

**LEEDS CITY COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

Held on

Wednesday, 25<sup>th</sup> February 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 25<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2009

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon everyone and welcome to today's Council meeting. I remind all members and the gallery that mobile phones must be switched off and other electrical equipment while Council is in session.

I have only got one announcement and that is that I personally would like to thank everyone who was connected with the Leeds City Council for supporting Red Heart Day on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February, and those members of staff who helped to organise the many activities which took place on that day. Money is still pouring in and in excess of £3,000 is expected to be raised for the Lord Mayor's charity which is, of course, Andrea's Gift for brain tumour research and support. Thank you to all those who were involved. *(Applause)*

ITEM 1 – MINUTES

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

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: To move that the Minutes be received, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. All those in favour? Thank you.

ITEM 2 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 2, Declarations of Interest. I say it with some feeling. I will call upon the Assistant Chief Executive to say a few words.

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE GOVERNANCE): If I can say a few words it may assist members in deciding whether or not to declare. I have sent a note round which hopefully you will have read, but just to hopefully prevent lots of members jumping up at the beginning of the meeting and at the start of the Budget Meeting I will just clarify.

Members who own or lease a dwelling within the Leeds area or who are Council tenants need to have declared that as a personal interest on their form. I understand there has been a bit of confusion about that, so officers will get from the Register of Interests members' addresses and will make sure that they are all put on the relevant form so that members do not need to jump up now and give their addresses.

Members who are members of voluntary organisations that may receive grants from the Council, you do not need to declare an interest because the way the budget papers are structured we just have one line that says, "Grants to voluntary organisations" and the global figure. We do not set out the different organisations so you do not need to declare.

Members who are school governors only need to declare a personal interest as a school governor if you are going to be addressing the meeting on any aspect of the budget which relates to schools. If you are a governor and you are not going to speak in the budget debate, then you do not need to declare an interest.

Members who are ALMO directors, again the same applies. If you are an ALMO director but you are not going to speak on the housing aspect of the budget,

then you do not need to declare a personal interest either on the floor or in the meeting. Finally, any member who is a Parish or Town Councillor, because part of the budget payments relate to the precepts, you will only need to declare that as a personal interest and disclose it if you are going to be addressing the meeting on the Parish Council precept aspect of the budget.

Hopefully that will close it all out and nobody needs to jump up.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor McKenna.

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: Thank you, Lord Mayor. That was very clear, thank you. I do need to declare an interest as a governor of Christ the King and West Leeds South. Thank you. Personal interest.

THE LORD MAYOR: If you will just allow me then to – I will come to that but I also want to announce the list of written declarations was submitted by members and is on display in the anteroom and on deposit in public galleries and has been circulated to each member's place in the Chamber.

I invite any further individual declarations or corrections to those notified on the list, if there are any.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I declare a personal interest as a school governor of Victoria Secondary School, Victoria Primary and Churwell Primary and also as a Director of Aire Valley Homes, seeing as I will be speaking on both issues.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: I may be talking, Lord Mayor, I am governor of Moortown Primary School.

THE LORD MAYOR: No more? Right. I invite members, then, by a show of hands, if you will, to confirm that you have read the list, or the list as amended, and agree to its contents insofar as they relate to their own entries. If you would like to show, please? Thank you.

### ITEM 3 – COMMUNICATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 3, communications. I will ask the Chief Executive.

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

### ITEM 4 – BUDGET

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, we go to Item 4 which is the budget. I ask you to look at Appendix 1 and I ask Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Can I begin the budget presentation today by, in time honoured fashion, thanking Mr Gay and his team for all the work that they have put in for this most difficult of budgets.

Further than that I want to thank the teams in all the different departments of the Council who this year more than any other year than I think any of us can remember had to play a decisive role in putting this budget together. It has not been

easy and the administration wants to place on record its thanks to all departments of Leeds City Council for their input into this year's budget.

I also want to thank our team in Treasury Management who, as ever, have pulled out all the stops to ensure that our investment policies have reaped rewards, even in these very difficult financial times. Those rewards have helped to support front line services.

Over this past three or four years this administration has tried to reduce the Council's reliance on too many one-off contributions towards our revenue expenditure and significant progress has been made again this year. It has to be our goal, however, to continue to bear down on this fault line in our budget and to virtually eradicate the reliance on Council's regular revenue budgets on one-off funding.

Our objective in this year's budget has been threefold and that has been to protect front line services; target extra resources in certain key areas; and deliver a Council tax below the current rate of inflation, because we are all acutely aware, particularly in these depressed and depressing economic times, how any increase in taxation hits hardest those who can least afford it.

Before I turn to the details of our budget, I think you would expect me to spell out the backdrop to our deliberations this year. The scenario has been one which I think two years ago none of us could have imagined and which certainly no administration in living memory, if Mr Balls is to be believed, has ever had to cope with previously.

Nationally even the Prime Minister has now finally accepted that we are in a deep financial recession. Most financial experts believe that Britain will be the worst affected of any developed western economy and the reasons for that are not difficult to understand: an over reliance on debt in the public and private sector; banks lending unsustainable amounts of money to individuals and companies that had little or no collateral; a government that has borrowed as if there was no tomorrow; and a Prime Minister most of all, perhaps, who has preached a simple and economically ignorant gospel that he single-handedly had beaten, in his words, boom and bust.

The reason, of course, why we are going to feel so drastically the effects of this recession is that we live in a country that is now laden with debt, whether it is government debt, whether it is the financial institutions or its many individuals, and the live now pay later culture of the Brown years will drastically affect everyone, not least people who will tragically lose their jobs at an ever-increasing rate.

The effect on this Council, of course, is also dramatic: rent arrears are increasing; Council tax defaulters are increasing; visits to our sports centres – indeed all of our undertakings where people pay to go in – are decreasing; capital receipts are collapsing; housing developments are at a standstill; commercial developments are being put on hold; and a government nationally in denial and making an announcement every day that is supposed to help the situation and only adds to the confusion. None of these initiatives ever seem to come to fruition. Indeed, I had a discussion with an un-named government Minister this weekend who actually rang me to ask about the government initiatives and shared with me the frustration of the government that none of the initiatives seem to be being actually replicated in action on the ground.

To cap it all we get the worst Revenue Support Grant settlement in the history of the city. Remember that this comes on top of this year the worst Revenue Support Grant in the history of the city. Once again other cities receive a better grant than we

do. I make no bones about repeating some of these statistics every year because it would do well for all of us to remember precisely what the disparity is between what this city gets and what neighbouring and, indeed, other large Local Authorities get.

It is only twelve months ago that George Mudie said in the House of Commons:

“Manchester has been treated better than Leeds in terms of everything. I do not understand it. I am cross about it.”

George, it is no good you and your colleagues being cross about it – you have got to do something about it – something that you and your six colleagues have singularly failed to do over the past twelve years. They have been wholly ineffectual in getting the government to understand the impact on this city of these massive financial disparities and it is high time they were brought to account. Mock indignation in the House of Commons is not enough and it is not good enough.

