

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Held on

Wednesday 9th April 2008

At

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
CIVIC HALL, LEEDS

In the Chair:

THE LORD MAYOR
(Councillor B Cleasby)

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THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon, everyone. Could I welcome everyone to the Council Meeting on 9th April 2008. The first instruction, please, to turn off all mobile telephones. Remember, if a telephone goes off in the earshot of the Lord Mayor, it is £50 to the Lord Mayor's Charity and I can assure you it is very good value at that. Thank you.

Council, I have a few announcements that I would like to put to you. My first one is the news that Councillor Gerald Wilkinson is to be the Deputy Lord Mayor for the year 2008/09. (*Applause*) His Deputy Lady Mayoress will be Pat Small, so perhaps we could pass our good wishes to Pat as well.

I have a short list, Councillors - as we know this is the last one before the next local election and three of us will not be returning as Councillors. Councillor Amanda Carter, Councillor David Morton and Councillor Liz Minkin are not contesting their seats. Could I thank each and every one for their service to the city over those years and certainly wish them well in their future endeavours.

Finally, back to Liz Minkin. I am not sure if Members are aware that whilst on a visit to family in Wales, Liz was rushed to hospital with a ruptured appendix. I have sent a personal get-well message and I know you would all join with me wishing Liz a full and speedy recovery and hoping that it will not be long before we see her back here in the Civic.

My last announcement is, Whips have decided there should be, on 22 May, a special meeting in the afternoon. The date and the details will be supplied to you eventually. That is so that any business can be done and got out of the way so that Mayor-making can be the fun that it ought to be. Thank you, Council.

ITEM 1 - MINUTES OF MEETING HELD ON 20TH FEBRUARY 2008

THE LORD MAYOR: If I can then move us on quickly to Agenda Item 1, which is the Minutes of the meeting held on 20th February 2008. Councillor Hamilton.

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

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Can I therefore call for the vote. All those in favour? Against? Abstentions? Then the Minutes are passed. Thank you, Council.

ITEM 2 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

THE LORD MAYOR: Agenda Item 2, Declarations of Interest. Has everybody who needs to, based on today's Order Paper, declared? Thank you, Council.

ITEM 3 - COMMUNICATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Agenda Item 3, Communications. Chief Executive?

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: There are no communications, Lord Mayor.

ITEM 4 - DEPUTATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Agenda Item 4, Deputations. As you can see on the Order Paper, we have five deputations, so could I ask Councillor Hamilton?

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Lord Mayor, I move that all the deputations be received.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Therefore could I have a vote that the deputations be received? Those in favour? Against? Abstentions? That is CARRIED.

DEPUTATION ONE - WEST YORKSHIRE ANIMALS IN NEED

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

MR O TOWNSEND: Thank you, Lord Mayor, elected Councillors. My name is Oliver Townsend. I am co-founder and Chairman of a local animal welfare charity called West Yorkshire Animals in Need. My supporter today is Sue Huggins. She is a Trustee and Secretary to Hope Pastures Horse and Donkey rescue sanctuary, which is based in North Leeds. Many of you probably know of it when you drive past the ring road and see it on one side of the road or the other, depending on which direction you are coming from.

I am here today to make a petition to you, a deputation to ban the giving of goldfish as prizes at local attractions on Council-owned land and on Council-owned property.

If you would just take a moment and consider one aspect. If I asked you to think of what would come into your mind if you thought of boil in the bag, I am sure you would immediately think of Uncle Ben's rice, maybe a pasta sauce, possibly a sauce for a curry. I am sure many of you did not think of it like this. (*Demonstrated holding up a transparent bag containing a large toy fish*). This is little Gertrude. She has accompanied me today and what I am trying to do is to make the point that goldfish as prizes spend all day in direct sunlight - in fact before they get to that stage they are actually transported to the events and they are buffeted about and if many of them do not survive that journey, then they have only got a whole day in chlorinated water - water, may I just remind you, which slowly burns the skin off the fish. Furthermore they are in direct sunlight; they have no chance at all to survive. If they have survived the journey and have been buffeted, at best they are brain damaged and at worst they are already dead.

Just imagine the implications of the sort of signal that we are sending out to our youngsters who are, indeed, the adults of the future, for them to be presented with a situation where live animals, goldfish, sentient beings, are actually given away as prizes. Many of them, as I say, do not survive the journey, they do not survive the day in direct sunlight. They are really quite deliberately punished for just being goldfish and I think that is very unfair.

Furthermore, there is a very simple solution to this, apart from obviously banning the giving as goldfish as prizes. There is a win/win situation for everybody in this in

that the stall holders could quite easily just give soft cuddly toys - something I would be very comfortable with and I hope you would all agree that this would be by far the better alternative.

In respect of poor Gertie and all her colleagues, I beg you once again, in conclusion, to please, please, put this forward to Committee stage and to have this barbaric, cruel - I really cannot think of an adjective that would be sufficiently strong enough to warrant the banning of these poor little mites from our stalls for ever. That way then we would send out an absolutely clear signal to all of the public of Leeds and, indeed, further afield, that Leeds City Council are a group who are a caring group of individuals and who do not wish to send out the wrong signal to our adults.

I thank you and again I implore you to ban this practice. Thank you very much indeed. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hamilton?

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Lord Mayor, thank you. Can I move that the matter be referred to the Executive Board for consideration?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. I call for the vote. All those in favour? I think you can see that that is pretty well unanimous. May I thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Good afternoon. Thank you.

MR O TOWNSEND: Thank you, Lord Mayor, thank you, Members.

DEPUTATION TWO - ACCESS COMMITTEE FOR LEEDS

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Please now make your speech to Council, which should be no longer than five minutes and if you could begin, please, by announcing the names of your deputation.

MR T McSHARRY: Thank you, Lord Mayor, fellow Councillors. The deputation is from the Access Committee for Leeds. My fellow attendees are Barry Naylor, Judith Smith, David Littlewood, Victoria Burford and myself, Tim McSharry.

Over the last 25 years Leeds City Council has established a history of involvement and consultation that it can be rightly proud of. In that time the citizens of Leeds have played a positive role in advising and guiding on the developments of key public services.

As elected members will be aware, the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 amended the 1995 Act in recognising the pivotal role that public bodies have to play in promoting the rights, equality, opportunities and inclusion of disabled people within society and in many ways will be a positive addition to what has already been achieved within Leeds.

Indeed, the Elected Members, Chief Executive and Officers should be congratulated for embracing the core principals of the 2005 Act by supporting the development of a Leeds based Independent Disability Council, the IDC, to work in partnership with the Local Authority to develop, commission and deliver public

services that are inclusive, accessible and truly reflect the choices, aspirations and social and personal care needs of all older and disabled people here in Leeds.

Establishing the IDC will be a key to understanding the realities of what can be for many older and disabled people truly heroic struggles to maintain their dignity, self respect and independence in the face of a society that still relies on misconceived stereotypes around disability and age.

Leeds has continued over decades to establish benchmark services that have been exemplar in meeting the service and support needs of its citizens, but sadly this is not the case for everyone for many people, even those in their late 90s who may have worked and dedicated their lives to the success of our city, are having their self respect and dignity stripped away through the rationing of services and means testing that seems to place a cash value on their most basic human rights and, for those especially of an older generation who refuse to take part in the means testing process as they feel that it degrades their life and dignity, they are left alone to continue their struggle and in many cases fall into the safety net that is the NHS casualty department.

This sad and degrading process carries massive hidden costs not just for the individual but to the whole of the society, and has very little to do with valuing or respecting the dignity and choices of the individual.

It is essential that this Council develops a positive and meaningful partnership with the IDC to ensure that it co-produces the outcomes that deliver truly inclusive and responsive services that are fit for the City of Leeds in the 21st Century.

Leeds can take great pride in those services that have been built on embracing the diversity and vibrancy of our communities, but this cannot be taken for granted. We live in a changing society. The evidence is clear; we live in a city where the average age of people is increasing, which in turn is very closely linked to higher incidences of disability. There are ever greater demands being placed upon public services and none more so than in the case of Leeds Social Care.

This Council must be absolutely honest with all the citizens of Leeds and show decisive leadership if it is to avoid the social degradation and exclusion of some of its most vulnerable citizens. Leeds cannot be protected from the consequences; the demographics of the UK is changing.

The key to how this city responds in the best way possible to future social demands and expectations is how it includes and meaningfully involves the people of Leeds.

This Council, in partnership with the IDC, must open up a dialogue with all Leeds citizens to openly discuss the realities of how we properly finance the Adult and Family Care Services that are not just critical to older and disabled people, but are fundamental to the social inclusion and cohesion of our city.

The consequences of failing to take action now will have devastating personal consequences for many individuals and families in the future.

Compromise is a very fine word, especially for those who have the privilege to define its terms in the knowledge that they will not have to experience or endure the consequences.

THE LORD MAYOR: Finish your next sentence, please.

MR T McSHARRY: Headlines and empty words are meaningless to people. For the sake of securing the future of all the citizens of Leeds, leadership and action is required now. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hamilton?

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I move that the matter be referred to the Executive Board for consideration?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Could I put that to the vote, Council? All those in favour? Against? Abstentions? That is certainly CARRIED.

Could I thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration that your comments will receive and good afternoon to you. Thank you.

MR T McSHARRY: Thank you, Lord Mayor.

DEPUTATION THREE - RETAILERS AND RESIDENTS OF MORLEY

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Please now make your speech to Council, which should be no longer than five minutes and if you could begin, please, by announcing the names of your deputation.

COUNCILLOR JOYCE SANDERS: Good afternoon Lord Mayor and Councillors. I am Councillor Joyce Sanders, Mayor of Morley. With me are Councillor Wendy Whitehead, Councillor Joe Tetley, my husband Kenneth Sanders and the Morley Chamber of Trade Chairman, Keith Robinson.

I am here to raise concerns about the increasing number of charity shops in our town centre and indeed, other town centres around the Leeds City Council area.

There is no doubt that charity shops have an important role to play in raising money for their charities. These shops provide an opportunity to recycle goods that could otherwise end up in landfill sites.

There needs to be a balance within a thriving town centre with a range of shops offering a variety to the shoppers which will encourage visitors. At the moment our town centre is dominated by charity shops and individual traders find it impossible to compete.

In a smaller town centre it is important to offer independent traders the opportunity to establish themselves. It can take several years before they can make a business viable.

The independent trader faces unfair competition with the charity shops.

Charity shops receive a large reduction in rates; they do not have to pay staff as they are run by voluntary workers. A substantial percentage of their stock is donated. Did you know that they hold 50% of new stock for re-sale? More often than not this new stock is sold at a very cheap rate in a window next to and independent trader selling similar goods for which they have had to pay a full price.

It is for this reason that Morley, together with other local towns, finds it difficult to financially compete with the Charity Shops.

It is because of the charity subsidies, particularly the rate reductions that enable them to occupy the most prominent locations in our town centre. We have one main street with nine charity shops and another one has opened this week - that is ten.

In this situation, how can we build our town into a vibrant place to compete with such out-of-town shopping centres as the White Rose and, of course, Leeds City Centre?

We need to redress the balance if we want to avoid a vacuum being created where independent traders cannot afford town centre locations and the only retailers able to afford them are charities.

We believe it is vital to change national rules on planning legislation if we are to achieve vibrant town centres.

A recent summit held in Morley identified the need for greater diversity of shops. Legitimate concern was raised about the lack of variety of shops to encourage people into Morley. We are dominated by estate agents, travel agents and charity shops.

We believe that this is not only a Morley Town Centre concern but it affects similar towns from Pudsey to Wetherby, Horsforth to Garforth and change is necessary if we want our town centres to survive and to thrive.

What are we proposing to address this challenge we all face? We are asking the Council to support a campaign to change national planning legislation to allow a cumulative impact strategy to be adopted in town centres where charity shops are concerned. We believe this will provide a fair balance of shops, making the town centre viable in a similar way to the licensing policy adopted where pubs and bars are concerned.

In conclusion, Lord Mayor, we would again stress that we want a vibrant town centre in Morley with a broad range of shops attracting more customers. We believe this is something all smaller town centres want and need, if they are to survive in these challenging economic times. It is in everybody's interest for this change to occur.

Without change we will lose regular shoppers to larger centres and the good work charity shops to undertake will be compromised with fewer customers coming through their doors.

Can I leave you with the old saying, charity begins at home. Thank you Lord Mayor and Councillors for listening to our deputation and we hope you will support our call for change. Thank you. (*Applause*).

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hamilton?

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I move that the matter be referred to the Executive Board for consideration?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Could I therefore put that to the vote? All those in favour? Against? Abstentions? That is CARRIED.

Could I thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration that your comments will receive and good afternoon to you. Thank you.

DEPUTATION FOUR - LOCAL RESIDENTS, TINGLEY BAR ROUNABOUT/GYRATORY

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Please now make your speech to Council, which should be no longer than five minutes and if you could begin, please, by announcing the names of your deputation.

MR A SLINGSBY: Mr and Mrs Mallett and Mr Pitts. I am Albert Slingsby . The Deputation is local residents concerned with the deteriorating condition of Tingley Bar roundabout, Morley.

Most of the roads around Tingley Bar roundabout are like Swan Lake when it rains, due to either the road gullies blocked or a few inches higher than the rest of the roads, so the water has to build up until it finds its own level to run away into people's gateways and the Tingley Mill yard.

When it rains a pond covers half of the road from the Tingley Bar Fisheries doorway and car park, along Bridge Street to the bus top lay-by. You have two options there; you can stand waiting for a bus and get showered with mucky water, or stand back from the pavement and miss the bus as the driver thinks you do not want that one. If it had been last Friday and the judges for Morley in Bloom were going to get showered with mucky water catching a bus, it would have been sorted before now. A bit further on from the bus stop, there is the remains of an old road sign sticking out from the surface of the pavement, just waiting for someone to fall and hurt themselves on.

Last weekend somebody attempted to steal our thunder by staging a lightning cleaning attack on Tingley Bar. Before, there were two or three barrows of muck and silt around each of the triangular reservations where the pedestrian crossings are. When it was wet you had to be careful where to walk and not slip on the mud. However, there is still muck at the entrance of Shire Road housing estate and the pedestrian crossing opposite to clear up and vandals keep smashing the phone box windows at Tingley Bar adding more broken glass to the problem.

As a member of Morley Council's Highways, I spent over a hour with a Leeds Highways Engineer pointing out things that needed to be done for Health and Safety, i.e. a bollard or barrier to stop traffic mounting the pavement opposite Tingley Bar Fisheries and parking on double yellow lines, causing pedestrians, pram and wheelchair users to go out on to the road. This is an accident just waiting to happen.

Weeks ago, we witnessed a Southern Electric wagon parked and stuck on the grass verge near Shire Road. As it was dragged out, it ripped up the grass and brought a load of muck out on to the pavement and road.

Next day I contacted Leeds Highways to ask if they were going to see to this. They assured me they would send a cleaning crew out the next day – to date the only cleaning crew looks like it has been angels, rain and the traffic running over it. Like horse manure, if you kick it about long enough, you'll lose it.

We would like to know the date of the Decision Notice for the Rein Park housing development. Enquiries from Leeds Council's Planning Department reveal that developers are responsible for replacing any dead/vandalised trees that die off etc, within five years of the Decision Notice.

Our MP wrote a letter, dated 5th February 2008, which has received no reply as yet, to Leeds Council about the replacement of trees at Rein Park after we were continually told by Councillor Finnigan there was no Section 106 agreement money available for trees. We have found out under the Freedom of Information Act that Leeds has received over £6,000,000 and Morley South ---

THE LORD MAYOR: Mr Slingsby, can I just stop you there? I think you are a little remiss in referring to an existing Councillor. It does not appear to be part of what your deputation is about.

MR SLINGSBY: OK. The replacement of trees - I have campaigned to get these trees replaced and I have been told that there is no Section 106 agreement money available, but according to information there is at least £500,000 of Section 106 agreement money available for Morley South, so the question I have asked is, how many trees would the interest from these figures like that pay for?

Also, can you tell us the difference between Cottingley in Bloom and why Tingley Bar does not receive the same treatment? Cottingley has received money from Leeds Parks and Countryside, South Leeds Health for All. It said in the Yorkshire Post you could not see the road for the trees. We could not see Tingley House Farm for trees before Rein Park was built but now it looks like a petrified forest.

Have I to go around with the begging bowl for us to get some trees planted and the grass verge reinstated after Southern Electric's commercial vandalism?

I am submitting letters from the MP that he wrote to you about this reference to the trees idea, plus---

THE LORD MAYOR: Mr Slingsby, can I stop you there? Being generous I did stop you earlier and, Council, I was generous too and gave the gentleman time to continue, but you have exceeded your five minutes now.

MR SLINGSBY: OK.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you very much.

THE LORD MAYOR: Could I call upon Councillor Hamilton?

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I move that the matter be referred to the Executive Board for consideration?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Could I therefore put that to the vote? All those in favour? Against? Abstentions? One against, one abstention. Thank you, that is CARRIED.

Could I thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration that your comments will receive and good afternoon to you. Good afternoon to you.

DEPUTATION FIVE - MUSLIM SOCIETY OF LEEDS

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Please now make your speech to Council, which should be no longer than five minutes and if you could begin, please, by announcing the names of your deputation.

MR N SHARIF: My Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, my name is Nasser Sharif and my colleague's name is Mohammed Ali.

I would like to start with a brief introduction to the Muslim Society of Leeds. MSL - or Muslim Society of Leeds - was initiated in January 2003. Although members of the organisation met regularly prior to this, it was not until January of 2003 that this was done formally under a constitution. Members met primarily to improve the lives of men, women and children in their locality and whereby identifying barriers and initiating activities and programmes to address these problems.

MSL contacted Mike Ross in Leeds City Council Development Department in June of 2006 to enquire about the former Bentley Lane Primary School. It was informed that the building had been disposed of and the Development Department were looking to sell the building on the open market in the spring/summer of 2007 as panel approval for this had already been granted. In order to get preferred bidder status, MSL would require a sponsoring Leeds City Council department to support his proposal. It was at this point the MSL put together a business plan to realise its objectives for the Bentley Lane Primary School Site and submitted this to the North West Area Management Committee to look at our proposal. We proposed to turn the building into part community centre and part learning facility as outlined in the business plan for the site.

This was submitted to the Area Officer, namely Dayle Lynch, who informed us that the whole Area Committee would require seeing this to be able to pass judgment. Incidentally, Dayle was not aware at that point if we were even approaching this through the correct channels despite having told her that this is the way we have to progress, from Mike Ross.

We contacted Dayle many times to ask her if the Area Committee would require anything else to get a favourable decision. The only thing she asked for was a community survey gauging local opinion of the proposal. This was submitted to Dayle just before Christmas of 2006.

November had passed, so had December, January, February, March and even April, before we had received a response. Six months on I received an e-mail from a person by the name of Richard Brown from the Area Committee. It said that the local Councillors were not willing to support the proposal because the local Councillors did not believe the cash flow forecast was achievable.

All the while we were being told by Development Department that Council is about to market the building any time. In the summer of 2007 we had been informed that the Council wanted to auction the premises, but not the whole site, just the part of the building that was vacant, the other being occupied by Park Lane College, and that the college had user rights to the area the occupied. The Council was in process of finding money to split the services as the buildings had been one when it was originally built and that this would be achieved by December of 2007.

We approached the Area Councillors in December of 2007 to ask why they believed that figures did not add up. Following a meeting in January of 2008 between ourselves and Sue Bentley and Judith Chapman, Councillors, and Dayle, the Area Officer, it was agreed that we will proceed with this again and that the only thing they require is an amended cash flow forecast for the site.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I just stop you there? Could I ask you to desist from actually using names? It could be misunderstood.

MR N SHARIF: OK, that is fine. This was provided a week later and from this point they started demanding things like constitution, management structure, minutes and so on. We did not have a problem providing these. Our only questions were why were we not asked originally a year-and-a-half earlier, when we originally put the proposal in?

We took this opportunity to speak to another local Councillor and in the initial meeting with he could not recall the proposal even being presented to the Area. He took a copy of the business plan and on an initial thought he liked what he was hearing.

We got a final decision in February of 2007 that the local Councillors were not willing to support the proposal because they believed that the figures forecast were rather optimistic. In this meeting a lot of praise was being levied at the Headingley Development Trust's proposal further up the road. After a bit of detective work we came to know that they had received money from the Area Committee to put together a business plan and a development worker was assigned to help them put it together. We, on the other hand, were being told that if we were credible organisation then we would not even have to ask the Councillors what we require. The Area Committee also granted the Headingley Development Trust £100K for refurbishment. Ironically, their initial business case---

THE LORD MAYOR: I am going to ask you to stop there because you have now exceeded your five minutes. Thank you very much.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hamilton?

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I move that the matter be referred to the Executive Board for consideration?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Could I therefore put that to the vote? All those in favour? That certainly is CARRIED.

Thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration that your comments will receive. Thank you and good afternoon to you. Good afternoon to you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Whilst we are reorganising could I just point out to Council if anybody overruns I, in fact, have a seconds counter here so, although you only see a red light, I have actually seen the count down in seconds, so I am counting when I stop somebody and I am being generous by giving them the same time and I will do the same for all of you if I should have to stop you and you overrun. Thank you, Council.

ITEM 5 - REPORTS

(a)

THE LORD MAYOR: Could I move to agenda Item 5, which is Reports. Councillor Hamilton?

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Lord Mayor, I move in terms of the notice.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: I second, Lord Mayor.

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

(b)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hamilton?

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: I move in terms of the Notice.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: This is Reports agenda item (b). I call for the vote. All those in favour? Against? That is also CARRIED.

ITEM 6 - RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

THE LORD MAYOR: Turning the page, Council, Agenda Item 6. Councillor Hamilton.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: I move in terms of the notice, Lord Mayor.

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

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

ITEM 7 - QUESTIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I therefore move us on to Agenda Item 7, which is Questions, and call upon Elizabeth Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Can the Deputy Leader of the Council confirm his party has met its 2004 election manifesto commitment to make Leeds cleaner?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The short answer is of course yes, but I want to go into some detail.

Since 2004 Street Scene Services has concentrated its efforts in two areas: firstly, to improve the environmental quality city-wide, but in particular to make a visible and sustainable improvement to the most deprived inner city wards.

The service uses the best value performance indicator, BVP 199, to measure environmental cleanliness and demonstrate year-on-year improvements. This indicator surveys the standard of cleanliness with regards to litter, detritus, graffiti, fly posting etc and uses a grading system. It produces some results which I just want to

read out. In 2003/04 the figure was 31.2 and in 2007/08 the figure had dropped - i.e. we are cleaner - it has dropped to 16. (*Applause*)

In 2007 Leeds was entered into the Clean Britain Awards and was short listed into the top ten out of 50 applicants for the category of Clean City. Leeds City Council received a certificate of merit for this.

