

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Held on

Wednesday, 28th January 2009

At

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
CIVIC HALL, LEEDS

In the Chair:

THE LORD MAYOR
(Councillor F Robinson)

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VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 28th JANUARY 2009

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon, everyone. Welcome to the first Council meeting of the year 2009 and I wish you a very healthy and hopefully prosperous New Year.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE LORD MAYOR: To repeat the morning's announcements about mobile phones, I am certain you are all aware to turn them off - and that will include members of the gallery - and any other electrical appliances that you may have. Thank you.

I have several announcements that I would like to make. I am delighted that several Leeds' citizens have been recognised in her Majesty the Queen's New Year's Honours List and letters of congratulation have been sent to all the recipients.

I can also advise you that I am hosting a Civic Reception in the Banqueting Hall at the Civic Hall on 27th February 2009 to celebrate the staging in Leeds of the Engage Superleague Champions Leeds Rhinos NRL Premier and Manly Sea Eagles in the Carnegie Rugby League World Cup Challenge. (*Applause*) You will be pleased to know that invitations to the reception will be sent out this week.

I would also like to mention that it is Councillor Congreve's birthday today. (*Applause*) A bottle of champagne, I understand, is appropriate! We shall not sing!

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: We have got our glasses, David!

COUNCILLOR CONGREVE: I cannot think of a better way to spend a birthday than with my colleagues!

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: You are very sad!

THE LORD MAYOR: Could I remind members that there is a memorial service to celebrate the life of the late Norma Hutchinson on Sunday 8th February at 10.20 at Roscoe Methodist Church, Francis Street in Leeds.

Finally, if I could advise members that there will be a film crew in the Chamber to film the deputation by pupils of Boston Spa School on matters referred to in the Mayor for the Day manifesto relating to the Leeds Arena.

I believe that concludes my announcements.

ITEM 1 - MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 19th NOVEMBER 2008

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 1, then, Councillor Bentley.

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I move that the Minutes be received.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Those in favour? Thank you. Against? No. Thank you. CARRIED.

ITEM 2 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 2, Declarations of Interest. As I said, the list of declarations is submitted in the ante-room and on deposit in public galleries and has been circulated to each Member's place in the Chamber. Any further individual declarations? No, good. That is a record. Please show if you wish to confirm that you have read the list and agree to its contents as they relate to them. Please show. A bit more enthusiastic would be better, but anyway there we are. *(laughter)*
CARRIED.

ITEM 3 - COMMUNICATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 3, Communications. I turn to the Chief Executive.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: There are no communications.

ITEM 4 DEPUTATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, on deputations. We have a number and I will ask again the Chief Executive.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: There are five deputations, Lord Mayor, as you have already indicated the first, relating to the Leeds Arena; the second, management of Adult Social Care; third, the Kippax Leisure Centre; the fourth, proposals for academies in Leeds; and the fifth and lastly, the future of the West Park Centre.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Bentley?

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: To move that all the deputations be received.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. All in favour? CARRIED. Right, the first deputation then.

DEPUTATION ONE - BOSTON SPA SCHOOL "MAYOR FOR THE DAY"

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon ladies, and welcome to today's Council meeting. Please now make your speech to Council which should be no longer than five minutes and please begin by introducing the people in your deputation.

SOPHIE CONNOLLY: My Lord Mayor, my name is Sophie Connolly and I won Mayor for the day competition. I am representing Boston Spa Comprehensive School and would like to introduce my fellow students, India Wilson, Rebecca Dale and Laura Jones.

I will now read out my manifesto titled Lets Get Leeds Rocking.

If I was Mayor of Leeds for a day I would use the opportunity to put forward the demands of the youth of Leeds to have our own arena.

The proposal would be to build an arena which will enable multi-usage for concerts, sporting events, musical extravaganzas, big type shows and exhibitions. It is time for the unofficial capital of Yorkshire to have a prestigious venue in order to attract the top artists and entertainers to Leeds. The venue would attract multicultural events to represent the Leeds youth of today. The multi-use arena will be capable of internal alterations to enable all types of performances, along with corporate hospitality suites, conferencing and exhibition areas.

Accessibility will be from all parts of Leeds and surrounding areas. Special buses will be used with transport costs included in the ticket prices. This will reduce the amount of car traffic to the site.

The site will have no parking facilities apart from that for buses and other approved transport. Out of town park and ride facilities will be in operation.

This will enable fast traffic free access to the venue, along with fast turn round of people both ingoing and exiting the arena.

The site will be monitored by top of the range CCTV and actual manpower to guide visitors to their places. Special security will be empowered to refuse entry to anybody causing problems. They would also be banned from future attractions.

Within the site will be state of the art medical and emergency services. Food concessions will offer a wide range of quality food and drink.

Leeds arena will be the best venue in Europe offering safety and security for all visitors of all ages. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Very good. Following that rapturous applause, can I ask Councillor Bentley.

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: I move that the matter be referred to the Leader of the Council.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Those in favour please show. Very good, look at that. CARRIED. Thank you, that is certainly passed. Thank you for attending this afternoon and I am certain all our Councillors and others have enjoyed your little speech and consideration will be given to what you have said by the respective person. Thank you for attending. (*Applause*)

DEPUTATION TWO - SOCIAL SERVICE USERS

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Would you now please make your speech to Council which should be no longer than five minutes and please begin by introducing your deputation.

MS C BROWN: I am Carol Brown, I have MS and Parkinson's Disease and I have been a service user for about seven years and this is Malcolm Naylor, who is supporting me who has been a carer for many years, and Diane Howse who is my personal assistant. We are here to express the general concern about the future of the Homecare Service.

Adult Social Care is about to undergo radical change. I am asking you, as our elected representatives, to make sure that the changes made to Homecare are

financially and logistically viable and to the benefit of both service users and staff at the point of delivery.

The chief asset of the in-house Homecare service as it stands is the quality of the assistants who deliver the care. They are punctual, professional and concerned for the welfare of their clients but they are increasingly being asked to cover too wide an area and to administer care to too many clients. Staff leave and retire and are not replaced and the reason given is lack of funding. This does not seem very convincing when one considers that three new senior managers have been appointed on salaries of £90,000 each.

This proliferation of highly paid managers is evident in every department of Leeds City Council. The number of Council employees receiving remuneration of between £50,000 and £200,000 has risen in the last four years from 165 to 516 and we have not seen a corresponding improvement in services.

Moreover, the digipens system, which must have cost a substantial amount of money to develop, has been phased out before they have even become operational in all areas in favour of electronic rostering which, presumably, is going to involve yet more expense.

The first point which I would like you to consider is that huge amounts of money are being wasted on unreasonably high salaries for managers whilst a much reduced front line staff struggles to maintain a high level of care. (*hear, hear*)

My second area of concern is the Direct Payments method of administering Homecare which is a Westminster-led initiative. It may be wonderfully liberating for some but many older people are terrified at the thought of finding their own carers as may be seen from the letters pages of such publications as 'MS Matters' and 'The Parkinson'.

Everyone in Leeds who uses Direct Payments is registered with HM Revenue and Customs as a small business even when, as in my case, using Direct Payments for only eight hours a month. We all accepted this as a legal requirement but on further investigation I have found out that registration is necessary only if one is a limited company. There is no justification for sending nervous pensioners bewildering packs of information containing CD Roms and letters which are headed, to quote the last one I received, "ADVANCE WARNING TO SEND IN YOUR EMPLOYER ANNUAL RETURN ON LINE FOR 2009/10." When I enquired at the Armley support office why it was necessary to register service users as small businesses, I was told that it made life easier for the accountants. Inexplicably, the payroll is administered by a firm of private accountants at Horsforth. Whatever the reason for their involvement, I do not think that their convenience should be considered at the expense of the peace of mind of elderly service users.

The difficulty of 5,600 service users trying to find to carers each to cover the seven day week is compounded by the fact that Leeds is offering only £6.42 an hour. The Association for Real Change has worked out that the system cannot work on less than £11 an hour and most Authorities are offering £9.50 to £22. Also, has anyone calculated that there will be need to be at least 84 advisers to help people through the administrative nightmare at the end of each month?

In Oldham, where the scheme has gone further, one service user needed so much support that she was costing the Council £49 a week more than if she had been using the in-house service.

The long-term plan is for Direct Payments to become Self Directed Support, covering daytime activities as well as care. If this happens, one can only predict that many severely disabled people will become very isolated as they will be unable or unwilling to organise transport and group activities for themselves.

In conclusion, I am asking that the potentially excellent in-house system should be given more support and resources; that the upper layers of management should be reduced; that the remaining managers should make themselves more aware of what is happening on the ground; and that those who opt voluntarily for Direct Payments should be given a realistic hourly rate. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Bentley.

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: I move that the matter be referred to the Executive Board.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second that.

THE LORD MAYOR: Those in favour? Thank you. Those against? No. Thank you for attending this afternoon and you will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Thank you again and good afternoon. *(Applause)*

DEPUTATION THREE - KIPPAX AMATEUR SWIMMING CLUB

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Please could you make your speech now to Council and it should be no longer than five minutes and please begin, would you, by introducing your fellow deputation.

MR C BULMER: My Lord Mayor and Councillors, good afternoon. My name is Colin Bulmer and I am here on behalf of Kippax Amateur Swimming Club regarding the proposed closure of Kippax Leisure Centre.

I have been coaching swimming at Kippax for over 30 years and can boast several national and international swimmers. In 2006 Leeds City Council presented me with an award for 'Outstanding Services to Sport' in Leeds.

I am joined today by our club secretary, Angela Britton and Mark Bulmer, who is a member and parent. Joy Bate and Doug Morley are also supporting us from Kippax Parish Council.

With respect, the Council are the guardians of sport and general fitness and well being of the people and youths within the city. It is felt that it is vital that the Council must not relinquish responsibility and certainly control of the 'peoples' sports centres in Leeds. It is also worth remembering that these sports centres serve the local schools.

Not only are there the needs of the communities within the area to consider (we serve Garforth, Swillington, Great Preston, Allerton Bywater, Ledston, Ledsham, Fairburn, Austhorpe, Kippax, Colton and Whitkirk to name but a few) but also the consideration of the families and largely the youths. These are hard working families and rely on the centre, which of course supports the health of young and old and provides facilities to support sportsmanship and competitive excellence. It offers the opportunity for all children to try a sport and develop personal skills.

It is worth mentioning that sport also helps build confidence in individuals both in scholastic studies and youth projects. Achievement help promote complete self-confidence.

The introduction to teamwork and individual performance is character building, whilst at the same time offers opportunities to make friends and helps develop a strong sense of team spirit. Certainly, all our members are from local communities and have benefited from extending their circle of opportunity and strong friendships which, without the centre, would have otherwise not been possible. The centre has been the hub for the communities.

Kippax ASC is based in Kippax and has the use of other centres due to the difficulty in hiring pool time to suit our training programme. It is an important point as it is vital that young swimmers perform at correct times, ensuring their health and school commitments are not jeopardised. The consideration of the parents and family routines must be considered in order for the child to be able to commit to regular training. Otherwise this could result in the child and the city missing out on potential sporting success.

The level to which Kippax ASC aims to perform has in the past proved to be one of the top junior international age teams groups in the country. Kippax teams have competed successfully in top international competitions in Canada, Holland, Germany and as far as Australia, producing seven junior international swimmers and numerous Leeds and District, County, North Eastern Counties and National champions. All the young swimmers were local.

With limited transport links and the extensive travelling time, these children would not have become involved in swimming had there not been a local centre for them.

Yes, we want the proposed top facilities as well as, not at the expense of losing our existing centres. The broader the base, the higher the pinnacle.

We ask that Kippax Sports Centre and its pool remains managed by the Council and is modernised to support the community and develop young swimmers and, of course, the sporting needs of the local people. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Bentley.

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: I move that the matter be referred to the Executive Board.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you for attending. We will have a vote! Thank you. Those against? CARRIED. Thank you, deputation, for what you have said. It will be taken into consideration and you will be certainly kept informed. Thank you and good afternoon. *(Applause)*

DEPUTATION FOUR - LEEDS SCHOOLS TOGETHER

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Please will you make your speech to the Council and it should be no longer than five minutes, and please begin by introducing your fellow deputation.

MR P WALTON: Good afternoon, Lord Mayor. My name is Paul Walton from South Leeds High School - I am a teacher at South Leeds High School. This is *(inaudible)* who is a teacher/governor at South Leeds, Sally Kincaid, who is the mother of a child who is from one of the feeder schools for South Leeds. I have to give apologies that there are no representatives from Intake - they could not make it to this meeting for this deputation.

Our deputation represents Leeds Schools Together which is a forum made up of parents, school governors, staff and professional associations against the proposals for South Leeds and Intake High to become academies.

We strongly believe that the consultation process did not genuinely take into account the views and concerns of the local communities. In the case of South Leeds, there were numerous petitions with over a thousand signatures and a packed public meeting with an overwhelming majority of people voting against an academy proposal. There were 64 written responses received and only two of them actually supported the proposal, four were neutral and 58 were against the proposal for South Leeds becoming an academy.

South Leeds experienced a very difficult merger process, bringing together two communities that clearly opposed the new school. There were three serious riots in the first year and after four years since its opening the school is now a much calmer, safer teaching and learning environment. The school is now making steady progress and a recent HMI Inspection indicated that the school would very likely come out of special measures after the next inspection in the spring term.

An overwhelming majority of staff and parents at South Leeds are very concerned that all the good work achieved over the past few years in developing a positive ethos and identity for the school as part of the local community will be put at risk by now closing and reopening the school as an academy. What the school now needs is time to consolidate its success rather than more change and uncertainty.

Intake High School is also making steady progress, having come out of special measures over two years ago. The school does need an improved building; however, it just does not make sense to change an improving school's ethos and all the instability that may arise with closing and reopening the school as an academy just to get money for a new building.

Although GCSE results at South Leeds and Intake are currently low, the schools cannot be simply be measured by national targets to be deemed as failing schools. In fact as part of the government's national challenge for schools to be achieving 30% A to Cs including English and maths, the schools are not even being given until 2011 to achieve their targets - whilst other so-called failing schools are being given that period of time to achieve their targets.

All the research so far regarding the success of academies shows that results are mixed. Despite the favourable presentation of improved GCSE results by the government, there are plenty of reasons to be concerned. There is no independent evidence that academies are delivering significantly improved results at a faster rate than other maintained schools.

Of the 638 National Challenge schools announced by Ed Balls in June 2008 - that is the schools labelled as failing - 26 of these schools are academies. This was 31% of the existing academies, a larger proportion than in the maintained sector. Clearly academies are no magic bullet. The hard work of school improvement depends, as it always has done, on improving a range of factors.

Research on academies from the London Institute of Education concluded that “rises in achievement” corresponded to falls in the proportion of pupils from deprived backgrounds. Price Waterhouse Cooper, in its research, concluded much the same.

This research clearly links in with evidence from the only academy in Leeds so far, the David Young Academy, which excluded more pupils last year than all the other high schools in Leeds put together.

Although Education Leeds and the proposed sponsors have tried to reassure staff and parents at Intake and South Leeds that there will be minimal educational disruption, the closing and reopening of the schools as academies will in fact affect continuity and stability within both schools. The proposed sponsor of South Leeds High, Sir Paul Edwards, told the staff there would actually be a predicted dip in results in the first two years of a newly opened academy due to the changes the school will have to undergo. Try explaining this to the parents of students who currently are in Year 10 and doing their GCSEs next year. Try explaining this to the parents of students who will be commencing Year 7 next academic year and will have to experience all the uncertainties.

To help measure the views of staff at South Leeds and Intake regarding the proposals for academies, a joint union survey was undertaken by the NUT/NASUWT and the ATL. The outcome provides a very clear indication that a significant percentage of staff from both schools would be looking for work in other local authority schools if the schools became academies. A significant percentage also indicated that they would be prepared to take strike action if pay and conditions of service related to transfer of employment were not clarified in writing by the proposed sponsors and Education Leeds as appropriate. Staff are very concerned with the example of the David Young Academy, whereby a reorganisation occurred shortly after becoming an academy, resulting in major changes to pay and conditions of service and a consequent high turnover of staff.

We are very concerned that local accountability will be lost if South Leeds and Intake become academies. There have been assurances from the proposed sponsors and Education Leeds, that there will be closer collaboration; however, an academy's governing body is legally independent from the Local Authority and a sponsor can assert significant influence over decision making within the governing body. Of particular concern is the credibility of Edu Trust as the proposed sponsor of Intake. Edu Trust is currently under investigation by the Department for Children, Family and Schools, over issues to do with mismanagement of finances and a senior executive of the company was dismissed due to raising concerns over this. When the staff at Intake voiced their concerns over the proposed sponsor, their Principal Designate responded by telling them not to worry about it as everything will be OK. Surely Leeds City Council and Education Leeds have a duty and responsibility to the local community to ensure that the proposed sponsor is appropriate for the school. (Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. I call upon Councillor Lowe to make a point of explanation.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: Yes, as a point of explanation, I am Chair of Governors at Intake High School. As far as I am concerned the comments that have been made about Intake and Edu Trust should not be taken account of in this Council Chamber. There is nobody from Intake apart from me here in this Council Chamber. I do not in any way, shape or form own or support the comments that have been made today and the evidence does not support this. People can obviously vote on

what the person just said. What I am saying is that parents at Intake, Governors at Intake and the majority of staff at Intake have been consulted and not one person has written to support. I have said what I have to say.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Bentley.

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: I move that the matter be referred to the Executive Board.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I call for a vote. Those in favour? Against? Thank you indeed. Thank you for attending and for what you have said as well and you will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive, so thank you and good afternoon.

DEPUTATION FIVE - SIX LOCAL COMMUNITY ASSOCIATIONS AND ACTION GROUPS

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Please will you now make your speech to Council which should be no longer than five minutes, and if you would please start by introducing your fellow deputation.

MRS L CULLEN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am Linda Cullen from Moor Grange Action Group. This is Tony Ray from West Park Fields Action Group, Ken Torode, West Park Residents' Association, Wendy Moore from STEPS, Supporting the Elderly and Peter Owen from Spen Hill Residents' Association. We are also here to represent Leeds Reformed Baptist Church and Kirkstall Crusaders Football Team.

West Park Centre is on the Council's asset disposal list.

West Park Centre is a centre wide community centre. People come from all over Leeds, especially for the music groups and the church members. Two thousand people go through the doors every week. Fifty plus organisations use the centre. Leeds Reformed Baptist Church has 400 people attending on Sunday. Northern Ballet, who are due to move out, make up less than 50% usage. The view is that it is one of the most widely used civic buildings and there is a great need for this building.

Of these users, some will use the local shops. If the centre closes there will be a negative impact on traders. This may cause shops to close down and will cause the West Park as an area to deteriorate

There is absolutely nothing at all for older children and teenagers in the West Park area. West Park Centre would be an ideal base for expanded youth service provision, children's services, expanded elderly provision and sports and fitness use. Caring for Life has expressed a strong desire to use West Park Centre to expand their services for children and the elderly.

The Police are backing us. Soon they will be using a room at West Park Centre for local policing, so presumably when everybody else is turfed out in 2010 the police will be turfed out too.

The land the centre is on was donated to Leeds Corporation in 1947 and the family who donated the land are still alive. There is a restrictive covenant on the land stipulating that the only buildings that can be built are educational buildings or an electricity transformer station. Do Councillors want to waste council taxpayers' money on a legal battle with the community over the sale of this land?

West Park Centre does need some repairs but is structurally sound and it would cost so much money to build another new building that was similar.

If the centre is sold there is a risk to West Park fields and that is our green space - the covenant would have been breached.

All our community groups are non-party political. This is a community issue and in Leeds North West we have got cross party support. We also have support from the North West Inner Area Committee (Labour Councillors and Liberal Democrat Councillors).

We ask councillors to take the West Park Centre off the Asset Disposal List. We need to make sure that West Park gets a fair deal and our communities are supported.

Where will all the organisations go if the West Park Centre is closed down - the police, youth services, community groups, Education Leeds, music groups, other groups?

We have seen the White Paper with the motion on West Park Centre from Councillor Illingworth. We have also seen the amendment from Councillor Carter. We know that West Park Centre has not been declared "surplus to requirements", but people think it will be next year when Northern Ballet closes. The amendment says "constructive discussions are taking place". Well, you have got copies of our report, we would appreciate it if you would read them. We would also appreciate a concrete guarantee that the West Park Centre will be taken off the Asset Disposal List and we are not left with something like a scout hut. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I call on Councillor Bentley.

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: I move that the matter be referred to the Executive Board.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Vote. Those in favour? Against? That is CARRIED. Thank you for attending this afternoon and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Good afternoon to you and thank you. *(Applause)*

ITEM 5 - REPORTS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 5, then, reports. Councillor Bentley.

(a)

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: I move in terms of the Notice.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: On to the vote. Those in favour? Against? CARRIED.

(b)

THE LORD MAYOR: On (b), then, Councillor Andrew Carter.

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

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: Second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Vote again. Those in favour? Against? Right, CARRIED.

ITEM 6 - QUESTIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 6, we are on Questions. Right. Councillor Mulherin.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Does the Deputy Leader agree with me it is vital at all times, but especially in times of difficulty, that Council leaders show strong leadership?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Of course the answer is "Yes" but I suspect the supplementary is about the four letter word "shut".

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: I did not quite catch the end of Councillor Brett's comments there but the supplementary actually is. Does Councillor Brett therefore agree with me that it was extremely disappointing that officers were left to explain the loss of a memory stick containing the details of 5,000 children in this city to the media and people of the city? Would he also care to comment on Councillor Finnigan's comments that losing this significant amount of our children's personal data was "simply small potatoes"? Finally, would he agree that those families whose data was lost would consider it anything but "small potatoes"?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I would agree with her that what happened was significant. If we are talking about leadership, it does not mean that you jump up and answer absolutely everything every time.

One of the things that is happening from that is that we are getting a significant number of front line staff who have use of memory sticks to sign a document to try and make sure they understand the new culture that is needed to avoid that.

Let me just say what I consider to be the four main traits of transformational leadership. The first is to do with being a role model and Andrew and I, I think, both would reckon to walk the talk. We were very pleased in October when Keith and others said that we should go to London to see Rosie Winterton to try and get some more resources. Sad to say, I have to report to Council that thus far we do not appear to have had that much response, but we are still hopeful that the wheels of government are working.

There is a second role of transformational leadership in terms of being a change agent and one of the things that Andrew and I have agreed to do is to set up special meetings to do with the very changed situation we had with the credit crunch where we are going to have, effectively, a War Cabinet to look probably two weekly

at the change of information as, sadly, the economic situation changes and I fear in the near future not for the better.

The third thing is to show aspects of being a team leader and I think both of us do our best to support and encourage other members of our side and certainly to support and encourage officers. One of the things that is shortly to come on stream as a response to the credit crunch is a leaflet that we have tried to make sure appears for everyone who is made redundant and loses their job. We want for every job seeker to have a special flyer which gives local information.

Finally, the fourth aspect of transformational leadership is to do with being a communicator and all I am going to say is, the appealing vision even in these difficult times Andrew and I when it comes to the next meeting will have a vision about next year's budget we will be happy to share with you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hamilton.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Executive Member responsible for Finance care to comment on how the recent changes in taxation introduced by the Government will assist the people of Leeds in coping with the economic slow down?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It has been suggested by a number of commentators and certainly by the Liberal Democrats, that the £12.4b that the Government spent on this temporary cut in VAT has not been, so far, demonstrably successful. *(hear, hear)* I would just like to indicate that had the Government actually trusted Local Government and had distributed to the Local Authorities the amount of money that we would have had under the Revenue Support Grant from the £12.4b going to Local Government, we would have benefited to the tune of £100m.