This year our settlement from the Government is 2.1% - a £6.2m increase. That is 0.7% lower than the national average, almost half a per cent lower than the core cities and 1% lower than the average for the rest of the West Yorkshire Authorities.

If Leeds had the same funding as the other core cities, we would have received another £1m. If we had received the national average we would have received almost another £2m. What makes the continued loss of money inexplicable is not to award us any Neighbourhoods Working Fund. In fact, because of that we began our budget discussions from a baseline that made us £8m worse off in this coming financial year than we were in the current financial year. On top of that we have been absorbing inflationary costs throughout the year massively above the rate of inflation.

Let me just remind you of some of these figures in comparison with other Local Authorities. The City of Manchester gets £325 per head of population more from the Government Formula Grant than Leeds does; Newcastle gets £225 more; Nottingham gets £158 more; Sheffield gets £125 more. In Sheffield's case that is equal to £93m. In West Yorkshire Bradford gets £124m more; and Wakefield gets £25 per head more. Nobody can tell me whatever the problems in a city like Wakefield with a population of 326,000 they have the same complex needs as the second largest Local Authority in England, which is Leeds, and yet they get the equivalent of £18m more a year. It is not acceptable, it is not good enough and something really has to be done about it.

Over this past twelve years – and I am not pretending Leeds got a fair deal previously but what I am telling you, and it is a fact, that the gap between what this city gets and what other cities gets is growing, not reducing, and it is not acceptable and it is time to do something about it. My Lord Mayor, I am sure Councillor Wakefield in this part of the budget presentation will agree with me, as he does every year, but you are the party in national power. Your MPs must be able to carry some clout or what are they there for, I ask myself, and the people of Leeds should ask themselves.

Let me conclude on the background to the budget by saying this, that despite all the massive challenges that this country, this Authority, this city and all its residents face, we do remain confident of the future and we believe we have set a budget which will protect front line services in revenue and capital terms taken together will help to stimulate the local economy and give everyone in this city value for money.

It does, however, horrify me when people seem to drift into denial about the obvious economic situation that we all face. However, we do believe that in this situation opportunities will present themselves and, indeed, are presenting themselves to organisations, public and private, that are prepared to be flexible and prepared to be innovate, so we will come out of this recession and the budget I am going to detail in a moment I believe addresses those issues which we are able to control and which will help this city, weather the economic downturn and the economic difficulties better than some others.

If I may turn to the budget for this coming financial year. It proposes an increase of 2.9% in Council tax. That is 1.8% lower than in 2008/09 and is the lowest increased proposed in a budget in Leeds for 14 years. It looks like Leeds will be very much in line with a number of other major Local Authorities and, indeed, substantially less than some – a far cry from two particular budgets delivered by your party, Councillor Wakefield, in the not too distant past. In 2001 and 2002 it was 4.9% and in 2003/04 it was 7.9%.

To deliver a Council tax at this level and protect front line services we have had to take difficult decisions, and I want to deal with one straightaway and that is the much reported and misunderstood reduction in jobs.

The delivery of this budget is dependent on a reduction in staff numbers of a net 450. Unlike many other walks of life where people are being faced with enforced unemployment, we will achieve this through voluntary early retirement and natural wastage and by removing vacant posts from the structure.

We cannot, as an organisation which is a major employer funded by the taxpayer, sit here and ignore the economic realities faced by everybody outside this building. These decisions had to be made and we have made them in what I believe to be a sensible and decent way in accordance with our employment practices.

These reductions also, of course, reflect very much the downturn in the Revenue Funding Services that the Council operates. Quite obviously when we have less people using our facilities and less people using our services, we need less people to deliver those. What we have done is to protect the front line services to the most vulnerable people in this city and that we continue to pledge to do.

I also want to comment further on the effects of the fallout of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and its substitute package from Government, the Working Neighbourhoods Fund. Leeds had an NRF allocation as you all know of £14.9m in 2007/08 which was fully committed and, indeed, financed some of the best schemes across the city but in particular in the seven most deprived wards in the city. That was reduced to £8.9m in 2008/09 by the Government and will be reduced to £3.5m in 2009/10, a cut of £11.4m, and there will be no funding through NRF through 2010/11 onwards. We will then have suffered a budget cut of £14.9m. For all your Government cares it could have resulted in the closure of our Antisocial Behaviour Unit, it could have seen the decimation of Leeds Watch CCTV or the Intensive Neighbourhood Management Scheme, or the Graffiti Removal Service and many other things, but thanks to the determination of this administration and in particular the Department of Environment and Neighbourhoods – and I pay tribute to the Exec Member and to senior officers – we have been able to identify other funding streams to keep these much needed services running in the city of Leeds.

This administration has continued to lobby Government to get more funding for Leeds and we have been successful in securing what I consider a relatively small sum of money but one that can be extremely well spent, of a quarter of a million

pounds for the Worklessness Pilot which in particular will focus on Halton Moor and Osmanthorpe, but also a couple of other areas in the city.

It does stick in the throat for me to have to say, however, that John Healy, the Minister who was responsible for the funding fiasco on NRF, was the Minister who was so supportive in getting the quarter of a million pounds. I will do him a swap and have the £14.9m he took away back and he could keep the quarter of a million and we will still do the Worklessness Pilot.

Leeds City Council and its partners are drawing up detailed plans for this pilot project that will test out the greater flexibility proposed – in particular, as I say, in Halton Moor and Osmanthorpe, where 28.4% of working age population are claimants compared with the city's average of 13%.

Surely a more effective way to tackle problems of unemployment, particularly in the seven most deprived wards in the city, would be for the Government to support our proposals and lobby to allocate Leeds part of the Working Neighbourhoods Funding. It was denied us on only .04 of a per cent - .04 of a per cent. We challenge any Government on the margin of error of that level and they admitted to some errors but refused to go back and review the situation.

The result of that is that other major cities have received substantial funding: Birmingham £34.2m; Bradford £12m; Manchester £25m; Liverpool £29m; Newcastle £3m – but it would appear this Government's attack on our finances knows no bounds because this year we are having to impose a rent increase on our tenants of 6.2%. If we had followed the Government's Rent Restructuring Policy, the rent increase would have been even higher at 8.25%. This is simply a tax on tenants with the Treasury creaming off millions of pounds.

The Supporting People Grant, the allocation for 2009/10 remains static at £32.9m which, of course, is an inflationary cut to services that deal with some of the most vulnerable people in our society. In addition, this funding has been progressively reduced over previous years. In 2004/05 it stood at £35.9m and we face the prospect in the year 2010/11 of this funding being cut by a further £1m.

Despite its rhetoric this Government, with the support of the members opposite, seem intent on cutting funding to this city that should be going predominantly to the seven most deprived wards in the city and, may I say, seven of the most deprived wards in the country.

Then we come to LABGI, the Government incentive scheme to pay back to Local Government some of the increased business rates generated by what was then a more successful economy.

The distribution for 2009/10 has not yet been finalised by the Government but the budget assumes we will get £500,000. There was no scheme last year – the same Ministers responsible for other financial restrictions had their hands in this as well – but in the year 2007/08 under the old scheme, Leeds was budgeted to receive £10m. We have had another substantial cut from this Government.