The real answer to "Is it cleaner?" is not what I say - it is what the people of Leeds say. The Public Perception Survey in 2006/07 highlighted that 63% of people in Leeds were satisfied that the land and highways were clear of litter and refuse and this placed Leeds well above the metropolitan average. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR NASH: I should like to ask a supplementary. In view of what Councillor Brett has just said, could he explain how he thinks that 'cleaner' does not include the responsibility to remove rubbish from the bin yards of back-to-back properties right across the city where rubbish in some yards is two to three metres deep?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Councillor Nash, I am well aware of this problem. I think it was yesterday I tried to deal with a couple of bin yards in my ward. The simple answer is that usually the bin yards are private property. That is not a complete answer, in my view---

COUNCILLOR ATHA: It is not any answer.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: If you let me finish, Bernard, the answer I believe is that we have got a responsibility to ensure that *in extremis* the public are kept safe, but we are not in a situation where legally the Council can barge into private property and do what we like without permission.

This is an area of difficulty. It is certainly not something that we have to do in terms of clearing rubbish from private property. Many of our residents, I think, would get extremely upset if, without their permission, we went into their property. I accept what Councillor Nash is saying, however, that this is an area which concerns me and I understand that it will concern many Labour Members as well and it is an issue that we are trying to deal with and certainly *in extremis* Environmental Health will deal with bin yards where there is rubbish which causes an unsafe situation. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Lord Mayor, I understand that officers have recently been asked to present to a House of Lords hearing looking at Narrowing the Gap work across country, asked to present on our work with international new arrivals in our schools. Please could the Executive Member for Children's Services tell us a bit more about this?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Yes thank you, Lord Mayor. I will be glad to. I am pleased to say that of 116 submissions made to the Narrowing the Gap national project, work in Leeds was one of just six initiatives which were presented to the House of Lords Panel. The Panel are looking at the progress, challenges and key components to narrowing the gap, improving outcomes for vulnerable children and for young people.

Their particular interest in Leeds stems from the work that we are doing to help international new arrivals. This includes inducting them, assessing their needs and circumstances and providing personalised learning programmes for them and their families within Leeds schools.

The success of this work has been underpinned by a partnership approach with input from Early Years, from the Primary Care Trust, Healthy Schools, Inclusion Services and the School Improvement Service. It builds on our very successful New Arrivals Programme evaluated by the Home Office as a beacon of good practice in 2005.

It recognises that schools are responding to a growing number of pupils who have spent very little time in education, whose learning has been severely disrupted and who are in the very earliest stages of acquiring English. Very few schools have any experience with such pupils and have needed support and advice on how to include them and provide the best possible provision.

Through co-ordinating the planning and training work, our progress has seen increased confidence and self-esteem reported by young people and their parents. We have had reports from teachers of improved capacity to work with these children and a system to support and intervene effectively in the arrival of international young people is increasingly understood and accessed.

Improved co-ordination between schools and other services is leading to better targeting of resources. We know that international new arrivals are a challenge for Local Authorities. We know - and schools tell us - that here in Leeds there is still work to do in this area, but this recognition shows that we are on the right track and making good progress on this issue and I am sure that Councillors will join me in congratulating those officers who are travelling down to London to highlight this in a few days time. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR GETTINGS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Executive Member for Leisure like to comment on the recent successes at the Grand Theatre and also comment on the present financial position of the theatre?

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. In doing so I should probably declare an interest in being a member of the Grand Theatre Board, which I had not declared thus far in these proceedings. No doubt there are other members of the Grand Theatre Board who will now bob up and say so.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: It is a family affair this is.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Despite the rumours I am not related to Councillor Gettings in any way!

Lord Mayor, the Grand Theatre Board has had a successful autumn and winter, smashing---

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Procter, just stop there, please.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Can we have a ruling on both John Procter and the person that asked the question have now declared interests in this subject. Are they allowed to bring this up?

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I just clarify first of all, Councillor Gettings, have you in fact declared an interest previous to the meeting?

COUNCILLOR GETTINGS: Yes.

THE LORD MAYOR: You have. You had before the meeting?

COUNCILLOR GETTINGS: No, now.

THE LORD MAYOR: You are just doing it now and the same for Councillor Procter, you are doing that now. Right, now I will ask for a ruling.

THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE OFFICER: As this is a question then the matter of having to declare an interest does not come up.

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, Councillor Procter, continue.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. As I was saying, the Grand Theatre has had a very successful autumn and winter season, smashing box office records. Those records that have been broken are: the highest grossing drama, which was *The History Boys*, grossing £180,000; the highest grossing dance, which was *The Nutcracker*, grossing in excess of £421,000; the highest grossing musical, *Blood Brothers*, again grossing £437,000; and again, another record broken, the highest grossing musical with *Joseph*, taking £440,000 and attracting 27,403 people to its audience as well.

All of this activity has led to a healthy budget position of the Grand Theatre, currently £27,000 in profit, with the overall company of the Grand Theatre and Opera House Board Ltd also being in profit. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR BEVERLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. With the local elections of 1st May fast approaching and in the light of the revelations in the now infamous Sunday Times article regarding the methods used by the Labour Party in Leeds to win elections and increase their presence in this Chamber, can the Leader of Council please tell us what measures (if any) are in place to stop political parties from abusing the election process this year?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Can I say by beginning to answer this question that I sincerely hope there will not be a repetition of the newspaper coverage this time round that there was last time, because the allegations certainly brought unwarranted attention upon the city and its residents and, in particular, a particular area of the city. Quite frankly I do not think in that respect it did any good to anybody at all.

The Code of Conduct is extremely clear, Councillor Beverley, and I do not intend to read the whole of this out because I would take all the time of questions up, but I am going to highlight one or two and I would just ask every Member of this Chamber to take note of them.

Applying for a postal vote in the name of someone else, destroying ballot documents or unlawfully voting in the name of someone else are all serious criminal offences. Can I say, if we had any evidence whatsoever that any of those practices had taken place, we as a Council would ensure the full weight of the law was brought to bear on the individuals concerned. (*hear, hear*)

Unfortunately Returning Officers are not currently empowered to investigate allegations of electoral fraud. However, in the light of the allegations last year I can tell you that the Returning Officer and his senior staff are working very closely with West Yorkshire Police to ensure that any possible abuses of the postal voting system are detected and reported to the police for investigation. Additionally this has been made plain to all candidates and their agents for the forthcoming elections. Additionally, I have asked the Chief Executive to write to the heads of the regional

parties in Yorkshire to remind them of what the allegations were in Leeds last year, that we do not want repetition and asking them to write to their candidates and their constituency Chairmen to make sure that that message can be passed on to party workers.

I want to make it absolutely clear also that, as far as I am concerned, the major parties - political parties - in this country, have already signed up to a Code of Conduct. That Code of Conduct commits all the major parties not to participate in a practice known as "farming" - that is the collection of postal votes from individuals.

I strongly suspect that that practice was carried out in Leeds last year in some areas. If anybody is caught with that practice, then as a Council I think we should be looking at our own constitution to see what measures we can take against those individuals concerned.

It is not acceptable in the mother of democracies for this practice to happen. At the moment we are witnessing a particular country where they have not declared an election result for two-and-a-half weeks now. It is beholden upon all of us to set an example in this country at this time as well as every other and so I hope we have in place, Councillor Beverley, all the safeguards necessary.

I will conclude by saying this. I suspect very strongly that journalists from a whole variety of media will be watching this city very carefully. You have been warned. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I understand that Steve Smith is not here, not very well. Could you send him my best and hope that he has a speedy recovery. *(laughter)* I do not know to whom I am addressing this, I think it is James Monaghan that I am addressing this particular question.

Could the Executive Board Member for Environmental Services please tell me where his administration plan to site their proposed incinerator?

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. As Councillor Lyons should well know by now, as he has asked his question several times, the administration Council has identified four sites for potential for a waste treatment facility. We have no preferred location and we are considering a neutral approach to the location and keeping our options open for other sites to come forward.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Thank you very much, James. As this administration refuses to tell us, the people of Leeds, where the incinerator is to be *(laughter)* - there is a plan, Lord Mayor, to shout me down, I am acting within Standing Orders so I hope you bear this in mind.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: You are certainly standing. *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Do you not know that a PFI that you applied for has been granted to the tune of £68.8m...

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: By whom?

COUNCILLOR LYONS: ...to build an incinerator and a rail head.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: No it has not. That is a lie. That is a lie.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: As far as I can say, what you are doing is saying you do not know where it is going to be but yet you have applied to DEFRA for this

money to build an incinerator - and this is what it says, to build an incinerator - and a rail head at this particular area.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lyons, you are now making a speech. You have asked the question.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: No, Lord Mayor---

THE LORD MAYOR: I am stopping you. You have asked your question. Councillor Monaghan, if you would give the answer.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: It will not be long before May and we will be saying good bye to more than a few more.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Desperate stuff.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Councillor Lyons has slightly stolen my thunder in congratulating Council in actually achieving the £68.7m-worth of PFI credits for a waste treatment facility. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Where is it going to be?

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Tell, James, tell.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: I want it to be very clear that that money was granted on the basis of us applying for a waste treatment facility - a neutral approach to a waste treatment facility. Procurement will start later this year and the technology will be chosen during the procurement process and we are considering a neutral approach to it.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: For where?

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: So it is absolute nonsense to say that we have applied for an energy-from-waste plant. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Lies, lies, lies.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Atha, I would respect you more if you refrained from language like that, please. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I only said "lies", my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: You said it three times.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: And I said it three times because that is what I believe we have been hearing. If there comes a time---

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Withdraw, Bernard. Withdraw. Disgraceful.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Atha, you will have plenty of time to put forward your debate after the election. Thank you. Could I move now to Councillor Pryke?

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Executive Board Member with responsibility for Learning join with me in congratulating John Smeaton High School on the outcome of their recent OFSTED inspection?

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: And its Governors.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: If you just hang on a minute, Peter, you might get a surprise.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: I do not see why we should (*inaudible*)

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Yes, I would like to---

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harker, would you just stop there? Nobody shouts anybody down whilst I am in this Chair, Councillor Lyons. Now let us get to business and get it sorted and get home. There might be some football on. There might be something worthwhile on television instead of wasting our time here. Councillor Harker, continue.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: I did not realise that the question was so contentious! (*laughter*) Yes, I would like to add my congratulations to those of Councillor Pryke. The OFSTED inspectors found the John Smeaton Community College which just, we should remember, 14 months ago was handed a notice to improve, is now rated as 'Good' and a school with a capacity to improve further.

I would like to congratulate the students, the staff, the management team and even the Governors, Peter, but especially John Dalby, the Headteacher, and Marilyn Steele, who have done fantastic work. Together they have established a school that has raised achievements in all areas and improved the life chances of all its young people and they are to be congratulated, as are many other schools in this city in the secondary sector who are also improving their standards year on year. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Member responsible for Leisure update the Council on the Morley Leisure Centre plan?

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The PFI project for the replacement of Morley Leisure Centre is progressing well. The Council is working closely with the Local Education Partnership to develop the project looking at costs and designs. Plans are currently being finalised and will be submitted for planning approval later this month following a further round of public consultations.

The new leisure centre will offer some state of the art facilities including a 25m pool, a learner pool, two sports halls, a multi-purpose hall, a 150 station bodyline gym, a dance studio and classroom and also a central atrium with a café and bar facilities and viewing area to the sports hall. The facility is being designed to afford views of Scatchard Park with the car park being located at the front of the building for the benefit and security of users.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: By way of a supplementary, Lord Mayor, if I may - I know you love it Peter, you love it really - would the Executive Board Member care to comment on the fact that the Ardsley and Robin Hood BNP candidate, the Morley North BNP candidate and the Morley South BNP candidate do not support the proposals for Morley Leisure Centre, do not attend working group party meetings and this is something that the Morley electorate might wish to reflect upon when they come to casting their vote on 1 May?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Procter, that was not a question and does not deserve an answer.

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: Lord Mayor, I took the question within...

THE LORD MAYOR: I am sorry, Councillor Procter, I am in the Chair. That was not fair, that was in no way a question, that was a statement. Councillor Driver - please sit Councillor Procter, thank you. Councillor Driver.

COUNCILLOR DRIVER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Board Member for Education agree with me that the Government's new vocational offer is an important step forward for our education system?

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Yes.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: I wish I could welcome the development but my welcome is a little bit like the curate's egg - it is going to be good in parts. I do wish the Government had stuck to its original plans under the Tomlinson proposals. I think they were a better approach to the vocational question. I am very sorry that Tony Blair when he was Prime Minister torpedoed that report the very morning that it was launched.

Nevertheless I think all areas of the Chamber should welcome a very serious approach to establishing in this country strong vocational education and I do welcome that we are making that move forward. I would encourage Councillors on all sides of the Chamber to support these moves as they move into the curriculum of our high schools. We have one chance to get this right and we must take this chance and make sure it happens. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR DRIVER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. In view of that reply and particularly following a discussion I had with Councillor Harris and his colleagues this morning in the Narrowing the Gap Group where we heard that the Skills Employment Programme in Leeds provides...

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Is this a question, Lord Mayor?

COUNCILLOR DRIVER: ...benefits for only five out of 40 young people - 'benefits' was the word, not jobs - would Councillor Harker like to tell us why none of the 40 people from the inner city areas who took part in the Job Guarantee Scheme with the Council - with the Council, the biggest employer in this city - were deemed good enough to be offered a job by the Authority?

COUNCILLOR HARKER: I think there is a slight problem here that Councillor Driver remembers Lifelong Learning as the portfolio and that my role now stops at the age of 19, as I am part of the Children's Services Department, and I think that the 40 young people he refers to actually fall outside my purview.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Ewens.

COUNCILLOR EWENS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Could the Deputy Leader of the Council please tell us about the recent Beacon Award recognising the strength of our Partnership working in Leeds?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am delighted to report that Leeds was one of three Local Authorities in the country to be awarded Beacon Status for its Local Strategic Partnership and its Local Area Agreement. This award says a lot about the quality and range of services we offer and proves that working together closely with partner organisations has made a real difference to the lives of people across the city.

The Beacon Award Scheme is considered by many to be the Oscars of Local Government, with Leeds being the only Authority in the country to receive one or more Beacon awards in every year since its introduction in 1999. This is our tenth Beacon Award.

This year there was a vigorous assessment process including a half day visit speaking to Council Leaders and key staff and such partner agencies as the police, health service, business and voluntary, community and faith sector and also a formal interview process.

We will now embark on a year-long programme of engaging with other Local Authorities across the country to spread our learning in the area of partnership working. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: Lord Mayor, Gerry Harper will ask the supplementary at the next meeting.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: And pigs fly backwards.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Elliott.

COUNCILLOR ELLIOTT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Board Member responsible for Parks and Countryside comment on the positive improvements to the Tingley Bar Roundabout flower planting scheme?

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Are you thinking of moving to Morley, John?

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I have noticed the improvements made at Tingley Bar roundabout and recognise the significant assistance of Morley in Bloom in delivering these improvements. I would like to thank that organisation for their efforts not only there but in the whole of Morley for the work they did. I would like to thank Councillor Elliott for her support of that particular group...

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Absolutely, yes.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: ...in providing a much improved and attractive Morley. It is right to say that our roundabouts provide an important feature right across the city and I am pleased with the improvements that have taken place over the last four years to improve our gateways.

Lord Mayor, I do find it rather annoying having to talk over a cackle of people who are quite ignorant and clearly uninterested in the affairs of Morley, unlike some of us. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Procter. Councillor Renshaw.

COUNCILLOR RENSHAW: Lord Mayor, can the Deputy Leader of Council confirm that the Liberal Democrats in Leeds are still committed to Narrowing the Gap.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Brett.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It would be, I think, unusual for a Councillor representing the ward in the middle of Leeds with the highest unemployment to give any other answer than of course we are committed to Narrowing the Gap.

We learn from the statistics that the Government provide on the Index of Multiple Deprivation, which was published last November, it shows that Leeds has indeed narrowed the gap between the richest and poorest areas in the city. 415 of the Super Output Areas in Leeds - 87% - have improved their ranking nationally and it is some of the poorest areas that have seen the biggest improvements.

In 2004 when these indices were last available, the most deprived Super Output Area in Leeds ranked 36 - in other words very near the most deprived in the land. 2004, I seem to remember, was when there were some elections and this Council changed control. Four Super Output Areas in 2004 ranked amongst the most deprived 100 nationally. In 2007 no Super Output Area in Leeds was in the bottom 100 and the most deprived Super Output Area in Leeds ranked 113.

The Labour Government agrees that Leeds has made great progress in narrowing the gap since 2004 - so much so that, much to my annoyance, they have decided to give Leeds no money from the Working Neighbourhoods Fund in 2007. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Disgrace.

THE LORD MAYOR: We have now exceeded the time for questions.

COUNCILLOR RENSHAW: Can I just ask a supplementary question on that?

THE LORD MAYOR: No, we have exceeded the time for questions and on my understanding of our rules it does not allow for a supplementary to be placed.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: What a shame, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: It is a shame. You should have got your Members a little more disciplined, Whip, and perhaps we would not have wasted so much time. Thank you.

ITEM 8 - MINUTES

THE LORD MAYOR: We will now move to agenda item 8, which is the Minutes, and I call upon Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: My Lord Mayor, in moving Item 8 in terms of the notice I cannot help but reflect on the fact that poor old Councillor Illingworth was rejected and put down to Question 17 on the Order Paper again.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: I second and reserve the right to speak.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Very helpful, Andrew.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: He lives in hope.

THE LORD MAYOR: I will now invite Members to speak on the Minutes and call upon James Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on page 56 Minute 199, the Leeds Strategic Plan. This plan outlines how the Council will work to offer the best possible services to the people of Leeds and I would like to question how the Corporate Contact Centre fits into this plan.

We had a good debate at a Council some months ago when Councillor Brett promised us a review into the Corporate Contact Centre to make sure that the rip-off policies of this administration would be brought to an end. At least, I think that is what he promised. I have read in another document somewhere that they have a preference arranged for waste on a site in the Aire Valley, but apparently that is not an incinerator in Richmond Hill.

Coming back to the point, Councillor Brett promised the best possible value will be brought, this review would be brought swiftly to a conclusion and the Call Centre would stop ripping off people, particularly those people who have pay as you go mobile phones and other facilities, who do not have land lines, for contacting the Council.

I wonder if you would care to comment on the fact that Newcastle and Sunderland Councils offer this facility; Essex police offer this facility; RSPCA offers this facility of an 03 number. It has been made available by OFCOM for several weeks now for low rate calls, yet Leeds City Council still seems to be mired in an ongoing review process.

I hope Councillor Brett will be able to tell us when this reviewing will stop, the procrastination will stop and they will start getting the best deal for the people in Leeds. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am commenting on page 566 Minute 199, the Leeds Strategic Plan 2008-2011, and specifically the city-wide issue of flooding.

When I was approached by a local resident in March after the last round of flooding, I was genuinely surprised that there was £130,000 set aside by this Council to assist residents affected by the floods of June 2007. I assumed it would be long gone. I was amazed to find out that at that time there was 28,000 still unclaimed and I have to ask the question why? Has this administration got anything like an acceptable handle on the issue of flooding or, indeed, its aftermath or our role in the matter? I suggest not.

It seems to me to be indicative of the administration's whole approach to flooding that in June last year - this really comes as no surprise - in this Council Chamber Andrew in July 2007 spoke about lessons being learned but I suggest this has not been the case either. Indeed with Garforth and Swillington flooded again in January, I had again to scabble round trying to ensure sandbags could be deployed to affected areas. Indeed, despite the rhetoric so little seems to have been done to improve internal emergency procedures since last June. It is frankly laughable unless, of course, you are hip deep in water - then it ceases to be funny.

In July's Council Andrew also accused me of being an expert on climate change for having the audacity to suggest we speak to the experts, accept the rains will come again and try to improve those procedures and the infrastructure for when it does. My Lord Mayor, I never claimed to be an expert but this was as inevitable as night following day. The fact we cannot even properly promote what funding is available to people in an acceptable time scale fills me with dread. What happens when, as I suspect they will, the rains come again? No, I am not expert but it is a

simple self-evident fact and one all Councillors in this Chamber must address and Councillor Lyons and I are determined this issue will continue to be highlighted until the administration, frankly, gets a grip.

If as was suggested and the Government's contribution was - and I quote - miserly, why have we not managed to spend the money we ourselves earmarked? What is going on?

In January I had the dreadful task that I never want to go through again of visiting a couple flooded out twice in six months. The lady of the house is suffering with cancer and has attempted to take her own life, such was the utter desolation she felt.

I was promised that easy and affordable remedial work on the culvert outside their home would be undertaken way back in August 2007 and several times after. By January that work still had not been done and, lo and behold, just as they were about to take re-occupation of their premises, it flooded again. What is going on?

I must thank Councillor Richard Brett here who did personally intervene in that particular case and I would like to thank him for that intervention, but that said, only this week on Garforth Main Street I did a walk-about with residents and the water grates remain blocked to the brim. Indeed, there is so much dirt to excavate from them I think it is more a job for Time Team than the City Council, Lord Mayor.

The evidence is there. What lessons have been learned? After nearly one year in this Chamber I have frankly long since given up on the hope of any serious debate from or with the administration. I have no doubt I will again be lambasted but it could be worse - I could be wading about in raw sewage trying to salvage my possessions, feeling suicidal and neglected by the very people who were elected to represent us.

Come on, let us have a serious thrust on the issue right now. Expert I may not be but I suggest we are failing people who look to us for help and is that not, after all, why we are here? While the administration continues this inertia, I suggest we all pray for good weather. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Thank you very much, Lord Mayor. We will miss you when you go - not very much but we will miss you.

I want to speak on page 56, 199, regarding the flooding. As you know Temple Newsam takes in the Dawlishes and it is last year they were badly flooded - it was last year, the year before and the year before that. It gets to a stage where when you are visiting people or being all round that particular area, they still have builders in trying to get their houses so that they can go back and live in them. Some of those are in camper vans, some of them still in hotels and some of them are sleeping upstairs while the work is going on downstairs.

You might think it is an act of God - not the God I worship it is not because he does not do things like that, or should not do, or be prepared to put them right. What we have got now is where the people - and I am talking about the Dunhills - have not got sufficient money to put things right. We have got it where the insurances are talking about £5,000, etc. They cannot afford them.