This is a huge sum of money, £100m, Les, £100m. This could have been used to fund removing the backlog of maintenance works for all Council assets; bringing all Leeds City Council leisure centres up to an ideal standard; refitting all libraries that need work; and removing the further backlog from the Highways Maintenance Programme.

All of these works would not only have improved the fabric and infrastructure of the city, they would also have been employment creators and in the current climate that is crucial. It would have fuelled further jobs and skills and training in the city. Obviously all of these things are still part of our commitments but without that £100m it is hugely more difficult to do within our current means. I offer that to Council as to what might have been. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Lord Mayor, just by way of clarification, can you confirm again what the figure was?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: £100m, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Bale.

COUNCILLOR BALE: Would the leader of Council care to comment on recent press comments made by Sheffield MPs and the operating company Sheffield Arena relating to our successful pursuit of an arena for Leeds?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Yes, thank you, my Lord Mayor. We all took the view initially that the adverse comments by Clive Betts MP were so much hot air but

he seems to want to persist in what I can only describe I think in planning circles would be called a trade objection. It is a bit rich coming from Mr Betts, to be honest, because he was once Leader of Sheffield City Council at a time when they were on the verge of bankruptcy and he engineered various handouts and bail outs for the city.

I do not want to get into a war of words with the city of Sheffield because I think they like us agree that an arena in Leeds would be the missing piece in the jigsaw as far as popular entertainment venues in the North and the Midlands is concerned and, of course, it would generate £28m-worth of income into the Leeds economy every year.

I would just make one point. Sheffield is a city that benefits from £122 per head of population more from the Government every year than the city of Leeds gets. Similarly, when our transitional funding from Neighbourhoods goes to zero, Sheffield will be receiving £13m every year.

We do not want to get into a debate where I go on with a list that is even longer, which I have here, but quite frankly I think we would all agree that over the years, and under Governments of different persuasions, Leeds has not had the investment that it ought to have. We now have what we believe to be a very robust deal to deliver a much-needed facility for the people of Leeds.

I just wish, Councillor Bale, that there were more supportive noises from the group opposite because they have been mealy-mouthed in the extreme so far about what we believe is a flagship scheme for this city that will create jobs and inward investment and give the people of the city region a facility they have every right to expect because other city regions already have them. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Bale? No. Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Leader of Council join me in welcoming Holocaust Memorial Day in February as an opportunity to reflect on the evils of Nazism and Fascism?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Absolutely, in reply to Councillor Finnigan. A few years ago when I was - and I apologise if I have told this story before to members of Council - a few years ago when I was visiting the city of Washington on business, I found myself with some time to spend on the Sunday when I was not meeting my company's customers and I visited the Holocaust Museum. I would recommend anybody who visits that city to visit that particular museum. It would touch anybody.

I took actually two colleagues of mine with me who were much younger than myself and they remarked how right it was that people of their generation should visit that sort of memorial so that they too would never forget the acts of barbarism committed by one group of people against another. We must never forget. *(hear, hear) (Applause)*

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Lord Mayor, would he agree with me that those especially in the extreme right wing political parties who deny the Holocaust deserve our contempt?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Those who deny the existence of the Holocaust must be blind, deaf and totally without any brain power. The documentation is, I regret to say, all too vividly there for everyone to see. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Anne Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Will the Executive Member for Environmental Services inform me when his department is going to update the information given on the Council's website?

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The content of the website is continually reviewed to check for accuracy and to improve the customer experience. When information is incorrect or out of date it is considered urgent to correct it.

THE LORD MAYOR: Any supplementary.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can he then inform me when the changes in refuse collection days in parts of Farnley and Wortley will be put on the website, bearing in mind that it has been wrong for at least a month, if not longer?

COUNCILLOR LYONS: They are not doing any more there. *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. This is the first time I have been aware of that information. I am sure that the relevant officer has already made a note and it will be corrected. Councillor Blackburn is correct when she talks about the website being an important tool and the Council is currently in the process of revamping the internet pages that deal with waste management to improve the quality of information and experience for residents.

We have already launched a search facility to find recycling and collection dates for the year ahead. Apologies if it is not there for your little bit of Leeds but we do want to make it easier for residents to recycle as much waste as possible and to dispose of their waste effectively.

We are now going for a completely new look and feel for waste-related pages, making the whole experience more interactive and improving the quality of information. The main change will be a dedicated home page serving as a gateway for all waste and recycling information and the content will include news items and performance figures, interactive games and tutorials, the facility to book an educational visit from our Communications Team and lots more. I am pleased to tell Council that the site is scheduled for relaunch in April of this year.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Beverley.

COUNCILLOR BEVERLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Will the Leader of Council join me in welcoming the custodial sentence handed down to the criminal leftist thug Daniel Searle of Roundhay Road, Harehills, who was this month jailed for attacking the home of a British National Party member, and will he confirm that this Council utterly condemns all acts of violence, persecution, harassment and discrimination committed against its citizens purely on the basis of their religious or political beliefs?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: My Lord Mayor, any resident of this country who commits acts of violence, persecution, harassment and discrimination against people going about their lawful business deserves the full weight of the law to fall upon them and if that is a custodial sentence, the more the better. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary?

COUNCILLOR BEVERLEY: No.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Board Member for Central and Corporate confirm that the Council will continue to be committed to narrowing the gap?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Lord Mayor, I was asked the very same question by Councillor Renshaw in April last year. I am not going to read out the same answer. For the sake of brevity I will simply say that my Ward has the highest number of jobs seekers in Leeds so of course we are all committed to narrowing the gap.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I hope you do better on the supplementary than you did with Councillor Mulherin. Will Councillor Brett now apologise and explain to the Council why he said what he said at the Executive Board when he said that the lowest paid workers of the Council were lucky to have a job?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: As I recall, it was in the context of a living wage and what I believe I was explaining at that time...

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: So you did say it?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: ...was that the situation - Peter, if you want an answer you will have to listen to it. If you are going to keep interrupting me you are not going to get an answer anyway. You may not like the answer I am going to give but it is my answer, not yours.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: But you said it?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: The answer I was trying to give was that the Council in the last 18 months has put a considerable amount of money into the pay and grading which means that our lowest paid workers already earn significantly above the minimum wage and that they were, therefore, in a situation where the living wage, we might argue, has already been achieved for our lowest paid workers. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Rhodes-Clayton.

COUNCILLOR RHODES-CLAYTON: In view of recent press coverage surrounding recycling, would the Executive Board Member like to comment on Leeds City Council's performance?

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Our recycling and compost rate continues to improve with 31.5% of waste being recycled in the financial year up to the end of November 2008. This is 5% higher than the rate in the previous year and 1% above our target for the year, so I think no mean achievement.

The result of that is that we have recycled 9,229 tons more waste than we did last year and 13,561 tons less waste has been sent to the landfill compared to the same period last year.

I am pleased to say that the amount of waste these households producing is also falling and the total amount of landfill waste per household has fallen from 514kg pre household between April and November 2007, to 464kg per household in the same period this year, a reduction of nearly 50kg per household. I know that we talk in terms of measurable things - 50kg - 50 bags of sugar per household.

In the current year we shall be rolling out some more services. We will be piloting the fortnightly collection of green recycling bins in 26,000 properties; we will be piloting the collection of food waste on a weekly basis; we will be continuing to roll out the garden waste collection service to even more properties taking coverage to over 60% in the coming year; and at East Leeds Household Waste Site we are developing a state of the art recycling centre including a re-use shop. We will continue to invest in communications and educational activities including working with schools and communities to spread the message. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Any supplementary, Councillor? No. Councillor Hyde.

COUNCILLOR W HYDE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Will the Executive Member for Environmental Services join me in deploring the appalling misinformation regarding Council waste management policy distributed to residents of Halton Moor and will he take the opportunity to set the record straight?

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. members may remember an exchange in Council a few months ago when members over there asked me what input I had had into a Labour leaflet and at that stage I do believe that I offered Councillor Lyons my editorial skills for any leaflets that he puts out in the future. Sad to say he did not take me up on it. If he had have done, then I would have...

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Decimated it.

COUNCILLOR SMITH: ...said that the information that he was proposing to distribute to residents of Halton Moor and Temple Newsome was both untrue and likely to cause unnecessary and unfounded concern amongst its residents.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Disgraceful.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: I hope you have got that (*inaudible*) you have not been telling us for seven meetings. Now you are telling us.

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Whilst the former wholesale market site on the Cross Green Industrial Estate has been identified as a possible site for a treatment facility for residual or non-recyclable waste, the Council has made it absolutely clear that it has not yet selected a site or a technology for this facility. Bidders for the contract have been invited to propose alternative sites.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Listen, you might learn something.

COUNCILLOR SMITH: The preferred solution will be selected on a rigorous evaluation of the full range of environmental and other criteria. Councillor Lyons was in fact written to by Andrew on 14th November to explain that position.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: No, I never got that.

COUNCILLOR SMITH: You never got it. Well, that is the postal service for you.

Members of Council may wish to learn that in fact nine bids have been received. There are three different sites involved - so it is not just the former market site - and the nine bids include a number of technologies including MBT and gasification and not just the EfW facility that Councillor Lyons bleats on about. I think that that is a vindication of our mutual approach on procurement.

Councillor Lyons's leaflet also talked about the treatment facility intending to serve other towns and cities outside of Leeds. Not true.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: I have not asked the question yet. *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR SMITH: You are getting your answer, Mick. Setting an absolute geographical boundary on the source of waste would be impractical and completely arbitrary in terms of its benefit and the Council has agreed a clear policy that this is a facility for Leeds waste and bidders are being made quite clear about that criteria.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Verbatim does not say that.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Brett said.

COUNCILLOR SMITH: There are also no plans to transfer waste into Leeds by train. The idea that the Council plans to demolish houses to do so is completely fictitious.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: That is a disgrace.

COUNCILLOR SMITH: To further suggest that in the later stages of the residual waste project most of the housing on Halton Moor will be demolished is complete fantasy and scaremongering of the highest order. Councillor Lyons, I invite you to take up my offer of editing your next leaflet. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR W HYDE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to thank Councillor Smith for the detail of that reply and I would just like to ask him whether he agrees with me that any member who engages in this sort of regular scaremongering is not, in fact providing a service but is providing a disservice to his electorate. I wonder whether he would further join with me in reminding members opposite who might be minded to go in for this sort of scaremongering the legend about the young lad who cried wolf to the extent that when there really was something to complain about he was never listened to? *(interruption)*

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: So the wolf will come then, Bill?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: A bit like John Illingworth, eh?

COUNCILLOR SMITH: I agree with my colleague Councillor Hyde.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Very wise.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Would the Executive Member for Leisure update me on the progress with the new Morley Leisure Centre?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: It is going very well. *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, I am delighted to hear that Councillor Gruen thinks that our wonderful renewal of leisure centres across the city is going very well. I am sure we will have the opportunity to quote it in leaflets in the future.

Councillor Finnigan, thank you for the question. I was delighted to join with other members of the new Morley Leisure Centre Working Group recently in Scratchard Park and witness the laying of the foundations for the new Morley Leisure Centre. This ceremony marked an important stage of this fantastic process, the

former leisure centre now being demolished and work now firmly under way on this new 21st Century facility.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Working Group, Councillor officers, local elected members for all of their support and hard work in drafting this new proposal. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary?

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: I have no more mutual praise!

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: John, Armley members would never do that to you, honestly.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Armley members are not grateful.

COUNCILLOR PARNHAM: Will the Executive Member for Environmental Services inform me when the new stickers giving the dates of the green bin collections are going to be distributed?

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The Council will send the new calendar to all households that require one along with the newsletter updating residents on the progress with the waste strategy and I hope that it gets through to you, Mick. Further publicity about how to reduce, re-use and recycle as much as possible - we are able to distribute this by the end of February.

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary? No. Councillor Beverley.

COUNCILLOR BEVERLEY: Will the Executive Member for Environmental Services please tell us whether or not the Council will be adopting Animal Aid's Compassionate Charter?

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The Animal Aid Compassion Charter promotes the adoption of the following eight actions which support both animal welfare and the environment.

Firstly, to ban circuses with animals from Council land; secondly, to ban the giving of pets as prizes; three, to make Leeds a plastic bag free zone; four, to go fur free; five, to promote and subsidise spaying and neutering programmes; six, to purchase only cruelty free toiletries and cleaning products; seven, to stop the sale of foie gras and veal; and finally to adopt only humane, non-lethal management of pigeons and other animals and birds.

I have confirmed to Animal Aid that I am generally supportive of the aims of the charter and work has already been undertaken towards meeting the first six of the actions either in whole or in part. The Council has already banned the giving of pets as prizes and circuses with animals on Council land. A resolution last year called on the Government to legislate to end the provision of free plastic bags and it was resolved to minimise the use of these plastic bags at Council outlets. The spaying and neutering of dogs is promoted through the Dog Warden service and when the Lord and Deputy Lord Mayor's formal robes are next to be replaced, no animal fur or skins will be used. Finally, the Council Procurement Unit has issued a sustainable procurement policy which promotes the use of sustainable toiletries and cleaning products.

I am keen to ensure that the residents of Leeds are able to exercise their freedom of choice and that suitable tools are available to protect both health and the

environment when controlling pets. It will be difficult, therefore, to adopt the final two actions proposed to Animal Aid and maintain this stance. Animal Aid acknowledge in their correspondence that the actions need to be tackled in an order that is both practicable and achievable to the Council.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Any supplementary?

COUNCILLOR BEVERLEY: No.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Taggart.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Deputy Leader assure me that tackling inequality in our city will be one of his administration's top priorities?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: This is yet another question, Lord Mayor, that I have been asked before, so I am simply going to confine myself to saying that not "will be" but has been and will continue to be.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Taggart?

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Given that his comments at the last but one meeting of Council regarding equality for women, does he share my disappointment that, despite the all round expertise at his administration's disposal over the last four and a half years, not a single woman in his controlling group has ever been a Member of the Council's Executive Board? Is it because he does not actually believe that women should be given serious political jobs, or is it because he does not think the controlling group's women members are up to it?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: We have a very specific question. We have on our front bench three very able women, so I understand the question and the detailed answer. The rate at which we are able to move towards our aspirations, we cannot always do that with the facts.

In saying that, we are saying that we aspire to women in senior positions.

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: Aspire?

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: They're not there though, are they?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: If you look at the Council's directives you find we have achieved on that particular agenda a great deal. There are other agendas - I am happy to talk with you further - where we still have a considerable way to go and I would say within this Council that disability is one of them.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: What about that lot? (*inaudible*)

COUNCILLOR TOWNSLEY: Would the Executive Board Member with responsibility for Central and Corporate issues outline what measures are being taken across the Council to ensure the maximum possible security of confidential information held by the Council?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I have a long answer which I am going to cut short, in view of the time. We have already touched on this in a previous question. There have been a number of cases recently where there have been things that have gone wrong which we have taken very seriously and it is our

intention, has been our intention over the last couple of months and will continue to be in the next few months, to tighten up considerably over the way in which we deal with security issues.

As I referred to earlier, one of the things that we have done is to try and ensure that all officers who deal with memory sticks have signed a piece of paper which makes it absolutely clear to them that we do not expect them to leave them in a place where they may go missing and they need to take more care of what they are doing. That is one of a number of ways and I suspect it will not be too much longer before members will hear more about ways in which we will be able to ask them to help us with increased security. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Right, now that is the time limit and we must leave that particular item.

ITEM 7 - RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

THE LORD MAYOR: We are on Item 7.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I move Item 7 in terms of the Notice.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, thank you. Can I start by apologising to Councillor Carter for not...

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Everything. On your knees.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: ...giving notice. There has been some slip up in not getting my name across to you earlier than now.

I want to refer to page 56 and you will be well aware of it within ten seconds. It is the signatures to the call-in.

Early today you were preached by Councillor Hyde and by others about the sanctity of the independence of the Scrutiny process and here we have an ideal example were yet again every at verse end the administration try to make it as difficult, as complex as possible for us to actually effect a call-in. Earlier it was two members could have a call-in. Now five members have to have a call-in, but it cannot be the new technological age of electronic signatures - no, you have to actually force people to come into the Civic Hall and sign a piece of paper to say they want a call-in and I cannot believe that this is a report from the Head of Scrutiny Member Development, whose opinions I normally value highly. He actually says, "This is to avoid members not being fully aware of the issues involved." What? Come in and sign a piece of paper because you might not be fully involved with what this is all about.

It is, frankly, again, another device to make it more difficult to call-in and to have a proper and fair independent and transparent Scrutiny process.

I have to put that on record because if we do not, then again we will be accused by people like Councillor Harrand, "You did not say anything, you will agree

this in any event.” We do not agree this particular proposal, we think it is subversive and actually think it is counter productive.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Just before Councillor Carter says something very similar (*laughter*) because this is a key point, as far as I am concerned. We are sometimes berated for not taking Scrutiny seriously. That is something that I have heard on many occasions from members on the other side. We have had a number of meetings with Scrutiny Chairs where we have tried to do our best to say yes, we do take this seriously. It is issues like this where we have found on occasions that some of the five signatories did not know that their signature had been used which led us to introduce this.

This change makes this process tighter and more important and that is why we introduced it.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Taggart.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: I was at that meeting, Lord Mayor, and I do not recall that being said. I challenge Councillor Brett to produce any Labour Councillor who unknowingly supported a call-in. That is the first thing I say.

The second is, we do not all live in the Civic Hall, unlike him. Some of us have a life to get on with and my work in particular takes me all over the place. I can sometimes be 150 miles away from here. If I get a phone call from a Labour colleague or from the Group Office on an issue, I might be able to give a view on it and it might be yes, I do want that call-in. I am not driving from Northallerton or Thirsk to Leeds Civic Hall to put my name on a piece of paper to drive back to Northallerton or Middlesbrough - I have got better things to do, Councillor Brett. You are treating us like little children. We are all elected. All 99 of us are elected by the people of Leeds and each one of us uses electronic communications - except probably Mick - every day of the week. Every day of the week we all receive and send out hundreds and hundreds of e-mails, some of which are extremely important. Are we going to say actually we do not know if he is reading e-mails from Neil Taggart - after all his are in black and white and his are always in blue.

Treat us seriously. What you are doing, the consequence of what you are doing, you are diminishing the call-in procedures. There will now be fewer call-ins because so many of us lead complicated lives. It is an absolute disgrace and it should not have happened. (*hear, hear*)

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I wish to join with that. I just think you are being totally unreasonable. Only yesterday - Monday - I signed an agreement for £4.5m from Sports England for work with younger people. I did it by electronic signature because it is accepted. I am dealing with a bank for another organisation with which I am concerned. All these deals are now done by electronic signatures.

I think you have got to take this seriously. You are in a position as a group where you have got together as a very unholy alliance but nevertheless you are working as a group and you know you can employ the same brutal tactics of getting away with anything because you simply have the vote.

I am afraid that we were in that position many years ago. If we were brutal with our power because we had got a larger group as that one group than you have with three or four, if we did that we were wrong. What you are doing is using this power in a way which is quite undemocratic. It is an impertinence for an officer to

say to me, "You have got to go in and sign that bit of paper to show you understand the implications of a call-in." It is a damned impertinence and I am quite prepared to say to that person, "It is an impertinence." I was quite prepared to e-mail everybody and say it is an impertinence for an officer to tell the three Greens who had indicated what they thought about someone revealing private information to others, when he was telling them that it was not right of them, it was the wording, but very atrociously worded, rebuked them for having the impertinence to make this suggestion.

We have got to come to a point where we say with less, I think, force than I am using now, that we are elected by the people, each one of us, whether we are only one person on a bench or two or three or 43 or 20 or whatever it is. Each individual has a right and quite frankly call-in is getting a farce.

I signed a document, I cannot remember whether electronically or not, for a call-in. The call-in was called at a time which I could not do because I had already got two previous commitments that had been booked weeks ahead. Others were in the same position so it meant that only one of us could go to that meeting and talk about something which is of great importance to the people who work in Leeds. That was unfair. The great beacon of openness, Councillor Hyde, I think, was the one who insisted on maintaining that particular time and day. It is just not on.

We have a lot of argey bargey and I quite enjoy the rather harsh words that we express to each other and then laugh about it afterwards - that is fine - but when we come down to serious issues like this, or the issues which we discussed earlier in the day, it is not fair for us to do the bland kind of decision you just spoke of. At one time you were not like that. You were quite a reasonable person. *(laughter)* I mean a long time ago and you will not remember him but quite frankly you must not let these things happen and continue to happen because it is really debasing the whole quality of the organisation. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to agree partly with Councillor Atha. Call-in had become - had become - a farce and that is why these measures were introduced, to get over what is nothing less than an embarrassing situation. I was at Scrutiny Board not many months ago debating the issue on a call-in of cemetery charges. There was the most embarrassing, excruciating set of ten minutes or so when the Chair of that Scrutiny Board, Councillor Pryke, had to suspend proceedings because he did not know and half the Scrutiny Board - in fact all the Scrutiny members I do believe actually knew - what three of the Labour members who had brought that call-in forward really were talking about. They had got some briefing documents, supposedly, that no-one else had got. It turned out that it was a Labour Group briefing document. The meeting was adjourned for that document to be photocopied so everyone else could see it - oh no, they did not want that to happen, did they? No, officers were sent scurrying all over up to the Labour Group to get an original briefing document from someone in my department to photocopy that and distribute that, but that did not tally with the actual briefing document that had been done in the first place.

The fact of the matter is that if call-in is to mean anything, and Scrutiny is to mean anything, those people who are performing the call-in have to know about that subject, understand that subject, appreciate that subject and, yes, feel that it is important enough to take the time of those elected members, very busy elected members, to come to this building and debate those important matters.

If that happens and when that happens, my belief is Scrutiny will be taken more seriously and we will have more faith in the Scrutiny process, which is something that I certainly want to see, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: I find it absolutely hypocritical coming from Councillor Taggart - your attendance is appalling at Scrutiny. You turn up around four o'clock, you cannot tell anyone where you are. We all value the call-in process and I think actually we have worked with officers and members before about that I am very pleased we have the facility to do so but coming from you, Councillor Taggart, it is absolutely a joke. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR GRAHAME: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would just like to say I am sorry I cannot remember your name but what I have heard from the way these members here, the two parties, have treated Scrutiny over the years, I am appalled to what I have listened to today. I think they have all have personality changes. They want to remember what they have said before and I am glad that you are all taking this seriously now. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Lord Mayor, this is actually a very serious matter. Councillor Grahame's last comments, like her usual utterances, are not really worth talking about so I will deal with Councillor Atha's comments, many of which, like Councillor Procter, I agree with. Bernard, what I have to say to you is this. You are a senior member of that Group. Get your house in order. It is as simple as that.

We agreed because there were insufficient call-ins happening that one party with five signatures could generate a call-in. That, as has been graphically illustrated by Councillor Procter, was grossly abused because of the complete lack of discipline and organisation within your own Group.

I would say this to Councillor Taggart. If you want to be taken seriously, act seriously. Do not behave like a bunch of big kids. You spent 20 years refusing to have any Scrutiny Committees in this Council when they and us asked you to set them up. Since the time they have been set up you have done nothing but try to make a shambles out of it. Some of the people you appoint as Chairs you would not let run a raffle. *(laughter)*

My Lord Mayor, Scrutiny is very serious. It needs leadership from your Group Leader and discipline from your Whip and if they cannot provide it, Bernard, change them. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Would you nominate me as Chief Whip?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Absolutely. Any time, Bernard.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Could you just listen to the Legal Officer?