Despite all of this we are going to deliver through the revenue budget and the capital budget a programme that will help Leeds through the recession, will in the medium and long term create jobs, will safeguard front line services and, in particular, those who are the most vulnerable in the city.

I do not want to comment too much on the capital programme as Councillor Brett will be covering that shortly, but let me list a variety of things that we are doing department by department, some in capital terms, some in revenue terms.

In Development we will continue to deliver the £15m Town and District Centre Regeneration Scheme, including the Parks Renaissance Programme, bringing much needed investment to all parts of the city. We will continue to deliver the Leeds Arena project, which will create jobs and inward investment for the city and which still, I regret to say, has not received the full, unequivocal support of the Labour Group.

Because of our continuing investment in highway maintenance, insurance claims have been reduced again this year by £361,000 and the Highway Maintenance Programme stands at £13m.

Funding has been provided by the Area Committees to allow further conservation area reviews and last, but by no means least, the LEGI programme, something the Government has funded, is in its third year and beginning to make some real progress despite added and considerable pressures brought about through the economic downturn.

In Leisure work has commenced on the Northern Ballet Theatre Headquarters, a project due to be completed in 2010. The Grand Theatre phase 2, including the Howard Assembly Rooms, has been completed. The City Variety refurbishments are about to start. The Morley and Armley PFI schemes are under way. The RFID technology – Radio Frequency Identification technology – rolled out in 2008/09 is going to continue in 2009/10.

The success of that scheme has been proved already in pilots at Beeston, Hyde Park and Wortley, saving the library services £390,000. This technology is now to be rolled out into Farsley, Wetherby, Guiseley, Rawdon, Calverley and Boston Spa.

Neighbourhoods and Housing. Despite the fact that the Government's almost daily initiatives fail to come on stream, here in Leeds we have supported the continuance of the EASEL Regeneration Scheme. The Strategic Affordable Housing Partnership will have its first sites commencing next month. Disabled facilities grants expenditure will be over £7m in 2009/10 and Leeds made a submission for £3.6m from the Government, i.e. 60% of a £6m programme. 60% is the expected contribution from Government but we have been told the provision will actually be £2.57m, which is the same as this year plus inflation - once again, the Government reducing commitments made to the city previously.

The provision of these grants not only help vulnerable patient but they create work in a sector desperate to see investment and desperate to see employment. The Area Committees will have £3m to support activity in local communities. We have pledged to continue funding PCSOs. We make almost £1.5m contribution to the scheme which sees five PCSOs in every ward. This Council is providing 30% of the funding for 170 PCSOs that now cover Leeds. This has made a real difference to reductions in antisocial behaviour, what some people might described as low level crime but we know is amongst the most annoying and distressing for people who live in our wards.

We know that Labour are intent on redeploying these PCSOs but our commitment is clear, we will continue to combat crime in every ward in this city wherever it occurs.



The Leeds Watch CCTV operations will be upgraded to digital monitoring and be completed during the year. This will improve the quality of information gathered to assist in reducing crime. £850,000 is in the budget to deliver this scheme and Council wide we have an apprenticeship programme now set up for 250 young people.

Now I want to turn to two particular areas where the Council has already accepted – and at the Council meeting only a month ago we made it very clear – that we were not happy with the recent inspection reports we had in Adult Social Care or in Children's Services, so if I turn to Adult Social Care first.

This Council continues to spend above the Relative Needs Formula from the Government on Adult Social Care. It underlines our commitment to an increasing and, in many cases, an increasingly vulnerable group of people. Following the inspection we are committed to realigning our resources and modernising the services.

We make no apology for backing our Director of Adult Social Care in modernising the service and providing a service which is more in line with individuals' requirements. I should have no need at all to remind any members of the words in the CSCI's Independence, Choice and Wellbeing Inspection report. It says "Policies require review to ensure resources are shifted towards services that promote independence and personal choice." That we are committed to do and we have put the funding in place to deliver that agenda.

Where will the extra money in Adult Social Care in this year's budget be spent? Directly Payments - £2.4m extra will allow 310 additional service users to switch to direct payments. Safeguarding and personalisation weaknesses were identified by the CSCI and they will be addressed, with a £1.256m increase for the Assessment and Care Management budget.

Increasing independence to enable older people to live at home longer is crucial and it will get an extra £305,000 to extend the seven day hot meals pilot city wide and for Neighbourhood Networks.

Increased investment to meet learning disabilities demand will see a further £2.4m increase to provide care packages for an extra 120 people with learning difficulties. £2.1m is also included in the capital programme to create four new community bases for people with learning disabilities. This is part of the modernisation of Learning Disabilities Day Services which was agreed by the Executive Board in January.

We have targeted efficiency savings by reviewing management structures, reviewing the use of overtime and agency staff, procurement efficiencies, staff travel and transport efficiencies and all this is designed to improve the front line services for people who need those services the most.

We are proposing those savings in a way which protects the delivery of the service, because in all those instances the saving has to be weighed very carefully against the ability to continue delivering the service.

In Children's Services the Dedicated Schools Grant for this year will be £405m. It is anticipated that the DSG will grow by 3.6% in 2009/10. This is lower than the equivalent national increase for pupils, so yet again Leeds gets a lower share, a smaller share of the cake.

We will spend an extra £1.6m for placing children with foster and adoptive parents, externally providing greater support for the most complex cases. An extra 500,000 will be given to support safeguarding work focusing on performance, training and quality assurance, and a further £100,000 is provided for improving the quality of placements and outcomes for looked after children. In addition £1m will be provided for disabled children to have better quality equipment adaptations and short breaks.

Additional resources will be provided to improve standards of care in residential homes.

In both Adult Social Care and Children's Services we are committed to supporting better front line services for the most vulnerable in our society. We are also determined to implement the rigorous action plans which both the Department of Adult Services and Children's Services have put in place, and we believe we have also provided now the amount of finance that is needed to deliver those services.

We have earmarked a further £400,000 specially set aside within the general contingency of the Council to ensure that we can deliver the improvement plans which this Council has committed itself to in both Adult Social Care and Children's Services. We believe that the programme put before us by both those departments and the mechanisms by which they propose to introduce them are robust, but we are determined that they will be delivered, which is why we are giving both those departments a safety net within the general contingency of a further £400,000.

If you did not realise that perhaps you should have asked a question about the contingency when you had your briefings from the Director of Resources.

In Environmental Services we are making an extra £1.5m available for the Waste Strategy, to continue the expansion of recycling, with a further 70,000 homes receiving the garden waste collection which has been so well received where it has been introduced already. This and other measures should raise the recycling rate to 36%, saving over £1m in the iniquitous landfill payments that this Local Authority has to make and with which we were saddled by Central Government.

We shall also pilot a weekly collection of food waste in the city. This is additional to and not instead of our weekly bin collection. I have made it absolutely clear on previous occasions – this Authority will continue with weekly bin collections despite the big stick with which the Government threatens us and the penalties with which the Government threatens us. We will continue with weekly bin collections.  
(hear, hear)

A further £103,000 has been provided to improve street cleaning on the main arterial routes into the city. An additional £280,000 has been provided to support the procurement process for a Waste Treatment Facility.

