossgates and Whinmoor. We need to be able to make these decisions at our own area.

I think, like I say, I am going to draw my opening comments to a conclusion there and let other people have a chance to speak but I hope, just as Terry Grayson gave an excellent example earlier – and I am sorry he is not here at the moment – of how the problems of youth services and anti-social behaviour could be sorted out at community level, this is the kind of thing we need to look at when the All Party Group is hopefully set up.

In that spirit I think we all need to work together on that one and I move the White Paper, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor J L Carter to move an amendment.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Lord Mayor, I am not going to have a real go because I think the speech was not an attack. Just a few points. Let us just look at the history for a second. You are quite right, I do not like being at the delivery though. I like to be at another part of the thing but not delivery! *(Laughter)*

Let us just go through it for a second. You remember when the Area Committees came in we tried it with the CITs. The CITs did not really work, the devolved functions. I think it was a start but not a finish. I think they helped us, though, to develop the committees themselves.

I came in and I was given the job or the opportunity to start the Area Committees, to get them going etc. Let us not forget there are few points when we are talking about resources, etc.

The first thing that I had to take care of was the Wellbeing moneys. The with the Wellbeing moneys, the Labour party had a proposal – quite right, down on paper – which would have given the Area Committees £800,000. That is what it would have given them. I am pleased to say that I was able to provide £3.5m, which is a phenomenal increase on what had been done before.

In addition we did various things. We moved things like the wardens, they went over to the Area Committees, youth service, recycling banks, along with that

revenue and capital. Since then we have added community centres to the list. This year we have provided an extra half a million pounds in spending for the Area Committees. There is an enormous commitment from this side to the Area Committees.

At the moment the budget delegated to the Area Committees adds up to over £10m. Added to this are the millions we are spending with the support of the Area Committees on local Town and District Centre Regeneration to improve local centres, many of which lay at the very heart of local communities and have been – Peter, do not try and correct that, it is right, sit down – and have been shamelessly neglected by Labour for many years.

As many of you will know – do not try and correct it, Peter, it is correct – we have been reviewing Area Management and soon will be in a position to report proposals for further delegated functions which will be added to the Area Committees' existing responsibilities.

My aim is to ensure a paper goes to the Executive Board in early autumn this year. Indeed, my Lord Mayor, if this Council supports Councillor Lewis's White Paper he is delaying it because it will take the whole of this financial year – it will delay it nearly a year. I do not think that is acceptable – not to this administration because we do not stand still, we like to move forward.

Members will also be aware of the work that is currently being done now by Councillor Judith Chapman in her role as my Lead Member. She has been looking at this from a members' perspective and is now finalising her report and she has been seeking views of elected Members and held meetings with many Area Committees Chairs.

My Lord Mayor, I do hope she will be able to confirm when she stands up to speak that Councillor James Lewis did not fail to give his views which were requested. If she cannot confirm that he totally ignored the request his comments today are a wee bit of a sham.

I meet regularly with the Area Committees and once proposals have been put together and Councillor Chapman has finished her report, I will be discussing these with the Chairs of the various Area Committees.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: What report? We have not heard about it.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I am not going to break off to answer you but let me just tell you this. All of them have been contacted to ask for their views on Area Committees and if one of you can say you have not, please put your hand up.

My Lord Mayor, when I last met the various Chairmen of the Area Committees they were complaining about the Council's budget. They were not happy about the proposals to three area teams. What it did, it trimmed a few highly paid staff and a few support staff to reduce bureaucracy and at the same time keeping front line and services and staff, project officers, in place.

My Lord Mayor, I make no apologies for this administration being efficient in the way it operated. These efficiencies lead to investment in real services – real services such as our PCSOs in every Ward in this city.

With the three Area Management teams matched against our three ALMOs and our three police divisions, we are able to sustain area working and bring in some

new service delegations without extra bureaucracy in order that we can give more responsibility and increased financial responsibility to the ten Area Committees.

My Lord Mayor, I ask Council to support this amendment which will progress with speed and efficiency, and I ask them to reject Councillor Lewis, not for what he has said because we are all singing off the same hymn sheet at the moment from what I understand, but he does not appear to want to get on with it. By autumn the report will be there. It will also have been seen by all the Chairs of the Area Committees and it will be at the Executive Board for comments and for approval.