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE GOVERNANCE): In relation to the vote, the recommendations that are referred to in Item 7, if you actually look at page 57 of the Council book, there are three recommendations of the General Purposes Committee. There is (a) to require original signatures on the call-in request form which is the one you are talking about; there is (b), which is an entirely different topic, to ensure that all Scrutiny Board recommendations are submitted to Executive Board; and then there is (c), to approve the Scrutiny Board procedure rules as appended in appendix 1 to this report.

The amendment to the Scrutiny Board procedure rules talk about the requirement for the original signatures referred to in (a). I would suggest that when you are voting you vote on whether or not you agree with (a) and (c), which is the debate you have just been having about the original signatures, and then have a separate vote on ensuring that all Scrutiny Board recommendations are submitted to Exec Board.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you for that advice. We will go to a vote, then.

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE GOVERNANCE): Can I suggest that the first vote is on (a) and (c), which is the top of your discussion, which is the requirement to have original signatures on call-in request forms.

THE LORD MAYOR: Right then (a) and (c).

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, we should be clear, we have to vote on the (b) as well.

THE LORD MAYOR: Oh, yes. (a) and (c), those in favour please show. Those against? I think that is CARRIED.

Then we will go to (b). Those in favour? Against? That is CARRIED. That concludes item 7, then, with a bit of luck.

ITEM 8 - MINUTES

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 8, Councillor Carter.

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

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: Seconding and reserving the right to speak.

(a) Executive Board

(i) Central & Corporate

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you. Lord Mayor. I am speaking to page 85 Minute 164, which is the Deputation to Councillor - Communities Against Post Office Closures. People may well be aware, because they have had similar problems in their area, we have had significant closures of post offices over the last few years in Morley and the surrounding areas. We do believe that these are the heart of our communities and we have campaigned hard, often in vain, to try and keep these open. Anything that the Council can do to provide the help and support that is required to get these post offices reopened or to get new post offices opened in communities has got to be warmly welcomed. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on the same Minute. I notice it calls for a report to be brought to the Executive Board on cost-effective ways of working with post offices to safeguard the provision of essential services for communities across the city. I think we have already done a lot of things to try and work with the post office. We have over £43m-worth of payments, such as council tax, business rates, housing rent, commercial rent taken through the post offices in 2007/08, which is over 600,000 transactions through post offices, yet this has all been in vain because we have seen many of them close last year, basically ignored by the Government's sweeping approaches, which some of them seem to defy logic and just seem to be a cull just to reduce the numbers.

In my Ward we lost Newall Post Office in Otley and Kirk Lane in Yeadon, just outside the Ward and used by many of our residents. The result was getting a longer walk up hill for elderly residents to get to another post office. These, as Councillor Finnigan over there said, they are the heart of the community, post offices, and it

really does concern me that we are seeing more and more close. What worries me is that I know that down in Essex they are looking at ways of maybe going to reopen some post offices, but that should not fall on Local Government, especially considering how our settlement has been reduced, how we get such a poor settlement from central Government there is no way that we can actually afford to provide what should be nationally funded.

I think it is appalling the way that the post offices have been treated and I just wonder, where will it all end?

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I wish to address the same Minute. It is interesting, Lord Mayor, that a route has been found for the Council to get involved because, after all, our function is looking after our communities, looking after our neighbourhoods and the post office is one of those vital parts of that. I find it quite interesting that fairly recently there has been a change of heart by Leeds MPs who are now working to achieve something, which is unlike 15th October in 2002 when five of them voted for the Urban Post Office Reinvention Programme - the other three were not there.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I bet I know who one of those was.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: It is interesting that all of them were Labour at that time. The thing I find rather odd is their naivety, but I should not, having seen their reaction over the Iraq war I should not find it naïve - did they not know that reinvention meant closing post offices, meant chopping off the bits that the failed managers could not find a way to manage? By that I mean the one who failed us with Leeds United and the one who failed the FA. It is interesting that the MPs did not do anything about those kinds of responsibilities then, Lord Mayor.

I am sure there is some interest in this and I chatted with my local postie and I have got the post office very wrong, because I thought that if we do more Christmas cards and more birthday cards and more letters to each other, we would keep the post delivery service going and the post offices themselves. I am wrong. The postal delivery service survives on junk mail. It is those big payers who pay that pay to make the delivery service work. I find that, coming back to the community aspect, quite a bizarre situation. If it is junk mail it goes in our green bins and we have the expense and cost and the trouble, then, of emptying those bins and trying to dispose of that waste.

I think it is time, Lord Mayor, that our Council, let alone all the Councils in our country, were given an opportunity by Parliament to work collectively, not have a situation where MPs vote one time in Parliament as if we do not know when it is all fully recorded, of course, and then they come on the picket lines here when the post office has been closed and tell us they are supporting us. It is a bizarre situation and, Lord Mayor, in closing, I am absolutely delighted that the lifeline is still open for the post office to remain in Horsforth. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to address my comments to Minute 182 on page 91 of the Minute book about the way the Council transforms the way it deals with customers in this city. So far Councillor Brett has not directly answered any question in this Council Chamber except those from members of his own group but I have got my fingers crossed for this one - I have got my fingers crossed.

Many thousands of pounds are spent by the Council on brands, brand consultants and merchandise for the introduction of the Contact Leeds brand which was swiftly withdrawn. The Council have also been ripping off residents of this city from £1200 to £1500 a month on their rip off 0845 phone numbers and this went on for many months after it decided to end this. In terms of this expenditure and income, this unnecessary expenditure and this unnecessary income that the Council received, could you comment on how that contrasts with the Council's view that when worthy groups like Relate come to the Council for funding they are told that the cupboard is bare?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Brett to sum up.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I start with post offices, Lord Mayor. Clearly this is concern to members everywhere that we have had I think it is 22 post offices in Leeds in the recent round that have faced closure and in spite of in many areas members in this Chamber and many residents of Leeds working, doing their best to say "No", as far as I am aware we have not really been successful in Leeds in halting the tide of closures.

To me this is all about trying to bring into the 21st Century the outward facing services not just of the Council but the Council and its partners and we have had some talks with the post office, we have made some contacts with people in Essex and elsewhere, but in our current financial climate we are simply not able to subsidise the post offices to keep open.

What I believe we are trying to do is to talk again with the post office to try and make sure that those post offices that we do have we are able to keep and it is around trying to see whether there are more services that the Council needs or its partners need that we can jointly provide. In looking to the future with possible new joint service centres, it is discussions around those that we need to be having.

I will happily say that hindsight, James, is a wonderful thing and, of course, if you go back a number of years when there was no Contact Leeds, when there was no contact centre, when there were 112, as I understand it, phone numbers that the public were told they had to contact the Council with and for many of those phone numbers the experience of ringing the number was not very productive. In the context of changing that the administration introduced Contact Leeds and I think nobody at the time said that branding Contact Leeds was a bad or stupid idea. In the grand scheme of things the amount of money that was spent was not huge. We have to spend some money, clearly, for any new service to let residents of Leeds know that it exists.

We have recently decided that that brand is no longer what we need and the amount of money, I have been told - I have not got the figures in front of me but if I quote this wrongly I will be told by officers and I will send you the correct figure - the amount that I am told that in changing the branding we lose, if you like, is in the region of £6,000, if my memory serves me right. In one sense, of course, nobody wants to waste £6,000 but in another sense it is surely sensible after a reasonable period - and I think the time period we are talking about here is three plus years from the start of Contact Leeds to where we are now - then it is surely sensible for us to review what we have done and the decision has been made that that separate branding is no longer what we require.

I do not want to go over the debate about the phone numbers. We listened and we changed what we are doing. The silver numbers are now there, they are 0113 numbers and I think we had better say to you that you have helped to get a change there, we did listen to what you said. A lot of things were said not just about

the Council and about the Government numbers that are 0845 numbers, and I have not noticed very much in public about any of those changing, so I suggest you talk to contacts in your own party to see whether the Government will do something to change some of the numbers in your words which are still “ripping off” residents of Leeds. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: We go to Neighbourhoods and Housing, Councillor Lewis.

(iv) Neighbourhoods & Housing

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I want to speak on page 86, Minute 168 which concerns the Options Appraisal for Council Housing. I just wanted to put this in context because clearly we are not in the dire state we were pre the ALMOs. We are not in the position where we have a £1,000m-worth backlog of repairs that need doing to our homes.

We have been incredibly successful through the ALMOs in bringing in investment to this city that I never thought I would see in my lifetime as a Councillor and I think the ALMOs have been particularly successful in transforming neighbourhoods. Not everything that we would want to see done has been done, and I have raised in a letter to you, Les, some particular concerns I have got locally, but they have achieved a huge amount in addressing the problems that this Council faced for 20 years.

The problems that we face in the next few years are not on that scale and at the same time we have had some very positive news from the Government, the DCLG's recent consultation paper on changes to the revenue and capital rules for new Council housing which actually will enable Councils like Leeds to build Council homes and will enable three star ALMOs to build Council homes themselves. We are still waiting for what I expect to be a very positive document on the whole issue of the Housing Revenue Account Subsidy System which is due shortly and which must have a huge impact on this whole debate.

I am concerned that we are talking so soon while we are still receiving investment through the ALMO process about stock transfer, and it is something that is very easy to speak about in a kind of glib way but let us remember that these are people's homes we are talking about. We are talking about transferring the ownership to Council tenants of their homes to other landlords.

That is a huge, huge issue that every member of this Council Chamber should think about very, very seriously. It is not about transferring the ownership of a sports centre or even a Town Hall - these are people's homes and that is far more sensitive and far more important than any other building in the city. On this side we remain committed to letting tenants make decisions about future ownership and management of their homes.

We have earlier had a customary reference to Education Leeds and how this had taken a big chunk of Council's responsibility away, etc, etc. We hear it at every Council meeting. Let us think about also how if you take the Council's housing stock away, how that reduces the Council's ability to change neighbourhoods. It is incredibly serious for us as a Council to just consider in a fairly casual way to think about stock transfer.

Reading the report that came to Executive Board what struck me was that it was all about money, it was all about financial options and there are far more important issues at stake than just the financial options. The financial options drive

us in many ways but there are other things that we need to think about and the most basic is about security of tenure, because if you are a Council tenant you are a secure tenant. You are not a secure tenant in a housing association property. I am not saying they are insecure but they do not have the same tenancy agreement as our tenants have.

Stock transfer is not just a rebranding. It is not just, "Oh well, let us just stick another label on it, it is no longer Aire Valley Homes, it is no longer Leeds East North East. We will just call it something else." It is far more fundamental, the implications are huge for the city.

There are loads of, I suppose, imponderables, risks associated with stock transfer that we need to consider in great depth before we move on. I will just mention one or two and as somebody who works in housing I can see this over the past 20 years. We have an increasing tendency for housing associations to become large, remote from the people they are serving, remote from the communities they serve with Chief Execs on huge salaries, they are unable to really understand what is going on in the communities they purport to serve. You have one association I was dealing with where they work across 36 Local Area Agreements. You tell me how a housing association could even attempt to play any kind of sensible role in that?

They have a huge lack of local accountability, they are not responsive to Councillors. One of the best housing associations locally, I have huge problems getting any response over basic issues of repairs. It is like dropping a stone into a bottomless well. That is one of the good ones. If they do not respond to us, they do not respond to anyone else.

Councillor housing is about local services and that is the big issues. Thank you Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. First can I say, Richard, you have said nothing which I could stand up here and disagree with totally, but you have put emphasis on certain things which I do not think are there and you need to be very careful about doing this. One is stock transfer.

I know all the arguments as far as stock transfer is concerned. You made some points. I was not quite certain whether you were saying, Richard, we do not have a review. You did not actually say, "Look forget it, just stay as we are." If you were, you have got to be a little bit careful. The Audit Commission when they came and they interviewed me made it very clear - very clear - that they would expect this kind of review to take place. They also made it clear that everything should be on the table.

As I have said to you privately as well and I will say it now in here, there is no fixed view on the way forward. We may have the tenancy to go on, we all would like the tenancy to go on, the ALMOs have done a good job, there is no argument about that, but just bear one thing in mind. You say looking at funding - we have to look at funding. There has been a lot of capital, massive capital placed in it. The administration of that capital goes to running those ALMOs. If I tell you that currently we are going through a peak of £150m of decency funding, so around £50m and it is dropping down. We have a duty and responsibility to see how we finance in the future. There is nothing much which you have said which would lead to stock transfer. There is nothing that we have said that would lead us in a completely different way at the present time.

I have said to you and I will say it again, you will be involved like everybody else in this Council will be involved on the way forward. When we go forward that is

the time we will start debating whether the stock transfer is good, whether it is not, whether we keep the ALMOs or we do not keep the ALMOs, whether we bring it back into house or whether we do not bring it back into house. All of the various things have to be looked at. This is an enabling phase to start that exercise going. Once the exercise is further down the road, then the debates will start. I hope do not have debates, actually, at the end of the day. I hope we can get an agreement across the Council Chamber which I think we can in many areas.

I think you are going a little bit early on it, and I understand why. You are putting markers down and I have no problem with markers being put down, but bear this in mind that if we do not do this we will have the Audit Commission round our neck. That is the first thing - in fact, I am certain we will.

We have to also see the three ALMOs at the moment are definitely viable until 2011, 2012. They will not be viable if we had not (*inaudible*) but they are. It is what happens after that date. We have to ensure their viability.

We have also got, you referred to the legislation. We do not know if it is true yet but it would be very nice if we could spend some more money on Council house building. We have no objection to that, if we try to do that and if the Government comes out with that, start coming out end of February, it is scheduled for February so we should know what the CLG are doing from the end of February, so that is another thing that should be on the table.

Nothing is off the table and nothing is being concealed. That is the only point I am trying to make, there is nothing here which you should be frightened of or worried about because you will certainly be involved. Members over here will be involved, you will certainly be involved and members over there will be involved on the way we go forward. I will leave it at that. Thank you.

(v) Children's Services

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking to Minute 148 on page 78 about the future provision of primary education in Richmond Hill. Members will have seen in the Evening Post that Education Leeds are starting a consultation process on effectively the closure of Mount St Mary's Primary School and the possible construction of a new school on the Richmond Hill Primary School site. Needless to say speaking as a Ward member, not Scrutiny Chair.

In the document that Education Leeds have distributed around the parents and some of the area there is what I think is a contentious paragraph about the demographic projections for children in Richmond Hill. They are saying that in their Appendix I there is a rising birth rate putting pressure on provision in the area within a few years. This means at the very least existing provision must be maintained, obviously.

There is, however, as I say, some uncertainty about these projections which are less reliable and stable than in other parts of the city due to high inward migration. It is possible if it continues that in the current economic climate some recent economic migrants may return to their home countries and the inward flow may slow down. I do not know when this was written but it is all history now. The inward flow has reversed.

However, that is a very misleading paragraph because there are not that many recent migrants to the Richmond Hill area who came or who were there to go back home.

Comparing the two parts of Burmantofts and Richmond Hill Ward, there are many, many more migrant children in Brownhill and St Patrick's Primary Schools on the other side of York Road, in Burmantofts, than there are in Mounts St Mary's Roman Catholic Primary and Richmond Hill state primary at the moment, and that is likely to be the case for the future.

Nevertheless - and I think I speak for my Ward colleagues - we welcome the proposal by Education Leeds to access the new financing to build a two form entry, a new two form entry school on the Richmond Hill site but we will, of course, listen to the parents at the public meeting at the Irish Centre being held tomorrow evening. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I wish to speak on Minute 149 on page 79 on the so-called Federation Model commissioning children's education provision. There has been a distinct lack of democratic debate about these proposals, which are clearly officer led. I and my colleagues are not even clear whether you as an administration have agreed with or have total confidence in what is proposed.

The Executive Board has not discussed this commissioning structure other than the references to it which were hidden in just three paragraphs of the report sent to the Executive Board on 3rd December 2008 on the arrangements for the transferring of responsibilities of the LSC to Leeds City Council.

Offices from Education Leeds have been giving presentations on this idea to interested parties like the College Principals in the city. Indeed, one such presentation was made to Labour Education Group. However, those presentations do not constitute consultation and I repeat there has been no democratic debate of these proposals.

There are many questions about this model which, if implemented, would have far reaching consequences for the provision of education across the city. Questions that have yet to be answered which immediately spring to my mind include how will employers be engaged? How will a separation between provider and commissioner relationships be ensured? How are timetable and transport issues going to be addressed? In areas like my Ward where public transport is patchy at best, how will young learners be able to access the reorganised provision? How will schools with different timetables, not to mention different school years, be able to effectively collaborate? Where is the evidence that partners and professionals have signed up?

Members on this side of the Chamber believe that the educational experience of learners should be continuously improved and that educational standards and performance should be of the highest priority. What we are demanding is a democratic discussion and full analysis of these proposals and for a proper consultation to take place with all interested parties. It is imperative that we are to have this debate to ensure that the interests of all our constituents are taking into account as we move forward with the development of the new educational models. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am commenting on Minute 163 page 85. I would just like to draw attention to the plight of schools in the community of the Hyde Park area. There is a well documented lack of playing pitches in the area and Council will remember the Deputation that was brought to Council last autumn concerning the lack of playing pitches and the possible opportunities for actually achieving them.

The report duly came back from Education Leeds to the Executive Board which is why it is under Councillor Harker's portfolio, and I have to say to you that the report was inaccurate, complacent and downright misleading. Education Leeds gave a cosy report of the schools in their area on alternative provision, including artificial pitches which are actually fairly small and, as a result of the report there was a deluge of opposition from the community.

The reality is a very different story in terms of access to the alternatives and in some cases the pitches are well outside the area which would involve lengthy journeys. One mistake Education Leeds actually forgot to do was to ask the schools themselves about these alternatives and heads wrote in to actually say that they information was incorrect, partial and, as I said before, misleading.

As a result Councillor Wakefield and myself asked for this paper to be withdrawn and for it to be brought back to a future meeting. It came back in January and, guess what, the report stated that there is not adequate provision in the area.

The local schools in Hyde Park area do not meet the minimum requirements for playing pitch provision as laid down in the Education School Premises Regulations of 1999. Surely in this part of Leeds the Council has a moral duty to adhere to these regulations and to provide adequate land for the children.

As you will be aware there is a proposed sale of the former Leeds Girls' High School site and I would suggest this gives the Council an opportunity - and some would say a once in a lifetime opportunity - to solve this problem. Surely at the very least in the anticipation of the planning application coming forward information put together by Education Leeds should be accurate. This is the sort of data that will be crucial to planning members when they come to make a decision on any future application.

Could we please have an unambiguous, clear statement from the Council that it intends to use all its powers to keep protected pitch status for the High School playing fields and, furthermore, than once it has defended this status, it will buy the fields from the High School and make them available to the local schools and community?

I have to say, Councillor Harker, I have to raise this under your Minutes as it came under your portfolio but what I am asking for you to do in your position, is to put all your influence on behalf of the children in this area to enhance the provision that they have.

I believe we have the policies and the strategies and I urge you to show some leadership. We have got the opportunity here to make a real difference to the health and wellbeing of children and young people in the area. We have asked on numerous occasions for you to stand up and be counted when it comes to the narrowing the gap agenda. Surely in this area where there are such stark inequalities around health and wellbeing, we should stand up for the rights of these children to have access to playing facilities that all of the children in our city deserve.

I am asking you to have the guts and determination to take this opportunity to benefit children in the Hyde Park area for generations to come. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I speak to page 86, Minute 169, the Deputation from Woodkirk Valley Football Club. I want to say a few words. Woodkirk Valley Football Club do an excellent job in our community to make

sure that young people, both male and female, get an opportunity to play the game and it gets them involved, it gets them active so it is something very positive to do.

The main concern that we do have is the fact that certain sports clubs are sent all over the place. I will be changing some of my sports clubs with you, they are playing in your fields and your sports clubs are playing on our fields. All it needs is a little bit more organisation to make sure that these clubs are not having to travel far. I know what is said in paragraph (b) about Area Committee involvement. I think that is very useful. I think it would be very constructive if Area Committees could have some input into that to make sure that as much as possible local clubs get to play on local playing fields. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I want to speak on Minute 171, National Challenge and Structural Change to Secondary Provision in Leeds - that is page 87.

All members of this Group that I have spoken to have been deeply concerned by some of the things it proposes and have a great many questions they want to raise. Firstly, this group supports wholeheartedly the Government's Building for Schools programme. It has meant 30 new schools, we have refurbished 200 in Leeds and indeed hopefully we have got £100m more coming into Leeds. We will support any extra investment which will improve schools and learning for the young people of this city.

I would also like to congratulate the pupils who have achieved so much this year, with the GCSE results for the city showing the percentage of pupils achieving five A* to C including English and maths has increased by more than 4% to over 47%. These improvements have in no small way been made possible by the £1,200 more per pupil of extra investment there has been from this Government since 1997.

However, as we all know not all of Leeds's young people are doing as well as they could and not all schools are performing well. For these reasons this so-called restructuring of provision is apparently being done. I say "apparently" because it is not a paper which is about standards. I believe the real driver behind this restructure of schools in East and North-East Leeds is about managing pupil numbers and dealing with the mistakes and miscalculations that the administration and Education Leeds have actually made.

You have to deal with the fact that Temple Moor School is too small; David Young is too small; and John Smeaton is too small. It is not just in East Leeds. This is what you are most concerned about. The Government's National Challenge requires that 30% of pupils in all schools achieve five GCSEs at grades A-C, including English and Maths and if they do not Local Authorities are required to put into place structural changes to make sure this target will be reached.

In Leeds, as I am sure members are aware, there are seven schools who are not reaching this 30% threshold and three of these schools are directly discussed in this paper. Those schools are Parklands Girls' High, Primrose and City of Leeds School.

What is being proposed in this paper? It seems, Richard, that you go to great lengths in this paper to stress that it is a consultation paper and that you are not making recommendations. You are very firmly, as always, on the fence - a typical position for a Liberal and not a very comfortable one for you to be in, I would assume, Richard.

We are promised that the paper with recommendations for these changes will come to March's Executive Board and we very much hope it does, because these are very important issues and any proposal must be debated and scrutinised fully. However, a number of things, it seems to me, are clear from the paper.

There will be major change for the provision in Boston Spa and Wetherby which may mean that one school will be closed and the number of places will reduce dramatically, bearing in mind 60% of pupils at Boston Spa come from East Leeds and 20% of Wetherby pupils come from East Leeds.

COUNCILLOR: 40.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: That a new school may be build in East Leeds, presumably to accommodate displaced children from East Leeds, that Parklands School may be relocated, probably to a central location and may become an academy, the future of Central Leeds Learning Federation is in doubt and one or both schools may become academies or may close. Let us remember, Councillor Brett, that you did actually give a guarantee to us in this Chamber that you would not close City of Leeds School. These are massive issues and you can see that it is vital that we debate and scrutinise them.

What is the Labour Group's view on this? As far as we are concerned we have always been on the side of choice. We believe that parents and young people should be able to choose which school they go to and that is why this Group got rid of school catchment areas. We are proud we did so and this paper limits the choice for people in the city.

If you close Boston Spa school you are saying to those children in areas such as Whinmoor that they cannot go to the school they wish to go to. This is wrong. You will be forcing them to go to a school that they do not know, one that has no track record of success and one which they cannot trust - indeed, probably one which may not even have been built yet.

This question whether Boston Spa and Wetherby should only be served by one school, I will remain to be convinced. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Same Minute, same page. I just want to comment on one specific aspect. I think Chris Edwards and Councillor Harker made it clear when speaking to Leeds Heads recently that there would be an open consultation throughout East Leeds on these proposals before a paper came to the March Executive Board. I would ask Councillor Harker to reiterate that in here and ask him to say he includes the East Leeds Councillors as stakeholders in that process, and he will make certain that they will be included and perhaps even the Outer East Area and the Inner East Area Committees. We have a stake in that area and we would like to be formally consulted.