In one department we have significant savings to help facilitate expansion of front line services. We are implementing a cash standstill for Central and Corporate Functions. At this point I will not look round at the Chief Executive – he knows that his department is having to take – and I think we all accept quite rightly – a very large share of the significant amounts of savings we have generated. It is essential that the people of this city see us living within our means as a Local Authority and providing services at the front end.

In addition, they will be expected to make 2% per annum savings in support services across the piece. Other general running costs have been reviewed and cash limited, taking account of specific contractual commitments. £100,000 will be saved on energy efficiency and a further £463,000 on procurement.

A new managed print computer system will generate a saving of half a million pounds and £225,000 savings will be generated from ICT collaboration, moving from Lotus Notes to Microsoft. The Public Private Partnership Unit has managed to deliver a surplus of £300,000 in 2008/09 and we are expecting it to deliver a similar surplus in 2009/01.

In addition, we have virtually dismantled Labour's International Relations Unit. We have cut it by a third this year. I have to say I note with a wry smile the Labour amendment because for the past two years they have sought to abolish what they themselves set up 20-odd years ago and which we have bit by bit saved money on over this past four years, which actually brings me nicely to the point because before I conclude, I want to comment on the Labour amendment but not in great detail. I think Councillor Brett will be picking some points up there as well, and also on Councillor Blackburn's amendment.

I am particularly taken by some bits of Councillor Wakefield's amendment and I particularly want to refer to – members of the public who are listening will not realise but any amendment to the budget has to be verified by the Chief Officer of Resources, Mr Gay, and has to be deliverable. That is a rule that was brought in a few years ago – very good, really, because it by and large, although not quite in this case, means that you cannot come up with any old thing that comes into your head and say you can do it – as I say, perhaps not in this case for reasons I am going to highlight in a moment.

Can I just deal with the first and perhaps the most minor thing – publicity. Councillor Wakefield rattles on about the amount we spend on publicity. His Government is always exhorting us to consult, consult, consult – send this out to your residents, that out to your residents – but in point of fact Leeds, the second largest city in England, ranks very well in terms of spend on publicity compared with other Local Authorities.

For example, Liverpool spends £17 per head of population on publicity; Manchester £11; Newcastle £9; Bristol £9 – I am rounding these up, by the way – Birmingham £9; Sheffield £8; Leeds £6. City Regions, Bradford £12; York £9; Harrogate £8; Selby £8; Barnsley £6; Wakefield £6; Leeds £6. If we go through Yorkshire and the Humber the story is the same with Hull being up at 17 quid, Rotherham at nearly £11, York at £9 – so it goes on down to Leeds again at £6.

When you compare what we in this Authority spend on publicity per head of population we spend at what is a very reasonable rate compared with our other Authorities and, indeed, certainly any others of comparable size.

If we were not to spend any of this money then we would rightly be criticised by your Government for failing to consult with and inform our residents of what was going on. What we have done over the last four years is to prune these levels of expenditure that we inherited from you quite drastically. I hope that puts that into context.

Perhaps the most serious part of the Labour amendment, however, is – I think all members have probably been given this – it refers to Regeneration and Jobs and Skills. I want to point this out to you. If you were to implement the saving that you are indicating in your budget of £1.5m in Regeneration, you would devastate, completely devastate the regeneration programme of this city. It is all right you shaking your head. If you have not realised what it means then I am going to tell you...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I will explain.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: ...because this is what it means.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: We know.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: The Regeneration budget in this Local Authority stands at £6m. £2.8m of that £6m is from capital schemes and grants which leaves £3.2m. If you were to implement Labour's cut of £1.5m, it is 50%. It is 50% of the available Regeneration budget.

Now, Councillor Wakefield, we have a right to ask you, as supposedly the Leader of the major Opposition Party, where those cuts would fall. We know you want to relocate staff from Regeneration to what you say are generating jobs and skills. There are 32 staff employed in Regeneration, so it seems to me you would probably have to redeploy 16 of them. What are you going to get rid of, because you are going to have to tell the people of Leeds this? The EASEL and Aire Valley Regeneration Programmes have nine officers dealing with the implementation. The Housing PFIs, the Regeneration of West Leeds and the Leeds Bradford Corridor have twelve officers. The Town and District Centre, the Heritage Initiative, the LIFT Programme with the Joint Services Centre have six people. The private sector in *(inaudible)* has five people.

Councillor Wakefield, which of those officers are you going to take away from those schemes for your budget amendment? We have a right to know. Otherwise, we have every right to say that, as we have long suspected, you will scrap the Town and District Centre Scheme, you will stop work on the West Leeds Gateway and the Armley Regeneration Scheme, you will no longer progress issues on the Leeds Bradford Corridor - which your Government are encouraging us to do - you will not fund the continuation of the EASEL scheme in East Leeds. What are they, because you cannot double count and you cannot have it both ways? It is either one or it is the other and the people of Leeds have a right to know where your axe would fall.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: We know where yours is.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: My Lord Mayor, as I said, I will leave the rest of the amendment to Councillor Brett, in his capable hands, but in one other area I have to say that I wonder what you are playing at. No doubt you will spell it out to us. In Adult Social Care you appear to be putting off the income generation part of the equation, and nobody wants to put up charges, not really. What politician really wants to put up charges?

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: You.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: They are not exactly an electoral winner, but sometimes you have to make the choice. You cannot be the lowest charging Local Authority - and we are in many respects - the lowest taxing Local Authority - and we are in many respects - and still deliver critical front line services to the people of this city. At some stage you have to make the decision and I am afraid what your budget does in Adult Social Care, or so it seems to me, is to decimate the areas where the funding would come in which would mean that it was totally impossible to implement the programme of improvement that your Government are demanding that we make.

My Lord Mayor, I never thought - and it is a sad day indeed - that I would say this, but we have two amendments on the Order Paper today. We have an incomprehensible, unworkable one that even our Director of Resources says:

“This amendment assumes reduced staffing in some areas which may impact on service levels and will therefore have to be carefully managed.”

That is what he says about his amendment. No such thing about David's amendment. It seems to me I really ought to move the suspension of Standing Orders in order that David Blackburn can move the sensible opposition amendment and let Keith carry on being the back end of the pantomime horse. *(laughter)*

My Lord Mayor, in conclusion I want to make these closing remarks. This country faces the worst recession for a hundred years. It is quite clear – apart from those people opposite who seem to be in permanent denial – that this is not a crisis solely made in America or that it came out of a clear, blue sky or that it could not possibly have been forestalled. Its gravity may well have been exacerbated by global conditions but in many respects there are home grown components to the situation here in Britain that were predicted and about which the central characters were very clearly warned.

They include the incontinence of the Labour Government's fiscal policy, the looseness of the Bank of England's monetary policy - put in place, both of them, by this present Prime Minister – the imprudent and astonishing lending practices of the banks. Of all those involved – Ministers, bankers, economists – they were all alerted to the dangers but chose to ignore them.