My Lord Mayor, this administration's commitment has been total to Area Committees. Remember in 24 years you never had an Area Committee and it is all right saying you had ideas but you never delegated anything to anybody. It takes a great deal for an administration to say, "I am going to delegate responsibility and I am going to delegate it in some cases to my opposition." We did that. We did that, we are proud of it and we are proud to go forward.

My Lord Mayor, please, please, reject Councillor Lewis's White Paper, accept my amendment and we will progress Area Committees faster. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: The next speaker is making her maiden speech and that is Councillor Chapman.

COUNCILLOR J CHAPMAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am pleased to second the motion to the amendment proposed by Councillor Carter. Over the past year I have been tasked with undertaking a report in to Area Committees and management, their functions and powers and how these might be expanded in the future.

My work is about to be finalised and will be incorporated into the proposals that will be brought to the Executive Board in the autumn of this year. At this point it will become available to all elected members. Wide consultation has taken place with elected Members and this has been used as a key part of my report.

It is interesting to note that Councillor Lewis has raised this White Paper debate despite the elected Member consultation on the success, failures and future role of the Area Committees. I should like to point out, Councillor Lewis, that you, together with the majority of your group, did not have the courtesy to return the questionnaire. To now suggest that an all party working group should be set up would be to ignore the work done over the past year by myself, the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Housing and officers within the department. We are ready to bring forward firm proposals, yet the Labour Party is still keen to have further discussions.

Putting that to one side, during the past year I have consulted extensively not just with elected Members but also with key officers from the Area Management structures within the Neighbourhoods and Housing Department. Throughout this process one thing has become apparent. Area Committees can and do make a big difference to Leeds. Our proposal will look to give them an increased role and further powers to enable them to make an even bigger impact in the future.

The report will take on board the consultation exercise conducted with Members and will hopefully bring forward a truly representative set of proposals aimed at improving our local communities through the Area Committee system.

Based on the three key principles that Area Committee and management work to, it is clear that this system introduced in 2004 by this administration has been a success. However, we cannot rest on our laurels. There is still a great deal of work to do. The proposals in the forthcoming report will seek to build on the successes, correct the weaknesses and look to devolve more powers to the Area Committees to enhance and increase their role in our communities.

This work is ready to begin now, not in a year's time after a working group has been set up. We are committed not just to words but to action now. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR BEVERLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I wish to speak very briefly in support of delegating certain powers from the Council down to Area Committees.

It is my belief that the closer we can bring decisions and decision-making to local people the better. It is not just my belief, it is also BNP policy. It is even in our local election manifesto. I am sure you have all got this document at home on your bookshelves.

The level of government at Parish and Town Councils, however, is an area of government which is often overlooked and I should declare a personal interest at this point as my wife has just been elected to Morley Town Council.

The level of Parish Council is often overlooked and, in my opinion, underused and what I would like to request of the working group, if such a group is created today, or of Councillor Chapman and subsequently the Executive Board, is that when it is examined what powers could be devolved down to Area Committee level, it is also explored whether it would be possible at all to give certain powers to Parish and Town Councils where they exist. Obviously we do not have Parish and Town Councils everywhere across the city. They are very unevenly spread. In some Wards they have got lots – Harewood Ward seems to have about ten in there and there are lots of city Wards that do not have any in there. Nevertheless it is a level of government which I would like to see more powers devolved to and if that could be considered I think that would be very worthwhile.