The specific point I wish to make is about the lack of commitment in East Leeds by the administration as evidenced by the partial demolition of the East Leeds Family Learning Centre. I think most of you who have been in this Chamber for some time will remember that this was a thriving, nationally renowned resource. It received accreditation and praise from the Secretary for State and other well respected people throughout education.

When we left office we left with a £6.3m legacy in terms of it might not be you, Councillor Harker...

COUNCILLOR: Wrong portfolio, Peter.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: ... but we left in the Council Capital Programme a £6.3m reserve for that particular purpose. In one of the early Executive Board's when you did accept your portfolio you agreed that this particular site could become an ideal life long learning centre. Indeed you signed up, as did Councillor Brett, who then hailed the portfolio to the vision of Lifelong Learning Centres - nursery, Primary Schools, High Schools, Learning Centres, Colleges all working in partnership together.

We also knew that the Skills Council at that stage had pledged further funds if that vision had been realised.

We make no apology on this side of the Chamber for saying that adult training and the development of vocational skills and getting people fit for meaningful jobs is something that is very close and dear to our hearts. It may not be important to you but we believe in particular at present difficult times that people are worried about their jobs, we should not risk the future of what was a very well used facility by allowing it deliberately to fall into disrepair.

We believe jobs and skills are a top priority. We see training and skills as central to help people find a route back into the labour market. In East Leeds this is particularly important. I realise we have priorities to weigh up from all parts of the city and people who make pleas from throughout the city.

It is very disappointing to see a resource removed that has helped change lives in our community. The £6.3m we committed for improving education and training in East Leeds has disappeared and with it the hopes of redeveloping this major East Leeds site.

You have done so by stealth. The money was not just taken out but initially transferred to the contingency scheme but it will not come back into East Leeds, will it? It will not come back into the best interests of adults and children in these deprived areas of Leeds and you are, along with Councillor Golton, the champions of children in the whole of the city. You should not neglect one part of Leeds deliberately. You have let the buildings rot; they now have to be demolished and frankly you should be ashamed that this is the state in which you have left East Leeds - a crumbling show of buildings and you are watching them fall apart. I think our children and adults in Leeds deserve better. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak to Minute 163 on page 85. We have heard the support of the Headingley members, community and the aspirations in the area to secure the Leeds Girls' High School pitch for community use. We acknowledge that the services are not ideal at the moment and that any potential use of the pitch by the local community and schools will be very beneficial.

I have to say that I do find Councillor Blake's points are rather out of date, though. She may be aware that Ward members have requested that Section 106 money from the redevelopment at Headingley stadium, we requested that money from that development be put towards the potential purchase of this hockey pitch. She also is out of date, and perhaps Councillor Carter can confirm this when he sums up, that the Council has been actually proactive in approaching Leeds Girls' High School in potential for buying this site. I think the Councillor is out of date. I am struggling to see her interest in this area but then as she lives in Otley and represents Middleton Park, as it is right in the middle of the two perhaps that is easy for her to get involved in issues in this area - or perhaps it is being slightly more political than that. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Could I just say, we listen to those statements with pleasure, we trust them when the time comes to vote to preserve those pitches. You will in fact put your vote where your words are now. At the moment your track record on that is appalling and you voted at North West Inner Area Committee to keep a school open on Beckett Park and you voted three times that yes, we will keep it open; when it came to a decision here you did not vote that way, you voted quite differently to get rid of it and close it down.

We welcome your interest suddenly in these three pitches (*interruption*) and we will support you if you take the lead but you make sure that those pitches remain. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Well, Bernard, thanks for addressing those comments to me on that item. I do not know what you are talking about. (*laughter*)

COUNCILLOR ATHA: You do not know what I am talking about?

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Now I would like to move on to Peter Gruen. Peter, you are aware that the Family Learning Centre as a site was transferred from my portfolio fractionally over two years ago. As far as the provision of Early Years in that part of East Leeds, I can confirm we will maintain the same level, we will put in extra investment if and when we move our facilities out of the Family Learning Centre and I am looking for better accommodation because I think my Early Years Officers deserve better accommodation than that currently provided in the Family Learning Centre.

I would like to move on to Councillor Dowson now. Yes, the National Challenge says we have got to look very carefully at three schools in East Leeds because they are below the floor targets. I do not agree with her figure that seven of her schools are still below the floor target - she has got that wrong, it is much less than that.

She has been listening to Plan A, or maybe Plan A 2, 3 or 4. I am actually working now on something like Plan 6 because unless the Government bring forward Wave 13, as we have requested them, of the Building Schools for the Future Programme, the actual physical estate in East and North East Leeds will not change.

Just dealing with Councillor Brett's point, the only person I know who has articulated very clearly five times in ten minutes to me personally that City of Leeds should close and why aren't I getting on with it faster, is Jim Knight, Secretary of State for Schools.

Let us deal with Judith and playing fields. Yes, I agree with an awful lot of what Judith said but there is obviously a general election in the offing (*laughter*) because when Judith came to sanction the rebuilding of Spring Bank Primary School, which is on a very cramped site, there was a lot of garden still left around Spring Bank House, the old Tetley house. Yes, we have got to do something for the children in this area. Education Leeds in the report they prepared very clearly said it was not satisfactory, but it has not been satisfactory, Judith, when you held the portfolio and you were involved.

I do want to point out to Councillor Mulherin and actually Councillor Richard Lewis, Education Leeds is not the Education Leeds mark 1 that this administration inherited with all the statutory power it had because they had been taken away from this Council. We are now dealing with Education Leeds mark 2, which is a commissioned company which delivered on behalf of the Children's Services the

education service, the final arbiter on Learning and Skills Council commissioning is not Chris or his team - they may be the agents we choose to carry out the commissioning. If you want the definitive version on commissioning for the Learning and Skills Council it is the Deputy Director for Children's Services, Keith Burton. He gave a brilliant presentation last week. It is understandable by everybody - it was a very, very good slide projection.

Yes, there are going to be problems with the learning and Skills Council---

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Confederation.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Let me finish - when they take over the funding and the commissioning. Whether schools wish to come together into groups to deliver the 14-19 curriculum is down to individual high schools. The Government has given them that power to decide. We have just been told about the Morley solution to this. The Trust status of, I think it is three high schools and seven primary schools - it could be more than that, I am told.

There is a probability and I would not say I have ruled it out, because I think it is an interesting discussion I can have with Heads that all schools in Leeds became Trust Schools so that the playing field was level. We have got to have open discussions with the professionals who deliver education. When we have a plan, when we have something for us to consult on I will consult, and I will consult widely. I am not going out to consult, Peter, until we have something to consult on. At the moment there is nothing to consult on - absolutely nothing because unless I get my hands on Wave 13 money, restructuring will not happen and the Church of England will not get its extra academy but it probably would not get it anyway, just to deal with that issue before somebody else - I am surprised that did not come up today.

Richmond Hill I think we move on to next. I would like to thank Councillor Lyons. I have not done that very often, it is something of a red letter day. I inherited the problems around Richmond Hill of Primary Education when I took over the portfolio and Mick and I had several rows in this Chamber. I am very pleased now that we are in a position to build in Richmond Hill and to build a two form entry High School which will bring two very good schools together and I hope that we can put in community resources and other resources and we have to talk about that. We still have to go through the consultation period which I hope goes well.

We put things into consultation documents though, Councillor Pryke, which we feel at the time are necessary on population and I am sure that at the end of the day what we all want is the best possible provision for the young people in Richmond Hill so that they can go on. I do thank everybody who has been involved - the governors of Mount St Mary and others - in getting us to where we are now.

I would now like to come back to Councillor Dowson. I did not get a chance of saying myself in this Chamber because we did not get round to the question how pleased I too was with the exam results of this year. We had 14 schools below the floor targets when we went into those exams and I think I am right in saying we now have technically three not. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. As all those items were educational related and Richard has handled them fantastically, I suggest that we move on to the next debate. (*Applause*)

(vi) Leisure

THE LORD MAYOR: I call on Councillor Wakefield

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The reason why we are moving the reference back is simply to try and change the criteria of investment under the, I think it is called Investing into Wellbeing Centres, that is it. Can I thank John and the officers for allowing us locally to have extra consultation with our communities? That proved very useful and I think today's deputation proved the strength of feeling that is around in our local communities about this. I want to just describe some of the experiences we have on that consultation because I think this is a shared experience.

In the audience there were elderly people that used Kippax Baths to do the things that this Council and the Government is urging them to do to keep fit, to keep active, to participate in sport, keep social networks, which we all applaud. There were also young mothers who bring their children down - and there were young mothers - to the swimming pool straight after school, again to do the things that we keep urging everyone to support about participating in sport and keeping healthy and so on.

It was a rather surreal presentation. It lasted 45 minutes and I have shared this with other colleagues. It started off taking us to Yeadon Tarn and then we went to John Charles, then we went back to Pudsey - this is all visually - and then we went to John Smeaton. John Smeaton was described by the officer as a local facility - it is actually six-and-a-half miles away and two buses, but nevertheless it was described as a local facility. It soon dawned on that audience that actually this was not what was programmed about investing in sport and building on the success of the Olympics - it was actually a closure programme for Kippax because the officer said Kippax did not meet the criteria of district centres, arterial routes or complementary activity. You can understand as you have heard today the anger and frustration of local people who had sat there thinking they were thinking about investment in Kippax who were actually hearing confirmation that they were going to close it. That is exactly what the officer said.

In that audience, as I say, were the elderly who have no cars, they cannot find a way up to wherever the new site is supposed to be, young mothers who have no cars, children who have no cars and people representing Brigshaw who actually are a flagship of social inclusion because of their partnership with John Jamieson, who use the sports centre to encourage special needs pupils to swim. You understand why they said to us - and I am saying today - why is it that we came here thinking it was about improvement and it is about closure?

I say this to people like - is Councillor Shelbrooke about, and Councillor Cleasby? It is all right for Councillor Shelbrooke - I will get it on record whether he is here nor not - to say people have to move on. Why should the people of my Ward have to carry on going to, for example, Kippax Leisure Centre? It is all right for him. It is all right for Councillor Cleasby to say that let us have some sense of this - 1.6 miles at three miles an hour is 33 minutes - what a nice time to warm up for exercises. It is all right saying that to local people especially the elderly, especially the young.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: I am the elderly! You are talking about a 71 year old, Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: We are talking about sporting and local facilities. Go on a slow boat to China, Brian. We are actually talking about what these credits are about. They are actually about wellbeing and that means you have got to have a strong business case - I accept that - but you have also got to have a case that deals with wellbeing and that wellbeing means addressing, helping equality

and social inequality and the things that you have heard this afternoon from the Deputation about trying to bring about sporting participation locally.

I say this, John - and I think you have been reasonable in terms of listening - if you put that criteria in that has a social dimension, you will have a different case about where you should invest in this city. You will be able to look at Kippax; you will be able to look at Beeston; you will be able to look at Middleton and all those places because that is what these PFI credits are about - improving health, improving wellbeing and actually making sure that you address the inequality. You will do more than what the paper sometimes is guilty of. You are pretending that the Council is there to compete with the private sector. It is not. The Council is there to address social need, social inequality that the market cannot provide. I urge you, John, to go back, have a re-think, put that criteria, come back in this Chamber and we will give you our full support if you do that because I think we will have a different debate about how the council should serve the people of Leeds and how we should address health and social need in our communities. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blake to second.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Yes, I would like to second the reference back in the name of Councillor Wakefield. Obviously as a result of the initial consultation exercise that took place a decision was taken to delay any decision and to consult more which, in my view, means that there is a recognition that they had got the process wrong. We would welcome this opportunity to start again, very much along the lines that Councillor Wakefield has suggested, that we look at the future consultation with new criteria based on community need and involving the people at the heart of the debate.

It will not come as any surprise to you to know that the so-called consultation in Middleton Park Ward was widely regarded by the community as a sham. It generated enormous anger and local people were outraged at the lack of notice for meetings and the staged format of meetings when people got to them and that feeling was replicated in, I think, all the Wards where the proposed closures are.

Also there was a unanimous feeling that the review has been set up as a cost-cutting exercise and that it was deeply insulting to the people of Middleton and Belle Isle and users of the leisure centre

Councillor Driver, Councillor Coupar and myself had to call extra meetings that were demanded by the community and over 1000 members of the community signed the petition against the closure.

So what happens now? We know you have asked Sport England to help in a more detailed analysis but what we do not actually know is how this will be done and how local people can get involved. I know you have had letters and comments from a wide range of individuals, organisations, pool users, disability groups and local schools, to name but a few, but what feedback have you given them as to the next steps? They want, quite rightly, to know how they can be included and how their voices can be heard and, above all, they want to know that future decisions will be made not on a cost-driven basis but rather on need, and by this I mean the needs of the global community, the health needs, the social needs to support and develop the regeneration work that is taking place right now in the community, all of the work that has been done to address the inequalities that exist in this part of Leeds.

So, John, if you are listening, please can you assure us that there will be a proper health impact assessment as requested by the PCT, that a full access study is done - for example the cost to primary schools when they have to bus their pupils to

swimming lessons when they can no longer walk to their local pool? In our ward there is a significant number of our schools who have got school resident population of over 70%, in some cases 90% of pupils living in the 20% most deprived areas in the country. We want to know the cost in detail of bus travel to alternative venues, the actual availability of buses in the first place and the distance to other suitable pools for the many users of Middleton Leisure Centre who actually have disabilities and travel from a wide area to use the pool.

I would urge you to listen to what all of these people have to say - the support for the pool from the elderly and neighbourhood groups as well as the families with school aged children to the faith groups that I know have written in, as well as the health professionals. You have an opportunity to correct a huge mistake here and we urge you to go back to the drawing board. I hope that you will listen to us, involve local people and come up with a solution that in my Ward the people of Bell Isle and Middleton, deserve.

I am urging all of you to support the reference back, to have a proper, informed debate about leisure provision in this city. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR CONGREVE: I support the reference back, Lord Mayor, because I think the criteria used is flawed. It does not take into account social needs. It is too narrow and discriminates against the most vulnerable in our society, the young and the elderly and the people with disabilities.

The criteria does not take account of key issues such as improving health within our communities. It does not take account the wellbeing of people within our communities and the bigger picture does not protect vulnerable people in our community - indeed, it is making things worse for them. It flies in the face of cohesion and respect and support for those that need help.

In Holbeck the South Leeds Sports Centre serves a wide community and vulnerable people. There are huge health problems that are well documented by the Health Authority. People in outer areas have a life expectancy of 15 years more than those in the inner city, in Holbeck. By taking away their sports centre we are just making that gap even wider.

There is a huge problem of obesity in inner cities and especially child obesity. How are we going to encourage pupils to take a health sport and activity when the centre is some considerable distance away? From the report to the Executive of users groups, 31% of people have said they will not travel any distance.

There is a low car ownership in the area and people cannot get to the John Charles Centre. It is all right for certain members of the Council to say people can walk, it is a healthy walk. It is not. There are many people that are elderly that use South Leeds Sports Centre because it is there, it is accessible and they go for gentle exercise, gentle swims, not physical workouts, not heavy workouts and the John Charles Centre is totally unsuitable for the majority of people that are using the South Leeds Centre. It is for professionals, it is for skilled sports people, not for the vulnerable and they feel overawed at the thought of going to John Charles. Many of those that have tried it have been disappointed and they will become disaffected and not partaking of the sporting activity.

There is a huge regeneration programme for Holbeck and one of the good pointers that has encouraged people to come to Holbeck is the fact that there is a sports centre but all the proposals I have seen, all the consultations have all been geared to closing South Leeds Sports Centre, not keeping it open.

The South Leeds Sports Centre is a community based facility. It encourages the local community to come into it through its doors and encourages them to take part in activities. The John Charles Centre does not do that. It is much bigger, it is much more remote.

When the consultation took place at the South Leeds Inner Area Committee, members made it very, very clear that they were against the closure, that they were supportive of refurbishment of the centre and the centre remaining open. I think when you look at the report of the Executive Board there was only 17% in favour of the proposals in that report for South Leeds Centre. That is giving you a message. That is saying something. It is saying that the community wants to retain their sports centre and they do not want it closing.

Of all the proposals, the proposals for South Leeds are the least popular. In fact 71% of users wanted more money putting into the centre, not the centre closing down.

I just want to reiterate things I have said before. How does closing South Leeds Sports Centre narrow the gap? How does it fit in with the Council's policies of Narrowing the Gap and Every Child Matters? People are saying, every child may matter to them but it seems different to Holbeck.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you.

COUNCILLOR CONGREVE: With that, Lord Mayor I support the move back.
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR MURRAY: Thank you very much, Lord Mayor. It is on the same minute and I want to focus on my concerns at what happens in Garforth. I would like to start by thanking officers for setting up two public consultation sessions in Garforth, one that we wanted and one that we demanded. Unfortunately not so many people attended, there was only about 60 people turned up. The point is, 60 people did turn up and they are using the sports centre and that is 60 people out of 153,000 that visit that sports centre on an annual basis - hardly representative.

I think I would also like to thank the officers for turning up and doing that. I would like to thank them for their presentations - a bit like Keith's comments, really. It was a professional presentation, they spoke for over half an hour, they got the vision across, we all got the picture and the news film went down with the audience that it was just academic, because what they were there for, the same reason as Keith's people were there, folk were interested in what was going to happen to their sports centre. In the way the consultation was set up, the way that it was publicised, they were a cynical lot and they believed that the Council had already made up its mind and that they had made a decision and that that leisure centre was under threat of closure.

What the officers did not give them, though, were a few facts and figures. I think most members got these facts and figures. These facts and figures, John, went to the Area Management Board. I have got the figures for Garforth. This is what I told the people in Garforth. I know how much you have spent, I know what the income is, I know what the cost is, I know how much every visit costs this city and it turns out to be 76p. The fact that I am mentioning it is that the leisure centre below Garforth happens to be Wetherby. If you look at the same set of figures for Wetherby you will find that the Wetherby costs are £1.23 per visit, so in other words it is 47p dearer to run the service in Wetherby than it does in Garforth.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Because it has got a swimming pool.

COUNCILLOR MURRAY: Wait a minute, John. What we have got then, if you look at it crudely, that is a quarter of a million pounds more you spend in Wetherby than you might well be spending in Garforth. That is a difficult message to get across to the people in Garforth, because the message in Garforth is we have got a sports centre that is threatening with closure and yet we are going to spend, invest and put more money into a more expensive centre at Wetherby. That is the perception, that is the message that comes across.

On this same paper that we have, it has been raised, of course, with this reference back, leisure centres attract greater custom if they are near a town centre and an arterial road and are located next to a school. This leisure centre in Garforth is not. It is not in the town centre, it is not on an arterial road and it is not near a high school. It is the fourth cheapest leisure centre in the city. You might have expected that to be commented on in the Executive Board papers. There must be an exception to every rule. I suppose that is the case. I suppose what we were looking for is a message in the Executive Board's papers that would say, "Ah, we could refurbish in Garforth, we could renew in Garforth and if we did that we could perhaps have and probably would have the most economic sports centre in this city." Not a message in the Executive Board paper.

Within the Executive Board paper there is one little thing that I just want to mention. It is a bit woolly. Ron - where is Ronnie? - I just want to mention this little bit. There are lots of percentages in this Executive Board paper and you have always told me, "Tom, beware of percentages. Percentages do not tell you the truth. In fact if there are a lot of percentages in it you will say it is a colouring board, there is lot being covered up."

COUNCILLOR FELDMAN: You are not taking any notice. You have not taken any notice of what I have said to you.

COUNCILLOR MURRAY: Let me just give you this. With reference to the proposals for Civic Leisure Centres, 39% either agreed or strongly agreed with proposals to provide a new facility for Kippax and Garforth. 39%. That is 39% of 60 people who were consulted. By my arithmetic that is about 24, so 24 people in a town of over 16,000 people are represented by that particular figure. It just does not add up, does it?

Forget percentages - what we really want are the real numbers, we want the real picture of what is happening in this picture. I do not think this report gives us that. Thank you, (*Applause*).

COUNCILLOR HARINGTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. On the same Minute. Because of the situation with regard to attendance, declining attendance in many, declining income, obviously consultation was necessary and we can see from the long list of people consulted that there was a big attempt to make the consultation as thorough as possible - Citizens' Panels, users groups and so on.

One of the results of the consultation, people were asked to vote, as you may know, to say where they thought centres ought to be sited and most people voted for centres to be sited in town centres or on arterial routes or dual purpose places where there was a school, for example, and the smallest number of people voted for a sports centre to be on a housing estate.

One of the issues that arose at Fearnville Centre was the question of whether anybody on the Gipton housing estate, or how many people, actually knew there was

a consultation on. I do not under-estimate the difficulty of such persons being consulted but the fact is that one of the key questions, I would say, was not really answered, namely in the huge decline at Fearnville, 100,000 over two years, how many of those people were from the Gipton estate and if they were not going any more, why was that and if there was a better centre further away, would they go? There were some key questions, I would say, that were not addressed which relates to the wider question of whether the Narrowing the Gap agenda was meant to be part or should have been part of the consultation.

You could argue well, we have had so many other documents about Narrowing the Gap you cannot have every issue raised in every single questionnaire, but I would say because the issue is so important and so complicated and so many needs to be met, then it did need to feature.

We need to know how the needs of people on the estate need to be met because there needs, obviously, to be some reorganisation because lots of areas and deprived areas in Leeds do not have centres. The Narrowing the Gap agenda needs to be part of the consultation.

The other issue which was not addressed was the Active Leeds agenda. As many of you probably know, last month an Active Leeds Strategy was launched. Obviously this is to try and to address the key problems of inactivity with the costs in both health, the cost to the economy, so how can you get Leeds more active?

Of course, not every single one of these people taking exercise needs a sports centre. You do not need a sports centre for cycling or walking or skateboarding or dancing necessarily. One of the key issues recommended, one of the key activities recommended was swimming. Obviously there needs to be a link - maybe it is coming later but so far it has not been made - between a possible closure of sports centres and the Active Leeds Strategy which is to encourage people to do more swimming.

The word "vision" was used, but when the people at the Fearnville Centre asked more about the vision, where would the new centre be and what would be in it, officers did their best but they could not answer that question because it had not been spelled out, so naturally a lot of people got the feeling that this was a cost-cutting exercise.

It may be that this is just the first stage and these Narrowing the Gap and Active Leeds questions are going to come in later but at the moment they have not been brought in and until they are we cannot be confident that there is a vision, we cannot be certain that these many needs will be met. I support the reference back. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Thank you very much, Lord Mayor. I want to thank John Procter and the officers for the consultation that they put in. What happened in actual fact was the people that lived all around the sports centre did not get any advice, it was too late to get out to them all so from that consultation they have been in touch with me regarding the closure of the East Leeds Leisure Centre and what we are saying here today is the criteria that was used in the first place was, in my opinion and the people's opinion, strictly on cost.

If we talk about narrowing the gap and we talk about why the sports centre was put on Halton Moor, it was built purposely where it is now for the very reason that people have been speaking about, for a deprived area that had no *(interruption)* Have you done? There is a word but I cannot say it. Keep your mouth shut while I am talking.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: He is a class act.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: What we are talking about is why it was put there in the first place. It was a deprived area that was even getting rated in the paper as called the "Come and live at the zoo". That was Halton Moor. That is what they were saying.

What we have done since then is to actually pull Halton Moor round so that it is a good place to live and there are people applying for houses on Halton Moor and we are talking about 300 and 400 people applying for each property that is coming up.