Most of all the person who chose to ignore them was the Prime Minister, increasingly looking like some sort of basket case. He realises his central part in the unfolding catastrophe but he will not admit it. It is the leader of your Government who has brought us to this sorry state of affairs *(Applause)* and it is the leader of your Government who remains the only sensible person still in denial.

We have put together, my Lord Mayor, out of this dreadful national mess a budget and a Council tax that are affordable, reasonable, protect front line services and where possible stimulate our local economy. In terms of our own ability, however small in a Local Authority in a national situation to protect the people of this city, we have recognised the severity of the problems and we have tried to act as best we can to mitigate against those and most of all we are taking steps to prepare our city and its residents to take full benefit of the economic upturn when it comes, as it surely will.

It is a budget rooted in reality that gives hope for the future and I move the budget, my Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I call upon Councillor Brett to second.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. With your indulgence I would like to start by saying a few words because I know that we have some visiting journalist students from Trinity and All Saints College, so I would like to explain to them that I am seconding this budget on behalf of my Group, the Liberal Democrat Group, but also as the portfolio holder responsible for Finance.

I am going to speak completely now and say my piece in seconding this motion and I particularly want to add my thanks to the Finance team, to Alan Gay, to Maureen Taylor and all of the key staff who have enabled us to get this budget together. I hope you enjoy, at the end of today, your celebration which I know is normal when you reach the end of this process.

From the beginning Andrew and I have insisted that this budget must sustain all maintained front line services. We believe we have done that. We started by looking at all the services the Council provides to see if we can be more efficient in the delivery of those services. We in particular have examined all the services we provide to see if we really need to provide that service.

I want before I go into the details of the capital programme to reinforce and stress from my party's point of view that the work that this budget does with regard to extra support for Children's Services and Adults is absolutely crucial. In Adults there is a significant extra provision of £1.25m for measures to improve the quality of our safeguarding services. Similarly, Children's Services we have added an extra £800,000 to improve our residential and fostering services.

We are saying very clearly and at the beginning, we have made sure that the weaknesses identified in the inspections last year are completely faced and tackled and put right.

Before I go into the capital programme I would like just to say a few words about Sunday parking because Radio Leeds was running a story this morning which I think was, shall we say, I think not quite complete. What they suggested was that the plan to introduce in the city centre some parking fees was very much against what the traders wished. Actually this proposal has come in response to concerns that traders have that parking spaces in the city centre cannot be accessed by shoppers because on a Sunday the spaces are filled all day long with people who park very early in the morning and do not move. Certainly the piece that I heard on Radio Leeds, understandably when it was introduced in the wrong way, suggested that we were mad to consider charges for parking in the city centre.

COUNCILLOR: I will second that.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: We intend to have a very small rate – I do not think the figures are produced but it will be a low charge in the region of 50p – to cover a significant period, three or four hours, so that shoppers wanting to go and shop in the middle of Leeds would not have to pay a significant rate, but it would then get more expensive so that those who wanted to park all day would not find it in their interests. I am sure if necessary Councillor Smith will say more on that but I wanted just to set the record straight on that issue.

I am going to concentrate on the capital programme and I did actually ask myself, do we have to have a capital programme? In one sense I think we could say the answer to that is "No", there is no law which says we have to do capital works but you do not have to think very long or hard before you realise that it would be a huge mistake to stop mending the roads and it would be a big insult to the people who lived in our houses if we stopped doing decency repairs.

The reason for raising that laugh semi-deliberately is to stress the point that we do not have to have a large capital programme, but I believe there are three very good reasons why we want to have, in this Council, the largest possible capital programme.

Those reasons I believe are, firstly, that building works are needed to maintain our assets, our roads, our houses, our public buildings. Secondly, capital works in many cases cover cultural and leisure facilities and work on them improves the quality of life in our great city. Thirdly – and I perhaps think this is the most important reason in the current difficult economic climate – is that a large capital programme creates and maintains significant numbers of jobs and it is for that reason

I believe that as large a capital programme as we can possibly afford is the right thing to do.

What you are going to hear in the next few minutes is our proposals for over a five year period this budget proposes a budget of £1.25b, equivalent to £2,300 for every Council tax payer in Leeds.

I want to pick out some of the highlights first in Environment and Neighbourhoods. The Disabled Facilities Grant increases from the earlier planned £5m for this year to £7m and that will enable more people in real need to be helped.

The Town and District Centre Scheme continues as Andrew has already said, with significant spends in Armley, Chapeltown and Yeadon.

The Area Management capital provision, which many Councillors value as their way of spending in their wards, will continue with £1.9m-worth of unallocated money for next year. I know in one or two cases that there has been concern about ongoing provision of wheelie bins and litter bins and I want to assure you there is £2.57m in the budget for those sorts of needs, so we have not forgotten that.

In Adult Services there are many social care establishments where some crucial fire risk reduction works need to be carried out – 19 homes for older people and a spend of £3.1m will be carried out in the next two years.

As we said in the January Executive Board meeting, a programme to transform day opportunities for people with learning disabilities will develop four community bases which will be used to support the Personalisation Agenda and this important work needs £2.1m which will provide a hundred places per day to support vulnerable people in this group.

In Children's Services the work continues on the Building Schools for the Future Wave 1 programme with major rebuilding at Cockburn where there is £16.4m, and Temple Moor with £15.5m, and nearly £24 to deliver new IT infrastructure work in all the Wave 1 schools.

I am sure Labour will say, is Government money...

COUNCILLOR: It is.

COUNCILLOR: Where did you get it from?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: ...but, as Richard will tell you, many other Authorities have struggled enormously with BSF and I want at this point to pay particular tribute to David Outram's team for the outstanding work they have done in delivering these projects, winning national awards on the way and spending very effectively £140m across all three phases of Wave 1.

We are getting a new youth hub at Merlyn Rees in South Leeds with a significant £5m spend, mainly funded by the Big Lottery. We have our Council wide schemes, a scheme you heard about last year, Ward Based Initiatives, local Councillors to spend. I am looking across at a party that wanted to spend £1m in each ward not so long ago. We said last year £30,000 on capital projects in each ward. I am sad to say that with Labour the biggest group you would expect that Labour would have spent the most. I am sad to say that when I checked this morning, of the major groups Labour have actually committed from the Ward Based Initiative money, the least amount. It is so small I will not embarrass you to tell you what the figure is.

COUNCILLOR: Go on!

COUNCILLOR: Save it for a rainy day.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I simply urge you as a party to get this money spent. It continues, obviously, this year with an extra - because we have had some criticism - £10,000 for each ward to allow Councillors to extend the spending to voluntary sector buildings for works on premises which will reduce running costs – energy efficiency schemes and that sort of thing.

There is also a Strategic Development Fund, £100m which we have put on one side and part of that is what is being used for the Leeds Arena and some very ambitious business transformation projects.

The Housing Revenue Account provides £321m of investment over the next five years. As we know the Decency Programme is coming to an end but Leeds still gets over £50m to complete the work, hopefully bringing all our homes up to an acceptable standard.

Crucially, this side has decided, in a very difficult climate, to spend £2.3m on keeping the EASEL Regeneration Scheme going at a very difficult time.