What are we doing with money in the bank if we have people in our city living like this? It is up to all of us of whatever party to say not only this money but a lot more money should have been put in. It did not happen in South Yorkshire like that. They had thousands and thousands and thousands of pounds going in so that they

could move in immediately and get it done and yet we are still waiting with money in the bank.

While we are on about money in the bank, we can afford £500,000 for an incinerator near Richmond Hill.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: That is the one you built.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: That is the one you built, Mick.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: I hope you are taking my time up because they shut me up last time; they will not shut me up this time.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: The Mick Lyons incinerator.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: I am entitled to speak on this particular Minute on this particular subject.

They are building an incinerator. They will not accept or told untruths about what DEFRA has offered and DEFRA has offered £68.8m towards building an incinerator and a marshalling yard to bring other people's rubbish from...

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Rubbish.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Yes, it is rubbish from London, Manchester and all over the place. What I am asking for is, ask the people of Leeds what they want. Do they want an incinerator or do they want the houses at Dunhills putting up to scratch? Thank you Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lyons, I really do appreciate you finishing early on your speech. Thank you very much indeed.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: It is all right, Lord Mayor

THE LORD MAYOR: Could I now call upon Councillor Iqbal?

COUNCILLOR IQBAL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, I would also like to speak on page 56 Minute 199, regarding the Leeds Strategic Review 2008-2011. Specifically I would like to talk about the crisis we face in burial provision across the city.

The Strategic Review aims to address the issues we will face as a city over the next three years and the extreme shortage of space remaining in our cemeteries is surely one of the most pressing issues confronting us.

Lord Mayor, I am stunned by this administration's lack of action on the issue of cemetery provision. As my colleague, Councillor Rafique, pointed out very recently, a delegation visited Council well over a year ago to highlight the crisis in cemetery provision. This Council agreed to refer the matter to the Executive Board but still no report has been presented. I cannot think of any other deputation put to this Council that has ever been treated with such disregard.

The constant delays and inaction by the administration is staggering. The lack of space in the city cemeteries is now well beyond crisis point. Our cemeteries are almost full but still Councillor Procter's much heralded working group only meets every three or four months.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Rubbish. Absolute rubbish.

COUNCILLOR IQBAL: Listen to this, Council. If Councillor Procter was treating this crisis with the gravity it deserves, then he would be making sure that this working group was meeting every month until the problem is resolved. This crisis is happening now, so why are they not meeting and finding a solution?

Of course, we had a solution six years ago.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: No you did not. What was that?

COUNCILLOR IQBAL: Under the Labour administration...

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Absolutely untrue.

COUNCILLOR IQBAL: ...plans were approved - this is a serious issue and please listen carefully. Plans were approved for a new 46 acre cemetery at Whinmoor Grange.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Untrue. They were not. They were not.

COUNCILLOR IQBAL: Two-and-a-half thousand burial spaces that would have provided adequate facilities for the people of Leeds for years to come, and do not bring Scrutiny issues to me - we have heard that before.

Then in 2004 when the site was just six to twelve months from completion, when over £200,000 of Leeds City residents' taxpayers' money was spent and all that had been spent and highways contracts worth £337,000 had been awarded, Councillor Procter pulled the plug on the proposals and asked the Executive Board to reconsider the strategy.

Since then what progress has been made? Very little. Various proposals have been put forward such as the extension of smaller cemeteries in Garforth, Harehills and other areas, but such options are extremely expensive and will eat into the much-valued green space in these communities.

These proposals do not even come close to alleviating the crisis we face today. It is four years since Councillor Procter pulled the plug on Whinmoor Grange and no other feasible solution has been found, but Councillor Procter does not seem to be concerned about finding one. If he was, I am sure he would make sure his working group met more regularly.

Councillor Brett admitted only last month that extending Harehills cemetery is too expensive, so that is his proposal? A multi-faith cemetery at Whinmoor Grange. Congratulations, Councillor Brett - after four wasted years you now agree with us that Whinmoor Grange cemetery is the best option. Unfortunately your plan for a smaller cemetery at Whinmoor Grange than we proposed is still wholly inadequate. This will not alleviate the crisis, so please, Councillor Brett, do not take another four years before you realise that our initial plan for Whinmoor Grange is the best one.

I wonder if Councillor Procter was aware of Councillor Brett's stance on this issue or did he, like us, have to find out about it through the press?

I know from speaking to residents in my ward and from across the city that the people of Leeds are deeply concerned about the lack of capacity in our cemeteries. Along with my colleagues here on this side, I am a founding member of the Association of Leeds Mosques. This group represents mosques from across the

city regardless of their political views. We even invited Councillors from other parties because it is a sensitive issue and we wanted to find a sensible solution.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: We did. No, we invited you.

COUNCILLOR IQBAL: I organised this Association of Leeds Mosques, called the organisation and invited Councillors from cross parties and the Councillors are here in this very Chamber.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Iqbal, could I draw your attention to the red light, I am afraid. Thank you. (*Applause*).

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Lord Mayor, speaking to Minute 199 page 56. I am sure all of us will agree that the Strategic Plan is a very worthy document laying out future plans and aspirations for the future of this city. Councillor Brett, as you know Members of this Council feel very strongly that they want to have ownership of the delivery of the plan and I know Scrutiny has spent a lot of time debating the question of how Members are going to be involved in the setting of targets and priorities. I hope you have established a way with officers to make that happen. The date for targets is coming up very close and we need to have those decisions in place. I am sure you will agree that it is the delivery of the plan that matters and especially related to delivering what the people of this city have told us are their priorities.

We know that mentioned in the plan one of the key ways of delivering is through partnership and you have just told us we are supposed to be beacons on this very thing, so could Councillor Brett assure us that he will separate himself from the unfortunate comments in the press made by Councillor Carter attacking those in the city who have shown an interest in the future direction of Leeds and those who have called for a wide, inclusive debate about progress?

Lord Mayor, what a contrast Councillor Carter has made to Councillor Minkin in his approach to critical debate on development in this city. I am very, very sorry that she is unable to be at what would have been her last Council. I would like to pay tribute to her service and to her contribution in moving our great city forward. (*hear, hear*)

Liz's approach was to embrace criticism, to bring people together and to work out ways forward based on the result of informed debate - an inclusive approach gaining better decisions and achieving huge progress at the same time. That is why she established LADI, not just for the great and the good but for practitioners and those working on the front line even, dare I say it, including academics. I hope we can all join together in wishing her a speedy recovery and to thank her for her dedication and contribution over many, many years.

I can tell you on this side of the Chamber, we are not alone in looking for a change of direction after May, and end to the half-baked style of leadership you have forced on the people of Leeds and an end to the unwarranted public attack on those working in the city who dare to have a different idea for the future.

Perhaps this form of aggression and bullying is what Councillor Carter means when he proudly describes this administration as "Tory led". Are you happy with that description, Richard? It is in all his leaflets going out all over the city. (*laughter*)

COUNCILLOR BRETT: It is not in ours.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Actually, Richard time is running out. We are looking forward to May 1st, looking forward to the challenge of taking our city forward and to

implementing the future strategy for the Council and, above all, to bringing an end to this tired administration once and for all. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I speak also on Minute 199 page 56. I am very disappointed with the draft plan because it is very much business as usual and it puts me in mind of St Augustine - "Lord, give me chastity, but not yet."

Business as usual will not deal with global warming and much more radical measures are necessary. Lord Mayor, starting from a pre-industrial level of 284 parts per million, atmospheric CO₂ is now 384 parts per million, which is a 35% increase in less than 200 years. The earth responds slowly and so far this CO₂ has produced a rise of about 0.7°C in global temperatures. Even if human production ceased tomorrow, the most recent figures suggest that there is at least another one-and-a-half degrees Centigrade already in the pipeline.

The current European target is to stabilise CO₂ levels around 450 parts per million, but the latest scientific data based on Antarctic ice scores and deforming sediment suggest that 450 parts per million CO₂ corresponds to a completely ice-free world with the complete melting of both polar icecaps.

Melting of the Greenland icecap is estimated to raise sea level by about seven metres, inundating many of the world's capital cities and destroying much of the best agricultural land. Complete melting of the Antarctic icecap would raise sea level by a further 61m, flooding Leeds City Centre. The shoreline would be in Kirkstall and the Abbey would be under water. Long before we reach this point economic collapse, mass migration, starvation, warfare and disease would have seen the end of civilisation as we know it.

Lord Mayor, I believe the following propositions are beyond dispute. One, existing global CO₂ production is already much too high and this has caused the present problems which are rapidly getting worse. Two, carbon dioxide output is likely to rise still further with industrialisation in China, India, South America and the Pacific Rim. Three, if nothing is done, climate change will lead to widespread crop failures, mass starvation, migration, war and disease. Four, we cannot exhort others to show restraint while continuing to offend ourselves. Five, most of the oil will be gone by 2050 although coal will last rather longer and coal has double the carbon dioxide output compared with oil or gas. Seven, Leeds and the UK cannot insulate themselves from global events and, finally, energy costs will rise very considerably during the planned period.

Lord Mayor, our local use of fossil fuels must fall by 90% by 2050 and this can be achieved in two ways - planned or unplanned. If we do nothing, natural forces will bring us back into balance through a steep decline in living standards and through large and brutal reductions in the global population. Alternatively, we could plan for it.

We could and should achieve a 5% annual reduction in fossil fuel use by the Leeds City region year on year for the next century. This means everybody - not just the Council, the public sector. That equates to 45% reduction in CO₂ output by 2020, assuming compound interest. If we miss our target one year, the short falls will be added to the next. Growth in one area must be balanced by increased savings elsewhere.

I believe it is achievable through planning. If it is not planned, it will happen anyway and this will be extremely unpleasant for our children, even if we ourselves are dead.

The 5% annual reduction must be written into the Leeds Strategic Plan, into the Leeds Development Framework and retrospectively added to the Community Development Plan so it can have an immediate effect on planning policies. This would require the Secretary of State's approval but I do not anticipate that he would refuse. We must ask our partners at the Leeds Initiative to adopt the same policy. I believe that many are already waiting for a lead and there will actually be little dissent.

Lord Mayor, this target can be achieved by a systematic attention to detail, by new buildings, better insulation and building design, by combined heat and power, more efficient equipment, greater use of public transport and sustainable transport modes, reducing the need to travel by house or job swaps, sustainable energy, heat pumps and so forth.

We can either achieve this in a planned way and thereby create a city that is fit for the 21st century, or in an unplanned way which will be a thoroughly miserable experience for all concerned. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on Minute 200 page 56 on the Joint Service Centre and I hope Councillor will be pleased to know that, unlike Councillor Illingworth, I have not e-mailed my speech to everyone several times beforehand.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: I have not got it yet.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Don't worry, Mick, you will. I was perplexed as to why the 20-odd year Labour administration had established its One Stop Centres across certain parts of the city but not the most deprived parts of the city while that administration was running the place. There are two in Seacroft, there is one in Halton Moor, there is a plethora of them in South Leeds but there were none in Harehills and there is none in Burmantofts - and there were not any in Richmond Hill either.

Of course, I welcome the JSC coming to the border of Harehills and Burmantofts and Richmond Hill ward because this will bring Council services nearer to the people who can really use them.

One of those Council services will be advice on benefit take-up. Leeds Benefit Service has a proud record of helping a lot of people to claim the benefits to which they are entitled but there are still a large number of people who do not claim the benefits to which they are entitled. Indeed, there was an estimate by, of all people - not an estimate, a statement by - Steven Byers last week that the Government is deliberately discouraging the take-up of income-related benefit to save £9b a year.

He has got the figures from the Department for Work and Pensions. 2005/06, between £1.6b and £2.5b in pension credit - that is the top-up to the basic State pension - was unclaimed. £1.1b to £1.9b in housing benefit was unclaimed. £1.4b to £1.9b in Council tax benefit unclaimed. £970m to £1.4b in Job Seekers Allowance. £650m to £1.5b in income support for non-pensioners. All went unclaimed three years ago.

It has grown since and since then the Department for Work and Pensions has admitted that it will not try to increase the take-up of pension credit because it says it is not cost-effective. Cost-effective for whom?

I hope Leeds City Council will be able to help people who live near the JSC that is going to be built on the Compton Road site, to claim the benefits to which they are entitled. I look forward to that.

Another advice function that the JSC can do will be to let people know where they live. I am glad Councillor Lyons remembered that the flooding did not happen in the Dawlishes, which are in Richmond Hill, but did happen in the Dunhills. He will probably also remember that if he had attended the working parties on the flooding, he would have been told - and I think he might have had the papers - that South Yorkshire had thousands times more money, thousands of pounds more money than West Yorkshire did because the flooding there was far, far worse. That follows.

He might also have seen that the Environment Agency has just announced the funding for the scheme in the Dunhills that that working party was working on. I happen to be a member of the Regional Flood Defence Committee - I am sorry, Lord Mayor, I must declare an interest. I welcome that and I hope Councillor Lyons welcomes that as well.

Another aspect of advice that the JSC can cover would be advice to new arrivals to the country. Councillor Golton referred earlier on to the House of Lords reference to the work done in our schools. I was quite surprised as a Governor of Ebor Gardens Primary to be told by a parent recently that we had had a lord or three around the school and I wondered what it was about. I found out eventually it was members of the House of Lords who had visited that school. They also went to Primrose High School and Councillor Grahame took OSC to that school earlier this year and the OSC visit was very well received and the school gave us valuable information. I hope the JSC will be able to give information to the parents whose children are in the schools. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR A TAYLOR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Again, I am referring to Minute 200 on page 56 about the Joint Service Centre in my ward in Harehills and along with Councillor Pryke I very much welcome this move.

Perhaps most of my time as a Councillor has been spent dealing with many people from the Gipton area and from Harehills who have problems with benefits and the Joint Service Centre will provide an ideal opportunity for people to receive advice at first hand and for that advice to help them on their way.

Councillor Pryke also referred to the Joint Service Centre being a place where people, non-nationals, people from other countries, will hopefully be able to receive help. Harehills has perhaps more than its fair share of people coming into the city from other countries. Let me tell you that Harehills has always had a tradition of welcoming people and that I know will continue and that, I think, is to their credit, but at the moment certainly where I am and in our own church hall at St Aidan's, we are feeding 400 people a week who are unable to receive benefits and in particular receive food.

The Joint Service Centre will be an opportunity for them to access facilities in order to assist them in leading a better life here in this country. It will provide also, along with Shine in Harehills, along with the oncology unit and along with the EASEL project, a focal point for regeneration. I hope that this administration is proud of its achievements in seeking to establish this Joint Service Centre in Harehills. It is very much needed and I know it will be very much used - perhaps even over-used, so thank you to the administration for that. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am going back to page 50 Minute 199 and I want to refer to what Councillor Dobson and Councillor

Lyons did regarding the floods, but with particular reference to the money that was available to residents.

Part of the reason possibly why there was so much left in it I came across maybe two months ago and that is the people whose houses are flooded and who are still not back in their own houses. A number of people I came across and, as I say, luckily I found out that they had not been approached, nobody had been in touch with them and now I am happy to say that they have been reimbursed with some resources from Leeds Community Foundation.

I am concerned about the number of people that have been left out that way and I am not particularly blaming anybody here because obviously it is a difficulty. I have raised the issue with Leeds Community Foundation regarding the closing of the fund, which was supposed to take place on 31st March, because until every citizen has got their just deserts out of that, I do not think we should be closing it. I have also raised it at a meeting and the Deputy Chief Exec was asked to look into the matter, so I am quite satisfied that the administration were looking at this and I do not do this with any criticism, but certainly somewhere along the line we could have done better and I hope if it ever happens again that we can resolve it better than we have done. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Page 56, Minute 199. I would like to respond to the comments made by Councillor Iqbal in relation to Muslim burials.

Councillor Iqbal seems to live in some sort of fantasy, parallel world. When he comes along at my invitation to a meeting of the Muslim Cemetery Working Group he is a genial, pleasant, nice, co-operative member of Council. Perhaps that is because he was accompanied by a number of senior members of his community. He comes here, however, and plays a different card completely.

Lord Mayor, the truth of the matter - and this is something that Councillor Iqbal chooses to ignore and goodness only knows what he tells the community - the truth is that I have given a serious undertaking to the Muslim community that once and for all we will address the issue as an administration of Muslim burials and we will get to a position that the Muslim community is content with.

I have to say, that is not a position that the last administration followed at all. Councillor Iqbal tries to pretend that in some way Whinmoor Grange Farm was the answer to everybody's issues, including the issue of the Muslim community and burials. It was not. It simply was not and the Muslim community actually, when you tackle them on this issue, recognise that. The fact is that only - only - 15 acres were given planning permission at Whinmoor Grange Farm. That is the fact of it, only 15 acres for a multi-faith burial ground - not for the exclusive use of the Muslim community.

Let us look at what the community actually are now saying, and this is effectively news to the Authority because of the work that has been done within the Muslim Cemetery Working Group. We have asked, for the first time, the community what they require in terms of their burial facilities and as short a time ago as Monday of this week I had an e-mail from Taj Ali, the Secretary of Association of Leeds Mosques. I will not read it all out but I will just read a certain bit of it out:

"I was heartened to learn from your e-mail that the issue of cemetery provision is being taken seriously."

I do not think that is critical at all of this administration or the efforts that we are indeed making. In terms of the issues and what we are looking to try and address, what Taj does go on to say, he lists the three issues that we have spoken about in the working group, that a site should consist of no less than 15 acres - no less than 15 acres. That would have taken up the whole of Whinmoor Grange Farm. It was an issue that the last Labour administration had not even got to grips with. You did not even ask the community what they were looking for.

The second issue that he lists is clearly that something be done about Harehills Cemetery and that we move as speedily as possible to deliver an alternative solution, which is what we are doing. Indeed, part of our proposals which the Muslim Cemetery Working Group discussed was just that, to improve existing provision at Harehills. A new plot has been opened up that will last a substantial number of years as it is. It is on a completely different side of the cemetery, it is not a site that gets waterlogged or damaged, it is new, virgin ground effectively as well - all, we believe, the all-party Muslim Cemetery Working Group believe, is positive. The space used by the graves should be undisturbed for 100 years as well; that was another one of the criteria that is there.

I might say, Lord Mayor, I hope that I am seen as someone who has approached this issue with a great deal of sensitivity and care, I may say, and I thank all of those people who serve on the all-party working group with me.

I might say - and I notice Councillor Rafique waving his arm frantically at the Lord Mayor, no doubt he is going to jump up and come out with his normal diatribe on this particular subject - unfortunately some people believe that Councillor Iqbal and Councillor Rafique do this at this time of year, play the race card.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: That is disgraceful.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: You ought to be ashamed of saying that.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: I, on the other hand, Lord Mayor - I said some people. What I say, Lord Mayor, is that I believe what they are doing is they are playing the community card. They are trying to set certain communities against each other, which I do not think is helpful.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Procter, red light, thank you very much. Councillor Grahame.

COUNCILLOR GRAHAME: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on page 56 Minute, 199 to confirm what Councillor Blake said. Yes, the Strategic Plan has come to Scrutiny, it has come to all of the Boards for comments and to Overview again yesterday. We have had Steve Clough at most of the meetings asking for comments. One of the main comments was that there is not enough in it regarding the role that Members play.

I ask you, Councillor Brett, will you be taking notice of the comments from Scrutiny as now Scrutiny is finally being accepted for the role that it has to play and that you will take the comments seriously? Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR MORTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak on Minute 199 on page 56. Obviously any analysis of the challenges facing the city over the next couple of years will include housing.

People may be familiar with a novel called Neverwhere by the novelist Neil Gaiman and he came up with the concept of London above, London below - very

much the London we all know and the London below, a shadowy world with all sorts of odd people who have been excluded from society. It plays with the very well-known sci-fi and fantasy motif of social exclusion becoming so extreme in some cases that it renders people physically invisible and, of course, that does not happen in real life but I sometimes wonder if that happens on a statistical basis and there is a London above, London below motif in social policy.

I want to say a little bit about rough sleeping in the city, as we discuss the Strategic Plan. When I moved to Leeds in 1994 there was a bit of a rough sleeping problem. The city also had massive over capacity of old style hostel accommodation - literally hundreds of spare bed places every night which have now thankfully gone, often in a not particularly empowering delivery mechanism. If you wanted to have an example of the success of a new Labour project in some ways if you have higher social spending and an incredibly targeted culture and a degree of social authoritarianism, you could actually call the rough sleeping as a success story. With the exception of very small parts of central London it is a social problem that has all but gone from Britain to the extent that we used to have it.

There are, however, limits to that approach and I wonder if we have reached them now in Leeds and that is what I wanted to discuss just with a few to the future.

We have at the moment hostel provision in the city. We also have a night shelter provision. They are two things that look similar but are actually quite different. There will be people that, given a day or two to sort themselves out, can move into hostel accommodation for weeks or months. There will always be in an urban metropolis for the time being a need for night shelter provision where people can turn up on a night-by-night basis, often only hours in advance of admission, people who are incredibly chaotic.

This is where we get into invisibility. The Government quite rightly wants value for money. It conducts its own head counts of rough sleeping in its own ways and that shows the city doing very well. I do not necessarily dispute that. I am just saying it is one way of looking at the problem.

There is another way of counting rough sleeping which is done by the voluntary sector and some charities. They perhaps go the extra mile, they look at a wider geographical area, they take people who might be sleeping in a garage or under some kind of cover and do not count in the way that the Government does, and they come up with a higher figure. I suspect the truth is probably somewhere between the two.

The difficulty that the city might now face, however, is that the Government, on the basis of its own reasonable statistics is saying you are doing well, we want to put money somewhere else at a time that we actually cannot afford to lose night shelter provision because the one that we have got is actually full. Indeed, the statistics would suggest that we could do with a handful of additional places.

Over the next couple of months I am very pleased that Councillor Brett has immediately agreed to look into this. We do have some very, very sensitive decisions to make and we could easily make the wrong one for the right reasons.

I just finish on this point. Firstly, I think, in a personal opinion, we have people who are sleeping rough in Leeds at the moment because there is nowhere else for them to go, the existing provision is full. I do not think that is very many people, I think most evenings it is probably only three or four, but if you add all those presentations over 365 days it is enough of a statistical problem for us to address.

Secondly, by accident and for the right motives, we might make that situation worse by looking at the wrong figures and if we cut that provision from about 14 beds at the minute down to ten, that problem will grow.

Thirdly, as I started out with, sometimes people can become invisible for all sorts of reasons and while it makes an interesting conceit for a fantasy novel, it would be a tragedy if it happened to the most vulnerable people in our society in social policy terms. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Rafique.