Part and parcel of how we pull it together was this sports centre. It is not just a sports centre. We should talk about dual uses when we talk about these centres and what they are used for. They are not just there for swimming or to lift weights and stuff like that. They are actually meeting places where the community and the area - and we are talking about a deprived area now - can go and meet, talk and it saves the Council money. This actually saves the Council money. What we should be doing is using the criteria for is what it costs to run the sports centre and what benefits we get in the area for keeping that open.

What I would ask is that the criteria should be looked at. For instance, when John gets mixed up with his figures now and again, I do not know what he does at home but he certainly does when he goes out to press and puts out the cost of the security - the cost of the security is shared three ways there. There are more people use that than the sports centre. It is the housing, it is the credit unions and others and they all put money in - or should put money in - for making sure your cars are all right. I can assure everyone that there has been very little damage to any cars for some considerable time, so it is working.

It is also working that the schools - and we have high schools in the area - can use this facility. Why don't we talk - they say it is costing you too much for running the sports centre so what I am asking is that the cost could be spread further over the leisure centres that you would go, we would have more policing, more people in the area trying to look after the people of Halton Moor and what will happen if we close this facility down? It will, sadly, revert to where we are spending Council payers' money on trying to keep it right when they have wrecked houses, etc., whereas now they can go, they can keep fit, young mothers can go and work correctly.

Please look at what you have got in front of you, John to say what benefits we would have if we left this sports centre open. By all means have a look at the way it is run so that we can earn more money from it, but do not close it because it is just a cost business because it will cost all of us more money in the long run if we close this centre. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. As many of you will know I had an operation a fortnight ago and I have not been on painkillers for a fortnight but I think when I get home tonight I am going to take them because of the hypocrisy that I am hearing here.

I find it incredible that former Chairs of Education speak in the way they have tonight Lord Mayor. Many on this side might know the direction I am leading in, but I am not taking you there. I am going to take you to Cranmer Bank. If I remember Alec Hudson, do you remember that pompous deputy leader of the Council who thought he was absolutely wonderful...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Have a go at somebody who has gone.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: ...he was the one who said the David Lloyd Centre was good enough for our side of Leeds as the South Leeds one was built. Do you remember? I will throw back at those responsible for Education. What about Cranmer Bank? What about those really poor areas around there? What about the really poor people in Horsforth? They would have to go all the way to Kirkstall or all the way to Guiseley with a very poor bus service.

So, Keith Wakefield, I notice the gentleman who spoke about the elderly behind you is missing now. For the elderly to walk 1.6 miles to a sports centre - it is a sports centre - there is every chance they are reasonably fit, there is every chance they are able to be able to walk there.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Especially with young children, yes.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: It is not an impossibility, Councillor Wakefield. Remember, Councillor Wakefield, when you go through the Minutes again, also remember that Councillor Cleasby made a bid for a sports centre and swimming pool in Horsforth that we do not have, never have had and are not likely to get because we do not fit the criteria but want to make sure that those who can and are able to use our sports centres at least are able to have access to them and that is important and that is part of the consultation.

When you go on about the really vulnerable people...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: It is not. It is the young people. You do not understand.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Keith Wakefield, don't you dare. I remember you and your group ripping off my four year olds. Remember the 1100 quid. Remember when John Major took £6.5m out of this city. Where is Suzy? The great outcry at the time. My four year old could not get into (*interruption*). The money was taken out of this city and put in the hands of the residents who put it back into their children's education. When Tony Blair got in the only one good Tony Blair seemed to have done is he kept that principle, he just changed the way the money went round and that is why we still have the equivalent of a nursery voucher so all our poor children in the city get that 1100 quid whereas you when you were Chair of Education or when Suzy was Chair of Nursery, the money for my kids went to your three year olds and that is disgraceful, so do not tell me or lecture me about vulnerable people because it is quite obvious all of you on those benches are the vulnerable people. Thank you for the time, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: I think now we can go back to Councillor Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: My Lord Mayor, members will recall the Executive Board made a number of specific recommendations to deal with the future of the city's leisure centres in December 2008. This followed extensive consultation on each of the four key proposals contained in the Vision for Leisure Centre Strategy. Officers are working with Sport England on producing a report that will shortly come back to the Executive Board.

Lord Mayor, I do not want to dwell on the inter-Labour battles between Garforth and Kippax but quite frankly we saw a deputation today from Kippax. Why did we see that deputation? Because at the last Council meeting one from Garforth came. What did the one from Garforth say to us?

COUNCILLOR: Kippax is a load of rubbish! *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: The deputation from Garforth said, "Well actually, you know, we think we would quite like a swimming pool and a leisure centre in Garforth" and actually if you look to Tadcaster and other private delivery models to deliver that. Clearly the people from Kippax think something quite different. Two Wards right next door to each other, two leisure facilities right next door to each other. What do the people who go to the gym at Garforth say? "It is a nonsense coming here because we have got no swimming pool. We can only go to the gym and sports hall." What do the people who go to Kippax say? "It is a nonsense here because we have not got a gym and we have got to go somewhere else for the gym."

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: It is the one you are closing.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: What is really causing Garforth a lot of pain, though, is the loss of virtually all of its usage from its sports hall. Where has most of that usage gone? To somewhere I believe Councillor Wakefield knows pretty well - I think he is maybe even a governor of a school quite nearby that has taken the bulk of the business that used to be in that sports hall...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: No, I am not a governor.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: ...and is causing a lot of pain to it.

In terms of Councillor Congreve and the comments in relation to Beeston, I attended the Beeston forum, it was a constructive and useful discussion. Councillor Congreve and Councillor Ogilvie said nothing. The members of the local community said a lot. I took quite a number of issues back to officers which will be contained in the Executive Report that comes back.

There was reference made to a petition. It is really a secret petition. It has been mentioned in this place before. I have not received a petition, the officers have not received a petition, the department has not received a petition, I do not think the Chief Executive has received a petition. Clearly it has not worked its way. Councillor Blake has received a petition - I am not quite sure what people think petitioning Councillor Blake is going to do but not a lot of good, I would suggest. *(laughter)*

Lord Mayor, you may wonder why we have this reference back. When I saw it tabled I was scratching my head and thinking I cannot quite understand this at all. I looked back in the Minute book and those members who study these matters, if they look to page 81 they will indeed see the Minute of the Executive Board held on 3rd December, I think it was.

What did Councillor Blake and Councillor Wakefield say at that time? It is not actually recorded as such. What they did not say, what Councillor Wakefield did not do was reserve his position or vote against.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I did.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: He did not reserve his position or vote against.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I have never supported.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: It is not recorded in the official record. Clearly it must be an omission and Councillor Wakefield will clearly have corrected that omission when those Minutes were cleared at the meeting on 14th January, but he....

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Can I just say, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Just a moment, Councillor Procter. Just let him answer this. Councillor Wakefield. (*interruption*)

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor, for standing up for that bullying and harassment you are going through. That is very fair. The paper that went to Executive Board was actually the recommendation to further consult about the amount of spaces in the swimming pool. It was not about the issue of whether they should close. That is the recommendation. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: That is a speech, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: You have an added 30 seconds.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, 30 seconds - he had at least a minute there. (*interruption*)

Lord Mayor, yet again Councillor Gruen - I know he wants to be Leader but he is not there yet, is it? - I am sorry, Councillor Wakefield is trying to appeal to the rest of his group who clearly had got on his back at their Group meeting the other day and say "Why didn't you vote against this, for goodness sake?" because that is the fact of the matter.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: That is another one you have cocked up, John.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, he did not vote against it at the Executive Board, he made a mistake there and was quite content with it but guess what? Guess what else? So were his other colleagues as well because this very same matter was referred to the Scrutiny, the relevant Scrutiny Board as well on 18th November. In attendance at that Scrutiny Board were Labour Councillors Harington, Jarosz and Ogilvie. None of them voted against the recommendations for the consultation that went forward at that time. Indeed, they were quite happy to let it proceed.

Lord Mayor, the simple fact of the matter is that when in office Labour had no vision for sports centres in this city. They let them wither on the vine. We inherited 22 centres across this city which were literally crumbling into the ground. We have got a vision for sport in this city and we will deliver it. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: We are going to the vote.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: We know the outcome, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: It is so exciting. We are going to the vote.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Recorded vote, please.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Seconded.

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: Excuse me, you have not rung the bell for the vote.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Oh dear!

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: The bell did go.

THE LORD MAYOR: The bell did ring.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: I can assure you the bell was rung.

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: I do apologise.

(A recorded vote was taken on the reference back)

THE LORD MAYOR: Present 91; "Yes" 40; Abstain 0; "No" 51. LOST.

Councillor Hanley.

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak on Minute 153 on page 80 and refer in particular to the long term burial requirements for the city.

I am sure many people in this chamber will agree that the burial strategy, whatever the Council actually chooses, should be one that provides a fair and economic service for the people of this city often in their time of greatest need.

Many members in this Chamber will be aware that burial costs have risen from £902 to £1,311, which is a rise of about 45%, since 2004 and I personally think that is disgraceful, but there you are.

Lord Mayor, when we compare ourselves to other Local Authorities around and about - I was thinking about Harrogate, Rotherham, Wakefield, I will not name them all but there are certainly ten here - you will not be surprised that Leeds comes out top of the shop. We certainly are the dearest Authority around and about.

At the recent Scrutiny call-in that John, or Councillor Procter, referred to earlier, I think many of our members were staggered to find out before the call-in had actually been heard and approved one way or t'other, that the increase in charges for that year of 9% had in actual fact been implemented. So much for Scrutiny Board. Absolutely disgraceful, really.

There was some confusion at that particular meeting but the Executive Board member did make a promise that any members of the public or, indeed, funeral directors that had been overcharged during that particular week would be reimbursed and certainly I for one would like to know how many people are involved and has that money been repaid. It is an important issue for those families.

Lord Mayor, we all know that this particular administration often quotes just how low the increases in their rates are and yet we see above inflation rises in leisure, which has been mentioned at some point today, we see a 47% increase in child care fees and we see the disgraceful, the absolutely disgraceful 11% increase in charges for the Beckett Street car park.

With great respect, Lord Mayor, I think it is about time that this administration stopped issuing the stealth charges and we started to be a bit more fair and open with the general public. Thank you, Lord Mayor (*Applause*).

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think Councillor Hanley, he was one of the posse of three who tried to put me through my paces in

relation to burial charges at the Scrutiny Board. Indeed, there are differential charges between burial and cremation. That is not uncommon in this city; that is common in every city. There is an issue in terms of finding space for burials. Clearly space is hard to come by. That said, as an administration we brought forward at the last Executive Board a burial strategy which I might say was warmly received by all members of the Executive Board because after, admittedly, a number of years of trying to get this matter sorted I think we have pulled something together that is almost to the satisfaction of everybody, bearing in mind there is still further work to be done with the Muslim community. I am aware that meetings have taken place since that Executive Board with representatives of the Muslim community to see if we can go a little further and deal with some outstanding issues.

Once again, interesting to note and I am sure members who were not at that Scrutiny Board will like to note that it was not quite unanimously carried but I was very grateful to have the support of Councillor Harington who supported my view about the administration on that particular matter.

Lord Mayor, I do not intend to comment on anything apart from one further issue. Let me go back to the debate we had on leisure centres and the wider issue of leisure centres. If members of the Labour Group are serious about trying to get better facilities in this city, if they are serious about public consultation, if they are serious about not whipping up hysteria within communities, reports such as this that is in the Evening paper and on the Yorkshire Post website which is entitled "Leeds Leisure Centre could be demolished for new school" is very less than responsible. I note from the article that Councillor Hyde is quoted - not Councillor WS Hyde I might say but Councillor Graham Hyde, who claims he had not seen it but nevertheless he is quoted. It is very less than helpful.

Can I just set the record straight? It claims here that it is a potential site and a rumour is going around. It is news to me, it is news to Councillor Harker, it is news to the officer corps. It is, quite frankly, a complete fabrication. It is completely untrue and I am looking to the benches - Councillor Hyde goes like *this*, "No". It is a complete fabrication, it is completely untrue. There is not one single ounce of credibility in what is said here and I hope the benches opposite would acknowledge that, Lord Mayor. Thank you. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR G HYDE: Thank you for that, John.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, there is no right of reply.

COUNCILLOR G HYDE: I want to make a point of explanation, Chair.

THE LORD MAYOR: The time is now quarter-to five and we must now close proceedings.

COUNCILLOR HYDE: Rule 14(14), point of explanation. Councillor Procter has accused me of something that is not true.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: What does 14(14) say?

THE LORD MAYOR: I am advised that you have not spoken in the debate.

COUNCILLOR G HYDE: 14(14).

THE LORD MAYOR: I draw this section to a close. Councillor Carter to sum up.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I just say to colleagues on these benches, all of them, after what we have just heard, if ever you are feeling down in the dumps and you are wondering why you bother coming down here, just look across there and think to yourself, "I would never do anything that facilitated them running anything."

We have heard throughout the afternoon a series of contradictions and I want to come to one that I think is extremely important in a moment, but let me deal first of all with two particular issues.

The first is that of the ALMOs. I think it is very unhelpful and I hope that Richard has not decided to run with a scare story because he knows full well the views of most of us - I think indeed all of us - that we think the ALMOs are doing a good job, that we set our faces against stock transfer a long time ago but equally he has to accept, as Les has said, that we are required by the Audit Commission to, from time to time, look at the situation.

If the Audit Commission were to mark us down for an inspection because of our failure to do what Les has described, this lot will be the first to be screaming at us like they were earlier this afternoon.

The second issue I want to touch on is the issue of Leeds Girls' High School. Quite rightly it has been pointed out that we have been extremely proactive to the point of spelling out what we want to see happen. We have been very careful because this is subject to a planning application for a piece of land we do not own. We have said we would like to see that piece of playing field kept for public use, we have indicated what we want to see happen as regards the sports centre but now it has to be a matter for the planning sub-committee and it is not up to me or anybody else who does not serve on planning to interfere other than to make legitimate comments, which I think I have just done.

I finally want to turn to education in the wider sense. You know, it really is absolutely no good at all for you, supposedly the major Opposition party, to have such a completely muddled view of where you want to see the development of education, particularly in East and North East Leeds.

Richard Harker is faced, as is the administration, with Ed Balls banging the table telling us what we should and should not be doing; Jim Knight, as he has already said, telling him five times or asking him when he is going to close City of Leeds, as if it is any of Jim Knight's business; George Mudie and the other Members of Parliament voting for one thing in Whitehall and coming back to Leeds and doing something completely different; and you lot, you seem to have five or six - you have certainly, Debra, inherited your dad's mouth - whether you have inherited his intelligence is another matter.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: My Lord Mayor, are we bound to listen to insults? You have "you lot", you have called a lady a big mouth. It will not do, Andrew. Calm that down and start behaving like the gentleman you are.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I am not worried about you. Throughout the afternoon she has constantly heckled everybody who has spoken on this side and if she is going to do that, she will get back something similar, Lord Mayor. That is the way it works, Bernard. Let me continue.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: I wish you would.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: My Lord Mayor, we on this side believe that education is extremely important for two reasons.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Oh, really? Two reasons, is it?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: One - you are still at it. You are still at it.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: You are. Look at you.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: My Lord Mayor, for two reasons. One, it is important to equip young people to make sure that they can play a full and proper role in the community that is this city. Second, if we want to continue to bring business into the city of Leeds we need to have people who are properly trained and educated to take up those job opportunities.

We therefore need to review always how we are providing our education in various geographical parts of the city. It is of no help whatever to have from your side three or four different messages coming out from people who supposedly are spokesmen.

Keith, you know and I know that over this past few days, couple of weeks, we have been put in a very embarrassing position - and I am not going to divulge the contents of private and confidential e-mails - but I am going to say I take a very dim view of a senior member of your Group bringing people to see me - in fact it was not me, it was Councillor Hyde and Councillor Procter - promoting a further academy in East Leeds from the Diocese to discover that this proposition has already apparently been put to the Department despite the fact we have not even begun discussing what the different components of education in East and North East Leeds should be in a revised situation and then to have you coming to complain to me about it and me having to put you in the picture.

Education is too important for silly little political games like that (*hear, hear*) and I am deadly serious about this. Get your act together. If you want to start contributing to what you want to see as a new configuration for education in East and North East Leeds, tell a straight tale, walk the straight line. Do not try and mislead, do not tell us things that are not correct and make your minds up what you want to see because you are doing the young people of Leeds no good at all. Show some leadership and sort it out. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: We now go to the vote on the motion to receive the Minutes. Those in favour? Thank you. Those against? Any abstentions? The motion is CARRIED.

I believe that I can now announce that we can adjourn for our refreshment. Thank you.

(The Council adjourned for a short time)

ITEM 9 - WHITE PAPER MOTION - WEST PARK CENTRE

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, into our final session. We are now on Item 9, White Paper Motion on the West Park Centre. I call on Councillor Illingworth.

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I rise to move the resolution in my name that this Council supports the continued use of the West Park Centre for youth and community work and resolves to remove it from the list of sites for disposal.

All members have heard the Deputation earlier today and received their document which explains the enormous range of people visiting the West Park Centre and the sheer variety of uses to which this building is put. It is, quite simply, one of the busiest community buildings in the whole of Leeds.

Lord Mayor, not only is this a heavily used building but it is also located in an area which considerable social needs. It is literally only a few yards from a super output area with the highest index of multiple deprivation for several miles around - a priority area, Lord Mayor, in terms of this Council's objectives to narrow the gap. If we lose the West Park Centre it is very difficult to imagine where else the necessary services would be delivered.

Lord Mayor, members have heard how this centre is used for an enormous range of musical activities from full symphony orchestras to small chamber groups. The main hall has excellent acoustics and it is one of the largest rehearsal or performance spaces in Leeds. Several choirs use this space, which serves a huge range of tastes from classical and opera to the School of Rock and Pop.

The location of the centre on a bus route close to the ring road and a few yards from the A660 radial route means that it is ideally situated to serve a large area of Leeds.

Lord Mayor, far from closing this centre we should be looking for a huge expansion of musical activities and also the dance using the large and specially adapted gymnasias. Speaking of gyms, Lord Mayor, brings me to the second major activity that takes place at the West Park Centre, which is physical recreation and sport. The centre has showers and changing rooms and behind the school is a huge area of playing fields that residents fear might soon become development land.

In 2006, Lord Mayor, the Council valued the school buildings between £5.5m and £7m but if the playing fields were included, the price rose to £18m. To be fair, the report acknowledges the need for planning consent and assumes that there are no effective covenants on the land but, Lord Mayor, I have to ask Councillor Carter why this land was included in the valuation if there was no possibility of a sale? These prices were estimated over two years ago, near the peak of the property boom. It is unlikely to be worth anything like these sums today.

The land is subject to a restrictive covenant in favour of educational use. The valuation assumes that such covenant will be ineffective. Lord Mayor, does Councillor Carter intend to break this covenant or has he some secret understanding with Leeds Metropolitan University that would retain the land in nominal educational use while denying it to those communities that are in greater need?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Here we go again.

COUNCILLOR: Speculation, speculation, speculation.

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: I am mystified by Councillor Carter's amendment. To retain the green space is of little value if it is restricted to university students. As well as retention it must be available for community use. Why does it matter if the site has not been marketed? It is still in major occupation and cannot be marketed at the present time. What matters to us is its inclusion in the disposal list, a problem that my resolution seeks to address.

Lord Mayor, this Council is committed to deal with the obesity epidemic and the best medical and scientific advice is that this must involve a large increase in

physical activity for the majority of the population. Current recommendations are for one hour of moderate to high activity every day. Lord Mayor, how are we to achieve this without adequate facilities for the masses, not merely for a privileged elite? What is the sense in demolishing first class recreational facilities in order to expensively recreate them elsewhere?

We have already heard today from the Kirkstall Crusaders Junior Soccer Team, who are desperate for additional playing surfaces and a permanent home ground, but we also need to develop cricket and hockey, netball, rounders - in fact the full range of team and individual sports.

Lord Mayor, if the West Park Centre were redeveloped for housing or other high value uses, any replacement facilities would inevitably be located in the green belt, further from the city centre, more remote and inaccessible for those in greatest need.

We have heard today of the huge range of community groups who use these buildings and their enormous potential to develop a wide range of artistic and cultural activities. Where better to do this than a centre on the boundary between a settled and, I have to say, largely middle class community, and an area of considerable social need? If we are looking for expansion across the entire social spectrum, I cannot imagine a better location for such expansion to take place.

We want to see more youth work, aiming particularly at teenage boys and hard to reach groups. We need diversionary activities to combat drug use and under-aged drinking and to deal with behavioural problems that go with idle hands and empty minds. It worries us, Lord Mayor, that our youth service apparently prefers to work with largely middle class kids that belong to the YMCA. More work is needed with less biddable individuals from areas of greater social need.

We are encouraged by the news that the police would be interested in a permanent presence in this building. It is also ideal for expansion of the library service, which presently is restricted to a mobile unit. The extra footfall from the centre improves the viability of local services and shops. On Sundays hundreds of worshippers use this building when it serves as a local church. We strongly welcome the joint use of buildings for religious and community purposes and see no reason why this should not expand to serve a wider range of faiths.

Loneliness and depression among older people are serious social problems, yet here we have a centre that seems ideally suited to the economic expansion of elderly day care and social facilities that will certainly be needed to cater for an ageing population.

Usually on these occasions the debate is affected by some enormous repair bill hanging over the buildings, allowing the Council to argue that it has no alternative but to knock them down. Happily, Lord Mayor, for the West Park Centre, this is simply not the case. The buildings are generally fundamentally in good condition. We are not facing enormous and unforeseen costs. A condition survey in 2004 identified the total repair bill of £1.7m but much of this was low priority work or, in fact, has already been done and the outstanding matters are a relatively small hill to climb.

Moreover, the centre breaks even in terms of running costs and the departure of Northern Ballet is not expected to cause a major financial crisis. Surely, Lord Mayor, there is everything to play for and the centre is well placed for a major expansion to youth and community work.

There is here a splendid opportunity for an enduring partnership between the Council and the local community. Instead of closing a fully functional building and then expensively recreating the same facilities elsewhere, I ask the council to support my motion which would remove this building from the disposal list. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. I call on Councillor Blake to second.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: An amendment in the name of Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: It is a pity that Councillor Illingworth, as is his wont, I am afraid, again implies there is some secret deal going on; this time it is not the officers, it is me, and it is with Leeds Met University. Nothing could be further from the truth. That is one of the reasons why some of us have such great difficulty, even when Councillor Illingworth makes some valid points, which he has actually just done, taking too seriously these incessant, unremitting conspiracy theories that apparently we are all guilty of.

Lord Mayor, I took the opportunity of actually going up to the West Park Centre a couple of weeks ago. I was attending a meeting of a voluntary group there so I had a little mooch around while I was up there, and certainly it is true a lot of voluntary groups - groups, full stop - are using the building.

The current situation is simply this. It is not vacant, it has not been declared surplus to requirements. It is on the list of sites for disposal but so are many other pieces of land and buildings which we will certainly not be disposing of and for some time we have got the opportunity now to see what we can do to keep community use on the site. I have had certainly two meetings with Councillor Bentley and a meeting with, I think, all three of the Weetwood Councillors present.

Actually it is very important for the statement we are making about the green area because, unlike yourselves, we have a very clear policy that we are not prepared to see development take place on greenfield areas wherever they are in the city if we can defend them against Government inspectors. That takes me back, really, to Leeds Girls' High School. If we own the land we have a level of control there that we can completely keep that land green and open for people to use. There may even be an opportunity for it to be more available for people to use.