The highlight of the capital programme as we read the list is clearly City Development. We are spending on Highways Maintenance an extra £2m, bringing the amount we are spending next year up to £13m. Over the next few years there will be a further £28.6m going up to 2012 to try and improve the state of the roads and deal with the backlog we inherited.

The LEGI programme, as we have heard, is getting an extra injection of £600,000, particularly to create new job opportunities in our most deprived communities. The City Centre Upgrade Programme has a further £1.2m included to accelerate this scheme with current work in progress in Albion Place and Lands Lane.

The biggest highlights, clearly, are on the important cultural front. As you have heard the City Varieties refurbishment, £11.4m, a significant improvement to a major cultural venue. The Northern Ballet Phoenix Dance scheme continues, £11.7m – a major new dance facility. Finally – and you would expect me to reinforce this, Andrew – at a total cost of £84m the biggest ever capital project on our books, our arena. I join with Andrew in hoping that Labour will formally say that they support this major project which was in doubt last year when they tried to recommit some of the funds from the airport to, as I have said, a different scheme of spending £1m in each ward.

This scheme, the Leeds Arena, is on course. It will make to our city centre with modest estimates saying that the hundred-plus days each year that we will have events there will add over £30m each year to the Leeds economy.

I make no apology, Lord Mayor, for ensuring that Council listens to this summary of our capital programme, a programme which will help create and maintain jobs; a programme which will help support all communities including the most vulnerable; a programme, Lord Mayor, which we should all be proud of.

Before I finish I need to spend a few minutes about the Opposition's amendments. The Green's amendment has the merit, in my view of being principled and honest. Increasing charges and fees across the board is a straightforward,



transparent way to fund the changes to Children's and Adult Services which you wish to see.

We disagree with your conclusions...

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Oh, what a surprise.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: ...but we recognise the care and concern with which you have framed the amendment, which brings me to Labour's amendment.

COUNCILLOR: Fantastic. I can hardly wait.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: When Dave Marsh produced the piece a few days ago – I think it was 6<sup>th</sup> February – Keith was quoted...

COUNCILLOR LYONS: I shouldn't bother with David (*inaudible*).

COUNCILLOR BRETT: ...in his response to our proposed Council tax increase with some statements that were a bit hard to fathom. We were not quite working out whether he was for it or against it, whether it was too high or whether it was too low, so listen again to what he said and see whether you can work out what he meant then. We will listen later on to see whether he knows now what he meant.

The Labour Group Leader Councillor Wakefield said, "This rise will hit hardest on those on fixed incomes and this budget will undoubtedly mean cuts to vital services." There may be some merit in the first part of that but I profoundly disagree with the second part of that statement. This budget does not mean cuts to vital services.

I suppose we could take it as a compliment...

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: No, I wouldn't. Definitely not.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: No, don't.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: ...that Labour keep the same Council tax increase, 2.9%, as we proposed but I prefer to think that this merely reveals weak leadership and dithering. (*hear, hear*) They cannot make up their minds whether it is too high or too low.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: We know what went on. It will all come out in the fullness of time.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: The amendment, in my view, does not show strong, clear thinking, merely some cheap hits at press jobs, the Civic newspaper and advertising. Let me tell Labour members, the Civic newspaper...

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: The silly what?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: ...which I understand you want to get rid of, as far as your amendment, I believe we do have a duty to consult with the residents of Leeds - that is why this newspaper is produced. That is not why it wins awards, but it does win awards.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: That is what Focus said.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I would ask you, what you would you replace it with, because if you are going to replace that consultation with something else, I cannot see in your budget amendment what the cost of that is.

It may seem straightforward to say it but we did a review of the use of taxis to try and reduce the amount of money we spend on that. It may sound OK but those of us who have to deal day to day with these services know potentially that reducing taxis hits vulnerable children and vulnerable adults.

Advertising and publicity includes all the printing of Council leaflets. We have already massively reduced advertising spending for the posts. Most of the remaining advertising is statutory - legal notices, closures, changes. It means that your amendment that you are going produce, you say, a significant cut in this area, I believe in practice you would be unable to fund the very flyers and leaflets for signposting to urgent services that in a time of economic difficulty are urgently needed by those who have been losing their jobs and those unfortunately who may have.

I want to turn to another so-called easy hit that sounds good on the ear when you are in your Group meeting - a 20% cut on external legal advice. We already have - and you can be forgiven for not knowing this - a very tight control mechanism on what happens before any department can go outside the Council seeking counsel's advice. There is no pot of money for legal advice. The money that we are talking about here is departments' own money. If they choose to use that for counsel's advice when potentially this could be spent on front line services, they are not going to spend that money unless they have a very good reason.

The reasons we do this include the length of the case - in some cases very short, it is just not practical for in-house lawyers to do the work - the complexity of the case and, in some cases - and particularly in the recent 18 months, couple of years - the equal pay area. There are experts outside the Council who understand that area very well. If we were to say to our own legal team, "You have got to read up on that", it would be a total nonsense. I would say to you that that area is not something that stands scrutiny.

International relations - already been touched on. The actual cost in 2003/04 was £285,000. The proposed budget now, £283,000 - broadly the same. They are going to cut it. That is what they say, they are going to cut where we have got to. I believe that international relations - and we have looked at this very closely - does some vital work to help Leeds's business get jobs with Eastern Europe. Special meetings in Leeds for businesses wanting to link Poland and Rumania. I do not believe that that is a responsible thing for a responsible Opposition to cut.

A responsible Opposition would act decisively, not just tinker around the edges and add a little bit there which in an ideal world they would like to have. They would take hard decisions on charges and fees, as the Greens have, rather than simply put off increases for just one year, which is what you are proposing to do on Adult Social Care.

Perhaps most worryingly from my point of view is what you have said about the climate change issues, about the food waste pilot, that you want to get rid of that and put off the time when we really increase recycling. I find that extremely worrying and then I thought, there is no need to be worried, they are not taking this seriously because they are not going to do this.

In summary I say to you, this Labour amendment is opportunistic, it is short-term in its thinking, it is timid in approach. Please support the administration's proposal in Andrew Carter's name. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

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

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am surprised that Councillor Brett actually spoke about the capital programme for so long, but little does he realise he also mentioned a lot of the revenue implications, but nevertheless it was worth hearing a second time, especially when you launched in your tirade of insults, because that actually tells us we have probably got it about right. *(hear, hear)* That is what you are very worried about.

Lord Mayor, I would like to start by thanking the officers of all the departments for helping us prepare our amendment today but particular thanks as well to people like Maureen Taylor, Doug Meeson, Helen Myland and, of course, Alan Gay, whose invaluable help and support has helped us to arrive at our amendment today.

I did worry about Alan and I did say to him, "Alan, is this the toughest round, is this the toughest experience you have ever had? Is it stressing you, worrying you?" He quickly turned round and said, "I am a Newcastle United supporter and compared to that this is a breeze." If you had seen them play last Sunday you would fully have understood! *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR MURRAY: That is not funny! *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: But it is true!