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: Lord Mayor, I will speak on another occasion on this issue.

THE LORD MAYOR: In that case then, it is Councillor Brett to sum up.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to start by welcoming the comments of Councillor Pryke and Councillor Taylor and Councillor Morton. I confirm that I have agreed to look closely at the issues that he was talking about.

The position with regard to the Contact Centre is that you are going to get the review answer very quickly, that we will be very shortly making public the results of that review.

Councillor Dobson and the flooding, I think it has already been made clear that the unclaimed money, as I understand it, has been looked after by the Leeds Community Foundation and not by ourselves. I am told that in this year's budget there is an additional £1.1m for a whole range of activities connected with flooding. You mentioned, I think, gulleys and we now, perhaps controversially, look at particular gulleys where there might, if they get blocked, be a danger of flooding. We do look more closely at them and check that there is not going to be a high risk that we can avoid.

I am not going to get drawn into incinerators except to say that when I went to look at what I thought were two incinerators in my ward, I found three as you well know, Mick, because you were present at the planning meeting, I believe in 1991, when they were approved but somehow you did not vote, although the record does not show anything about your failure to vote being recorded.

Councillor Iqbal was very gallant. Thank you, Councillor Iqbal, for recognising that we will be here in four years' time. Thank you Councillor Iqbal.

We need to return to the position of the plan and Councillors' involvement in it and yes, of course, Councillor Blake and Councillor Grahame are right to be asking questions about that and, of course, Councillors need to be involved at an Area level in making sure that they understand what is going on in their area and that the targets which they have been helped to set through the procedures that recent seminars have explained, they can and should be involved in this process. If Councillors are not involved, frankly we, the Councillors, are not doing our job.

I find Councillor Blake's comments and references to Councillor Carter opaque. I am afraid I could not understand what she was referring to. I strongly suspect that Councillor Carter, who is quite good at mind reading, will tell her what she was trying to say and, of course, then answer the point that she did not really make very clearly.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: In language even she can understand.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: On global warming I have to say, Councillor Illingworth, that I think you are in the wrong party. I would invite you to look closely at what the Labour Government has done in the last ten years and what other parties - my own and the Green Party - are saying now needs to be done. I find that a lot of the things that you were saying I say yes, bring it on, we need to do those things and I hope that together all parties will agree that that is something we will begin to tackle with increasing seriousness.

I think I have now dealt with most of the issues that are raised so I will stop at that point, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak on Minutes 195 and 196 on pages 54 and 55. Both of these relate to the Leeds Girls' High School and we are actually looking at the two deputations that were made to the Council; one on the Eleanor Lupton Centre and one on the use of the playing pitches and the potential for those to be brought into public ownership.

I would like to briefly touch on the decisions that were made by Exec Board in relation to those two items.

First of all, in relation to the Eleanor Lupton Centre, as members will be aware this is a listed building, one which would be quite difficult to convert but nevertheless one which I think most people, if not everyone in the community, would not want to see turned into a pub or a bar. There have been numerous petitions signed, the MP has got involved and said he does not want to see it becoming a pub and so I was very pleased that the deputation came to full Council asking the Council to make a clear statement on this. I was even more pleased that the Executive Board was then able to say in very strong terms that it would be highly unlikely that the Council would ever grant planning permission for such an outlet, that it would be highly unlikely that the licensing permission would ever be granted and also, given that we have a number of policies in place within the Headingley and Hyde Park area, including the Cumulative Impact Policy, it seems to me virtually impossible that this particular building would ever become a pub.

I was very pleased that the reports made it clear, the officer made it clear that was something that really should not and would not happen and I was pleased that the Board passed that particular resolution.

In relation to the playing pitches on the Leeds Girls' High School site, again this is an issue that has been very contentious in the area. We have had a number of public meetings. You will recall earlier on last year the school came forward with a development plan for the site and as part of that plan there was a proposal to build in part of the playing pitches. That was one of the issues that the community objected strongly to and that was one of the reasons why Exec Board decided to reject that planning brief.

We had a deputation to full Council asking the Council to consider purchasing these facilities for the benefit of the wider community and I am very pleased again that the Executive Board said that it would bring back a report looking at the feasibility of bringing some of all of these facilities into public ownership. I think again that sends out a very strong message that as a Council we do want to protect our green spaces, we do want to protect our sports facilities.

I have to say, Lord Mayor, some of the e-mail correspondence I have had in recent days regarding the playing pitches, regarding the Council's position on this

have been rather disturbing in the light of these very clear resolutions from Executive Board.

I think the peddling of conspiracy theories about things being done behind closed doors does not actually help us at all in reaching a positive outcome for the residents of my ward and the residents of Hyde Park and Woodhouse, because what we want to see is something on that site when eventually the site is sold on and planning applications come in that everyone will support. I think there is every prospect with the help of the Leeds Girls' High School Action Group, who have been working very hard to keep the community involved and, in fact will be holding a meeting on 10 May to ask the community what they want to see on the site, rather than what we have had to do so far which has been opposing what has been proposed. I think that is a very positive move.

I think some of the rather unfortunate comments that have been made that suggest that somehow things have been done behind closed doors are very unfortunate. Actually the Council has taken a very clear position on these two issues. The Action Group is working very hard with the community and I very much hope that the Council, when the planning applications come forward, the final outcome - which may be some years down the line - will be one which we can all support. Thank you Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR JAROSZ: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on page 57, Minute 201.

I welcome this Minute which states that the much-publicised Town and District Parking strategy is moving towards targeting priorities. This Minute states that there will be consultation with ward members and local communities. However, there may be consultation but will the views of local members and residents actually be taken on board? Will the needs of local people actually form the basis of the work which will be carried out in Pudsey to improve parking, particularly for the disabled?

I would hate to see the same problems arising from a misguided parking strategy as arose with the newly refurbished Pudsey market. If we look back at the history of the new Pudsey market, in 2007 Pudsey market was refurbished at a cost of £260,000; the money used to pay for new stalls, improved access for the disabled, CCTV cameras and better paving. Immediately problems were revealed with the new stalls in the market, the stalls being constructed at too high a level for stallholders to use. One vendor had to use the steps to reach the stall.

At a meeting to discuss the refurbishment of the market, traders asked the Council if they could be consulted about the design of the stall and that request was refused. Then we get to January of this year, the Leeds - Live It, Love It website, designed and updated by Marketing Leeds, which cost the Council £400,000 a year to run, purports to give directions to Pudsey market. Unfortunately the map supposed to show the location of Pudsey market actually shows the location of a town called Coffeyville in the state of Kansas in the United States.

Then we get to March this year and there are rumours abounding by the traders who have stalls in Pudsey market that they have been spied on. It is alleged that marketing management is using the CCTV cameras to spy on the traders going about their business. It is an allegation that has been made.

What I would just emphasise is consultation is not enough. You need to actually listen to the community and then act upon what you hear. Thank you, my Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR KIRKLAND: Yes, my Lord Mayor. Page 57, Minute 201. The first thing I would like to do is to declare an interest in the house in which I live. It should be self-evident but it is because I am going to use it as an illustration of one of the problems we have in Otley.

Adequate and convenient parking with a consistent availability of spaces is part of the essential basis for good, successful retail trading and the provision of good, legal, financial and other services. Those of you who have read the appendix to the reports of the Executive Board will know that Otley is a large town and that it is quite a long time since there was a parking review and it suggests that there is need for an early review.

The ward members fully endorse the need for an early review and we hope that the ward members and the Town Council will be fully involved in the research phase. The last review, when Labour were in control and I was an elected member, I was excluded from consultation. That is not good enough. Councillors at a local level must be fully consulted.

The final result was, as I said at the time, a great work of fiction. For example, the drive to my house, which is not particularly big, was said to have four public car parking spaces in it. The only way you could do that, Lord Mayor, is to stack the cars on top of each other.

In Otley we need a parking review urgently because the library was built on a car park - a very good library, I would support it 100% but nevertheless it was built on a car park. The parking spaces were supposedly going to be re-provided. Nobody knows where the reprovision actually is.

There are proposals to sell, in the very near future - in fact one is out for tender at the moment - two more of the car parks in Otley, so it is absolutely essential that we get in the town centre local, convenient car parking spaces with a quick turnover. Yeadon, which is also in my ward, also needs a review for exactly the same reasons. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR MORTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak on page 54, Minute 195 and page 55, Minute 196.

I am really pleased and quite pleasantly surprised by the two Executive Board Reports on the Eleanor Lupton Centre and also the Leeds Girls' High School and I think when we get things right it is worth standing up and saying that because it can be a negative profession at times, politics.

Firstly, around the Eleanor Lupton Centre. The first reason I am pleasantly surprised is there has been an understandable and legitimate officer resistance to go this far. There is a terror grounded in real fears that we might prejudice further planning applications but there is no reason why we should not stand up quite boldly and talk about the policies that we have all passed.

I know that there is a widespread cynicism, including at times inside my own party, about the issue around alcohol-related disorder in Headingley; that this is basically a middle-class suburb that moans a lot because there are some young people enjoying themselves. Go and live there if you think that, that would be my advice. Over the last ten years we have to impose what was really the first Cumulative Impact Policy outside the city centre and at the time people said is it really a suburb? The phenomenon of CIPs will prove that it has a positive effect and that has now been rolled out across the city.

We were I think second after Wetherby to have outside the city centre - again some cynicism it had an effect at least on the culture of the police although we have not actually prosecuted that many people. In terms of planning, anybody involved in Leeds City politics spends half their life on town centre issues, we have more live applications now in terms of food and drink usage. Policing, we spent a fortune over time dedicated to this, the whole of the Headingley CCTV scheme was predicated on this and in my contrary ways I famously opposed it because I said what would happen would be the police would roll over on their licensing applications and because they say there is CCTV coverage if anything goes wrong and, of course, the deal was done where the licensees paid for an extra camera. I think that has been proved broadly right. No-one is ever prosecuted on the basis of CCTV evidence; it just monitors for the higher level stuff. The rarely used Police Authority referrals have a kind of special forum night.

We have done an awful lot of work and I think really that ten years later the Executive Board report is a sign of that cultural change, that this is a really important problem, it is a community that is in distress and, of course, when it comes to planning if it gets there I hope the school will look at this and realise what will happen to its reputation if it sells to a pub chain. If it does it will be dealt with in a quasi-judicial manner and quite rightly so, but we have done the best that we can for our residents and I am grateful for all those involved.

Leeds Girls' High School playing fields – very difficult and quite complex. Despite the obvious temptations to play to the gallery, I have never actually said publicly, and I will now, that the Council buy the playing fields, for the simple reason that I do not know where the money would come from. I think it is dishonest in the end to promise people things that we cannot pay for.

What I will say is I hope that it is given the strongest consideration and that we will try and do something. If that is (*inaudible*) sometimes that is what politics is about. Unless you have lived in this kind of community, as I have done, it is the most densely populated and I think sometimes Harehills and I argue about the most densely populated parts of the city but it is certainly one of the two of them. Lots of back-to-back housing, very few gardens, emotional and psychological pressure. The response you get to any threat to green space has to be appreciated.

Then we come on to the NC6 protecting playing pitches. Not that the green space that we talk about is actually green – there are some fairly ugly tennis courts and this is where you get into the world of murky trade-offs. The school clearly feels that it has a right to sell some of this land at housing prices. You can only fetch housing prices for land if it is actually housing land and these courts are not, but also for argument's sake the school say their birthright only applies if you give away the N6 protected status for these pitches and I do not think we should – I think this an area where we should have a red line. I am pleased that the Council is looking at it and perhaps we could do a little bit more.

Thirdly and finally, I think the other reason that I am pleased with these two reports is that we did not get off to a very good start last October when the round table meetings with the school and local residents and Council happened. I will not say more about that now but it has not been rescheduled, there are other things that have been put in place and I think this olive branch, if I can call it that, in the form of the very positively worded Executive Board papers will go a long way towards building some bridges.

Final comment. We have had an absolutely superb community group in the Leeds Girls' High School Action Group, you could not have wanted a better community group – locally grounded, high calibre local resident (*inaudible*) the site

will be a substantial housing development, it is a windfall site and new homes are putting in this money as a small contribution towards it. They have therefore prepared to negotiate and the Council, using their taxes and elected by them, should (*inaudible*) it is an important step forward. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. If we can deal with the issues of the Eleanor Lupton Centre and the Leeds Girls' High School first.

As regards the Eleanor Lupton Centre, I think we just need to be a little careful because it will at some stage, I guess, be the subject of a planning application, so I am pleased to note that no members of the Plans Panel have spoken on the issue. As I am not a member of the Plans Panel, I feel I am a little less constrained and therefore I can say, as I have said in writing to numerous people and I think I have said in the Exec Board, I would be totally opposed personally to the Eleanor Lupton Centre being converted into a bar or an entertainment venue really of any sort at all. I think it is an important building externally and internally and I hope that a use can be found for that building which the community in general – but also many other interested people who live in Leeds and who have known that building for a long time – are happy with. I have made that very clear, so has Councillor Brett and so have numerous other leading members of the administration who do not serve on the Planning Panel.

Leeds Girls' High School. Again, we have to be a little careful because there will be a planning application at some stage, but I take on board Councillor Hamilton's comments in particular. He made a point about rumours circulating, I think, that were unhelpful so I am going to try and clarify the situation as much as it possible.

It is the wish of this administration that that very sensitive site is developed in a way which is complementary to the area. We all have to accept that it is a brownfield site and will be developed. There is the issue, then, of three areas of green space. There is the area of green space which up to press the grammar school have indicated they are prepared to dedicate as a public area of open space. I cannot just tell you the road it is adjacent to but it is below the junior school, as I recall, having visited on two occasions.

There is then the swimming pool and the undersized sports pitch to the rear. What we hope can be achieved is that that swimming pool can have some public access by one route or another. What we also hope we can achieve is that the sports pitch is maintained as an informal green space. I think it is generally accepted that it is an under-sized sports pitch, it is not actually used as a sports pitch now, I do not think, it is just an open green space but Councillor Morton is right in terms of density of population in the area, but it actually is something which as an Authority I think we need to increasingly address all around the city, and that is where there is an opportunity to preserve a green space we should be doing whatever we can through the planning process for preference to preserve that, so we have a major opportunity there.

What I want to see happen is, our Planning Officers are in discussions with Leeds Girls' High School. I hope that that will result in something coming forward that we can then consult upon in a much more positive way than was previously the case.

A word of warning that I would give is this. I do not think it is in anybody's interests – and I can say this because I doubt we have any great electoral interest in the area so I say it actually to the other two parties who are involved there – that playing about with this is a very dangerous game, because at the end of the day a

planning application could be lodged which subsequently goes to appeal which takes it completely out of the hands of this Local Authority and all along I have warned the Member of Parliament and everybody else that if that is where we end up, it is a dangerous position indeed.

Very quickly, because the orange light is on, the car parking strategy is there to deliver more short stay car parking to help us regenerate our small town centres. Regrettably, it was never done before and we have now, in our small town centres, restrictions in place which are stifling economic development and stifling our small businesses and small shops and that has to stop.

I have to say, Councillor Jarosz, you spent 20-odd years here allowing that to develop; we have spent the last three-and-a-half trying to put it right and we intend to put it right. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak on page 57 Minute 202, the Strategic Affordable Housing Partnership. Could I say that I have been pleasantly surprised as a member of the Partnership by the way it works. There is a kind of working group of individuals. I was not expecting it to be quite as good in the way that everybody contributes and I think that is very welcome.

However, I do wonder, we have all the usual suspects on there. We have got the housing corporation, government office, politicians. I do wonder whether there is one group that should be included and that is the Leeds Tenants' Federation, because the Tenants' Federation has campaigned on the issue of right to rent and I think that in terms of getting some kind of reassurance to that particular organisation, it would be helpful to have them involved.

I would also like to raise concerns about quite where we are going with the partnership, because back in 2003 we as a party came up with a policy of where an ALMO cleared a site, once the costs of clearing that site were taken out of the way, the capital receipt would go 60% to the ALMO, 40% back to the Council. That was done for a very clear reason and that was about saying to the ALMOs, you are not just about managing agents, your role is a bit more than that. It is about looking at the stock that you have got and saying is this stock anything more than marginal, should we consider, given that we have got this incentive to actually take some stock out of use if it is not for the long term future, that is what we should do.

You came in and you did away with that policy and I think perhaps the impact is now being felt because we are seeing that there are actually fewer sites coming through that are attractive for the Partnership, so I think it was short-sighted, what you did, and I hope that you can give consideration to what you can do about that.

I think there will be some opportunities that have seriously been lost through that and that is a great pity.

I also have concerns that we talk about a Strategic Affordable Housing Partnership but it is not strategic in that it still does not cover all parts of the city. Most of the sites, the initial sites, were all within Labour wards except for, I think, one or two – one in Morley, one in Rothwell, I think. There has been an opportunity for other members to put forward sites. From your own group there has only been Ronnie Feldman who has put a site forward – apart from Andrew, sorry. This is the information I was given by officers – I know Andrew has put forward a site. I am quite concerned that there are quite a few members on your side who absolutely oppose the idea of affordable housing in their areas and that was very clear at the Executive Board meeting where, while people might be saying, "Oh yes, we are quite happy to have affordable housing", the message was, "Not in my back yard."

I would say to your members, this policy has to be city-wide. We cannot have areas where we do not have affordable housing; there is a need for affordable housing across the city and on our side we are quite prepared to support any land swaps between general fund housing revenue account – it may actually, I think, go against our interests as ward members because it has to be across the city. There has to be affordable housing in every part of this city where there is need. That need is particularly strong, I think, in the outer areas, probably in the north north-west and I hope, again, that your Members will look again and try and identify sites that are usable for affordable housing and we will happily support that. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Page 57, Minute 202. Can I just correct Councillor Lewis on his comment about the one site?

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Cannot hear you, Colin.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: I can hear you, Mick.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: You will hear a little bit of sense, then.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Actually you have been misinformed because there have been quite a number of sites.

COUNCILLOR LEWIS: It is what officers told me, Colin.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Lord Mayor, I have to say this country is facing a housing crisis. House prices have risen to a point where for many owning a home is just a distant aspiration. In fact there was a programme on the radio today as I was coming in which said that somebody on the average income will now have to borrow nine times their annual salary to get the deposit on even the smallest of family houses and that, unfortunately, is just not good enough.

It is unfortunate, Lord Mayor, I think that the government have perhaps not really given this the attention it deserves. I do understand that from today they have introduced a new quango to look into this particular problem. I cannot help feel that the salary of the staff of the quango might well go towards providing affordable housing, but sadly that is not likely to happen.

Given their role in the crisis I have little confidence in the government's ability to deal with it. I am therefore happy to welcome this Minute, which is part of this administration's approach to the housing crisis in Leeds and I have to say I look forward to more progress on this area in the future and, with Les's indulgence, it is traditional on this Council for residents of Otley to speak up on behalf of Middleton ward (*laughter*) and, as no other resident of Otley has mentioned this, can I on behalf of the residents of Middleton thank the administration for page 55 Minute 197. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. As Councillor Lewis has raised this particular issue and as I chair the Strategic Housing Partnership, I felt I should comment, if only briefly.

First of all, thank you, Councillor Lewis, for your measured approach to your comments and also for congratulating us on the way it is developing, because the first three or four meetings have been extremely constructive.

I have to say to you it was in 2004 when we took over and, as regards affordable housing, any vision or strategic drive, we inherited a void. There was nothing and there was not going to be anything because the officers in the two departments concerned were not even talking to each other, I regret to say, on this particular issue and it has taken some considerable time and effort, but I have to say now this vision for creating affordable housing everywhere across the city has been taken on board by elected members of all sides and by officers in both the Development Department and in Neighbourhoods and Housing.

I am interested that you were a lot more careful about your words than your Leader was at the last Executive Board meeting, when I challenged him to identify which capital programmes he was going to chop to insert land into the programme for affordable housing. You interestingly used the two words "land swaps", because actually that is what it comes down to.

We are constrained greatly about the locations of affordable housing sites for two reasons: one, because you sold off so much of our land in certain areas of the city notably not represented by members of your own party. The result is that the Housing Revenue Account land that we now have predominantly lies in wards that are not represented by some of my colleagues and indeed some of your colleagues, I might say, and certainly members over here. If we are to truly get affordable housing being built in every ward in the city, then we have to find a way and land swap may be a way of doing it to achieve that, because we cannot do what Councillor Wakefield seemed to suggest, which is just to take away earmarked assets the capital receipt from which is already dedicated towards education, social services, the road, the arena – we are back on the Peter Gruen kick that we had a couple of cycles ago. You cannot spend the same money more than once. We know your government think you can but that is precisely why we are in the economic mess that we are in now.

Quite frankly, if any of your party want to say there should be more affordable housing on other areas of land other than we have identified and those areas of land are already in the Capital Receipt Programme, then you had better tell the people of Leeds what you are going to cut to do it, because you cannot have it both ways.

However, what I can promise you we will do is we will look very carefully at where we have assets in terms of land elsewhere in this city that could be used for affordable housing for sale and for rent, and we will look at how we could make sure we address provision in every ward in the city. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: My Lord Mayor, I believe Councillor Carter covered most of the points that have actually been raised on this particular subject. I just want to make a couple of points.

Affordable housing is not purely just finding land and building on it. There is the planning situation which has been sadly neglected for a long, long time, when affordable housing is part of the requirement to build new land. A lot of that will go into the areas which you are saying we are not building affordable housing in. A lot of them will have applications in property, a lot of them will have the need to build affordable housing.

It is not one thing that fits all. We have got to think of all the different ways of ensuring that people get affordable housing. The EASEL project – a massive project – that will bring affordable housing. That will be on land that we particularly own.

You asked about the Leeds Tenants' Federation. I am not sure if you know, the Leeds Tenant's Federation are now changing their status into a company. I do

not know if you know that or you do or do not know it. I think it needs looking at before we simply say we should take somebody from Leeds Tenant's Federation and place them on this particular body. I would not be supportive at this particular stage. Lots of people have campaigned for all sorts of different things.

The next way forward, of course, that we have got to look at, what we have been concentrating on an awful lot in here is existing property that we have got. Needless to say we have spent £800m on that and that has affected Council houses. PFI, we have now got £300m –worth of credits for PFI schemes. Lovell Towers – we do well, put your hand up there, congratulations on all the work you did there. Marvellous job, £2.3m to get Lovell Towers right. I hope the people in Headingley or Hyde Park would say come on we will vote for you because you did a good job there.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: The Lord Mayor will make you sit down, you cannot say things like that!