What I am prepared to say is that I think a lot of useful work goes on at the West Park Centre. One point I do take on board is it is ridiculous to re-provision services if you already have facilities there which are capable of use.

So in this ensuing couple of years, which is what we have got, we have got the opportunity to work up something that is really worthwhile for the community in that area and I shall be working very closely, as will Councillor Brett, with the Ward Councillors to ensure that what happens there is something that the local residents will welcome.

Let me re-emphasise, the building has not been declared surplus to requirements, it is not empty and therefore it is not for sale.

Just for Councillor Illingworth's information, the last time the Development Department in its previous guise had correspondence with potential purchases, Councillor Illingworth, as ever with most of these things your Party was in control. It

was in 2003 and I think the Executive Board member was Liz Minkin, but certainly Councillor Blake was a prominent member of your Group at the time and perhaps she might know who the developers were who the department had correspondence with because I certainly do not. I am reliably informed that since that time there has been no contact with potential developers, so I aim to reassure the Ward members we will have continuing discussions, we will meet with the users but I am not prepared to enter into another of Councillor Illingworth's scaremongering campaigns. *(Applause)*

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

COUNCILLOR YEADON: Lord Mayor, fellow Councillors, I wish to speak in support of the White Paper in the name of my Ward colleague, Councillor Illingworth.

You have already heard strong arguments as to why the retention the West Park Centre is vital, not just for the people who live in my Ward but the surrounding area and, as already clearly illustrated, the city.

I would like to touch on its importance as a centre of the community. Earlier we heard a deputation brought to us by six different resident and community organisations - six different communities coming together to save their shared home. In these uncertain times in which we are currently living we cannot underestimate the importance of community - the importance of neighbours and strangers coming together to support each other when times are hard. For this to happen a home is needed and this is what the West Park Centre has been for the people young and old of Spen Hill, Portsmouth Wood, Moor Grange, Kirkstall, Weetwood and West Park. Tenants, musicians, church groups, junior football teams and dancers - to these people the West Park Centre is indeed priceless.

Today gives us the opportunity for us to do something positive, to tell this delegation and these communities that we, united as a Council, have listened and will save the Hyde Park Centre (*sic*) from the list of assets to be sold off.

Councillor Carter, with respect, the community that use the West Park Centre want reassurance, not an ambiguous amendment that clarifies nothing. You are committed to retain the green space following pressure from the Area Committee and we welcome that, but what we want is calling for a commitment to retain the West Park Centre echoing the cross party unanimous resolution that was passed at the North West Inner Area Committee.

Incidentally, that particular meeting was probably one of the best attended with standing room only and the majority of the people there were there for the West Park Centre, which shows how strongly the community feel about this.

This unique establishment is indeed an asset to this city - an asset that should be valued, an asset that should be protected, not an asset to be sold. We would like the clear guarantee that this will not happen.

Lord Mayor, I am not one to steal lines off anybody but a member of a similar delegation addressing the North West Inner Area Committee said, "You gave Headingley a heart - please do not take away our centre." What I am asking is, have a heart and vote for this White Paper. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor, I would like to speak on Councillor Illingworth's motion. I think we welcome the deputation from the West Park Community Association and the joint groups' community associations. They

made their point very clearly and articulately here and they made them very clearly and articulately at the Inner North West Area Committee, as Councillor Yeadon referred to, in which we have had several different groups from all across the area represented and all had their chance to speak.

I am very pleased to hear what Lucinda probably said when she said about them being non-political and I think this has been a very non-political issue so far and I think it will stay that way. I was worried that it might not at one point but I have been very impressed with how Councillors on both sides kept it non-political and everybody so far, so I hope that spirit continues.

This all reminds me of Headingley Development Trust and Councillor Yeadon referred to the HEART scheme that is in discussion at the moment, which probably has not yet been given the go-ahead but we are very supportive of it and a huge amount of good work has gone on in the past two years from Councillors, officers with again support from all sides of the Chamber and again not discussed in a political way.

We have spent the past two years looking at those proposals which should be at Executive Board soon where it will receive support. In those two years the building has been declared surplus to requirements and been on the asset disposal list and we have still been able to work on those plans.

If the West Park Centre is declared surplus there are four conditions I see that should be met. One is that the sports pitches must be kept and must be kept for community use by all residents; two, that the community must have a chance to work with any proposals they could obviously have for the site before it is disposed of or marketed or anything like that; three, there must be a community centre facility there and there must be continued work for youth and community that site. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking in support of Councillor Andrew Carter's amendment. We all know that the West Park Centre is a much loved and extremely well used community facility within the West Park area of Weetwood Ward. It not only provides for the local community but attracts a much broader city wide group of organisations. Indeed, one of my own daughters spent many hours playing instruments in the junior strings orchestra.

This centre, as has been alluded to, is used by something like 34 organisations and some 1,500 to 2,000 people use the centre each week. Therefore, it is not surplus to requirements. Therefore, it cannot be sold by the Council because the Council has procedures to deal with such buildings.

I am sure that Councillors Atha, Illingworth and Blake with their combined 80-odd (I am not too sure I that is correct but it is around that figure anyway) years' service as Councillors are aware of the procedures, but they seem to have collective or maybe selective amnesia about them.

To be totally clear, a building can only be superfluous to requirements when it is empty and there are no users. Then the building will be considered by other departments to see if they wish to use it. For instance, Bentley Primary School, which closed in 2004, was used the following September, September 2004, by Shakespeare Primary School which relocated there whilst it had its new school built. Once the new school was built in July 2006 the pupils moved back to their new school and Bentley Lane was vacated and declared surplus to requirements at that point and it remains on the disposal list to this day.

In fact on 31st October 2008 Councillor Atha was e-mailed by an officer of the Development Department and informed quite clearly that the West Park Centre was not declared surplus to requirements. No decision has yet been taken to sell any or all of the former school site. I think this is quite clear, don't you?

I have to say that I am disappointed in the way that there have been scaremongering stories about this centre. There have been rumours that a housing developer had submitted a bid to take over the site of the centre and the protected playing pitches for development of an extra care village of approximately 250 apartments or dwellings. On making enquiries about this developer, I drew, surprisingly, blank responses from within the community and the Council. No-one has made a bid to take over the site because, quite frankly, the site is not for sale.

Scaremongering is nothing new from Councillor Illingworth, who told residents at an Area Committee Meeting attended by one of our most senior legal officers over a year ago, that the pitches would be lost on Tinshill Recreation Ground during the improvement works. Of course, there was no loss of pitches. There are, always have been and always will be six pitches on that site.

Moving on to the West Park fields themselves, I am delighted but not surprised that the administration has made a firm commitment to retain the green space around the West Park Centre, as we highly value the green space which contributes to the local environment and general wellbeing of residents.

The Weetwood Councillors will continue to value the work of the different groups that uses the centre and will continue to work with the local residents, as we always do, to retain facilities for youth and community work on the West Park site. Thank you very much, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Lord Mayor, I am surprised really at that last contribution because it flies so much in the face of the attitude you adopted at the North West Area Committee and I find that very surprising and very disappointing because I really thought that you had more to you than that.

Can I just deal very briefly from the beginning? I am suspicious because of the secretiveness of this whole business. The sale of this, this is a document - Councillor Brett, just control yourself, you will get too excited - this is capital receipts, sites tabled for disposal 2007/08, 20.11.12. There are 251 pieces - this is a confidential document which is now in the public domain, Leslie, so you must not influence that either.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Are you sure it is?

COUNCILLOR ATHA: This has 251 sites for sale and locked in the middle of that is West Park Centre. This document schedule for disposal 2010 to 2012, that went to Executive Board and was accepted. Now then, are you saying that it is not on the list for disposal or not, because if you are then you are controverting the truth as known to the officers.

The second point, you referred to an e-mail from an officer, who was Mr Crocker, Area Manager for North West Area and therefore properly concerned with this issue. He wrote to me on 16th September 2009 and verbatim this is a quote from the e-mail, a copy of which I have got here:

"I can confirm that West Park is not up for sale."

That is the statement made when he knew darned well, or should have known, that it was on the list for sale and had been agreed to be disposed of in that period.

He later wrote to me again when in fact I queried him on that point that as yet no consultation has taken place. Any final decision would be at least two or three years away. That is only assuming, that it was on the list for sale.

If we are all agreeing now to take it off the list, let us take it off the list and satisfy us all and then we can in fact sit down and get on with the next business, but you are not doing that and because you are not doing that it makes me frankly suspicious. Why are you not doing it? If as Councillor Carter says a lot of those things on the list we are not going to sell, why is it on the list? Get it off. It is as simple as that. If we can believe you, take it off now. Direct your colleagues to vote for that and we will sit down and say honour is satisfied, we are now sure. That is not the case and because you are being that bit devious it naturally raises suspicions.

Let me just tell you the kind of force of local people behind us rapidly. Moor Grange Action Group, Spen Hill Residents' Association, West Park Residents' Association, Supporting Elderly People, West Park Fields Group, Kirkstall Crusaders, Greg Mulholland MP - very strongly in favour of retaining this - John Battle MP - also very keen on saving this because, remember, this may be in one Ward but directly over that road, Spen Lane, is Kirkstall Ward. We have got the North West Inner Area Committee which unanimously - three Labour, nine Lib Dems - all agreed that we would vote to take this off the list. That was the vote, to take it off the list. Here just days later what are they doing? They are quibbling, "Oh no, we are going to rely on this, we are going to rely on that, the fields are safe" and so on. It is just not honest and that is why I am so disappointed in someone for whom I really have the highest regard that this is such a shame that this has to come to that.

The people who use this centre are ArtForms, Gypsy Roma Traveller, Attendance Strategy Team, Leeds NUT, Irish Arts Foundation, Theatre Co. Blah, Blah, Blah, Paper Birds Company, Musical Arc, Leeds Symphony Orchestra - a magnificent orchestra of amateurs - Leeds Festival Chorus - a first class chorus, one of the best in the country - the Central Youth Music Group, the Child Protection Training Officers and training team from Education Leeds, Country Dancing, Scottish Country Dancers, Leeds Ballroom Dance Group. You have already had mention of 500 people going on a Sunday to worship there. These are just some of those people who are prepared to carry on going there at a remarkable centre. The community groups, two or three community groups use it regularly for their meetings which you know perfectly well.

In the last nine or ten seconds I will tell you this. The condition survey in 2004 said about £1.75m of work to be done. Already the main hall has been rewired, the whole of the MBT wing has been rewired and the MBT wing, we have got a promise to be taken over by the Reformed Church and they are prepared at their own expense to run a massive youth development, sport and physical and also social regeneration project.

It would be lunacy to close this centre, real lunacy. We are not playing silly parties, let us just appeal for honest common sense. (*interruption*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Bernard. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR DRIVER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I rise to support the resolution in Councillor Illingworth's name and first of all to congratulate him on a uniquely pithy piece of prose, quite unlike his usual offerings when they come on e-

mails to me, but saying very much what is politically, I believe, the heart of the matter.

This is about communities and their continuity. This is not about buildings, it is about how you treat people with whom you are partners. If you look at the history of schools and school buildings in Leeds and anywhere else, it is very clear that those buildings become kind of uniquely a part of the heart and soul of the neighbourhoods in which they exist and it is not surprising, is it, that you have deputations like the one we had today saying the kind of things that it said today and uniting people of all sorts of different kinds of persuasions and views.

These things are not about party political division. They are about the fact that when communities grow and change the institutions within them are part of their ongoing life. What is obvious in North West Leeds is that there has been over the last few years quite a number of enterprises of this kind. Let me just take two or three in the Hyde Park to Weetwood corridor.

Royal Park. Royal Park was the school that was closed about the time when the Council changed hands.

COUNCILLOR: No, it was before.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: By you.

COUNCILLOR DRIVER: What happened afterwards was that there was no clear view of just what could be done with it. This is not a party political thing, this was about what in fact then took place. There were then long discussions, painful discussions, as I recall, in which people of different ideas tried to persuade whoever it was what they really believed should be done with the site. None of those things ever happened. We have got today a building which is standing like a raw piece of tooth in a state that nobody would be pleased about. I think you can see in that example just how painful these things can be and people still today up and down Hyde Park Road, which I use very regularly, will talk about the fact that they do not have the school site.

A little further up the road, and Councillor Monaghan has mentioned it, there is the Bury Road site. That has been also the subject of a great deal of to-ing and fro-ing and arguing and trying to come to a view much more constructively, I have to say. It has not been the same sort of pain but it has been very difficult and it has been one of those things where there are very different views. That division can be the means of bringing people together but sometimes it is not, sometimes it drives people apart because they do not believe there is a place they belong to any longer.

What we have got in the West Park site is an opportunity and why I am suspicious too of Councillor Carter's amendment is because it does not seem necessary. If in fact you have a community that is happily using the site, if that continuity is already built in, why try to do anything about it? What is it that you need to do? Is it that you in fact want to create smaller youth and community facilities? Is that what we read into it? Can you not tell us because those are the things that the community is asking about. Those are the things that worry me. Are they going to get less than they have had before and can they be part of a partner decision about the way forward? That seems to me the argument and I believe you should support the original resolution. If it ain't broke, don't fix it. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR G HYDE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Firstly can I declare an interest, Lord Mayor? My family use the centre and we use the music and dance facility and I would just urge the administration to reconsider taking it off the disposal

list completely because it is a well used and very good centre and they know that. I used to take my daughter there on a regular basis, particularly for the music and dance, and my grandchildren use it at the moment.

While I am stood up, Lord Mayor, I would also like to rectify something that was said earlier in this Chamber, but I was stopped from giving a point of explanation.

COUNCILLOR: Diverting from the topic, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR G HYDE: I have to say, Lord Mayor, that I was asked for a comment by a reporter from the Evening Post about the rumours and I have to actually cite the fact that in an EASEL document presented to the Ward members in East, St George's playing fields at Fearnville were actually cited for a new high school and I have actually spoken, Lord Mayor, my point of explanation, so that members are aware in this Chamber.

THE LORD MAYOR: Are you actually speaking to this item?

COUNCILLOR G HYDE: I am, Lord Mayor, but I am also using it to rectify additional. I will go back to the item now, Lord Mayor. *(interruption)* I can do that.

Going back to the centre, I have to say I have to support Councillor Illingworth in his motion because it does want taking off this list. It is a well used centre I know from experience. I have used it in the last 30 years with my children. My grandchildren use it at the moment to go to music, Bernard, and they do dance as well. It is an excellent centre and I think it is mischievous. If you cannot declare in this Chamber that it is going to come off this list, then it should come off this list. Let us be open and pragmatic and frank about it. It is valued by the community, loved by the community. It is not even in my Ward but I am speaking about it - that is how passionate I am about it - and I do use it as a grandparent and I did use it previously as a parent.

Can I suggest that you do take it off and you do have very good communication which has been suggested by you? Let us see if it happens, John, whether there is good, open, frank consultation. There are lots of rumours flying around. *(inaudible)* Can we just find out really what is going on and let us have it on the table properly. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. In seconding the White Paper in the name of Councillor Illingworth I just want to start by saying how surprised I was to see the amendment in the name of Andrew Carter. We have heard the deputation that has actually come today representing a range of community and faith groups. The strength of feeling in both the communities of Weetwood and Kirkstall are backed up by all party support but it seems to me from today that the difference is that the Labour Councillors are calling for this site to be taken off the list and we not been supported in this request by either the Tories or the Liberals. *(hear, hear)*

We heard today also that 2,000 people use the centre every week. Northern Ballet is going to move on into the city centre but it only has a relatively small use of the site at the moment. The Baptist Reformed Church that is actually in there want to actually expand their use into the week but they have been told at the current time that there is not space for them to do that. They would be waiting for space to be freed up.

I know about the Baptist Reformed Church because I was involved in the negotiations for them to go in in the first place. They are a very active church and draw from a very wide area and do tremendous work in the community.

I have to say, Andrew, if Liz was approached back in the mists of time, which you seem to enjoy bringing up in every speech you make, I can only say that she must have given them very short shrift.

I think the request today is clear. Remove the centre from the list of sites for sale. What could be more simple about that? It reminds me of the well-used phrase which bit of "No" don't you understand? I have to say that all the groups that were represented today are very well organised, they do a tremendous amount in the community and I am sure that if the energy that they are having to put into this went into actually planning for future provision, then you could continue with the excellent provision there for many years to come.

We have heard about the extensive and growing use of the buildings but I do not think from what I have heard that Kirkstall members have been given the courtesy of being involved in the consultation you seem to have had with Weetwood members.

COUNCILLOR: It is in their Ward.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Surely they should have been included. Until very recently Moor Grange was a part of the Weetwood Ward and many of the users of the centre actually live there. I have to say rumours do spring up where there is a vacuum. It is part of life, that is what happens. It is not helped by the youth service talking to people in the community and saying actually their preferred interest in youth work in that community is, as Councillor Illingworth said, on the YMCA site, not in the West Park Centre.

Why not remove it from the list of sale, have a full consultation about the future use of the building and decide a proper worked out solution to all the matters that are raised? I will tell you what the suspicion is - it is because Andrew actually wants the money and it is as simple as that.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Rubbish.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: I have to say we are asking what confidence do people have that once the building has gone, which you seem to be intent on doing in the future, that there will not be pressure on the fields? There is already talk openly that the covenant that was put on the field when it was given to the Council in 1947 is being undermined legally. You know, that is what is really upsetting people because they feel that this land was gifted to the city of Leeds in perpetuity for the future benefit of young people in our city.

It is a well used centre for both the local community, for arts, music and young people and adults coming from all over the city and it works well, as Councillor Driver said. It is thriving and has the potential to develop even further. These community facilities that work in this way are like gold dust. I believe we should be helping to protect and enhance such provision, not selling it off against the wishes of the people who gave it to the city.

I have to say the other aspect that has not been raised is the quality of particularly the hall in that building. It was built to a very high specification, the acoustics and certainly people wax lyrical about the state of the floor. It is a sprung floor, I think there are very few left in the city. It is an ideal opportunity to develop

dance and all the activities that young people value. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: thank you, Lord Mayor. I have to say listening to the debate so far you almost feel as if members of the Opposition are trying to convince themselves that something is happening that most clearly is not.
(interruption)

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: Please take it off.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: It is a completely artificial debate, as far as I can see. Completely artificial.

Let me just say a little bit about what happened at the Area Committee because I think it is important to understand. The issue was raised quite rightly at the start of the meeting by a user of the West Park Centre, we had a very long discussion, a very good debate on the issue and then at the end I proposed a motion which was to keep community activity at the centre. Councillor Atha then proposed an amendment to that motion about removing it from this register. I actually spoke against that at the meeting. I explained why I did not think that was necessary and in the end we were actually big enough, Bernard, to support your amendment in the interests of unity. That is why we did it.

It is very clear that this issue about the Asset Register is a complete red herring to try to distract people from the real facts which are it is not being sold off, it is not being marketed, no-one is getting rid of it. Those are the facts.

If we look at the register, as has been said, Headingley Primary School has been on the register for two or three years. It has not been disposed of. I suspect Harehills School was on the register 15 years - it most certainly has not been disposed of because it is now the Shine Centre. There are some Crown Jewels on that list which will never be disposed of.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Is the Civic Hall on that list?

COUNCILLOR J C CARTER: I wish you were on it!

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: It is on that basis that when it is foreseen, maybe a change of circumstances where someone is moving out, you need to look at the use of the building. It seems to me if you can do that successfully then the thing can be kept.

I have to say the debate started off in a fairly even handed manner, I thought - I thought it was quite constructive - but then it has become more and more political. I think that is a real shame, actually, because I think we all agree on the same thing. You have made it political, not us. We want to actually (interruption). All you ever do is raise red herring after red herring.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: You have.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: You are cowardly, that is your trouble.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Oh give over, Bernard.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: What makes me think this is actually quite a political issue is that this centre happens to be slap bang in the middle of two constituencies, Leeds North West, where the PPC for Leeds North West, the Labour

PPC happens to be sitting right opposite and is seconding this motion, and the PPC for Leeds West, the new PPC who no doubt wants to get her voice heard, so is attended Area Committee meetings. It is a perfect issue to pick on to try to score some cheap political points and that is the reason, Lord Mayor, why this issue...
(*interruption*)

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: A load of rubbish.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: It is nothing to do with the facts, it is purely about politics and it is a real shame. I think the people who use that centre need to be told about it. What we are going to do...

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: There's only you talking about politics.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: ...and the Council are happy to do this, we are going to put an end to this speculation, put an end to these rumours, gossip, these conspiracies and we are going to arrange to meet all the users to explain exactly what the situation is and spell it out in black and white so they all know what the situation is.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Absolutely.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: It is not being sold, it is not being marketed.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: And we shall do that and you can read it in the paper.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Those are the facts. We will tell the users of the centre those facts and then they will know which side of the bread is buttered. Thank you. Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I was not really going to engage in this but I cannot help being rather suspicious of the debate unfolding. I have read Willie Wonka and the Chocolate Factory many times and I always think that Andrew Carter should read the one about the Fudge Factory because whenever you are involved in this you cannot help but think this is a massive fudge. If we are all agreed then there is one simple thing to do - you just take it off and say we all agree, it is non-political, we all agree it is a fantastic facility, we will do it today. End of debate. You can have the publicity, have the photograph, we do not have to come back.

What I found very interesting is that we have been saying, by James Monaghan, it is great because it is non-political. You saw the deputation today. Are you saying that that deputation is being deliberately misled, because they seem to me quite genuine. I do not know whether they were political or not but across the parties, for sure, and genuinely coming with, I think, a very good presentation, so I am always worried about whether you kind of are saying to that deputation, "You are making it up, you have been kidded" or not. There are genuine feelings like this.

Do you know, I was sitting thinking about the track record of the Lib Dems in the North West and it is quite a long serial list of Lib Dems saying one thing in here and, as Councillor Atha says, another thing in the community. I remember Royal Park. They led the troops up - they were going to have a community - up the hill, down again. I remember Beckett Park. They said three times Beckett Park was not going to close, Lib Dems did. I also remember the issue of the road just up here - suddenly they changed again. The classic one for me involves Councillors Bentley and Chapman because I know somebody who was listening to them and they came

to me and I said, "How are you doing about the fence up in Tinshill?" and he said, "Oh, don't worry, Councillor Bentley and Councillor Chapman came to our public meeting and said they were going to fight it every inch of the way, they were on our side." They soon found out that when they came to this Chamber they voted the opposite way, so it is not as if you have not got form on this.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: You have got form!

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: You have really got a long list of saying one thing in the community, one thing in here and I think the simple thing, Andrew, is just say - we will give you space to say - "That is it, we are withdrawing it from the asset list and we are going on", because I was quite impressed with what Councillor Hyde said. This West Park does not just serve that small area. Andrew, you are wrong, there is a large number of people from Kirkstall...

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I am not wrong.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: ... and I am surprised, genuinely surprised, because of the proximity that Kirkstall members were not involved. If you want to kill suspicion would it not have been better to involve Kirkstall members, reassuring them step by step? When you carve people out you can understand why people get suspicions.

I know about this facility and I am like Graham, I am from the far east of Leeds and this is a facility that is recognised not only locally but regionally to have those facilities that John - and, you know, we should not always demonise John Illingworth, I thought his presentation today was excellent.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: It is you lot who do it.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: What he talked about, let us stick to the argument, is some wonderful facilities for young people to participate in music and you only have to look at the evidence of the importance of music to young people actually in enhancing their status and skills and confidence.