This motion is not about Parish and Town Councils, it is about Area Committees. I am happy to see once again we all seem to agree that more powers should be delegated down to Area Committee. Isn't it lovely when we all agree on something? I support this. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Beverley. A guillotine comes in at seven o'clock, so we now move to the mover of the original motion, Councillor James Lewis, to sum up.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I congratulate Councillor Chapman on her maiden speech but I do find it disappointing that her maiden speech was not made several months earlier when she was about to start on this work, because what it seems to me and watching so many Members of the Labour Group, is this review that her and Councillor Carter have trumpeted is something that has been cloaked in secrecy, done in a back room and with no involvement of the largest group on the Council. *(Interruption)*

Lord Mayor, if I may continue with my summing up – my summing up. I think the reason they are all shouting is they have been found out. This secrecy that exists in this administration, their deliberate attempt when they say they speak for the community to ignore the largest group of elected Councillors in this Council

Chamber. *(Interruption)* They say they have consulted us on reviewing Area Management. What did they do? They sent round a survey with earth shattering questions in it like, "Do you feel that your Area Committee has made a difference in your area?" *(Interruption)*

COUNCILLOR HARKER: You are slandering Judy. Sit down. Apologise to Judy Chapman.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: What has that got to do with a fundamental review of the relationship between this Council and our community? Nothing. You have been found out. You have been found out. Now it has been brought out into the open exactly how this administration treats our communities and I think you will begin to regret your high-handed approach, your secrecy, your backroom deals, your closed door meetings, your consultation that does not involve the majority of Members in this Council Chamber. You will regret this when you are defending your seats in this last year of this failed administration.

I support our White Paper because it is involving everybody in this Council Chamber. It is not about a closed little review. It is not about consultation that does not even tell you what consultation is about.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis...

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: I move my White Paper, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis, Councillor Chapman wishes to make a point. Could you explain to me what the point is first, please?

COUNCILLOR CHAPMAN: Yes. I am not going to stand up – I do not want a slanging match – but just to put everybody quite clear, would you just give me the courtesy of giving you some information. *(Interruption)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Chapman, please. I did ask you, what is the personal point where you think you are being misquoted? What is that point?

COUNCILLOR CHAPMAN: I have been misquoted. All 99 Members were sent the questionnaire from Martin Stenton and Steven Boyle asking for it to be returned to them. It is dated quite clearly.

THE LORD MAYOR: Sit down. Get it in your heads please, all of you, that when the Lord Mayor stands you all sit and you listen. *(Applause)*

I have explained before to Councillor Atha and he was gentleman enough to accept, there is a verbatim. If people have been misquoted there is the opportunity there to have it, it is recorded, to do something about it. If Councillor Chapman, and I accept, says that your department, your section, your officers, received information, if they have not passed it on to you can I suggest that instead of having a row here with members of the public in the gallery, that we do the sensible things and ask these officers to look into that for us?

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: You will have to prove it.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: We have not got any correspondence.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Chapman, you were about to try and give an explanation.

COUNCILLOR CHAPMAN: I am trying to give you a point of information here.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Chapman, you do not understand. What I am asking of you before I allow you to speak is what is it you think you were misquoted on?

COUNCILLOR CHAPMAN: I have been misquoted on the fact that they have not been involved in the consultation.

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, thank you. Council can hear what you say, they understand. Whether they accept it or not is another matter but you have, I think, made your personal explanation and you have made your point. Councillor Lewis, had you actually finished summing up?

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: I had.

THE LORD MAYOR: Wonderful. In that case can I take us to the vote? First there is an amendment in the name of J L Carter. Can I ask all those in favour? All those against? I think that is CARRIED.

In that case the amendment now becomes the substantive motion. Can I ask all those in favour? Against? Abstentions? That is also CARRIED.

ITEM 13 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS

THE LORD MAYOR: We move on to White Paper Motion 13 and if you notice from the Order Paper, this motion is not for debate but will, in fact, be moved. I have had indication from Councillor Gruen that the amendment would be accepted. Is that correct, Councillor Gruen?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Yes.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: You are not allowed to accept on my behalf.

THE LORD MAYOR: It is his important week – it is Bernard's important week – so in that case Councillor Atha, can I ask you to move your motion?

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I move it. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I ask Councillor Selby?

COUNCILLOR SELBY: I second.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. There is an amendment.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: We accept the amendment.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I move it, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: I second.

THE LORD MAYOR: In that case I believe the amendment now is substantive as a consequence of being accepted, whatever the motion is. *(Laughter)*

Can I ask for a show of hands? I think I am fairly safe to say that that is CARRIED unanimously. Well done, Councillors.

Can I close the meeting by wishing you all a safe journey home and to those members of the public in the gallery too.

(The meeting was closed at 7.08 pm)