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I am sorry, I will withdraw that. There are masses of schemes, there are masses of things being done. At the moment my only worry now is, I will be quite honest, is the economic condition of the country and that does put fear into me because the question of mortgages, they are just wiping mortgages out, it is happening at the present time, difficulty to obtain them, not a slow down but what we will find in property is not that people are buying houses cheaper – people will not be selling houses. They will stay where they are and then you have got to encourage people to develop houses at a time when you cannot sell them, or will find it very hard to sell.

I think we are going into a very, very difficult time. I am not certain Gordon Brown would know how the heck to get us out. We do not have a clue how he got there and I do not think he has a clue how to get us out of it.

On this particular point, affordable housing, affordable housing is being built in this city. It is interesting that this administration along with my colleagues over here are actually doing it and you failed in 24 years to do anything. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Children's Services Portfolio, Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on page 58 Minute 204, Fountain Primary School, rationalisation on to one site. I just pass on really our thanks to Richard Harker, who I know has worked very hard on this particular one, and also to acknowledge the work of the governing body and our own Judith Elliott, who is on the governing body and has worked exceptionally hard to put the case for Fountain Primary. Fountain Primary is a good school, it is an improving school, this is a very positive development in terms of making sure that we have achieved the best quality of education we can in this particular location. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR DRIVER: Lord Mayor, I want to speak on Minute 206 on page 59. One of the things, Lord Mayor, which strikes me about the resolutions with regard to admissions in this city is that they show very little sense of joined-up thinking about our educational priorities in Leeds. They are nice and comfortably parochial, just as Councillor Finnigan wants to have a small matter sorted out in his particular neck of the woods. That is what it looks like.

Unfortunately we do have some very large issues to do with, for one example we have double the national average number of pupils who left school in Leeds without any qualifications. We have ten per cent of school leavers who are NEETS,

who go out of school – 6% we do not know anything about further and yet we can deal with admissions as if those problems did not exist. I think that is a tragedy. It is losing an opportunity to think creatively about the sorts of changes we need and which Councillor Wakefield in his budget speech at the last Council meeting talked but as being the sorts of priorities we needed to sort out in terms of the best use of our resources.

I feel, Lord Mayor, that we had a city that has been divided against itself educationally in this sense for many, many years and we have part of the city where these kind of admission packages are just nice and comfortable, thank you very much, and fit everybody - or practically everybody - and there are other parts of the city where people get what is on offer and it does not fit. That is why we have the NEETS problem largely concentrated in the areas of the twelve inner city wards.

We find at the same time that we have a Council that not only ignores the outcomes of this, but actually reduces the resources for education and training in the city at the same time. That is damned disgraceful and I want to put my marker down about closing down Family Learning Centres or reducing them. Jobs and skills, where we need to be increasing the number of staff that are involved in that as a Council and we are actually reducing them. We are not thinking all together about this. It is all very well for Children's Services to expand and become the new big silo of the city, but if it is not joined-up thinking we will end up with more of the same problems going on and on. Again, as I was saying at the Narrowing the Gap meeting this morning, we recycle the same problems for the same individuals in this city time and time again, their families and their children and their grandchildren.

I think, Lord Mayor, we have got to think much more creatively than we have done about our admissions policy, about every step we take. The fact that it is simply ignored is not good enough. Lord Mayor, I will leave that for other people to judge whether they have got the same problems as I have, but I know from the ward I represent these issues are paramount. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think I need to echo Robert Finnigan's remarks about Judith Elliott. I thought she was applying to join the Liberal Democrats, the number of times she has sat outside my office over the last six months knocking on the door demanding to be let in. She is an extremely good Councillor and governor of Fountain Street and I am very pleased that we have been able, after a lot of work to be able to bring the school on to one site together.

I am sure that Councillor Driver was hanging something on admissions. I am not quite sure what it was. Admissions is about giving parents preference, and I hope you all notice I have used the word "preference" and not choice, because the misuse by the Government of the word "choice" leads to all sorts of problems. There is not choice, there is preference in this city.

For September 2008, 84.3% of parents got their first choice of school. That is above the national average by a significant percentage. I have not got the figures for this year but so far my telephone has rung less often from Councillors about appeals.

I would like to say something at this moment on appeals. Councillor Andrew Carter and I had the opportunity a few weeks ago to have a conversation with the Secretary of State Ed Balls demanding to know why it was that this Government thought that ordinary Councillors in any Authority had a conflict of interest when it came to representing parents in their ward at school appeals.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Hear, hear.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: This is an appalling situation. I can understand possibly why I should not appear, as I hold the portfolio, but I cannot understand why the other 98 Councillor in this Chamber should be deprived of the right of representing parents in their wards at school appeals. This is an appalling move by Central Government and I hope that you will support this administration in our protests to Government. Thank you. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to follow up my colleague there and to sum up.

Councillor Driver, he really was hanging quite a lot on the admissions issue that came from that particular meeting. In terms of the "Not in Education, Employment or Training", I am glad you have brought that up, actually, and hung it on that particular issue, because it was an issue that caused concern recently at a Scrutiny Board enquiry. It did mean, of course, that we were able to look into it that little bit deeper just to make sure that what we did have was assured in terms of our figures.

What I can let Councillor Driver know - he might manage to forget but I will remind him anyway - the validated data - because there was an issue with the company that we used to provide the data - shows that the "not knowns" figure at the beginning of 2008 was 6.3%, which is the lowest ever for Leeds. I also point out that the combined figure for "Not in Employment, Education or Training" and "not knowns", is 16.3%, which is the lowest ever for Leeds. I just wanted to put that across because the line that you were giving, Geoff, was a little bit more negative.

In terms of the choices that are given to parents across the city and how you are trying to make out that the admissions by being a little bit more complicated and not being overly general, basically it points out as far as I am concerned that one size does not fit all in terms of circumstances across the city and that also goes in terms of the needs of different schools across the city and the needs of different parents across the city.

I was expecting something from the side over there in terms of looking at attendance and attainment, because these are priorities for us to tackle as an administration because it is still one of those areas which is being very hard to budge in terms of our achievement for children in this city.

What I will say in those areas is that every one of those children is unique and the more flexible that we are able to respond to their needs, the better that we will be able to affect the figures overall for the city.

Some of the factors that bring down our particular figures in terms of attainment and attendance I will list them to you. One is deprivation - also life opportunities. Others are learning for special educational needs, parenting support, curriculum in terms of personalisation, pupil and family mobility, exclusions and the quality of teaching and learning in schools.

In all of those areas I will show you where we are actually responding to that and it is one of the reasons why our performance is improving.

In terms of deprivation and life opportunities, of course, we have been dealt a very bad hand by the Government. Simply because we are doing well as a city in terms of regeneration and making sure that our Super Output Areas in the most deprived have actually gone down, we should not actually be punished by those areas which are still the most deprived not getting money they deserve because they do not fit in with the Government's equation and that is why the work we have been

doing to get attainment and attendance up in those areas will be affected by the withdrawal of those NRF funds and our inability to access Local Neighbourhood Schemes.

In terms of parenting support and skills, you talk about the Family Learning Centre being closed. You choose to ignore the fact that we have the biggest network of children's centres of any Local Authority and we are due to expand them. Those are specifically in place to ensure that our parents get all the support that they need to ensure that their children attain and attend as best as they can.

In terms of curriculum, in terms of personalisation and alternative curriculum, we have already pointed out the successes that we have had in terms of enabling funding into the city to sort out children who are hard to reach, because we want to make sure that we are reaching them all, and that will ensure that they do have access to a greater personalisation curriculum and also to make sure that they also have opportunities to those vocational opportunities that Councillor Driver was welcoming earlier. We want to make sure that we are engaging with that Government priority.

We also note that Alan Reece has been appointed specifically to ensure that the most vulnerable children in our cohort, which are those who are in the Local Authority care, are also being addressed sufficiently by the schools in terms of having individual learning plans and he will be taking those up individually with the Heads across the city.

In terms of pupil and family mobility, you will have realised that recently we had a bit of an issue in terms of the Government trying to make out that we were one of the worst in the country in knowing where our children were when they were out of education. We were actually able to point out that the level of detail that we were providing showed how good we were at knowing where our pupils were and this is one of the areas which is the most difficult to tackle in terms of ensuring that our children attain and attend, because once we have found out where they are we can ensure that they do get those personal plans and we are an exemplar Authority for that.

I could go on but I am not going to. I just wanted to point out, Geoff, that by being negative about the city and, in particular, about the opportunities that are available for our children in challenged communities, you are actually doing yourself a disservice. You could actually talk about the fantastic things that are happening in South Leeds High School which you yourself took me down to that campus to show me. You could also join with Councillor Harker when he is talking about John Smeaton and how a school which supports some challenged communities can actually turn round very effectively with a decent governing body...

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: You are going to claim the credit, are you?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: ...and a decent head and also, of course, from a decent focus from the administration. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: We now have an amendment to the reference back. Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I was beginning to wonder when David Morton kept popping up for his farewell Council whether we were going to get to here, but we would still like to wish you all the best, David. I actually think that you have made a very lively and memorable contribution to the life of this Council and we certainly wish you all the best, except in politics, in your social life

and economic life and employment life. I understand you are going to America. In the Presidential elections many of us are trying to guess which candidate you will be supporting. Somebody said it may well be Ralph Nader because he is a maverick, so we look forward to seeing what impact you have in the future but again, from our side, we wish you all the best, David, in your future. (*Applause*)

I wanted to move a reference back, hopefully in a constructive way, because I think the decision to end the £23,000 to Relate was not only deeply damaging to that organisation but I believe deeply flawed in the process. I think Members will probably want to hear all the information I have certainly got and want to reflect whether this was a good decision.

Back in December Councillor Mark Harris, when he was Leader, offered very warm and supportive words about Relate and offered to try and get the £23,000 for Relate, even if it meant going external. I do not think I am misquoting you, Mark. Again in January Councillor Brett was being very positive in supporting about Relate and the work also offered to have a look. Even Councillor Andrew Carter - who is not here - offered warm and supportive words to have a look at this debate.

Basically I think they recognised, certainly publicly, some of the work they do. They do do really vital work in our cities. They counsel couples and relationships when they are under stress - some of it from finance, some of it from alcohol and some of it - and they reminded me last week - because they are having to deal with illnesses like cancer in the family, and that places enormous strains and pressures on a relationship.

I think that here is an organisation that all the Leaders recognise - and we do - as doing vital work, yet some months ago we get a paper at the last Executive Board which says that this organisation is not linked to our corporate priorities any more. This is an organisation, a voluntary sector organisation, that was recognised as a key organisation and funded for three continuous years, yet suddenly in 2008 they are not doing what they call "linked up to our corporate priorities", which are Narrowing the Gap and looking after children.

I went down to have a look and said, "Look, have you got any information that can justify £23,000? It is not a lot of money but we want to know if there is justification in your work?" They showed me some of the work they were doing in the areas. In Richmond Hill and Burmantofts they had over 50 clients. In Harehills they had over 50 clients. In Crossgates and Whinmoor they had 98 clients. This was about trying to keep relationships together, trying to advise people, many with children, and trying to say to them, "Stick together and work out your problems."

I cannot believe that is not linked to a corporate priority of ours. I just do not accept that because if you just think, if those children - and the evidence is overwhelming that if that couple stays together the children of that couple actually perform better by 80% and actually their attendance is better by 80% and I think we can all work out reasons why that is. For me, the evidence is overwhelming that Relate do good work in our inner cities and so on.

There was another argument in that paper that I think is highly dangerous. It said, "It is not linked to our corporate priorities and we have statutory bodies doing that work." I think for any paper to say that is a very dangerous game because we do work in debt counselling as a Council but we also fund the Citizens' Advice Bureau to £1m doing exactly the same work and we do that because we value the work of the Citizens' Advice Bureau. We value the work of the voluntary sector and, I think, come the day when officers start to say that we are doing the statutory work instead

of the voluntary sector, I think it is a very bad day for the voluntary sector and a very bad day for democracy.

I would just say this. If you cannot fit it into Social Services because they are under pressure, is there not an argument for it to come out of Children's Services? Isn't there an argument to come out of Corporate Services? I will not quote you all the money that we have talked about that is wasted on consultants, structures and so on. I think there must be an argument to look again at their work in our inner cities which they do not charge for if parents are on low incomes, look at the outcomes of the work. They have got information which I am told officers have never asked for, they have got it there and yet they are now being cut off from any funding from this Council, which means they will be forced to working with more wealthier families and they will be forced out of the inner city into the outer city because they charge £45 an hour.

Just up the road - and I never quote Bradford as a role model - they fund quite generously Relate and, in fact, our PCT fund Relate and they do it on a Service Level Agreement. I genuinely put it to you, Richard, or anybody else, let us vote - this is not going to win us an election, I think it is a question of justice but let us vote - for a review and a look at this again, get all the information on the table and give Relate a fair chance of carrying out their vital work with our vulnerable families in this city. I move, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR A McKENNA: Lord Mayor, I am saddened to be standing here again asking Council to reconsider the decision to stop funding Relate. Councillor Wakefield has already shown you the consequences of that decision. He has highlighted the facts and figures but I want to talk about the cost to families, not just the financial cost.

You have priced people out of being able to access the help they need. You have condemned children across Leeds and particularly in the less affluent areas to unhappy family lives. This coalition has denied children the right to a happy childhood free of stress and worry. I wonder how many people in this Council Chamber have not been affected either directly or indirectly by a relationship breakdown. Not many, I guess, yet despite a personal experience and, I would hope, an understanding of the emotional stress and upset such breakdowns cause, you still took this decision to remove the funding.

Without this money, this paltry £23,000, Relate can no longer afford to offer the concessionary rates that it used to. As a result they have seen massive drops in the numbers of people accessing their services from the more deprived areas of the city. More and more people are turning to Relate in Bradford, who still offer reduced rates. By removing this funding you are slowly killing Relate in Leeds. It is finding it increasingly difficult to survive with the number of clients dropping and it will not be long before they disappear. I would not like that to be a great legacy for you to leave - you were responsible for the demise of Relate in Leeds. I would not want that on my conscience.

I have stood here in this Council before and spoken about my own experience of domestic violence from a previous relationship, so I do know what I am talking about when I tell you the immeasurable value of a service such as Relate. I have been told by Relate of a case where a couple came for counselling during which an admission was made that the wife was being abused by her husband. Relate wanted to initiate separate sessions for the husband and wife, which is normal practice. Unfortunately the husband had control of the finances and refused to pay for the sessions. Relate had to stand by and watch the couple go back to an abusive

relationship as they could no longer offer the concessionary rates. How exactly has your decision helped that poor woman?

Relate in Leeds is a pilot for how to handle cases of domestic violence nationally. This is something to be proud of but how are we supporting this? By taking away their funding. That shows a real belief in Leeds and what can we achieve, I don't think. You said in your reasons for not funding them they made no difference to Social Services but you do not seem to understand that people turn to Relate before they turn to Social Services. You have no way of knowing how much money they have saved the Council in terms of Social Services, housing and in helping to solve financial problems.

People may be reluctant to go to Social Services when they need help but feel more comfortable in speaking to somebody in Relate. Having Relate there gives someone somewhere to turn to in the hour of need instead of involving the Local Authority and you have completely glossed over this. You have removed choice from the people and that is wrong.

In June 2007 when questioned about Relate, Councillor Mark Harris said that no-one in this Chamber would begrudge a penny to any organisation, person, family or child and he went on to talk about funding, it was a difficult decision that he had made and this is what he said:

“It is because priorities have to be set to make the money available to go round in a way that has the greatest effect to help the greatest number of people.”

What I and the people working for Relate and the countless number of people who turn to Relate would like to know is how letting Leeds United off £100,000 of parking charges, £74,000 business rate, is helping the greatest number of people and what kind of prioritising is that when you put a football team above the hard working families and innocent children of Leeds? How on earth can you justify that?

I cannot believe that when Relate are only asking for £23,000 that money cannot be found. The decisions you have made with regard to Relate are scandalous and that is why I am seconding this request for this reference back. Please think about the consequences of your decision and I appeal to every single one of you in this Chamber to think about your conscience, not just follow the crowd. This is far too important to fall victim of toeing the group line. Please do the right thing. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR BRETT: There is no question, Lord Mayor, that we on this side regard Relate as an extremely worthy voluntary sector organisation doing a good job. That is not a difference between us.

I think this boils down to do we believe that every voluntary sector group that is proved to be doing a worthwhile job should be funded by the Council, and I have to say that on our side the answer to that would be no, we do not simply accept because an organisation is worthwhile that it is a meal ticket, that is you have got to get some money.

The difficult financial climate that we are in means that Council has to ask the voluntary sector to provide clear services that we understand. The commissioning regime that we are coming into, whether it is Children's, whether it is Social Services, means that we have to ask what is this group providing that we want to purchase, that we need? When we have looked at this - and I think we have looked at it about

three times now, it keeps on coming back - every time somebody says yes, Relate is a good organisation doing a good job, we will look at it.

If we were to say we are not sure what use we are going to make of this organisation, we are not sure how it fits into what Social Services actually need - because the key question that we have asked of officers is, when you are in need of counselling expertise, do you ever ask Relate to do that job? If the answer in Children's Services or in Social Services was yes, we do ask Relate to do that particular, specialised job, we would be giving a different answer. We would have a clear need to say yes, we can understand, small though it may be, £23,000 - if anyone says to me can the Council not find £23,000, certainly £23,000 if we find that there is a real need, there is in reserve some moneys, but you would be opening a flood gate if you said to us that every time a voluntary sector group was proved to be worthy and doing a good job, that they should command funding. There has to be, sadly, in these difficult times where commissioning has with it a clear understanding of what that voluntary sector group is going to do, there has to be something that links what the Council needs for its children, for its old people, and in this particular case every time the question has been asked, we have found that that clear link is not there.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Rubbish. That is absolute rubbish.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: There is not, I am told, a specialist counselling service that Relate provide. When we need a specialist counselling service for a family that are on drugs, we go to a specialist drugs counselling organisation. When we need a specialist organisation for young people, old people or a family where alcohol is an issue, we go to a specialist outfit who deal with that particular area.

We would love to see a world in which whenever anyone asked the Council would provide, but I suspect that one of the differences between us - your side - is that there is this culture of the Council will hand out wherever, whenever a need is there and that, frankly, is not something we are able to do.

I repeat, nobody, certainly not me, is saying that Relate is not a worthwhile organisation. We have looked at this three times and every time we come back with the same answer.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Rubbish.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I therefore say that what we have to do is to vote down this reference back because if it goes through we will get the same answer. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Not even your group is clapping you.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Since my name has been used in vain I thought I ought to comment. Sorry, Peter, what was that comment?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: You cannot rescue him.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Try and rescue him - thank you very much. Richard Brett does not need me to rescue him. I am commenting because reference has been made to things I have said several times this afternoon.

Can I just begin by making this point, because Councillor Mrs McKenna said this at the last Council meeting clearly and has really alluded to it again today. I speak as somebody whose marriage has broken down with all the difficulties that

come from that. If my marriage broke down and if, Heaven forbid, my children have suffered, it was not because of anything the Council did; it was because of something that my wife and I did, sadly. I just want to make this point very clearly. For you to suggest, as you did last time, that children's hopes and dreams are smashed because of the actions of the Council, that really is an incredible leap to make. The problem sadly arises because of breakdown of a relationship between adults. We are no more responsible for that than we are for people who drop litter in the streets. We do not put the litter in the streets - people do. We then may try and do something about it but that is a completely different argument and it is wrong of you to say that we gratuitously smash the hopes and dreams of children - we do not.

Richard Brett has explained the situation and I explained that situation similarly. The purse strings of this Authority are increasingly squeezed. It is fact, and an undisputable fact, that this year we have found ourselves with millions less funding by virtue of what Central Government have done than has been the case previously, as Richard Brett has said. Everything cannot be a priority and this, as I explained last time, is where you ruthlessly - and it is ruthlessly - mislead the people of Leeds that to suit your own argument you pick on a priority today, another one tomorrow, another tomorrow and make out a special case with no hope that they will all be funded, and you will not face up to that fact, that every one of your priorities cannot be funded.

Richard Brett does not know that I am going to say this and it in no way contradicts what he says, but there may be an alternative course of action which I will undertake to pursue, and it is this. Through the Narrowing the Gap Group we know that we have engaged organisations in this city to lever money out of the private sector to assist us with Narrowing the Gap activities of funding where the Council itself is not able to provide the funding. I undertake to ask Leeds Community Foundation whether they can step in and assist us in this situation. Nobody for one minute - nobody - is decrying the work done by Relate or saying it is not a valuable organisation, but we are answerable in this situation in terms of our own funding and we must look imaginatively to other possible alternatives. I will undertake to do that in my capacity as Chair of the Narrowing the Gap Group, but as concerns this reference back, I stand absolutely shoulder to shoulder with what Richard Brett has said and will be voting against the reference back. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think that was the final nail in Councillor Brett's coffin as Leader of the Lib Dem Group. To make such a disgraceful speech about what he called giving hand-outs to voluntary sector organisations. Whose hand-outs? Are we back in the Victorian mill-owner days when you wish you had been alive in where you could give hand-outs to your servants or the serfs or other people? Hand-outs? Hand-outs? How dare you talk about hand-outs to voluntary sector organisations? You do not deserve to be Leader and sit in that seat with that kind of speech. Even Andrew Carter would not make that kind of speech.

You tell me that you have got no money. I am inviting him, he has got to follow me.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I would not follow you anywhere, Peter.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: You tell me you have got no money and that is the reason why you will not do it.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I would not even go to the pub with you.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I promise you, I am going to make a pledge now - the first day back on 2 May when we take control (*laughter*) we will give this money to Relate.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: You have no chance.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: We pledge that money and that will give it to Relate not because they are worthy or unworthy, but because they do work in that sector that is required to be done and needs to be done. There are lots of other voluntary sector organisations that depend on proper funding. Where will we take the money from? It will not take me an hour to save £27,000 in this organisation. We start cutting on the consultants' budget. There will be hardly any left, I tell you. We start cutting on some of the fat cat salaries in this organisation.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: You are pathetic.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: That is what we will start doing. That is what we will start doing, we will find the money. We will find the money and we will give it to those organisations and we will make sure they are accountable for what they do and how they spend it by putting people on their management committees, etc. That is the normal way a Council functions and gets accountability.

It is not to say we have got to pick and choose our favourite little organisations that we like because we are Lib Dems and they actually probably do some favours for us, those are the ones we will support but nobody else will support. Where was your matrix of evaluation that said they fall that side and do not get supported and others fall this side and do get supported?

I think it was a disgraceful speech, disgraceful sentiments and they actually pay tribute to the way you think and you operate and the low values that you actually have. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am not sure under what rule I am actually summing up on this amendment, but it seems to have landed on my desk in the end.