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Never mind, Tommy.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: On a serious note, can I also take the opportunity to thank the workers in the Highways Department, care workers and other Council staff who have performed magnificently in the last few months to deliver services in probably the hardest winter that we have had for many years. I know there are no national awards for that but I do think they deserve our recognition and appreciation for their professional commitment to the people of Leeds. *(Applause)*

Finally, I want to congratulate Councillor Brett on his efforts to cut global warming by biking in as often as possible, which is what he told the YEP. The only downside, Richard, to this, is that while you have been toiling and sweating blood between the mountains of Burmantofts and Moor Town, your Executive Board member for climate change has been buying bigger and bigger cars. *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR: Smaller.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Your other Executive Board member for climate change, Councillor Les Carter, under your leadership, is still driving round a massive gas guzzler.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: No it is not.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I am sorry, Richard, you have been very much on your own - very much on your own. Let me just say, you look a lot healthier for it, Richard, so keep going.

On a more serious note and in relation to the budget, Lord Mayor, the Labour Group accepts this is a very hard and challenging budget round. It has been made much harder by the loss of significant funding like the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and, of course, the cut in the business rate which we opposed, along with yourselves.

The most difficult part of this budget is to accept the basic premise and direction which we believe is fundamentally flawed and would lead us to a prospect of even more cuts and more redundancies in the future. Furthermore, in the midst of a global credit crisis you are wasting opportunities to shelter and protect the most vulnerable people from this economic storm, and I will deal with this later.

I will deal with the settlement and first. Yes, Andrew, the settlement is not enough and this Labour Group will always put the interests of Leeds first and we will always join in any lobby for more money from any Government, even if it is Lib Dem. That was meant to be a joke but you did not laugh! *(laughter)*

As I said last year, I would like this Government to recognise the role Leeds plays in generating jobs and prosperity in the wider Yorkshire region and I believe we should have that extra funding in our grant.

We have heard from Andrew about this being the worst settlement ever and I sometimes think - I know you are coming up to your significant birthday, Andrew, but I just wonder if you are starting to forget things because some of us who were here in the 1990s can remember when inflation was in double figures---

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Check your figures.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: When inflation was in double figures we received a minus 0.5% grant which devastated the services to our children and elderly and vulnerable people in Leeds. I do think yes, we want more money but I do think you should try and give a more balanced picture of financial support from this Government. We should note that the grant settlement is not the only revenue funding we receive because now, in addition to the grant, we get the Area Base grant worth nearly £50m which includes money for our outstanding children services which have been largely funded by this Labour Government and not by this administration.

Indeed, I think we should be proud of this Labour Government - it's commitment to improve health, education and welfare services which has actually seen the greatest transformation of public services that this country has ever experienced and this includes an increase in funding of nearly £3000 per pupil since 1997. On top of this we have seen billions of pounds invested in new hospitals, schools and homes and our very own ambitious capital programme, which was mentioned recently by Councillor Brett, is largely there because of this Government's commitment to public services in this city.

We know we are all facing economic problems and I know the budget is tight, but I would rather have a Labour Government in charge of our economy and our public services *(interruption)* than a Conservative Party which is already promising cuts of one per cent with more to come, which would mean, Councillor Les Carter, 146 fewer Police Officers in West Yorkshire alone and actually would place the 26 schools which are supposed to be earmarked for rebuilding in total jeopardy. I know, because I listened to David Cameron very carefully, I have seen the car that Matthew Lobleigh is driving around, I know there are more cuts to come if they ever get in power, so that is Tory budgeting. When you look at this budget you can see the same Tory fingerprints all over in the use of smoke and mirrors to disguise cuts and more cuts to come.

For example - let me give you an example. Not only are we again in a risky place with £12m only in reserves, which was actually pointed out by David Blackburn last year - we are also pursuing a very dangerous and risky strategy which neither Andrew or Richard mentioned with one-off funding. Using Section 278 capital and reserves is an acceptable - if not a desirable - way of spending revenue spending...

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Clearly did not listen.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: ...but the raiding of over £5m of PFI reserves to prop up our revenue spending money, which is earmarked for street lighting and the Independent Living Project, is an irresponsible and reckless decision creating a negative dowry for any future administration coming to power. (*hear, hear*) I want to be clear about this so everybody in this Chamber understands - this money is not only a one-off to be forgotten; £2m must be paid back to the Revenue account next year for PFI street lighting. This is a tax bombshell which could mean an extra 2.5% on the Council tax and the very real threat of millions of pounds of service cuts in the next few years as we have to pay back £5.7m to the PFI reserves. That is how dangerous it is and we need urgently to review this as a priority. My colleagues will deal with this later in the debate.

All of this has come about because John Bale rightly pointed out last year in a letter to the YEP the Coalition's weak leaderships which we have heard very loudly in the recent reports on the Children's and Adults care departments which showed us there is no political leadership in control over our caring services. For five years we told you to cut spending on spin and the blatant spending on consultants; we told you to reduce sickness, reduce agency costs and look very closely at your top heavy management structures with too much duplication. I am pleased you have started to look at this but how much money have you wasted that could have been saved and used to protect vulnerable children or keep adults safe.

Is it right that our Civic paper, which is becoming more and more a propaganda newssheet for this administration (*interruption*)...

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Coming from you.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: ...should come before vulnerable children and elderly? I do not think we do and I will give you examples of that later on.

Yes, you have made some savings but you have not done enough and, frankly, you are cutting the wrong services at the wrong time. We would not allow this tough budget round to be used as an excuse to cut bulky waste collections and household waste sites. This is not the time to be preventing people from recycling. It proves this administration can still not make the tough decisions like addressing the duplication, waste and inefficient structures of Education Leeds and Children's Services. We are going back in Primary due to the lack of co-ordination between Education and Children's Services. We are failing to look after our Looked After Children and this city has the highest number of young people not in employment, education or training and it is likely to go up under this administration.

Our proposal and our amendment intends to end the arrangement with Education Leeds and rationalise the structures to enable better co-operation and integration and we will put this money saved towards apprenticeships and training opportunities - something you have failed to do after five years in office. Indeed, you have destroyed the training services, which was targeted at those communities which have one third of people in benefits and who have no chance of a training place with the private sector because their social circumstances presented too much of a challenge for the private sector. That is your record on training and your timing could

not have been worse. The recession will mean massive job losses. People from all walks of life, all backgrounds and all professions will lose their jobs and the Council will do nothing directly about it.

We do not believe the Council should stand on the sidelines of the current situation by saying, "We cannot do."

One of the most recent speeches at the Chamber of Commerce stressed that the city's success owes very much to the culture of "can do", with everyone and every organisation playing their part in making Leeds a great city. What you heard today was doom and gloom and can't do and alibis - not can do and will do. You heard every excuse of why they are not going to do it.

It is now that we need the "can do" culture by acting together so we can help people whose lives, jobs and homes have been affected. We must work with business people - employers, trade unions, colleagues at Yorkshire Forward and involve the DWP and Job Centre. We can do and must do and our amendment pledges this city to play its part by concentrating on three major priorities in training - apprenticeships, retraining and job creation and retention.