So why are we debating this? The simple thing is now just withdraw it. I do not honestly trust the Liberal Dems in North West at all because they have got fudges all the way up the North West. Let us try and reassure the community, reassure the young people, we have got a fantastic facility we should be proud of promoting and reassuring them that it is there for ever. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR HARKER: We have had a lot said this afternoon, obviously, or this evening about community use of West Park. Education still delivers out of West Park. We do not need the whole of it. It is better that West Park for its structure sits with Asset Management than sitting in my portfolio. I have no plans, there are no plans for the delivering of educational services out of West Park to move anywhere else. That is all I have got to say.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Very good. Very clear.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Lord Mayor, I have sat reasonably quiet today and just listened from there. First of all I heard your attack on Peter, one of the most caring people we have got in this Council.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: He did not say one caring thing. Is he speaking to the resolution, Lord Mayor?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Turn to the debate.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Like Councillor Hyde, he pulled him up.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: He pulled Councillor Hyde up.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Yes.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Lord Mayor, are you going to shut them up or do I have to stand here till they shut up?

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: Speak to the res.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Lord Mayor, I hear Councillor Atha, they are all saying they are all suspicious. Do you know why they are suspicious?

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Because we don't trust you lot.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I will tell you why they are suspicious, because they think that the people act the same way as they do.

I will tell you a few things. Somebody said about breaking covenants. I can take you and your party to my Ward where two covenants were broken blatantly by you as a party. I will tell you about people breaking covenants.

They also talk about schools and Andrew preaching this and doing that. Councillor Atha I did not hear stand up saying that he had closed the sister school of this and sold the land for development. Did anybody hear that? Because what they do is they always put their values on other people.

Andrew has made it absolutely crystal clear

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Are you challenging my integrity, Councillor?

COUNCILLOR: No more than you do ours.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Answer the question. Are you challenging my integrity over the sale of Moor Grange? If that is what you are saying, say it out loud and we can all understand it because otherwise you are just smearing by implication. Now be honest and straight.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Smearing by implication? Bernard, you should be - you do it every day, every week of your life, so don't tell me that.

Lord Mayor, let us just come back to this issue. Andrew Carter has made it absolutely crystal clear. This land, this centre is not up for sale.

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: Well take it off the list then. Take it off the list.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Never in 35 years have I ever heard a Leader of Council make something so clear, crystal clear, to Council. This land is not for sale.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: This land is our land, this land is your land. Whose land is it?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Ours. It is our land.

COUNCILLOR J C CARTER: I have never heard in 35 years in this Council any Leader say something that is as strong as that and then the Opposition have tried - who want exactly the same, who do not want it for sale - then start undermining what the Leader said.

Lord Mayor, I think we judge these people by their own poor standards. I will tell you this, the Leader says it is not for sale; let me assure you and everybody in this Council, it is not up for sale.

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: Then take it off the list.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Take it off the list.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Matthews.

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am actually quite stunned by Councillor Wakefield's...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Stop playing with yourself. Take your hand out of your pocket. *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: What was that?

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: Shall we stop the party political broadcast now, Councillor Wakefield?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: You might think it is funny but I don't.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: You earlier with Councillor *(inaudible)*

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Oh no I did not.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: That was really funny.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I did not.

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: You talk about the record of the Lib Dems in Leeds North West. Wake up because they vote for us. They vote for us in Leeds North West. They do not vote for your stupid party. You closed all the schools in our area and we have had to deal with the leftovers, because that is what he left us with. You closed all the schools and that is part of our record, fighting your school closures with Royal Park School. I live on Royal Park Road...

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Beckett Park.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Miles Hill.

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: ... a few doors down from Royal Park School and I have to live with your mess, the mess you created, so do not start with that.

On the West Park Centre, I welcome Councillor Carter meeting with the communities because he will sit down and dispel all this stupid scaremongering and this stupid whipping up these politically motivated conspiracies. You have convinced now yourselves that it is going to happen. All the speeches as if the thing is closing tomorrow. It is not closing, it is not for sale.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Then take it off the list.

COUNCILLOR McKenna: Take it off the list.

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: What part of that do you not understand?
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: I call upon Councillor Illingworth to sum up.

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: Lord Mayor I have listened to this debate with increasing amazement because it seems that the council is all of one mind that it does not want to sell this centre and it should not go for sale but still half of them for some reason want to keep it on a public list of assets that are to be sold. I am just mystified as to why you continue with this attitude.

If you wanted to kill this rumour stone dead and make lots of people really happy in North West Leeds and part of the city, you have got a very simple way of doing it, which is to put a red line through a document which you published last year around this time on assets for sale. It is a public document in a public place and you could solve this problem in a second by getting your pen out and putting a line through it, crossing it off and now that we have all spoken, pass this unanimously and all go home.

For some reason or another instead of doing the obvious thing we have this tortuous, convoluted amendment that says it is not really for sale, even though you say it is not for sale but it is not going to be sold, it is going to be kept. Why are you doing this to us? Why are you doing it to the city? You have got in North West Leeds, as Councillor Driver pointed out, a succession of previous public buildings. We start off in Hyde Park and Woodhouse, we run through Kirkstall Ward into Weetwood and all it does, you emptied for the last four years. Nothing happening at all - not able to sell them, not able to develop them, nothing moving and all the time they are on the list, they are not available for the community, doing nothing, nothing taking place. You can stop this by not putting buildings up for sale you cannot sell or which you do not intend to sell.

Lord Mayor, it is obvious how to solve this problem and the way to do is to vote for the resolution we have put down to remove the West Park Centre from the list of assets that are to be sold and I would like to move that, Lord Mayor. (Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: We will go to the vote then for the amendment by Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: Can we have a recorded vote, please?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Seconded.

(A recorded vote was taken on the amendment)

THE LORD MAYOR: Present 88, "Yes 44; Abstain 2; "No" 42. The amendment is CARRIED.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Lost again!

THE LORD MAYOR: We now take that as the substantive motion.

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: Recorded vote, please.

THE LORD MAYOR: We will take the vote, please.

(A recorded vote was taken on the substantive motion)

THE LORD MAYOR: Again, present 88; "Yes" 88; Abstain 0; "No" 0. That is CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Take it off the list.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Now take it off the list.

ITEM 10 - WHITE PAPER MOTION - REGULATION
OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 10 then, White Paper, Regulation of Financial Services. I call on Councillor Finnigan. Can we have attention, please, for the speaker?

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. With apologies to Hamlet, there is something wrong in the state of banking certainly in Great Britain, of that there is no doubt. What has happened has been a real tragedy and has a significant impact on all families across Great Britain. It has had a significant impact particularly in Leeds because of its position in terms of being one of the major financial services providers.

Let us deal with it initially head on. Who is responsible for this situation? Honest Gordon - this time next year you will be a millionaire - has to accept some of the responsibility for this. He had ten years as the Chancellor of the Exchequer to do something about the banks' lending policies, failed to do anything and at this particular point, unlike Peter, he does not seem to want to accept any responsibility for the situation he finds himself in.

Why is that important? Its impact on families is absolutely and utterly severe, not only in unemployment terms but in housing repossession, problems with credit card debts and putting a lot of families into significant and severe financial difficulties.

A lot of this could have been foreseen. Certainly bankers across Great Britain have lent in a way that has a total lack of prudence and a total lack of caution. Certainly going back to when I was a much younger man and had a lot more hair than I have got at this particular point, when I was taking out a mortgage many, many years ago there were certain strict rules about the deposit you had to put down and what sort of money the building societies would lend you and they restricted it quite significantly. Nowadays that does not seem to have happened and certainly when you are looking across the problems that we face, too much money has been lent to too many people who are unable to pay that money back and that leads us to the problems and the difficulties that we now find ourselves in.

It also must put us in a position where we ask some fundamental questions about whether continuous growth is sustainable and whether the demand for more and more material goods is something that can be sustained and is a good thing, or is it inevitably a situation that puts us in a bubble that will burst and the consequences of that on families is incredibly dire.

There is a clear failure to regulate and whether it is these toxic assets that we were told about, whether it is lending money to dodgy American mortgages, there is no doubt that prudence has not been reflected upon has not been considered.

We need significant regulation. We are in a severe hole at this particular stage. Whether you have any faith or you do not have any faith in what the Government has done to drag us out of this particular hole, the important thing is that we do not want to be back here again in the future. That does mean we need some significant regulation both on a national and an international scale and I would urge everybody to support this White Paper resolution. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I call on Councillor David Blackburn to second.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: I formally second and reserve the right to speak.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. I call on Councillor Hanley to move the amendment.

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, while I am pleased to see this White Paper so that we can have discussions on this very difficult situation that we find ourselves in, I do not believe that really contributes anything to try to find solutions and I just do not see the point of the Chief Officer writing to certainly our seven MPs and the Chancellor of the Exchequer because they already know what the situation is. Everybody in the country knows. They know at the primary schools, never mind in Parliament.

Lord Mayor, the amendment that I am proposing goes some way to suggesting that we could do something that will make things better. We have been concerned with a terrible scenario of the public in this city, we have got a great number of problems with businesses in the city and I personally - I do not want to sound like a doom and gloom merchant - think it is even more serious than some of the things that we read, which are absolutely horrific.

The start of this problem, Lord Mayor, was obviously the credit crunch. It started in the United States of America, the sub-prime mortgages on houses that were being sold, with lending inflating prices, given to people who had no chance at all of actually meeting their commitments. That was bad enough and bad enough for them, but for all our banks, the British banks and for other international banks, to buy them in bundles and put posh words round them - what is the word, is it securitisation - a bin full of documents that they went out and ought for billions of pounds, actually beggars belief.

To kid themselves that there was an insurance that took the risk out of these purchases, it was nothing but the quick buck philosophy. It was incompetent by the banks beyond comprehension and it is on a scale over there that we have never seen in the world anywhere. That is how serious the situation is.

I probably believe that there will be many people in this Council who are perhaps very involved with people who are employed in Local Government and Local Authorities, perhaps you know the feeling, that it has not had too much effect on you. I really do fear for many things, including this council and its 35,000 employees.

The amendment does recognise I think that certain Councillors mentioned, we do need the FSA to take action and to impose regulation but on its own that will mean absolutely nothing. This is a world problem.

The Prime Minister is quite right to pursue the route through the IMF and, of course, the other international organisations, the Bank of International Settlements. If we do not do that it is absolutely no use at all.

Lord Mayor, my own working life in actual fact did not start in a bank, believe it or not. I started working and learning on my 13th birthday - that was the present they arranged for me, they got me a job - and I started as an errand boy in a pawn shop - and I should explain quickly when I say "pawn" I mean the P-A-W-N type as opposed to the P-O-R-N type. The latter porn, Lord Mayor is a subject I know very little about - in fact I probably know nothing about. Perhaps there are those in the Chamber who know far about that than me, I don't know.

Lord Mayor, just to go back to my errand boy's job, you learned many things. You certainly learned how to work and you were taught to be humorous in a pawn shop in that environment and you started to think how does money work? It was difficult to see some impoverished sole pop the old man's suit for ten bob on a Monday morning and be back in on Friday to redeem it for 10/6d. It is only a tanner is that, Lord Mayor, and you know what sixpence means and I am sure some of these younger kids will as well. It was a very simple contract. It was a secured loan. You gave them your suit, he gave you ten bob, you went back with 10/6d. Of course, it is interesting, if you never turned up he flogged your suit for about a quid. Sixpence is a very small amount of money, is it not? I am sure everybody in this room, there will be more than me, knows that that equates to about 60% a year. Isn't money a wonderful thing, Lord Mayor? That was a fully secured loan.

What a shame, Lord Mayor, that some of our bankers did not start their working life as errand boys. They might well have been better off as opposed to the Etons and the other famous colleges. Perhaps there would have been a sense of reality with them.

Lord Mayor, if the bankers had turned up at the back of our pawn shop with the guy I worked for - he was an 80 year old man I worked for - if they had turned up with a bundle of rubbish like this was, he would have shown then short shrift. He would not have been daft enough to buy this sort of securitisation.

Lord Mayor, it is a great shame that a Tory Government allowed the building societies to be demutualised - that is what they did. It was an even bigger shame to see what was one of their stars not so long ago, poor old John Redwood, when he produced his Business Psychology Paper which was published in 2007, a couple of years ago, well supported by Dave and George and there he suggested that there should be even less deregularisation. Now, of course, they clamour for more.

So far, Lord Mayor, this Government has taken decisive action. We have recapitalised the banks to the tune of £37m, there has been a £20m fiscal package to reduce Value Added Tax, to reduce tax, they have provided help for pensioners.

THE LORD MAYOR: Just a moment, if you do not mind. Could I ask the front bench, please, down there, to behave in a more respectful manner? (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Well done, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am sorry about stepping off a bit. The £20m fiscal package that Councillor Brett referred to recently, it did reduce Value Added Tax, it reduced Income Tax for some people, there was help for pensioners and there was help for some small businesses. The £10m package for a working capital scheme is so important to businesses and small businesses. A guarantee scheme has been introduced to try and unlock the banks to start to loan money again, because that is one of the desperate things that we are trying to do.

Lord Mayor, I think probably everybody in this Chamber will agree that we have got a bank rate now that is so low it is unbelievable. It is staggeringly low and this is part of the Government's philosophy to try and recapitalise. Lord Mayor, the list goes on and on. The scheme to help people buy their first homes, no stamp duty on sales up to £175,000, a scheme to loan 30% of the property's value to families who have joint incomes of less than £60,000. That is an interest free loan that the Government is prepared to make for a period of five years.

Lord Mayor, we have done a lot but we do realise that we have to do more and I was interested in the £2.3b announcement yesterday to try and assist the car industry. It will be so important to them.

You know, Lord Mayor, people have all sorts of different views. We have all changed our minds about what Gordon has done, what he has not done, whose fault it is. I am really concerned about what can we do, what can this Council do that will assist and try and get us out of the situation that we find ourselves in.

There are some big things we can do and perhaps some small things. We can maybe follow the lead of Councillor Peter Box from Wakefield. They started a small scheme which I believe is called the Mortgage Assistance Scheme and it will help families who end up in arrears, for whatever reason, to get them through that period of time, to get them back on track, to keep the family together. That is something we could do, something that we should do, Lord Mayor.

The bigger things that we can do, Lord Mayor, that will make a very significant job to this Council, to its employees, to the businesses in the city, to the public in the city, is that we can start to look at the bigger capital schemes. We could maybe revisit Supertram. We can speed up - and I am not criticising Councillor Harker here - the spend on schools under the BSF programme. We should aim to bring forward as many capital schemes as we possible can. Above all - and I think that this probably is the biggest single thing that this administration could do and it could start to do it tomorrow, Lord Mayor, and that is to look again at the Regional Spatial Strategy. This is a complicated document, this has been produced professionally, it has been looked at by a number of groups on the Council. What it tells us, Lord Mayor, is that we have...

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, it is the red light, that means time.

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: We did build...

THE LORD MAYOR: Just a moment. We are having an argument down here.

COUNCILLOR GRAHAME: You tell them, Lord Mayor

THE LORD MAYOR: I called a halt to our speaker and I am just making up the ten seconds or so. (*hear, hear*)

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: Just to quickly finish, Lord Mayor, we did build 2216. They suggested that we build 4300. I am saying that we should take that up to 5000 and we should implement that starting tomorrow. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Taggart to second.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Leadley.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: I am happy to do his speech if he wants. I know you want to hear more from him but he is not here. He had to go to the Town Council to set a budget, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Thank you very much, Lord Mayor. I am rising to support Councillor Finnigan's motion and oppose Councillor Hanley's amendment. I really think that Councillor Hanley needs a reality check. If he thinks that Leeds City Council can launch into building schools for the future or bringing back Supertram without borrowing money, what planet does he live on? Which Government does he think stopped us borrowing that money in the first place? If we could have borrowed that money we would have been building Council houses for years, but his Government will not let us borrow the money for that.

Councillor Hanley's amendment is taken almost directly from Labour's current stinging manual, but unfortunately it is a bit out of date. You just need to check their websites, including the great one on the labour risks appropriately called (*inaudible*) Rebuttal.

Last year it was all the fault of US sub prime toxic loans going bad and nasty American banks going bust, spreading contagion over here. Now it is the fault of other countries not agreeing to harsher regulation earlier. Somehow something Gordon Brown the Chancellor never advocated before. Spot the 1984-style re-writing of history.

The problem for the party over there is that you are facing the trauma of a collapsing economy brought about by the banking crisis your Government did nothing to prevent. By allowing credit to spiral out of control your then Chancellor made the crisis worse than in almost all over European states - Iceland on Thames. (*laughter*) Not my line.

The Chancellor then PM Brown never showed any concern with bankers' greed before this month and Lord Mandelson, your favourite, is notorious for saying Labour is incredibly relaxed about bankers getting filthy rich. I cannot remember you saying that.

Roll back to 2007. Northern Rock. Northern Rock - remember that - was a key element in bringing on the collapse of UK banking. It was a UK institution with UK depositors, with a UK loan book and UK bank loans, so how is that to be blamed on the global crisis?

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: Because of what they bought.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: As late as 2008 when Vince Cable was warning of trouble ahead, your friend George Mudie went on record to say that everything was ticketyboo. None of you were asking for better banking regulations then.

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: Nor you.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Oh, we were.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: You cannot escape the fact that your Prime Minister constantly lauded light touch regulation which turned out, in effect, to be no regulation at all. He lionised Sir Fred 'the Shred' Goodwin, who then needed £37b of taxpayers' money to save RBS. Even then, Gordon handed over the dosh without

any conditions. It looks as if almost all of that has been lost, while the bankers carried on paying themselves hefty Christmas bonuses. Now they need a second, bigger bank bail out, just in time to pay for a bit of skiing in Dallas.

What have Leeds people got back from this massive waste of money? Redundancies are still mounting and local companies are squeezed harder. The Bank of England believes increasing the flow of credit to companies is the most important pre-requisite for an economic recovery. For three months now the banks have been cutting the supply of credit by calling in loans and refusing to make new ones. It all means the Brown bounce of last year has turned into the Brown backlash. Everything leads back to your great leader.

When pressed by Evan Davis last week regarding his claim that he had ended boom and bust, Brown's response was, "I meant the Tory boom and bust". *(laughter)* Does he not realise how ridiculous that makes him look here at internationally? Why can he not just be honest.

Since Council met last year there has been a fairly significant change at the top in the States. Unlike Brown, who constantly plays down the crisis because he is worried he will be known as Minister for the Recession, Obama is facing reality. He rightly keeps pointing out that the crisis will be long and the journey painful. Councillor Hanley could help by encouraging his Leader to do the same. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR SHELBOOKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I see that the bunker mentality of Gordon Brown has spread its way completely through the Labour Party now to all ranks. It beggars belief, what you said, Ted, it really does. Councillor Finnigan's White Paper is absolutely correct, there does need to be more regulation within the banking sector and what happens; regulation which was removed by the previous Chancellor, regulation which was removed to allow credit to spiral out of control for this great growth we had for the ten years, growth which he was happy to ignore because it made the figures look good and growth which now has completely gone to bust and he cannot just blame the credit crisis in America because if the policies which had brought in were so effective, why has the currency of this country collapsed against the major currencies of the world?

I was speaking to a car dealer last week and I said to him about were they passing on the 2.5% cut in VAT to their customers. He said, "No, of course we are not because the Pound collapsed so badly against the Euro that does not even cover our losses on what we are buying these things in for from France and Germany, etc."

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: Are we joining it then?

COUNCILLOR SHELBOOKE: What has it got to do with joining the Euro, Ted? What on earth has it got to do with joining the Euro? You see, once again you say you are leading the way on economics but you are just lurching to the next ridiculous comment. You spent plenty of time - plenty of time - saying about we are going to lead the way and everything else and you announce a pitiful copy of our policy for the Government guarantees of the loans. You told us of the £2.5b yesterday for the car industry which all of your union buddies are absolutely up in arms about because they do not feel it will do anything, but I want to come back to the VAT, Ted.

You were there spouting about how good the cut in VAT was and how that did everything for people in this city. It has done nothing. Is VAT chargeable on children's clothes? Is VAT chargeable on food? Probably the staple goods of families who are finding it hard to survive and buying those things. How much money

do people have to buy on luxury goods to save that £5 a week the Prime Minister keeps talking about? A darn sight more than £5.

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: There is £300 per family.

COUNCILLOR SHEL BROOKE: They are losing that on the prices on cigarettes and fuel. The simple fact of the matter is that they have been behind the cut.

I agree with Councillor Finnigan that there does need to be better regulation and it needs to be brought in but you cannot sit there and say that the Tories have not got any ideas and we are not doing anything. Every idea we have come up with you have nicked two months later, only your Prime Minister is so proud of himself and does not want to actually admit that he cannot lead on this that he comes up with a watered down version which is so complicated even the banks do not understand it and these are the people who got us into this mess in the first place by being the most clever people on earth and they cannot understand your own Prime Minister.

Lord Mayor, it is right that the people of this city deserve better than what is happening at the moment. There are things which I am sure we will look at in our budget to be announced next week because we have been a sensible administration in the last few years. We have not borrowed willy-nilly on the growth and expected the growth to carry on and I am sure that the Leaders of the Groups over here will be looking very carefully at ways they can help people in this city, ways which will not be in the way that your Government do saying, "I will tell you what, lads, don't worry, we will borrow another £350b. Don't worry about it because I will be dead by the time that has got to be paid back so we do not need to worry."

The simple fact of the matter is that we do need sensible policies, we need policies to help people out there. We were the first party to call for a regulation on the utility companies and the prices they are charging, bringing back the Post Office accounts...

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Nationalise.

COUNCILLOR SHEL BROOKE: ...and keep the Post Offices open so that people can get a fair price for their fuel rather than having the pre-paid meters which are double the cost of what everybody else has to pay for their gas and electricity and looking at real ways.

I must admit, Councillor Brett actually changed my opinion on something this afternoon.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Only for five minutes.

COUNCILLOR SHEL BROOKE: I had the opinion that instead of having the £12.5m wasted on the VAT cut we could have invested that money back into local Government to slash people's Council tax bills but I realised after what Councillor Brett said this afternoon that that would actually only work for the first year and his idea of using the £100m - the £100m - to invest in the infrastructure in this city would create jobs and would create a better city. It is those sorts of policies we should be doing, not this nonsense which is coming out and quite frankly trying to blame the US all the time is not washing anywhere and you really do need to start reading the papers because people do not think you are doing a good job. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking in favour of the motion. Firstly, when Ted was moving his amendment there - a rather interesting amendment, I have got to say that - a colleague, he is over there at the moment (going out of the Chamber now) Councillor Campbell said to me, "If you do not want us to write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, who does he want us to write to?" Possibly Barack Obama, seeing as you are blaming everything on the United States. The fact is it is not all caused by the United States. The regulation in this country has not worked and there are people losing jobs so these fat cats can get away with making profits on things that they should not have done.

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: (*inaudible*) regulations.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: We need more regulation...

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: Tell us what.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: ...and I have got to say from what the President of the United States is saying he wants to bring in regulation where you seem not to do. Ted, your motion is how wonderful you are and how your great leader is going to save the planet, like he did the House of Commons. This is not about this. This is bread and butter stuff. This is regulating banks so they do not make silly disasters like this in the future. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR DAVEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I was not actually going to speak on this subject but hearing some other people on the other side of the Chamber they do not seem to have grasped what actually happened and I thought I would just set the record straight.

I should actually first of all make a personal interest as well. I actually work as a Team Manager at Bradford and Bingley which, as you know, was nationalised so I am actually dealing with £41b of taxpayers' money that we have to repay, so I am actually dealing with some on a day to day basis.