There have been a lot of questions here, speeches, in the last five minutes and some of them more surprising than others. I will just make the point that it is about priorities. Richard's word was absolutely right and decisions have to be made when you are in office. It is not as much fun as when you are in opposition when you can make these commitments willy-nilly.

I just think that the last statement by Peter Gruen there changed the atmosphere a little bit. If you are going to commit a future - distant future - Council to providing the funds for this organisation, I feel sure we can find another ten by six o'clock who will be just as eager to come and make a case, and it will not be £23,000. A line has to be drawn at some place. I think this is the right place. I support what Richard has done. I am interested in what Mark has proposed and we will talk about that later.

On balance the argument must be that we continue as we have done in relation to Relate. I suggest that we do vote against this reference back in the best interests not just of this side but in your own long-term interests. If you are going to get committed to this policy, one day soon you are going to - one day, many years from now you are going to be very embarrassed that you have made this commitment and I think this reference back is not only in our interests but is in yours as well. I suggest that that is what we do. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Could I now then call for the vote on the amendment. Call for a recorded vote. Is that seconded? It is. Chief Executive.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Would members please press the plus button - I am sorry, please press the button marked 'P'. *(laughter)* It was the reference to "fat cats" that was the distraction! *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: For a reference to fat cat I suggest you look there! *(laughter)*

(A recorded vote was taken on the reference back)

THE LORD MAYOR: Present 92; "Yes" 43; "Abstentions" 0; Against 48. So in fact that vote is LOST. The reference back is lost.

As we have now reached 4.45 it is now time to move straight to Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I was interested in the comments that were passed on the Central and Corporate portfolio which seemed to wander pretty wide of that particular area. I think Richard handled it very well, considering how much people stray from the actual portfolio.

I am not going to attempt to discuss or to answer the predictions of mass pestilence, plague, the sea levels rising, Armageddon, all the rest as preached to us by Councillor Illingworth, although what I will say is that anyone who does not take global warming seriously needs to start pretty quick, which brings us on to the first of my comments in winding up, which is on flood protection.

I am the first person to say that any family that suffers from the effects of flooding in their home suffers a personal disaster and a disaster to their property as well and we all should do everything we can to help them but please, please do not try and pretend that the flooding we have seen over recent years is the fault of this administration any more than it was of your administration.

What I do want to point out is that in the last trouble in summer, the timing was interesting because it was only about a month before that the Environment Agency had cut the Leeds Flood Defence Scheme from its budget and because of the flooding and because of the aggravation and the cross-questioning and the scrutiny the chief of the Environment Agency got and the Secretary of State got, the thing gets put back in the programme. Let me tell you - and there is no-one can duck away from this - unless the Government fund the Leeds Major Flood Alleviation programme, I regret my prediction of hauling the Secretary of State out of his flat and marching him round his constituency waist deep in water will come true.

I will tell you, if the Government do not start funding flood defences properly around the whole of this country, they will have a lot to answer for because there is no doubt we are going through a period of climate change.

What can we do as a Local Authority? As Richard pointed out, we have put £1.1m into the budget, we have come up with alleviation schemes that will not solve the problem but within our budgetary constraints things that we can do to help the situation, but until we get the major schemes that this city has been promised we are up against it, so make no bones about it.

What we should be doing, actually, is supporting and congratulating our emergency planning teams and the officers across the board in this city who worked so hard during those periods of flooding and the help that they gave to very many residents.

I was up at the leisure centre at Fearnville where we had a control centre and a place for residents to sleep during the last difficulties and I was absolutely delighted the number of officers who were just turning up straight from work, "What can we do to help?"

We can always do better. We can always do better. Gulley emptying is an area where we can do better because it is a bit perverse that in order to maximise the emptying of gulleys in high risk flood areas we have to take services from elsewhere, but let me remind you that actually this administration have doubled the amount of capacity in gulley emptying that this city had. When we took over I think did we have two or three gulley emptiers and we now have six and the teams to man them, so you have got pretty short memories.

Now let me come on to the issue of waste disposal, waste disposal solutions. Let us get the facts actually right for once so, Michael, this is especially for you. By the way, the three incinerators that exist down at Knostrop at the moment were all passed by a planning committee with a majority of Labour members, a planning committee that you sat on and did not vote against those applications and, furthermore, at least one of those incinerators imports waste from outside to Leeds to burn and you as a planning committee knew it when you agreed to it, so do not talk to us, Councillor Lyons, about incineration. *(Applause)*

My Lord Mayor, I wrote to the Secretary of State some six weeks ago. I am going to read you - I have not had a reply yet, I wonder why. Here is the letter I wrote to him:

"The situation regarding energy from waste (incineration) in Leeds is that energy or heat from waste is not our preferred option for residual waste disposal and we have made that crystal clear.

My understanding is that your officials at DEFRA have made it very clear that to apply for PFI credits to introduce a residual waste treatment facility we have to be process neutral - in other words we cannot rule out any of the possible solutions. A site has to be identified that is in Council ownership to give certainty to the process, even if we do not intend to use that site.

It would be very helpful for the City Council if your Department, via yourself and the Secretary of State, could clarify whether or not we risk losing the PFI credits if we stipulate a particular form of treatment as our preferred one. We have made it very clear in our bid that although we have based the bid on energy from waste, it is included as a reference technology only and I stress is not our preferred option.

If we can obtain clarity from your Department, it would make our position a great deal easier and enable us to rule out incineration altogether."

No reply from the Secretary of State. Why? Because he is playing politics in the same way as Councillor Lyons is playing politics. *(Applause)*

Let me tell you, you have been rumbled. Michael, you have been rumbled.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: You have been rumbled.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: You allowed three incinerators adjacent to your ward. That is what you did, that is what we all know. *(Applause)*

You are the man who brought incineration to East Leeds. You brought incineration to East Leeds. The Lyons man. *(interruption)*

Now we are warming to it. You have had your chance - sit down. *(Applause)*

My Lord Mayor, what else did we have? Heaven's above, we had the car parking strategy that Councillor Jarosz brought up and she went on about Pudsey market. It is amazing, the only time you hear anything from Councillors Richard Lewis and Josie Jarosz, the Dickie and Dottie of local politics, *(laughter)* the only time you ever hear anything from them is when they moan about something this administration has provided in their ward of Pudsey.

The latest thing, let me tell you, unfortunately the PFI lighting unit have put some modern lamp standards up in the Moravian settlement at Pudsey - obviously a mistake. So what happens? A resident rings up and complains and immediately it is being sorted out. After the event, the Pudsey ward Councillors finally latch on to it, the MP goes up and takes a photograph of other lamp standards, probably on the day he ought to have been in Parliament voting to save post offices. This is the best bit - I spoke to the officers and I said, "Were the ward members briefed on the street lighting programme in Pudsey?" "Absolutely." Why did they not pick up, with all their vast local knowledge, take it up with the officers? Take it up with the officers.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Lord Mayor, I had a discussion with the officers...

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: You have not spoken on this.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: ...in the room through there and I raised the issue of what they would do for the Fulneck settlement.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis, you have not spoken on this issue.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Take it up with the officers. I had my briefing yesterday and all I can say is, Dickie and Dottie were asleep again as usual. *(laughter)*

So, my Lord Mayor, I have still got the green light on. What else have we got? Not a lot from this lot today, not a lot, so let us just - Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I knew it.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I am only going to say one thing. Stand up - just stand up, please. *(Councillor Gruen stood up)* Please do not talk about fat cats to anybody over here. *(laughter)*

My Lord Mayor, what a cheap jibe. I actually thought Keith Wakefield put forward a very cogent argument - I did not agree but a cogent argument. Peter Gruen unstitched any chance Keith had of every getting anyone to vote for him...

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Richard did.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: ...because he had to make it so personally nasty against Councillor Brett. Councillor Brett pointed out how difficult the financial situation of this Authority is thanks to your Government. What you should be doing, get your backsides down to London and tell your Government to treat us fairly and we would not have to make savings like that. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Could I now call for the vote on receipt of the Minutes? All those in favour? Against? Then they are PASSED.

Could I then just point out that we are going to stop now for some little time for some refreshments and all of those of you who have been entertained in the galleries are, of course, welcome to join us.

(The Council adjourned for a short time)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, everyone

ITEM 9 WHITE PAPER MOTION - LIVING WAGE

THE LORD MAYOR: Agenda Item 9 on page 11, White Paper Motion. Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Firstly I would like to thank David Blackburn and the Green Party for offering to second this and he has rightly said before, this is not just a Labour party concern. I think the Green Party nationally, as well as the churches, have also agreed with the essence of this campaign and I have to say even KPMG - not a well-known left-wing organisation - have also adopted the Fair Pay Campaign, along with Barclays Bank.

I was hoping that this kind of debate would generate a great degree of consensus across the parties. Leave David alone, Les.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I never said a word. We were discussing his future.

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: So are we.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Is it your waste strategy?

THE LORD MAYOR: Come on now, let us get it together. Remember, Man U are playing tonight so let us get business sorted!

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Now you are asking for us to stay here till 11.00! Do not say that. I actually think that there should be a large amount of consensus over this White Paper because actually, when the Council acts together united, then we are far more effective. I look at the last debate on the Neighbourhood Working Fund and when the Government turned us off from Neighbourhood Working Fund, we did not have any hesitation in joining the administration in saying that was a social injustice, we will support the lobbying of Parliament on the Council's behalf. I think George Mudie has done an excellent job and I think he is in close liaison with the Council and Government and you, Les, about this issue and I think we are waiting for the outcome of the discussions that are taking place now.

I have to say this, the work that was done - started by us but I will give the administration credit where it is due - on financial exclusion was something else we should support and have supported it. Some of that work has stopped loan sharks in parts of our city charging vulnerable people up to 100% interest rate on loans because they could not get them from the bank. I think Ed Balls, who was then in the Treasury, has come down and actually praised the work of this Council and I think Andrew Carter was the person responsible for launching it, about the work of the financial exclusion.

I know it is pre-election but actually I thought we could actually all agree on this White Paper subject to one or two changes, so I was very disappointed in the amendment because here was an opportunity - if you are not happy with the White Paper but you want to keep the spirit, you pick up the phone, you talk to the Whips, you talk to each other and you say, "Is there something that we can keep together to keep that consensus and agreement so we can push this forward?" Sadly, that phone never rang and instead we have got a big diversion on issues we probably agree with about the 10% but we are not focused on it and instead we are going to get speeches from our Parliamentary wannabees, we are going to hear Alec Shelbrooke yet again giving his speech in Parliament. (*interruption*) The only person who has not joined the three stooges is Stewart Davies and I hope he does not let me down.

COUNCILLOR: Who?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: He is a friend of mine up the road. (*laughter*)

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I did not think you had any.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I haven't - I call him a friend. We are going to get Parliamentary speeches about Brown's ending of the 10%. That is a real, real shame that we have missed an opportunity to discuss the nature of poverty in this city and that we try to understand it together to see how we can address that, because the one thing that is quite clear about poverty, if we are concerned about 149,000 people, then it is not because they are all unemployed. It is actually because some of them are in employment and not being paid enough. When you look at the national statistic that 50% of children living in poverty live in households where one person is working, you realise that poverty is far more complex than just saying it is unemployment and benefits. I think sadly we still have 23,000 people in West Yorkshire that are paid below the minimum wage because we are not imposing the minimum wage on rogue employers. There was a missed opportunity to talk about how you tackle poverty through employment.

Given what we have done in financial exclusion, that is a great pity that we are going to divert from that topic.

I have to say, when you have a Council that procures £800m of goods and services, it does beg the question - 400 capital, 400 revenue - what could a Council do in the procurement of services that would help not only the low paid but those exploited by conditions?

I was very pleased when I spoke to the procurement unit that officers thought that we do most of this anyway, that actually we are moving nearer to the kind of ideas that the Fair Pay Campaign are doing. What I actually thought, I thought here is a really good opportunity just to finish the loop off and get us all signed up.

If we do sign up to this, we do end certain practice that all of us would condemn. It is not just about the minimum wage. We end practices in the cleaning

world, in the catering world where some employees are not given any holiday pay and given very little sick pay. We end the practice where people who have to take time out for emergencies have their time taken away from holidays and, above all, in the caring industry - and I would like this looked at by officers because I understand we do have an organisation working for us in procurement that actually carries this practice through - that we end the practice in caring where the carer only gets paid when they are with the client. They do not get paid when they are travelling from a client to a client, so that obviously brings about pressure on that individual carer to actually rush through the time so they can catch up in the journey, and there are examples of that I understand in this city and I am sure all of us would want that looked at if that is the case by one of the contractors.

What happens is that elderly person who has been signed up for caring actually only gets half the time because understandably that person wants to get through to the next listed client, to the next listed client, by the end of the day. That is what I think the important part of having this Fair Pay Campaign Network and being assigned to it, which I hope we will do despite the diversions that we are going to hear, because it makes very good sense for us. When I hear procurement officers say it is viable, it is do-able, it is affordable, then we should actually move ourselves along that way.

The interesting thing that I was looking at, Barclays Bank do it and, as I said, even our own auditors, KPMG, subscribe to this because it makes good business sense for them if they pay a decent wage and offer holidays and sick; they retain staff. You will all know that if you have a high turnover it has been estimated by the Institute of Personal Development that for every turnover of staff it costs £8,200, so KPMG, Barclays and other finance organisations do it because it makes good sense.

I think we should do it because not only does it make good business sense, it actually makes good political sense, moral sense and, indeed, it is a demonstration to all those employees, some of them who used to work for us, that we really care.

I am moving this White Paper, as I said, hoping, given that we are now moving to more and more - I do not personally like it, I would rather keep services in-house - more and more to a commissioning role, that we can send a message to all those low paid employees that we really care about the terms and conditions of their lives because they are often the most vulnerable people and the lowest paid people and the most exploited people in this city performing public services on our behalf. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The motion before us today is about making a commitment to achieving a living wage - a fine aspiration which I think all of us in Leeds should want. It is about bringing a report on how Leeds can become a living wage city, what we need to do to achieve it and what the financial cost will be. At this stage it will not commit us to spending a penny. It is an aspiration to work towards.

It is about how we might do this. It is not some sort of left-wing, loony scheme, so do not be thinking that, and it is not some scheme that has been dreamt up between Councillor Wakefield and myself as a conspiracy. It is a national programme that many organisations, both political and social organisations, are supporting. It is about a sensible way of ending the scourge of low pay.

I know from working with members on the Conservative and Liberal Democrat benches over the number of years I was in the administration, that they are serious about narrowing the gap. I say to them directly, they have nothing to fear from this

motion and their support would indicate to the city as a whole their wish to address low pay and poverty head on.

Sian Berry, the Green Party principal speaker and, by the way, patron of the Fair Pay Network, said that at its launch:

“We are a wealthy country and yet hundreds and thousands of people still work for poverty wages. This is not good enough. An economy cannot call itself successful until it provides a fair day’s pay for a fair day’s work.”

We say very much about this city being successful economically and I think we owe it to our citizens to deliver that here in Leeds.

Just before I move on, I can mention the amendment from the administration. I have got to say, if you put that as a motion you would probably have got a phone call from me saying I would be prepared to support it - certainly I would second it because everything in it I agree with you, but this motion is about us doing something. It is not about the Government, it is about us doing something. It is about us taking the lead and saying to people we are about fair wages and giving that example.

Let us today speak as one voice and commit our Council and our city to achieving a living wage for all its citizens. Lord Mayor, I second the motion.
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Lord Mayor, I am a little bit disappointed that Keith has chosen to phrase his introduction to this along with sadness that we did not approach him. If he was serious about all party agreement on this measure he really should have approached us before submitting the motion...

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Absolutely.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: ...and we might then have been in a different position.

However, I want to start by saying Liberal Democrats support the concept of a living wage. For many, many years I have supported the concept of fair trade and have helped to run a stall on a monthly basis where the aim is to try and ensure the Third World, the people who grow food, are better paid, so this is not a concept that is new to me and I am well aware that Liberal Democrats in London have supported some of the initiatives towards a living wage there.

In Leeds we just spent several years on job evaluation. It is a long process where in essence what you have to do in evaluating jobs is decide which is worth more and you rank all the jobs and we are near the end of that process on fair pay. It is costing us in this financial year an extra £4.2m. Anyone who thinks that you can just upgrade the lowest rung of the ladder without there being any effects on the rest of the ladder simply does not understand how these things work.

I am in principle happy to support the concept of a living wage. What I am reluctant to do is to commit this Council to achieving a living wage unless and until we better understand what the precise figure might be, because were we to agree this afternoon that the figure for a living wage was £6 an hour, we could say immediately this Council is a living wage Council because our lowest employees are paid £6 an hour. We have to, it seems to me, find out and get a number of different, independent bodies, whether it is universities, our staff, whoever, doing some work

over a period of months to put a figure as to what a living wage actually means before we can begin to understand what is involved in saying yes, we will work towards that.

I do not want to spend long on the difficulties because I would rather stress the agreement on the concept, despite what Keith has said. It would be wrong, I think, in view of the words on the paper, for me to omit completely the background in which this is being brought to us. We have faced the worst settlement from the Government in living memory following on a number of years which could hardly be described as generous. We have had the removal of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding. We are still waiting for the settlement for our Council workers in terms of what they are paid and the amount extra that we may have to find in due course when agreement is reached is still not clear, but the amount that I understand was offered by the employers - and the unions have turned down of 2.45% - would actually cost us above what we have budgeted for, £2.5m.

On top of that, as we are all aware, the Government have doubled the tax for those who were receiving the 10% band. It is often portrayed as getting rid of the 10% band but the long and the short of it is a lot of people are paying twice as much tax for a certain amount of their income.

If the Government wanted to have a living wage in Leeds, the Government could, at a stroke, decide the living wage is whatever figure the Government thought the living wage should be and to a degree this undermines the concept of a minimum wage. You are going to have a minimum wage but actually you want everyone to be paid more. What then does the minimum wage mean?

I have some difficulties with some of the detail of this motion, which is why we put down our amendment. I believe the way ahead is for whoever - the Chief Executive and others decide - do the research using the universities, outside experts, whoever, to agree what is needed, to then look calmly when we are not in an election period at what is possible. It seems to me that Labour here have forgotten Gordon Brown's key misused word - they have forgotten the watchword "prudence". You do not commit to anything without knowing the full implications. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

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

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. We are absolutely, totally committed to the issue of a living wage. Indeed, our view is that you just put up the minimum wage, it is as straightforward as that. It is a Central Government thrust.

What we have severe concerns about is the mechanics of actually being able to achieve that. Twenty-two years before the BNP over in Kirklees tried to get me sacked I was a welfare rights worker, so we dealt with the low pay each and every day and we know the realities. It is great for people to come out with ideas and concepts but when you have got somebody in front of you who is genuinely on a low wage, it is a question of looking at what it actually means for every extra pound that they actually earn. It is the mechanics of that that need to be looked at.

If we accept that somebody's wage goes up by a pound, 100 pennies, what do they actually see at the end of it for low pay? The first thing is you get a 28 pence in the pound reduction as a result of your tax and your National Insurance. Everybody knows that. There is an issue about the fact that we might be subsidising the fact that the Government made a right mess of their tax policy on the low pay but

if you leave that to one side and look at the next claw back, the next claw back you get tax credit, 37 pence in the pound to go up to 39 pence in the pound, according to CPAG. By the time you do the calculation on that you are down to 44 pence because you lose 28 pence of that pound in terms of the claw back from the tax credit system.

If you are getting housing benefit and Council tax benefit, believe it or believe it not you have an 85 pence in the pound claw back - 20 pence off your Council tax, 65 pence off your housing benefit. If you run that through the actual process there is another 37 pence in the pound that actually comes off, so for each pound that you are actually giving these low paid workers, if they are in receipt of all of those benefits - and the vast majority are - they actually save seven pence in the pound in their pockets.

To be honest, we have to be absolutely straight with them and say we did go for this. Without adjusting all the other things, you are seven pence in the pound better off as a result of that. I think that is giving them false hope, I think that is not being straight and honest with them. What the low paid actually want is to see more cash in their pockets.

If you are going to actually achieve that then you need to look at all the challenges that the low paid face. It is not just a question of bunging one thing up and leaving everything else in isolation. It is complicated, it is difficult. It is important that we have a role to play, but that Central Government have a bigger role to play.

In terms of tax and National Insurance policy, that is Central Government. In terms of the claw back on tax credits, that is Central Government. In terms of the claw back from the housing benefit and Council tax benefit, that is Central Government. We have no control whatsoever over any of those.

Although we are absolutely and totally committed and we would look at increasing the minimum wage to achieve this, we have to look at all the other issues if we are going to make it work if you are going to genuinely see the low paid with additional money in their pockets and that is why ultimately making these sort of statements - they might look great and glorious and I am sure the newspaper will cover it and it will look fabulous, but it is not being honest with the low paid, it is not being straight with them because ultimately, as you are pumping money into their pockets they are getting it clawed back in other ways.

We need to sit down, reflect on that, see what our role is, see what Central Government's role is and at that particular point make some representations to change things fundamentally so that the low paid do get a fair deal. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I will keep this fairly brief because a lot of the points that have been made already were down here in my speech. I do not think that there is anyone in this room who would not like to see people earning a decent wage and this discussion of a living wage is all about the living costs. Of course, one of those living costs is paying your Council tax.

Councillor Brett commented that the Fair Pay negotiations had cost an additional £4.2m this year for the Council and our success in lifting people out of poverty in the city has cost us £8.8m in terms of the loss of Government funding in the grant for that. The settlement that we received from the Government does not take into account every year the huge increases that we have in social services' costs as our population ages. The effect, of course, is that with all of these things

bundled together, we have an above inflation Council tax increase, much as we try to keep it down as much as we can.

The bulk of people who live in this city do not actually work for Leeds City Council and the things that they are experiencing at the moment are an open door policy on immigration that is keeping wages low, food prices increasing for such items as bread, the basics, by about 12% in the last year, fuel up by about 10% and Council tax up, of course, above inflation. Then when you take into account the increase to a 20% tax rate for those on the lowest incomes, it is being hit on numerous sides.

Before we say that we will rush ahead and rush into agreeing straightway to move into a living wage, as Councillor Brett says we need to understand all of the things that are involved in that and the effect it will have on the Council tax payers across Leeds, because a lot of the lowest income people in Leeds are the people on pensions and I believe, according to my colleague, Councillor Shelbrooke, that 70% of pension increases over the last - how many years? - ten years, has been swallowed up by the increases in Council tax. I think this is a national and a local issue.