There is an old saying that when the US sneezes the rest of the world catches a cold and that is why the credit crunch has happened. What the bankers have failed to realise is if you have got a house in the UK that is worth 100 grand, or you lend 100 grand but then it is only worth 70 grand, you can actually, even though you sell the house, that £30,000 shortfall you can still pursue through the courts. In the US if you have got a house that they have lent \$100,000 against but is only worth \$70,000, the law there in the US allows the person to just throw the keys back to the bank and walks away, so immediately as soon as people start foreclosing, the banks have got a hit and they cannot do anything about it.

What the banks did was, they bundled all of these up into securitisations, banks in the rest of the world bought them but what they did not realise was that - and it was banned in the States on those that did it - but they did not realise in the US that if property is worth less than you owe you can throw the keys and walk away and there is nothing you can do about it. That is the whole reason that the whole economy is in collapse.

The banks are not trusting anyone, that is why the banks are not lending, and until the banks start trusting people again, this recession is going to continue. There are people arguing that Gordon has brought the country to its knees. I can say now, if the Prime Minister had not pumped money into the banking system we would be in the Stone Age because you need money to trade. As an amateur economist you know that in trade you need something to barter with and in the world all you can

trade with at the moment is money and if money becomes useless then you have to start trading and saying, "I will give you a goat for two sheep" or something.

COUNCILLOR SHEL BROOKE: Why do you have £350b?

COUNCILLOR DAVEY: Gordon has to pump money into the country because he if he does not pump money into the country then the economy collapses. It is as simple as that. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Thank you very much, Lord Mayor. I reserved my right to speak. It is curious, about 25 years ago you could go to the average Labour Party Branch Meeting almost anywhere in Leeds and there would be a small left-wing group that would call for nationalisation with an eye to the banks and it was a regular cry. Then blow me down George Bush more or less does a version of that in the United States and, of course, there has been a huge injection here. This tells us that something is new and something is different. I think eventually this will lead to some kind of new politics.

Ted is absolutely right, you know, because when you are in a hard place central Government - a sensible central Government - looks to local Government to help start getting things going again - exactly what Heseltine did in the early 1980s. You remember all the devastation wrought by the Thatcher Government from 1979 onwards. It was local Councils like Leeds, although a Labour Council, encouraged by the Tory Government to do something on job creation and training and I suspect that is very much what is going to have to happen again because local Government has got a good track record of doing things when there is an emergency and something needs to be done with it.

Councillor Finnigan's motion is in error, really, because it is only looking at a very small part of the picture because compared to 25 years ago the world financial system is now much more international than it was. Most big companies are not national companies, they are international. They do not really care where they are based. I was talking to somebody who is involved in a company whose headquarters, I think, is in Geneva and all the Board of Directors meetings are held in English. I think there are about twelve people at the Board meetings. Not one of the twelve has English as a first language. They come from all over the world. It is curious, is it not? Their company is a world company. They do not particularly relate to a particular country and that is why the events that happened in the United States are so important, because it has had its ripple effect elsewhere as we have heard.

The banks have been greedy and bad decisions have been made. Some people might criticise and say there was too much regulation. That is not what the Tory Party was saying just in 2007, actually, because there was a paper published by John Redwood, which got much approval from David Cameron, complaining about the regulation. I will quote you from page 53, for example - this is Redwood:

"Government claims that this regulation is all necessary."

- the question is, do we need all this regulation -

"Government claims that this regulation is all necessary. They seem to believe that without it banks could steal our money."

I suppose if you live in Iceland and have got a lot of money you might think the banks have stolen your money. He goes on to say:

"Competition is a customer's main ally. It is competition which keeps the bank honest."

Really?

"Lots of financial houses, yet lots of them have gone bust and it needs bold politicians to do something about these situations when they arise."

Further on on page 54 Redwood writes:

"Sometimes regulations"

- this is really curious, I think -

"Some times regulations achieve something that would happen anyway. You do not need a regulation to stop chimney sweeps sending small boys up chimneys."

Now I now that some people have said that John Redwood has come from a different planet and when I say that I mean members of his own party, but he is going back into the 1800s when actually children did go up the chimneys and they were stopped by Parliament because people said this is not right and it is not fair. It beggars belief that if we ever did get a future Tory Government - Heaven forbid, Heaven forbid - that people like John Redwood would be saying, "Let us have chimney sweeps, that might actually get the economy going again."

We have to have a review that is international. A national look on its own is no good. We have to look at the situation across the whole world. The British Government has to work in partnerships with the IMF, the Bank of International Settlements and others and if we do it on our own we will get it wrong. If we do it on our own we will get it wrong. We have a duty to all the people we represent to do the best we can for the people in Leeds. I believe Local Government like Leeds City Council has got a major role to play. It is about facing up to the difficulties so let us work together to make sure the people of Leeds have a better and more successful life. Thank you very much, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: Thank you very much, my Lord Mayor. I was not prepared to start speaking because I thought time was up but there are a few important points that I want to take up here and I cannot believe the attitude of some of the people on the Labour benches that this is just an accident, something that we could not see it coming, nothing to do with us at all. Just about everyone could see this coming.

What we have had over the last eleven years of a Labour Government is three growth areas in this country, three things this supposed economic miracle is built upon. One of them is housing and that just running away completely; the other one is a massive Government spending which is completely unsustainable as they have now finally cottoned on to; and thirdly it is the financial services sector.

Look at those three things that make up our economic miracle over the last ten years and all three of them are absolutely - pardon my language - knackered. We have got here a problem particularly coming out of housing and the reason for this is that, of course, Gordon Brown changed the measurement of inflation that we used several years ago so what it allowed it to do was boast about record low levels of inflation and as a consequence what happened was with all of the imported goods

from the Far East that are nice and cheap, it kept the inflation figures nice and lot. Take housing costs out of the inflation measure and let house prices rise. All of a sudden, everyone has got money. They remortgage the house, spend it on a BMW. Everyone is feeling very flush indeed. Do not worry, house prices always keep going up. Anyone could see it could not keep going - absolutely anyone - because we were having discussions in this Chamber about how first time buyers cannot get a foot on the property ladder, so it has got to stop at some point. Saying that it is something that happened in America, it had nothing to do with us, we did not let it all rung away - of course it is to do with the Labour Government. It is the actions they directly took, it is the lack of financial regulation of the banks that allow these greedy bankers to go out there and lend money to people thinking that there was no risk and this little merry-go-round would go on for ever and all of a sudden we the British taxpayers have to bail out the mess yet again that the Labour leader has made. We are sick and tired of it and so are the people of Great Britain and I will tell you, at the next general election you will all know about it. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: So will you, Matthew, yes.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Let us proceed. We now sum up with Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I will be very brief. They were fair contributions. I do not think there is much to be said that Labour MPs now think about the need to be regulating the banking industry. Perhaps they should have figured that out ten or eleven years ago, but whatever.

I do not think there is much in the argument that says they did not regulate so we did not regulate but it is really their fault. It think it is academic to somebody who is unemployed or facing repossession.

I am fascinated by Ted's view, presumably the Labour Group's view, that what we need is more housing via the Spatial Strategy, because if he does do that means building an awful lot on greenfield sites and we will make sure that the voters in Morley are fully aware of that idea.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: That is what he wants to do.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: The other idea that we are getting some additional Government finance is most welcome. If Neil is guaranteeing that the Building Schools for the Future money is going to come early, then I would be most delighted, although I am slightly sceptical of that.

Ultimately if you go back he talked about regulating all associated financial regulatory legislation, national and international. The ball needs to start rolling with our MPs being on board and not being late coming into this particular one, with the Chancellor of the Exchequer getting stuck in on a national and international basis to make sure regulation is undertaken and that we do not revisit this problem ever again. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: We now come to the voting and first of all the amendment of Councillor Hanley.

Those in favour? Those against? Just LOST.

We go on to the motion of Councillor Finnigan. Recorded vote, seconded over there.

(A recorded vote was taken on the motion)

THE LORD MAYOR: We have members present 87, "Yes" 85, Abstain 0, "No" 2. That is CARRIED.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: It must be the Morley Boroughs, there's only two of them!

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Let's have a print out. Let's see the print out.

ITEM 11 - WHITE PAPER MOTION - TAX INCENTIVES FOR
RENEWABLE ENERGY TECHNOLOGIES

THE LORD MAYOR: We will now quickly go through the remaining White Papers, if they will be proposed and seconded, and we shall then vote on each one.

Number 11.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Lord Mayor, I am grateful for the Chief Whip, John Procter, and the administration for allowing me to firstly clarify some facts within the White Paper.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Wrong one. You are on the White Paper.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: It is the next one. That is rehearsing!

THE LORD MAYOR: No rehearsing, no. It is on tax incentives for renewable energy technologies in the name of Councillor Monaghan. You propose? Seconded?

COUNCILLOR CHASTNEY: Yes and in the interests of brevity I will not speak.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ogilvie to move the amendment.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: Formally move, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: Seconded, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. We go to the vote. First of all the amendment of Councillor Ogilvie, please. Those in favour? Against? Just CARRIED. Do you not think? Would you care to have it recorded? I think we will do a recorded vote.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Can you tell me who has asked for a recorded vote, please?

THE LORD MAYOR: The Lord Mayor.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: In order that the Lord Mayor can ascertain precisely the voting on that motion.

(A recorded vote was taken on the amendment)

THE LORD MAYOR: 87 present, "Yes" 43, Abstain 0 and "No" 44. LOST

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Lord Mayor, are we sure that every member actually voted because our numbers do not add up.

COUNCILLOR: The vote has been declared. It is declared.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: The vote is declared.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hanley did not and is not here.

Voting on the motion, then. We will vote on the motion in the name of Councillor Monaghan, the substantive motion. Those in favour? Those against? That was CARRIED.

ITEM 12 - WHITE PAPER MOTION - MANAGEMENT OF YORKSHIRE POST NEWSPAPERS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 12, the White Paper, Councillor Wakefield, management of Yorkshire Post Newspapers. Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I think it was the excitement of listening to Councillor Matthew Lobley that got me rather excited. I have already expressed my gratitude for the co-operation on this one so I would like to move to, under the provisions of the Councillor Procedure Rules 14(10) to seek leave of Council to amend the motion by deletion of the whole of the second paragraph of that White Paper. I would also like under Council Procedure Rules 3(1)(c) be suspended to allow for a brief statement in relation to the motion to be read. OK? This is a statement from Peter Lazenby, who is the Joint Father of the Chapel for the National Union of Journalists at the YEP.

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE GOVERNANCE): You need the leave of Council first.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I have just moved that 3(1). Sorry, yes, we have got to vote.

THE LORD MAYOR: Could we have the leave of Council?

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, can we just be clear about this? We are in a section that is non-speaking motions. If Councillor Wakefield is seeking leave of Council to amend his White Paper and delete the second paragraph, that is what I understand we are now taking a vote on only - not seeking leave of Council for this to be a speaking White Paper.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: No, that is right. I have got a brief statement to make.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Let us get this right this time.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Can I just ask, I thought the agreement was that he could amend his White Paper and he wanted to read out a statement of why he was amending it.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: That is news to me.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: It is a 30 second statement.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: It will take 30 seconds.

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE GOVERNANCE): Lord Mayor, you still need the leave of Council. We probably need to do it in two bits. First of all leave of Council in relation to allowing Councillor Wakefield to alter his motion, so you can do that now.

THE LORD MAYOR: We will do that now. Those in favour? Thank you.
CARRIED.

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE GOVERNANCE): Then he would also need to suspend Council Procedure Rules in order to seek leave of Council to make a brief statement that he is referring to.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: My Lord Mayor, I think we need some clarification here. Whose statement is Councillor Wakefield reading? His own in explanation or somebody else's. I am sorry, my Lord Mayor, that is highly irregular.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I understood there was an agreement.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: It is the first I have heard of it.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Your Whip has agreed it, from what I knew.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: No, no.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: As I understand it, it is Councillor Wakefield's statement which is quoting somebody else.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I can quote somebody else in my statement.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: It is only 30 seconds.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: We were not born yesterday.

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE GOVERNANCE): The question Council needs to consider is whether they wish to give Councillor Wakefield leave to make a statement. Council has already given you leave to alter your motion by deleting the second paragraph. That is sorted. What we now are dealing with is whether Council wishes to agree to suspend Council Procedure Rules to allow you to make a statement because we are in the bit of the Council where we are beyond seven o'clock and things should only formally be moved, seconded and voted on.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: It is just a statement.

THE LORD MAYOR: We will take a vote on it.

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE GOVERNANCE): So the vote is those in favour of Councillor Wakefield - suspending Council Procedure Rules to allow Councillor Wakefield to make a statement.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: An explanation.

THE LORD MAYOR: Those in favour of that.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: It is an explanation.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Against? I think that is CARRIED.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, I would like to move to suspend Standing Orders so the debate may now be had, the full debate.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, we are going to vote that the whole White Paper will be discussed and debated.

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE GOVERNANCE): Can I just clarify what we are doing now is a vote on suspending Council Procedure Rules to allow the whole White Paper as amended by Councillor Wakefield to be debated.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: As amended?

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE GOVERNANCE): Yes, as altered. So those in favour...

THE LORD MAYOR: Those in favour then? That is CARRIED. Anyone against? Right. We shall proceed with Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor, and thank you colleagues, because I do not intend to be that long in my statement I think at this time of night after a long day. I think I need just a brief explanation as to why this White Paper was put forward.

Firstly, I will read the statement and then I will talk about some of the implications.

“Johnson Press has for many years made annual profits in excess of £100m which was handed to shareholders, a return of more than 30% per year.

Even now the company has admitted to be still reasonably profitable, although profits had dipped. Since taking over the YEP Newspapers they have taken out tens of millions of pounds from the Yorkshire Post. They have put little in - indeed they have destroyed the livelihoods of dozens of Leeds printers and other staff at YPN building in Wellington Street.

Now they have reduced the quality of our papers, cutting the YEP from five editions to two. The paper is no longer even printed in the city. Now they are turning on the journalists.”

I think that summarises the feeling from within the YEP about the emasculation of a local paper that belongs to the second biggest city in this country. If they continue to dismantle that paper and its reputation we, as local elected members, will suffer and so will our community.

We have all had the ups and downs with local media but the one thing you get with the YEP and its local press is local focus. You break that and where is the link between us in here and the people that we represent?

I think it gets worse because I also think that one of the good things about the YEP is that they have specialists. They have specialist in law, they have specialists in business and they have specialists in Council. If you continue to force redundancies on them, you lose that specialism, you lose that focus and I genuinely believe you lose that democracy because that is the life blood, that is the link between all of us in this Chamber and, as I said, the community. This is not being over dramatic.

I was there with Councillor Matthew Lobleigh at the industrial protest and I am glad Matthew had the vision to come down with some of us to support those journalists in what is a struggle. It is not scare rumour. They have already, as the statement said, moved the printing out of this city and that was a severe blow to the manufacturing and to the jobs of this city.

Now they are talking already that they have gone as far as they can in the voluntary capacity but also forcing more redundancies. I think it is only right of all of us to stand up for our local paper. We have lost some of the local paper like the Weekly News but we have to say something as guardians of our city and guardians of our democracy to wish those journalists the best in their struggle to maintain quality journalism in this city for the citizens of our city to make sure that we are all properly informed.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Nash to second.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, how often have you heard people say "It was in the paper" or, "I saw it in the paper"? Did they mean the Telegraph, the Times, the Guardian, the Mirror or the News of the World? No, of course they did not. They mean the Evening Post, the newspaper which is important to them which keeps them informed of what goes on in our city.

In a previous life I made it my business to visit all the news editors of all the evening newspapers in the area which I covered - the Hull Daily Mail, the Derby Evening Telegraph, the Nottingham Post, the Lincolnshire Echo, the Leicester Mercury, the York Evening Press, the Scarborough News, the Halifax Courier, the Huddersfield Examiner, the Bradford Telegraph and Argos and the Sheffield Star, to tell them what I was about and to look out for my press releases.

All these news editors have two things in common. They wanted news which was fresh and news which was particularly relevant to their own town or city. All of these newspapers were situated and printed in or near to the town centre. The Evening Post is already being printed 30 miles away in South Yorkshire. The printed copies are loaded on to wagons and trailed up to Leeds. Not only is this not doing much for the environment, it also means that the deadline for copy from reporters for that day's evening paper is 7.30 am to allow for both printing and travelling time.

When the announcement of Tetley's Brewery was made at seven o'clock in the morning to coincide with the opening of the Stock Exchange, reporters at the Evening post had less than half an hour to cover that story. This was obviously particularly relevant and important to Leeds people and the result was that much of the story had to appear the following day after it had had a full airing in the broadcasting media. It is no surprise, then, to learn that Johnson Press prints mainly weekly newspapers where the deadline is not so crucial.

The reduction in the number of journalists and photographers at the Evening Post does not just mean that they have to work harder. It means that reporters

cannot get out as much as they would like into the local community to collect material for stories themselves.

It is inevitable that the newsworthiness of our beloved “the paper” will suffer. We may not like what we see in it at times about ourselves, but nevertheless the paper is necessary for the efficient functioning of local Government. My Lord Mayor, I second. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Brett to move the amendment.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I do not need to dwell on the fact that it is a very difficult economic climate at the moment and we all, I am sure, regret the loss of jobs not just in the media sector but in many others at the moment. I know how it feels, I was once fired from a job when it was no fault of my own, so it is clearly a very difficult time.

I am sure all of us would say that we want good, balanced coverage of local issues in our local media. My issue with this particular motion is that it is too narrow. I was recently on a field near Ledston interviewed by Calendar what the journalist said to me that they too were threatened with redundancy because of an Ofcom agreement that ITV has agreed that 17 local news regions are allowed to merge into nine. The consultation on that, apparently virtually everyone who was consulted was against that move and I would certainly be against that move so the amendment in my name is because the damage that would be done to our local wider news media were we to lose Calendar, were we to lose local news. That is why I am moving the amendment in my name.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Yes, my Lord Mayor. I do not think any of us would have to speak on this White Paper and amendment, but I do feel I have to, first of all, for the benefit of those members of Council who perhaps are not quite sure what was going on previously, point out that the second paragraph in Councillor Wakefield’s resolution advice was given, I understand, that if this paragraph in the White Paper was left in this Council would jointly be liable to action taken against us. I want to record I think it is unfortunate to say the least and extremely foolish of any party to have put a second paragraph in a resolution like this one, which has now been, thankfully, withdrawn, without first checking. I have to say that anybody who has worked in business at any level at all, reading that on the Order Paper should immediately have had alarm bells ringing and I think quite frankly, Keith, you ought to apologise for this mistake that clearly the Labour Group have committed. You clearly will not apologise. That says more about you than anybody else.

If I can go on to the resolution itself, we have amended it because quite frankly there are hundreds if not thousands of people losing their jobs in Leeds at the moment and I wonder what they would say if the first resolution that they were to read recorded by this Council about job losses and the distress that they are causing referred only to one sector? I am not going to go on for the next ten minutes rattling on the numbers of companies in Leeds that are shedding jobs or closing down but they are many, regrettably, and that is a very, very sad state of affairs.

I am not going to go into the political debate now because at some stage in the future I have no doubt we will be having that political debate, but if we are recording as a Council our distress and concern about the loss of jobs, then we owe it to the hundreds and thousands of people who are losing their jobs to make sure it refers to all of them and not just one sector which your White Paper does, Keith.

Furthermore, of course, I endorse the comments that Richard Brett has made because as local politicians we sometimes complain about the local press but we

also need it and we use it, of course we do, and it communicates to everybody news about what is going on in the city, but I have to say it is again a pity that the original White Paper does not mention the fact that the printing was moved to Sheffield some considerable time ago. As somebody who worked for most of his life in manufacturing, I deeply regretted the fact that a decision was taken to move that manufacturing, which is what it was, out of the city and to somewhere else, as I would complain and as I would bemoan the fact of any manufacturing leaving this city.

I think the people of Leeds expect us to make a general comment about the current economic situation. I think if we were to leave the resolution as worded even as revised by Councillor Wakefield, it would smack of self-serving and it would smack of perhaps vested interests that we have to make particular comments about a particular industry.

Many of our constituents and many more to come, I regret, are going to face the prospect of redundancy and that is a tragedy for those individuals and for their families. We as a Council should be recognising that distress in a much more general way than Councillor Wakefield's White paper does. We as a Council are doing all sorts, as has been alluded to earlier today, to do our part to make sure we can protect as many jobs as possible and that is a pledge that I know Richard and I are happy to make over and over again, as are other members of the administration.

This White Paper should have been thought out a great deal more carefully, a great deal more thought should generally have gone into it and we could have got something we could all agree, even at this late stage I would ask Councillor Wakefield to accept our amendment for the sake of all those people in Leeds whose jobs are under threat. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield it is up to you to sum up.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. This White Paper went in at the appropriate time on Tuesday and was checked by officers of this Council and it was only last night, at the eleventh hour, when it was found to present problems and that is why we are having to do it this particular way.

It has been on the books for three or four days and nobody in the administration has come up and said could we work together on this, because the White Paper is not about jobs. In fact, you could have put a paper down today about the economy and jobs if you had wanted to and we are more than happy to support any paper that does an all-party approach to doing as much as we can to save jobs. We share that. We share that concern.

What this was about is losing a democratic paper to the citizens of Leeds. It is not just about the jobs. There may well be losses. What I said was that already we have lost the jobs to the printing and that means now that the last story that goes into Doncaster in the morning is 7.30, so if anything significant happens in this city from 7.30 onwards, it cannot be printed that day. What I said was, unless we can support people trying to keep that paper going, improving its coverage as it tries to do in all varieties of ways, then I think we lose the link between our people, our communities and our role.

It is not about jobs, it is about saying we all need a paper because as Councillor Nash already stressed, people who read it may be going down but the amount of people who read the Evening Post about their community, or the Weekly News, is far more than other nationals. I think we ought to stand up for good quality

journalism and do everything we can within this White Paper already to express our support for the people down there who are struggling.

I just say one thing. If you lose those specialists you are going to get what we call a celebrity paper full of adverts, full of no coverage and we will suffer as a result.

I think it is a very simple White Paper and I think it is trying to say that this paper and those journalists down there are victims of a similar problem that we have outlined with the bank. If anybody reads the background to Johnson Press, what they did was acquire different papers right across the country and reach too far. You saw that in the Sunday Times article. What we are simply saying is nothing, I think, that would upset any of us, that we need a local paper, we need good journalists and we need to do everything we can to ensure that those journalists remain in this city covering our issues over the next few years. I move the White Paper, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: Can we have a recorded vote, please.

COUNCILLOR: Seconded, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: We will take the amendment.

(A recorded vote was taken on the amendment)

THE LORD MAYOR: Present 87, "Yes" 46, Abstain 38, "No" 3, so that makes the amendment CARRIED.

It becomes the substantive motion. Are we still recording?

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: Yes.

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, recorded vote for the substantive motion.

(A recorded vote was taken on the substantive motion)

THE LORD MAYOR: The numbers again, present 87, "Yes" 46, Abstentions 40, "No" 1, so the substantive motion is CARRIED.

ITEM 13 - WHITE PAPER MOTION - NON-RETURN OF STUDENTS' DEPOSITS

THE LORD MAYOR: We are back now to formally moving and seconding.

It is Item 13, motion Non-return of students' deposits. Councillor Hamilton.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Lord Mayor, I formally move the motion.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. We have an amendment in the name of Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: I formally move, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. We will call for the vote now for the amendment by Councillor Richard Lewis. Those in favour? Thank you. Those against? LOST, I think.

The substantive motion then. Those in favour? Those against? Right, that is CARRIED.

Thank you.

That is it. Thank you for your attendance. It has been a bit of a long haul. Thank you.

(The Council meeting closed at 7.45 p.m.)