We have got to look somewhere for the money to pay for this so we have a choice, do we not, really, with these things? We can either increase Council tax which, as I have just said, hits an awful lot of people on low incomes or, alternatively, we can cut staff, which is something that we do not want to see and was one option that in actual fact I know the Labour Group considered in their alternative budget this year.

I would like to see people being paid a decent living wage. I think we have to take into account that we have been on the receiving end of a poor Government settlement and that we need to make sure that we lobby our MPs and make sure that they do something for the people of this city. I do not think posturing a year on after voting for the increase in the ten pence rate of tax to 20p and saying how terrible it is after you voted for it a year ago is really a very impressive response to the situation. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR SHELBRooke: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It is always interesting, is it not, when Councillor Wakefield is embarrassed by his own Government because he tries to put forward these policies of "I thought we could all have agreement on this" and, "If you lot do not agree with me then you must be in the wrong."

Let us look at what you are actually saying. We are looking at a living wage for people to live on. Whatever we set, whatever we do seems to be undermined by Government. Councillor Finnigan makes a very good point. Let us just read through some of the people who are affected by this 10% increase to 20%: nursery nurses; bar staff; catering assistants; retail cashiers; library clerks; hairdressers; receptionists; home carers; typists. All of those people are paying any thing up to an extra £200 a year in income tax now. It is all very well trying to put forward a living wage but where does that end, because as Councillor Lobley has already said, the price of inflation on groceries has been far above the Government's official line of 2.2% and the increases in fuel costs have a much bigger impact than just filling up our cars with fuel. They impact on the price of groceries in the shop but equally at the same time - and obviously we will come on to the next debate so I do not want to dwell on this - when we are shutting post offices, seeing doctors' surgeries shut, all move into the centres of towns encouraging more people, some of the people on the lowest incomes to have to get on to public transport or to travel there whichever way they can paying more money in fuel, more tax costs.

The Government turn round and say they are putting more money into the economy and nobody is affected by this doubling of the 10% rate. That is only if you already have a family and that assumes that a family does not cost you any money. They are saying, "You will not be worse off if you have got a family" but what about the young people who are caught in this trap, who are trying to get on the housing ladder and they are now only able to get the 90% mortgages out there and we have had literally massive inflation in house prices.

There is plenty of evidence in the country that we cannot keep up with the price of inflation and that is sad, because there are a lot of people in this council Chamber, every one of us would like to see a decent wage for people in this city. We have got the minimum wage and yet we have talk about a living wage above the minimum wage.

The Government piped on only two months ago about raising the minimum wage. No opposition from any MP about raising the minimum wage because I think everybody is agreed. I know that our party originally would not agree to the minimum wage but that policy changed over eight years ago. We now agree that it has been good for the country and we are for it; we accept that mistake.

The simple fact of the matter is we are now saying it is not enough, we need a living wage. The only reason we are saying we need a living wage is because we are taxing people more and more. We have got nothing in the bank to get through this depression which is just about to hit us and on top of that people are handling stealth taxes constantly - taxes in the shops, taxes on their car, everywhere they go, taxes on their cigarettes. It just is tax, tax, tax and whatever we raise things by is not going to be enough to help them.

I would say that this, Council, it is a good proposition and the amendments are a very good one in the name of Councillor Brett and makes the point because the real point is that it should be our MPs who are saying to the Government, "You have got to help the people of Leeds to have a decent living wage. We cannot manage it as a Council on our own." It comes from the top, it comes from Government responsibility and it comes from those MPs who are supposed to be sorting this out for us. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR MORTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. If I can begin with an aside, if that is not a contradiction in terms. Just because we are in an election period and some people exploit that, I wanted to explore the comment that Councillor Loblely made about the Government operating an open door immigration policy.

We do, I think, on any independent assessment have the most restrictive immigration laws in the western world and certainly one of the most hostile public debates about that fact. To the extent that we do have an open door it is for any citizen of the European Union is entitled to come and move here just as any British citizen can move to Europe, as hundreds of thousands of them have done. The EU Accession of Eastern Europe was supported by the Conservative Party some of us would argue precisely because it would have forced down wages for poorly paid people.

With regard to Councillor Shelbrooke's comments, he is absolutely right to link the issue of fuel costs affecting everything, including basic food stuffs. It is a matter of taste ultimately whether the Government takes too much in tax but when you have oil over \$100 a barrel, which I do not think it going to change any time soon with China and India industrialising, we will have to think of slightly longer term than

just blaming any old Government. It was after all Ken Clarke who introduced the fuel escalator.

If we go back to where I was going to start, we have in the words of Mario Cuomo an opposition motion that is perhaps poetry and we have an administration amendment that is prose and somewhere in between I think the amendment probably gets it just about right in terms of moving forward. That is the dialectic we have going.

There is one thing in here that I think is very valuable, that the administration amendment does commit it to bringing forward a report within - actually it does not commit it to bringing a report in any time frame, that is probably what weakens it but let us hopefully say six months - that actually says what a living wage is, because if we do not know that - and it is not mentioned in your motion - this is a meaningless discussion; and secondly, how much it would cost because, at the end of the day if we cannot afford to pay for it then we are all debating hot air.

Providing that is brought forward promptly and with our two universities and officers doing a good piece of work, I think in Executive Board debate it is the best way forward. If that is the outcome of this then the Labour Group is to be congratulated, in my view, for putting it on the agenda.

Councillor Finnigan I confidently predict will have made the best speech, even though half the people still have to do it, simply because he pointed out the realities that you can put up wages and in that claw back and the extent to which the State has its fingers in everybody's pockets these days, is so high that unless you fix all those other things as well, we can do what I want with only seven pence in the pound in effect and that is why some of us would argue for a philosophy for a much higher basic rate allowance to actually let people earn the money and keep it themselves, rather than this vast, gargantuan bureaucracy that loses everybody's data on two disks, which takes money off people and then pays it back in increasingly complex ways. That is worth thinking about.

Why does this bother me? Well, like most good teachers, Mr Gallagher, who was my GCSE Economics teacher, taught me how to think and he did so by ignoring the syllabus, and he taught us about the example of somebody in absolute poverty in Britain on basic State benefits and asking the question was that person more wealthy than Henry VIII or not. His argument, in a slightly counter-intuitive way, was if you factored in culture and arts and library and health care and our increased life spans and calorie intake and electricity and central heating, that the person on benefit was actually wealthier than Henry VIII in objective terms, but does that person feel more wealthy? No, because we are all naked apes, we are a social animal and the status matters and there are gigabytes, probably even terabytes of research data that suggests that the most unequal societies are the most violent, the most socially stressed, those that have the most mental health problems, the most marital breakdowns and the highest rates of crimes. That taught me that inequality will always matter.

It is a difficult topic for a Liberal because, frankly, I do not trust the State to organise the rota where we all share out the menial tasks. When I went off to university, thanks to Mr Gallagher, the first really political thought I ever had was seeing the toilet cleaner at Newcastle Station and I knew that in all probability, not certainty, I would not have to do that job but that somewhere in a society somebody was going to and how did I get round that, somebody that did not really believe in State power that much?

I have not come to a conclusion but just before the red light comes on, let us just mention three things. Firstly, the Fair Trade principle is a good one. We do this in Unfair Trade, this is really an extension of it; the philosophical argument has been won. Secondly, let us not forget the bully pulpit effect. Councillors are not just about the commissioning of services. They are about civic leadership and if we do this we can use the bully pulpit that Roosevelt talked of to inspire other people in the city to do exactly the same and we should be doing that. Thirdly, as Keith has alluded to, when this report comes back to Executive Board, make sure that it is number one on the agenda because it is a crucial issue. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I perhaps come from an older school where we used to believe that it was reasonable for somebody to receive a fair day's pay for a fair day's work and we seem to have drifted away from that over the years into a world where we do not need to value people's labour in quite the same way that we did.

I could talk about the inequalities of perhaps the directors of KPMG and their earnings and their cleaners who may well, actually receive a fair wage but I am sure there is a considerable difference between those two figures.

I think actually, Lord Mayor, there is not anybody in this room has said - I doubt anybody in this room would dare say - that they did not believe that we should pay people fairly and that pay should reflect their expenses.

Councillor Finnigan has touched very nicely on part of the expenses problem. Unfortunately I think Keith slightly missed the point because though they were valid, he did spend quite a long time talking about what I describe as bad employment practice.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: That is what it is about.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Bad employment practice is something we should clamp down on and can clamp down without us going down this particular line.

He also said - and this is where I have to disagree with him - it is not about the minimum wage. It is about the minimum wage. It is quite clearly about the minimum wage because if, as I say, you as a State set a minimum wage, then that is the earnings level that you are assuming that a person who does a full week's work will earn enough money to maintain themselves and their family.

At the moment it is patently obvious that the minimum wage will not allow most people to do that and so we have this bizarre situation where any pay rise they get is effectively taken away from them by Central Government and then given back to them by another arm of Central Government.

That is ludicrous, quite frankly, and until the Government are prepared to address the minimum wage and their policy of taking tax from people who really cannot afford it and accept the principle that, as David said, you should allow people to earn enough money to live on before you start taxing them, not allow them to earn a pittance and then tax them, until the Government are prepared to accept that then unfortunately, whatever we say is in many ways academic.

If you say to me do I support the idea of people getting a fair day's pay - yes, I certainly do. I think that the amendment that we put forward actually enables us as a Council, by asking the Chief Officer to go away and come back and report it, it enables us as a Council to identify what we can do but, more importantly, it identifies

what the rest of Leeds can do to maintain and improve the living standards of the people who live here, and so for that reason I am more than happy to support this amendment because I think it gives us a way forward which encompasses all of Leeds in a move that I think we all agree which is we should be improving and increasing the resources and income for the people who live in the city. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am not going to spend too much time on this. I wanted to come at it from the angle of, given my portfolio area, young people because I am aware when I have tried to get the concept of a living wage in my head I have to admit I come to the same conclusion as Colin, which was along the lines of I thought that is what the minimum wage was for. Then I recall that when the Government set the minimum wage in the expectation that this was supposed to be a living wage for decent people and families, what they decided to do was ensure that the minimum wage for younger people was less.

This is where my problem comes in because what your living wage is I would assume depends upon your circumstances and, going to universities and asking them to look for some formula basically says that your lifestyle is going to be interpreted or translated by somebody who is on a different lifestyle and they are going to set an equation which will be a median or a mean average which will be an indicative living wage, which means that basically at the end of the day it is not worth the figure that it comes to.

Young people already suffer through the system that they have at the moment. As I said, they already have less of the minimum wage than is considered OK for people who are two years older than they are. They also enter, for instance, if they go into higher education they enter the university market where all of a sudden they are indebted to a huge degree which means that when they actually do go to earn their living wage, it is not a living wage because they are not only paid for their living expenses, they are also paid for the debt that is hanging round their neck and, at the end of the day, then it also threatens the living that they are expected to have in the future because if they spend so much time earning the extra money to pay off the debt, they might not actually achieve the end, which is to earn enough money to be able to pay back that debt.

I have to say, I would like to know from Councillor Wakefield - or from anybody actually to tell you the truth, I am not sure if he has any answer - whether or not this differential will be lessened by the concept of a living wage over a minimum wage.

I have to say, given Councillor Gruen's comments earlier about the use of the term "hand-out", I have to say the people who are single and who do not have children who are told that their tax is going to go up because the 10% band is going to get taken away, it actually does feel like it is a hand-out culture which basically says for most of you you will get family tax credits so you will be all right but for the rest of you, you are not worth a hand-out. That is the culture that the Labour Party has actually brought to us in terms of taxation, net income and distribution policy. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, I am delighted to support this White Paper that the Council does become a living wage employer. The appalling conditions that children live in where a family cannot have a decent wage, it is absolutely staggering that here we are in this new century and we still have people who do so badly. It is absolutely disgraceful.

The Conservatives, the Tories, there was all this scaremongering when we decided that we would bring in a minimum wage, when we first decided to bring it in. We were told that hundreds of thousands of people would be cast on to the dole, that the economy would suffer, hell and damnation and all the rest of it. Here we are almost a decade on; we have created two-and-a-quarter, two-and-a-half million extra jobs and hopefully they will now accept that their opposition to that was misplaced and they will seriously consider supporting this very important White Paper tonight.

Lord Mayor, in addition to the Leeds City Council and the decisions that we have to make on behalf of our employees, in this city we have something like 25,000 companies that are registered for Value Added Tax and pay-as-you-earn and they employ something like 440,000 people round and about our area. It is very important that the Council sets the standard and sets a lead. We want everybody to join in setting the standards. Some people have asked what is this standard? How much are we talking about? Some of the things that it should include as definitely the absolute minimum should be the minimum wage. We should be talking in terms of decent holidays and they should be 20 days plus the bank holidays. There should be serious talk about sick pay and the entitlement to sick pay that many folk do not enjoy, and there should also be fair and reasonable access to trade unions.

Keith has already mentioned that many of the larger companies already accept this standard. He has mentioned Barclays and KPMG - there are many other Local Authorities who have done it, the Fire Service - lots of people have already done it and what the big firms have found is that in addition to being a cost - and there is a cost involved - there are also benefits. Those benefits include - they are not always easy to just quantify but they do include many things: continuity of employment; the issue of recruiting costs; the issue of training. All of these things can be made better for people.

Lord Mayor, I know how difficult it is as an employer to compete in this modern world and one of the biggest problems I have, apart from *this* lot over *here*, is I have to compete against goods from China. People who work with me - because we never have anybody who works for us, we always have people who work with us - we have a situation where you go down to a B&Q or a Focus and you can see goods on the shelves - some are mine and some are from China. The low industrial wages that we sort out are between £8 and £10 an hour. In China that rate is less than £1 an hour. That is very difficult for an employer. It is tough, but I am pleased to say I am happy to take on the challenge of that and I am also quite proud to say I am quite prepared to be a fair employer. I feel that there is a responsibility that people who work with us, they are good enough to do that and we have a responsibility to them.

Lord Mayor, I suppose like you, Lord Mayor, I am very proud of my kids. I have got two children. I have got one son of 19 who is at Hull University. He studies mathematics and girls, probably in the wrong proportion, but my eldest lad is a lawyer and he does do a fair bit of work in employment laws. Recently he had an article published in the Yorkshire Post where he made specific reference to the problem of agency workers and this does include the Council because of the number of people who are employed in this type of employment. They do not always enjoy the benefits of directly employed people. I am delighted to say that there is a new bill, a Private Members' Bill, going through Parliament which should address this problem and I hope that this Authority does take that on board.

Lord Mayor, I am also very pleased that it is not just the Labour Party that is working hard to try and implement this. I notice that the trade unions, the churches and, of course, the Green Party, I am delighted that we are working together on this and I am sure there are other things we can do...

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Hanley, we have to receive your pleasure on another occasion. I am afraid the clock has beaten you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR S HAMILTON: Lord Mayor, I would like to speak in support of this White Paper in the name of Councillor Wakefield, which I am delighted has been seconded by Councillor Blackburn. I have to say I am disappointed that other parties have chosen not to support this White Paper because, unlike some discussions we have had in this Chamber, this is an issue which we can all get together and do something to help those who most need it - the poorest members of our society. I ask any principled member in the administration to put petty party politics to one side and cast a vote that could really help people.

Lord Mayor, I have spoken before in this Chamber about my trade union background and the important role that I believe trade unions have in society. I am delighted that this is another issue that trade unions have been leading the way. Unison have consistently said that workers should be paid a living wage and that is one that is sufficient to secure an adequate living standard without being dependent on work benefits and I would like to tell you why. Low pay is an issue that disproportionately affects women in the workplace. Unison has said that two-fifths of the part-time workers earn less than £6.50 per hour and these part-time workers are primarily women. It affects children, where two-thirds of low income households have someone in work. Half of all the children living in poverty live in households where someone is in work.

Unemployment has been reduced and although more people are in work, many people including 600,000 children have been lifted out of poverty in the last ten years. We must do more.

As a number of my other colleagues have said, this is not an attack on the minimum wage, it is not a criticism of the policies of the Labour Party. The Government have legislated for a minimum, something that should have been done a long time before it was. It should be our job as local leaders to provide more for people in Leeds to make sure that local people share in the successes and profits we make. We should take this responsibility to lead and really do something that will narrow the gap. If KPMG can do it, if London can do it, if Oxford can do it, if Price Waterhouse Cooper can do it, why can't we?

My Lord Mayor, I will say again, I hope today that we can all join together and vote for this White Paper and make a statement. Let us say we care about the poorest people in our society and we want Leeds to take the lead on this issue and do something that will really make a difference. Thank you, Lord Mayor *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: Lord Mayor, some of us are employees and some of us are employers. That is in our private lives, not as Leeds City Councillors. I remember one particularly memorable Mayor-making meal when the Lord Mayor of the day, Councillor Bill Hyde, regaled us all with a tale of how his father broke the General Strike in 1926.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Are you sure it was not Bill? *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: No, it was not Bill!

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: It was David Hudson.

THE LORD MAYOR: It was David Hudson.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: The case for a living wage is not just a moral issue. It has a solid business case behind it and that is something that the business people amongst us will actually recognise in both the private and public sector alike.

Evidence suggests that fair pay increased workers' efficiency and cuts absenteeism. How many times have we actually debated in this Chamber or had reports on the absenteeism within Leeds City Council as a whole?

The people who provide all the services without which this city could soon grind to a halt are all too frequently overlooked. Workers should be entitled to a living wage for a 40 hour week without the need for a second job and without the need to do overtime to make ends meet, paid holidays, Bank Holidays and equality.

I looked at some statistics - and I love statistics; they tell you a myriad of things and you can read into them whatever you want. I looked at the Citizens' Advice Bureau, who tend to be quite an accurate source of information, and they have actually estimated that for a family paying Council tax, gas, electricity, water, insurance, £3,426 a year. Your average Council rent is £3,000 a year. If you do work - and we are talking about people who work here - it will cost you £450 for a bus ticket. The BBC website, which I have not got quite so much confidence in, estimates that a family of four, it would cost you £100 a week to feed that family. All that adds up to about £12,000 a year and that is without looking at clothes, the occasional night out, a trip to the cinema or a day at the seaside with the children.

We looked today at some job adverts and a packer at a warehouse in Leeds is being offered £6 an hour and this equates, after tax and after all the other deductions, to £8,658. That is not an awful lot of money to live a life. Then I started looking round further and we do not have to look a million miles away from where we are now to actually find people who are on £6.17 an hour and that is the people we come past every day in reception in - that is the porters here, £6.17 an hour. When we leave I hope we will all remember this because these people are having to do so much overtime to actually pay their bills that it is unbelievable. Take a minute and ask them what they have to go through to find that they are earning a living wage in Leeds.

57% of British children live below the poverty line and they live in households where at least one of those adults is working. Fuel poverty in my ward is 27%. There are not many women in the administration at the moment - hopefully you will get more coming along - 64% of low paid workers are women. The hourly pay gap between men and women is 43% and people with children make up 31% of the low paid. We all know the statistics, we have all got estates where these children live - children growing up in low income households are more likely to have poor health, more likely to do badly at school and get in trouble with the police. If you think about the on-costs of that - amazing.

Getting a living wage in Leeds will be hard work, it will be complicated. Yes, it will involve engaging with the Government. A living wage can offer concrete benefits to both employers and to the wider community. Benefits from paying a living wage are measurable and they are significant and I would urge you to support this, please. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, I have to disappoint Councillor Dowson's plea that there might be more Tory women returned after this election. There is only one Tory woman, standing in a winnable Tory seat at this election and that is Anne Castle. She is here already. They have got *(inaudible)* others, we know that. No other woman is standing for the Tories.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: What about Garforth?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Let me tell you about the two different speeches you have heard so far - the ones from the administration telling us why we cannot implement what Councillor Wakefield is asking for, and the more positive speeches from other people saying we can try to implement it.

We have the usual Tory office releases to Messrs Shelbrooke and Lobley, and they read very well, congratulations, we can read your press releases, we are very impressed. We have Councillor Campbell telling us the rest of Leeds should do something. David Blackburn captured, I think, very well that it is we, this Council, who should do something.

I was reminded when I was preparing for this, look at the TUC General Secretary Brendan Barber, his New Year message this year. He was talking about a national debate about top pay. I want to talk about top pay because other colleagues have rightly concentrated on low pay. Councillor Brett told us earlier on how proud he is that we are narrowing the gap. I do not think you mentioned pay in how we are narrowing the gap.

Brendan Barber revealed that for every £100 earned by a top company director in 2000, they now own £205, while ordinary employees have only seen a £6 increase in every £100 they earn over the same period of time. He said if City bonuses had been shared around everyone at work in the UK, we could have all, every one of us in the whole country, enjoyed a Christmas bonus of more than £350. It is an absolute scandal. If you think about it, it is an absolute scandal that the City bonuses add up to something like all of us getting £350 extra, every one of us.

Since 2000 the total remuneration of the directors of the FTSE top 100 companies has gone up by 105% - more than the cost of living. In contrast, pay for the rest of us has gone up by just 6% more than inflation. In other words, top pay is increasing 17 times faster than average pay.

Directors - this is not, of course, all of it, is it, because directors in the top companies know how to amass their pensions and they are worth nearly £1b between them.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: So do Civil Servants, Peter.

COUNCILLOR: Golden plated.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I can be equally personal if I want to be but I am not going to be today because we are looking forward to a nice, peaceful meeting and then we will swap over these rows at the next meeting.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Not even with support from friends you will not, Peter.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Ted actually as an employer in this city reminded us also of the plight of agency workers. When we prepared for the budget we realised just how many agency workers this Council uses and continues to use, so there is a lot of that that we need to think about.

Sickness levels are prevalent, we saw in the Resources Scrutiny Board, at the lowest rate in this Council, so I believe we should do what Sharon Hamilton asks us to do which is make a statement tonight. Do not just always vote with your heads

- sometimes vote with your hearts as well and make a statement for the low paid in this city. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Speaking in support of the White Paper in the name of Councillor Wakefield. There is no doubt that the campaigns for a living wage have gained support from an impressive range of backers. I have to say this is no empty gesture and it is based on sound research and experience of very varied sections of society. I am again pleased to note that David Blackburn is seconding this White Paper on behalf of the Green Party in line with their national stand on this issue.

I have to say this campaign is not new. What is new, I think, is the widening recognition of the benefits that living wage adoption brings and it is, I believe, the consensus and the growing consensus among many of these different interest groups that will bring the success that it deserves.

We have heard a great deal about the statistics involved and I think all of us in this Chamber have to remember that those statistics, whether they are at national level or local level, represent real people and for many of us representing areas in this city they are very real facts of life that they have to deal with every single day.

The fact that so many women on low pay are so clearly disadvantaged - and this has a massive impact on children, whether they are on two-parent families or, indeed, single parent households - I have to tell you that 64% of the low paid workers are women and I think all of us have to take special note of that. There is still, as we know, enormous inequality between hourly pay rates between men and women in this country.

We have done an enormous amount since 1997 to bring single parents back into work. In 1997 there were only 11% in work and there are now 55% and I believe it is up to us to make sure that all of those single parents are earning a living wage when they do go out into the workplace. I think all of us must agree that the urgent need to address poverty wherever it exists, but especially in families with young children.

We have made enormous strides forward by introducing the minimum wage and against the backdrop of those, including your parties opposite, who predicted melt-down in the economy by its introduction. I am really pleased, as I said before, that we have support from third sector organisations, public sector organisations, the church, different political parties but most importantly in this context, I believe, as well from key players in the private sector.

Many of them now are actually designated living wage employers and, as we have heard, the evidence coming forward is overwhelming. Better pay, better conditions of service lead to more stable workforces, less absenteeism, lower turnover and a much improved quality of work environment. We only have to look at the total cost and impact on this Authority from the numbers on sick pay and those that are off work repeatedly. Even banks such as Barclays have procurement policies that mean that their cleaners are now benefiting from better rates of pay and conditions of service which include pension rights, sick pay, bonuses and direct holiday entitlement.

Also, the campaign is supported by the NUS up and down the country. Students are joining the campaign and David has made reference to students. The students I have talked to, it is not just about their own circumstances but about fairness and fairness in the workplace.

I urge all of you to support Councillor Wakefield's White Paper. I believe it shows leadership and a determination that we as a Council can lead by example. We can act and make a difference to the people we represent. I believe your amendment is weak, Richard, it lacks that commitment and it reminds us all of your party's and the Conservative Party's lack of support for the minimum wage.

You have a real opportunity to demonstrate your commitment to closing the gap. Please for once show some courage, support our White Paper, take direct action and help bring about real progress to improve lives in this city. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. First of all, I will say obviously my party, as it has been stated, backs this 100% but not only that, some of you may know that long before I was a Councillor in my younger days I was actually involved with the Transport and General Workers and I was a secretary of an office for nine years there so naturally this motion is very near to my heart.

Also, changing the subject just slightly for a minute, I have knowledge of how this particular motion can affect people because I have a son who is 21 years old now and he went to college for a couple of years and then decided he did not want to do what he went to college for, as youngsters many a time do, and tried different things. Between jobs he actually was working last year for an agency that worked for Leeds City Council. He was working in Street Scene and I thought yes, doing stuff like that is a good character building thing and great stuff and my son has got a good personality so he will get chatting with whoever he works with and through this he will come home on a night really, really riled because of talking to people, other colleagues that were working temporary as well as the full-time ones but he would say that, "I am out there with people a lot older than myself who have got families, who have been working, some have been working years through the agency" but as we all know, because I did a bit of agency work as a secretary many years ago, agencies top slice what the employer pays, so in effect the person on the ground does not, obviously, get the full amount, yet these were doing the same work as our own workers.

I met a driver, in fact, that was helping out on a day's clean up and spoke to me as Barry's mum and said to me, "I have been doing this for a year, yet the Council do not employ me direct, yet they are quite happy for me to work through an agency for them but I get a pittance." He had a family. To me, that is not right.

Just going back to my son, my son knows when he is well off, you might say, he still lives at home with us, but if he did not want to live at home he could not have afforded to live elsewhere, not on what he was getting through the agency. He enjoyed working there and, as I said, it was a good character building thing for him. He did not intend to be working for the agency for ever and now he has left and he has a full-time job working elsewhere, but it really does annoy me that we have got good people out there working for the agency and I have been told by managers that we rely on these agency staff and yet that they do not even get the amount of money as our Street Scene people who are doing the same jobs. That is not right.

Going on to other things as well as a living wage goes, obviously we should pay everybody a living wage - that to me, there is no argument for not doing. I think that people out there, some that do not work at the moment, if the incentive was there with work that paid a living wage we would have more people going out and getting work, but as has been said, if it is just a matter that do I go out to work or do I keep on benefit because I might lose my benefit if I work, really we want to be encouraging people to go back to work. My son was brought up with the ethics that you work, you do not rely on people to pay you something, you go out and work for it

but, as I said, he could not afford what he was getting. If he had not lived at home he could not have afforded to rent somewhere or whatever. He just could not afford to do that because they did not pay him enough.

Let us be honest here. To me if we are being fair - and that is what it comes down to fair, paying people a fair wage - that is only right in this society that we do this. We know there are Third World countries out there that pay a pittance to people, having children work all hours of the day and paying them pennies and that and I know that we are better off here than we are in Third World countries, but that does not make it right that we do not pay people a fair wage. I ask you to support.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Blackburn, I am afraid the clock has caught up with you.

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: I apologise for the slight delay, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I understand it.

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: They want to hear what I have to say, so they are packing themselves back here. Before I start speaking I should declare an interest in this matter as I am a workplace representative for UNITE union's finance section, so it is something that interests me because obviously when I represent people at work I understand the difficulties that some people are in and the reason why they need help and people to advocate for them.

I think from what I have heard this afternoon this is a very interesting debate and I am extremely pleased that the debate has come to this Chamber. However, I think it is the wrong chamber for it to be discussed in because whilst we may want to give people more money by virtue of the fact where we receive our income from - i.e. the man in the street - are we simply be going to be taking money from Peter to rob Paul, so to speak? The Council tax goes up to fund the extra payment, arguably putting people into more situations of debt and poverty because their Council tax goes up, we give people money but their Council tax goes up to represent funding that we need to give them the increased wage which I am told would work out for the Council at around £1.4m a year.

I think we really need to look at this closely and I do not object in principle to having a living wage - in fact, I would suggest it is essential. However, there are one or two problems with it being discussed in this Chamber rather than the Chamber in Westminster. I find it interesting that we have done away with the 10% tax band and introduced 20%, so immediately people who are on low incomes are worse off. That is nothing we can deal with. That is what our friends down in Westminster have decided to do.

Really what I am saying is that I think Keith Wakefield's original White Paper is interesting. I do think we need to advise those people in Westminster that it is all right us trying to resolve the issue here, sort of micro-manage it in Leeds, but it is a national issue and it is something for Central Government to deal with and, by virtue of the fact that they have done away with the 10% tax banding, I think it shows what kind of unfortunate Labour Government we have. To me it is not a Labour Government that my grandfather, who was involved in the General Strike in Dewsbury and started a soup kitchen to feed those people who were starving, I think he and people like that would be frankly appalled at what they see purporting to be a Labour Government. It simply is not but really all I am saying is, take it to Westminster because that is where it needs to be debated - debated by those people

who can change things and not debated by people here in Leeds. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR BALE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I agree with Peter Gruen that we should vote with our heads as well as our hearts, but I think it is important to keep both of those organs engaged and I do think there is a danger sometimes that when you set out to do good for people you can end up with unfortunate, unforeseen consequences. We have seen a great deal of unforeseen consequences from this Government over the past eleven years.

All of us in this Chamber want every worker to earn a living wage. It clearly makes no sense for people to be low paid and then have to rely on this enormously complex benefits system. It may well be - and people have referred to the original arguments over the minimum wage - that one of the consequences of the minimum wage has been that for many jobs the minimum wage has become the normal wage or even the maximum wage. I do not hear much of that from Members opposite, but I think if you look in employment agency windows it is hard to avoid the conclusion that the minimum wage has now become the normal wage and may have had the effect of suppressing wages because it legitimises a particular level of pay.

I think it is important that we should not ignore the sorts of arguments that have been put forward, for example, about relativities. It would be utterly unrealistic to assume that you can move up the bottom level of wage within an organisation without affecting other wage levels within an organisation, because people are concerned about relativities.

It is interesting, is it not, that some of the organisations that have been praised in this Chamber today - financial services organisations - are being lauded as examples of narrowing the gap. I would rather imagine that the gap between the lowest and highest paid in those organisations is rather greater than in this organisation.

It is important also, I think, to take account of what Robert Finnigan said about the poverty trap, because unless you actually think through the relationship between pay and the benefit system, people are not going to be any better off.

Matthew Lobley made the point about the trade-off between numbers of people employed and wages. Please do not ignore that. Please do not assume that you can simply increase pay and leave numbers the same. We look at the budget every year and it really does stand to sense that if pay goes up numbers may go down.

I will give you a wonderful example of unintended consequences. A particular developing country decided that its construction industry should get rid of casual Labour and that people, employees in the construction industry should have contracts of employment that gave them long periods of notice. That particular developing country ended up with the most mechanised construction industry in Asia because people were not employing people.

You do have to think through the consequences of your actions. If you want to do good you have to think through those consequences.

I want to try and broaden the focus too, because the minimum wage and the fair wage, the living wage, is only one aspect of the situation. People are concerned about jobs, they are concerned about pensions, they are concerned about housing, they are concerned about inflation - all those things go to create people's sense of welfare and well being.

Let us look at job numbers. When your Government came into power in 1997, there were 5.7 million people in this country on out of work benefits of one sort or another. I agree that is shameful. That was a pretty deplorable state of affairs. Do you know what the figure was last year? It was 5.4 million. Yes, you did get it down - very, very slightly. There are 5.4 million people in this country on out of work benefits of one sort or another. The position has hardly changed.

I yield to no-one in my abhorrence of racism but there is no doubt that immigration at the rate of about 140,000 a day, many from the EU because the Government has decided not to take the measures that other EU countries have taken in restricting EU immigration, that immigration has kept wages down. Do not shed crocodile tears. You know that is how inflation has remained low, because we have used immigrant Labour. We have in a sense exported jobs.

Average disposable income over the last ten years has gone down by 5% in real terms. Average disposable income has gone down. Household debt is now 175% of income. Debt is important to people. Compare us with the States. You hear about sub-prime mortgages - household debt...

THE LORD MAYOR: I am afraid, Councillor Bale, it is the red light, I am afraid.

COUNCILLOR BALE: Household debt in the US 140%; in this country 175.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Bale, thank you. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: It is interesting, Lord Mayor, that Councillor Bale mentions debt and the housing situation. I well remember, as many Councillors will do, the appalling situation there was in the late 1980s, early 1990s - record numbers of repossessions, people in negative equity and soaring interest rates. Whatever the current problems are, they bear absolutely no comparison.

It seems to me, Lord Mayor Councillor Grayshon on the one hand and Councillor Bale really should be in the same party, it seems to me. Perhaps they are secretly. They are worshippers of the accomplished fact and have no ambition or excitement for life. The people who make a difference in this world are often the people who are regarded as mad. For example, in the 19th century there was a big campaign for universal suffrage to make sure that everyone had the right to vote. They said, "Oh, it will never happen, these poor people, they would not know what they are voting about" and then men eventually got the vote but not all men. No, you cannot give women the vote. Women are stupid, they are not fit to vote. That was a position held by many Conservatives and Liberals of the day - women were not able to, had nothing to contribute. Anyway they were proved wrong. The Equal Pay Act, when the Labour Government brought it in the Tories opposed - "You cannot have legislation on this kind of thing." Now it is all accepted, is it not?

I remember in the early 1980s attending Labour Party Conferences sometimes as a delegate and there sometimes would be disagreements along with the trade unions, particularly those representing the more skilled workers actually a little bit unhappy about the idea of the minimum wage, but in the end the Labour Party Conference said, "If we come to power we will introduce it", but when the Labour Party came to power in 1997, many leading Conservatives said, "It will ruin the economy, it will destroy jobs." It was a load of rubbish, of course, because the number of people who got an increase in pay was massive - particularly women, of course - and the number of people involved in employment went up, so all the doubters were quite clearly shown to be wrong.

It is also interesting 2004 when sadly the Labour Party lost office in Leeds, this Council, the coalition, the then Conservative - still Conservative dominated and led (that is what it is, as we all know - actual Conservative ministers go on television, do they not, and say "Leeds is Labour (*sic*) controlled" and I say "No, no" and my wife says, "Don't, he is just a saddo, do not ring them up") but the reality is that very small group of men with one or two women but mainly the men, are running the whole show. It is a fantastic confidence trick, I do not know how they manage it but anyway they have sleep-walked the Liberals into their political bed. (*laughter*)

You can actually get quite big beds. You can go to all kinds of bed places. They are massive. Who wants a bed that can take 15 people? Those people over there will probably make use of things like that, purely for political discussion. (*Laughter*) Purely for political discussion.

It is about having ambition, it is about leading. The Conservatives and the Liberals have a real problem with this White Paper because substantially the Labour text survives, does it not? They take out a bit of the reference to the Welsh Assembly and the GLA, that all comes out. Let us make them feel a bit awkward, let us mention the 10% income tax rate which could be a topic for a completely separate White Paper. Let us try and make them awkward. The most important words for me are in the middle of their amendment:

"Council however notes the pivotal role played by Government in achieving a living wage for all."

Sometimes in this life you have got to do it yourself. We should be the leaders; we should be the tribune of the people. We are one of the biggest Local Authorities in the country and if it is good enough for the Welsh Assembly and if it good enough for the GLA and KPMG, it really ought to be good enough for us. Let us show the way. Why do you always expect the Labour Government to show you which way to go? (*Applause*)

You should have some courage and be prepared to do it. Earlier on reference was made to the number of women in low paid jobs. It is about 64%. We look across at the Tory benches and with Amanda Carter's sad departure from the Tory Group - a lot of us liked Amanda and she has gone - I would think they will have another woman, won't they? It is what we would do in the Labour Party. No, it is going to be a man who is going to stand in Calverley and there is only Anne Castle with even a slim - well, she will win, I will tell you, I concede you Harwood but that is about it - there is no other seat and look at you - look at you - you do not represent the people out there.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: We did when we got the Council tax rates.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: I will tell you something we have got in the Labour Group. We talked to ordinary people about this issue and some of us were not quite sure whether it would light a spark. This has lit a spark. In the 1990s the issue was a minimum wage - now it is a living wage, it is going one step beyond. You need to get real, you need to be with us. You should withdraw your amendment and vote for the Labour and Green White Paper. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I now call upon Councillor Wakefield to sum up.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I am going to sound very calm compared to the last contribution. I do not normally draw on individuals who make contributions but I have to say, Councillor Golton, I never followed one line of reasoning or logic of your

argument. I can tell you this - I will point you to proper research done by universities and by other institutions that point to regional wages and city wages and so on, but you have to remember, this is more than about the minimum wage.

Frankly, I have to say again, David Blackburn was right. He was. All this talk that Councillor Finnigan and others have used about a national Government's responsibility is a red herring for doing nothing by this administration. David, you are right. If we wanted to take responsibility, we should do.

All I would say is to you, Robert, bring on Albert Slingsby. (*Laughter*)

I will go to you, Richard. I admit, yes, we could have spoken but I have been here with Andrew Carter when he has made a good point when I was Leader of this Council and if there was a good point being made in the Chamber - and I recall doing this and saying yes, we will talk about the appropriate amendment, the Whips or the Leaders get together and we agree, and we could have done that.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: When? Name one.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Selective memory.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Frankly, you have used excuses to avoid taking action and if you notice, if you really notice this, half of them were arguing for it and half of them were arguing against it, so there is no common line.

David, I am sorry as your parting speech you are going out timid as a mouse. Do you really think that reports are going to bring about action? This administration has got reports all over the place - it has got reports on cemeteries, it has got reports on waste energy, the Mansion - none of it has come to fruition. I am disappointed if you really believe - and I sincerely believe you do - that you do not support us outright because, frankly, if you want action, vote for the Labour motion. It is as simple as that.

I will tell you something else. John Bale always makes me smile because he is the son of Milton Friedman. There is no doubt him and Thatcher were alike. He always finds an argument. I thought Cameron had got through to Councillor Shelbrooke and Councillor Loble. He has no effect - he has had absolutely no effect because what we heard today were arguments against the minimum raise resurrected, disguised but essentially against taking action. (*interruption*) It is absolutely true and do you know what sticks in my gullet? When Councillor Loble talks about utilities and payment. Who privatised utilities? Their Government. Who has been responsible for the hikes? It was a Tory Government and many of us remember old people without heating because they could not afford the heating and they come here and lecture us about the bills and the (*inaudible*). It is totally hypocritical.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: They can afford it today.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I have to say this, the Lib Dems - I have still got a quote from Menzies Campbell. "I believe" - this is what he said - "it is misconceived the consequences for the rest of the workforce will far outweigh any benefit from the minimum wage." They are still opposed to the minimum wage, never mind the fair wage and they dare not come out up front and say it. It is an absolute piece of hypocrisy. Your leader, Clegg, where do you think Clegg is going to take them? Not just to the bedroom. (*interruption*) I will tell you what he will do. He will not take 30-odd. I will tell you where Clegg will take them.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: We already know that!

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: No wonder they are now called the Clegg-over group. *(Laughter)* I will tell you where he will take them, Clegg. Clegg will take them further than the Tory Party on every social issue that we stand for. They will come out with taxes higher; they will come out against the minimum wages; they will come out with social intervention.

We talked earlier about could we take action and the consequences. That is why there is no figure. It was asked to look at the implications in our White Paper.

Les Carter sits there - Les Carter in charge of poverty and regeneration. There you are. This man in charge of poverty and regeneration is in charge of a structure to deal with poverty that has 128 officers - 98 are over PO grade, 15 are over the 45% of directors' pay. That means they are on £30,000, £40,000 and £50,000.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: My God.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: He hesitates now, he refused to put it in. He is a fat cat and he is looking after the department that does it.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Not compared with him you are not.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I am not as fat as him.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: It is quite simple. David and I think Anne spoke very eloquently *(interruption)* about their personal experiences.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Inner west here we come.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: We have a chance to do something, David is right. Forget all the things about the rest that you talked about, national, because Robert wants to avoid taking responsibility. Let us move and vote for our White Paper which will take responsibility and say to employees - and it is not just about the minimum wage - this Council is against the exploitation of public service workers who work in our invisible economy, who work in the hardest jobs possible and actually we as a Council will say something about caring and being committed for them because David is right, we have a moral duty as well as a political duty to do so. I move this White Paper, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Could we move to the vote? Recorded vote - is that seconded? Right.

(A recorded vote was taken on the amendment)

THE LORD MAYOR: We have present 95, "Yes" 49; Abstain 0; "No" 46.

COUNCILLOR: Getting interesting!

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Not enough.

THE LORD MAYOR: So that becomes the substantive motion. Can I ask then - there is no request for a recorded - surprise, surprise. All those in favour of the substantive motion? Would I be right, Council, to say that is unanimous? CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

It is now seven o'clock, we have run out of time. We now go through the White Papers, as it were, on the nod.

ITEM 10 - WHITE PAPER MOTION - POST OFFICE CLOSURES

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I call upon White Paper 10, Councillor Carter?

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

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor J McKenna?

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: I move the amendment, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR ARMITAGE: I second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Then we go to vote on the amendment in the name of J McKenna. All those in favour? Against? That is LOST.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I move a recorded vote on the motion, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, a recorded vote has been asked for now on the motion.

(A recorded vote was taken on the substantive motion)

THE LORD MAYOR: We have present 94, "Yes" 94. CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

ITEM 11 - WHITE PAPER MOTION - FAILURE TO KEEP LEEDS' STREETS CLEAN

THE LORD MAYOR: We move then on to Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: I propose the White Paper in terms of the notice, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR NASH: I second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Monaghan.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: I move the amendment, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR WADSWORTH: Seconded, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Therefore first the vote on the amendment in the name of Councillor Monaghan. All those in favour? Against? Abstentions? Three abstentions. That is actually CARRIED.

The amendment now becomes the substantive. All those in favour of the substantive motion? Against? Abstentions? No change. Thank you. That is CARRIED.

ITEM 12 - WHITE PAPER MOTION - SELECTION OF LORD MAYOR

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: With Council's consent move as on the notice, Lord Mayor, and request a recorded vote. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: I now need to ask consent of Council for Councillor Finnigan's request to change his White Paper. Those in favour? We have not got to the motion yet. If you read the paper he is asking for leave to change his White Paper, which does not need to be seconded at this stage. All those in favour of allowing him to change the White Paper? Against? That, therefore, is CARRIED.

I then call upon Councillor Finnigan again, now that this is a changed White Paper, Councillor Finnigan?

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: I formally move and request a recorded vote, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Seconded.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen, I believe you need to move an amendment.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I have to do the same, have I not, seek leave to change my amendment in the light of his change?

THE LORD MAYOR: Yes. All those in favour? I think that is CARRIED, therefore, Councillor Gruen, your changed amendment.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I move the changed amendment.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I second, very reluctantly, I think the whole thing has now become a farce by doing it this way. (*Interruption*)

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Can I move a recorded vote on the amendment?

THE LORD MAYOR: Right.

(A recorded vote was taken on the amendment)

THE LORD MAYOR: Present 93; "Yes" 41; Abstain 1; "No" 51. That is LOST.

We move on now to the motion, as that has fallen, and there is a request for a recorded vote on this.

THE LORD MAYOR: Present 91; "Yes" 51; Abstentions 30; "No" 10, so that is CARRIED.

ITEM 13 - WHITE PAPER MOTION - CODE OF CONDUCT FOR HANDLING
POSTAL VOTES

THE LORD MAYOR: We move on to Councillor Brett.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I move the motion in my name, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: To move an amendment, Councillor Selby.

COUNCILLOR SELBY: I move, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: I second, Lord Mayor, and call for a recorded vote on the amendment.

(A recorded vote was taken on the amendment)

THE LORD MAYOR: Present 94; "Yes", 42, Abstentions 1, "No" 51. That is LOST. That was the amendment.

We then move on to the vote on the motion itself. Is that to be recorded? Yes, recorded, OK.

(A recorded vote was taken on the substantive motion)

THE LORD MAYOR: Present 94, "Yes" 94. Surprisingly, there are no abstentions and nobody voting against it. That is CARRIED.

We move on to the proposed withdrawal of a motion. Councillor Morton.

COUNCILLOR MORTON: I move in the terms of the notice, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW: Second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, the proposer and seconder have asked to withdraw their motion. Can I then ask for the vote of Council? All those in favour? I think it is fair to say that that is CARRIED.

I came today thinking thank God this is my last Council sitting in the chair. *(Applause)* No, the good news, it is not yet because remember on 22 May there will be a special Council meeting in the afternoon, the time to be given to you later and that will be to discuss business so that we can just have fun at Mayor-making. Could I thank you all for your attendance today, your good humour and a very, very safe journey home.

(The meeting closed at 7.17 p.m.)