Firstly, we pledge to find provision for 500 apprenticeships. We would create 250 apprenticeships by offering jobs in all departments of this Council, from parks to offices - real jobs, real prospects and real training. We would also create another 250 apprenticeships in schools, paid out of balances which have spiralled to more than £12m. Government Ministers Ed Balls and Jim Knight are already talking publicly about creating apprenticeships by utilising school balances, so in total at least 500 new apprenticeships - not only for young people but also for people who have lost their jobs recently and are seeking to retrain and reskill themselves.

Our second strand involves setting up a Task Force to work with organisations that are already spending billions of pounds in this city and include the new college, the two universities, health authorities and so on. This Task Force would also work with employers to create jobs and maintain jobs in our city. We will pay for this by permanently deleting the post of the Head of Communications and not simply hiding it away for a more convenient time, and also we would make sure that we do not spend £100,000 on a new Director of Contact Leeds which we are already told is working absolutely brilliantly. We would cut that post to fund those opportunities.

Our third strand will involve extending training and this would mean the staff to adopt to a more flexible one Council culture. This is the part that Councillor Carter has not understood and it is a shame, because already in both Legal and Development departments some staff are already being seconded to other areas of the Council. This needs to be further developed as a matter of urgency.

For instance, our Regeneration Department costs twice as much to run as that of Birmingham City, which is the largest Authority in the UK, but we all know that unfortunately regeneration in this city is grinding to a standstill in certain parts and projects like EASEL are simply having to fight for their lives. I was told earlier that the regeneration in West Leeds has been drastically cut back. Some of the demolition is no longer taking place. My colleagues in West Leeds and Armley have actually experienced that. We have also experienced that in other parts of the city, so you cannot tell me you need the same amount of staff - it does not hang together. That is a great pity because we want regeneration to succeed, so we need to adjust to these circumstances and that is why we would deploy staff from Regeneration to Training, supporting them where necessary, and we would ask them to work in a new, improved extended Job Skills Services. Let me repeat myself, the staff who

were in the Regeneration Department would not be sacked but trained and accredited to deal with training and like the Legal and Development staff they would be seconded.

Unfortunately not only have you emasculated the training department, you have chosen to destroy Roseville - a scheme that actually provided purpose, dignity and respect for many disabled adults in this city. (*hear, hear*)

We remember when there was a Leader here who said he would resign if they lost one job. We have now gone from 140 to 38 on the structure. Thanks for that approval, David. Despite your valiant efforts and despite the warm words of Councillor Carter, we know that Roseville door making will finish. This is sad and a shameful day for this Council, because actually we all in this Chamber believe in that scheme that it brought dignity and purpose to people who would not otherwise get that training and job opportunities.

Instead of throwing our hands up in despair, I believe it can be saved. We are aware that ALMO money is coming to an end but we still have doors in all tenures of our housing stock in this city that need replacing because they are old, insecure and not energy efficient. Surely we can join up our green and social agendas and ask Roseville to make these doors. I am positive that this will, at the same time as giving hope and support to our staff, also help to address the challenges of climate change and fuel poverty.

Let us not forget, fuel poverty is a very real issue because of the massive increases to the cost of gas, electricity and water and making life for people on fixed incomes very, very hard, particularly our elderly. Unfortunately our elderly are still dealing with the set back of the recent Government Inspection Report which said we were offering an inadequate service to our elderly and vulnerable people.

I will not re-run our Special Council Meeting comments, but the one theme that haunts us is that in the report it told us that under your leadership a culture of cost rather than quality now dominates and this is underlined by some of your proposals recently in relation to the assessment of people with learning disabilities and mental health problems.

The biggest blow to the vulnerable and elderly in this budget is your proposal to increase charges for the elderly. This is a disgrace because you chose to dither and delay on Fairer charges for five years. Let us not forget, you were the parties that called it evil and wicked, and they were Councillor Carter's words. (*hear, hear*) You were the parties that said that you would refuse to implement it. You were the parties that said the reason you were forming your rag tag coalition was because you wanted to reverse the Fairer Charging policy and you did nothing and five years later you are not proposing new, higher charges at a time when an economic crisis is affecting people on fixed incomes and they are also facing higher utility charges.

I have to say that I think officers have worked extremely hard with User Reference Groups on these proposals and the extra time we asked for has brought about a better consultation process, but to increase their charges, to take more of their disposable income and savings is simply immoral and wrong at this moment. That is why we would freeze these proposals this year, because it is completely the wrong time. We need to listen very carefully to what our elderly are saying to show that we value them and their contribution to our society. At the moment they are saying they cannot afford to pay the increase now but instead we are going to bulldoze ahead as a Council with those charges.

If we are talking about value, let me also say we should also value our staff. Our staff are our assets and what they need is motivation, recognition and support. The proposals to weaken the protection of staff in the future under the management of Work for Change and the loss of more than 600 jobs must be a severe blow to the morale of Leeds City Council staff. Despite what Councillor Brett says, a loss of one job in Social Services is bound to affect the service we deliver. It is impossible not to. No, we cannot be immune from some of the difficult decisions that are being made about jobs, but more than ever this is a time to show how our low paid staff are valued by actually signing up to a low wage Council. Manchester have already done this by signing up to a fair wage, as they have in London and Oxford. In the private sector Barclays and KPMG have also led the way in recognising the contribution made by cleaners, caterers and other low paid staff. In Leeds the leadership of this Council instead believe that low paid staff were lucky to have a job here and that was one of the worst and most disgraceful statements I have ever heard while I have been on this Council.

The Greens, I am sure, will agree with our pledge to make this Council a Living Wage Employer. This will mean we will pay every worker in this Council the TUC approved minimum wage of £6.50 an hour, increasing the pay of more than 650 people, which would cost us only £100,000, and we will pay for this by making savings on department press and marketing team. This is our pledge and our priority in our amendment. (*hear, hear*)

In conclusion, the Labour Group's amendment clearly reflects totally different priorities to what we have seen from this administration. Of course we would like to have done more but on the environment we have said we would not let the economic problems be used as an excuse to cut bulky waste collections or close household waste sites. Indeed, we need to be even bolder on environmental issues. We have also committed ourselves to saying that we would not sit on the sidelines and do nothing when unemployment is raging in our city affecting all ages and all professions.

We have also made sure that instead of relying on charity handouts, that Looked After Children are provided with the help and support they need by this Council and, above all we have done this, Richard, and kept the same Council tax increase as you. To show our elderly people that we are on their side during these tough times we will stop the chaotic privatisation of Social Services, we will make sure that there are no increased in charges for social care and, finally, we pledge once again to freeze Council tax for everybody over 80.

The amendment shows that we can do something to help people who are looking for a job, that we can do something to help young people without hope, that we can do more to protect the vulnerable, and that we must do more to help the elderly.

I move this amendment and urge everybody who shares our values and our priorities and our commitment to vote with us. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

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

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

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

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I join others in thanking Alan Gay and his team for helping us in drawing up this amendment. I think



I had better also thank the Leader of Council and the Deputy Leader for the nice things they said about my amendment. It looks like I am buying the beer tonight!

Before I move on to my amendment I would first comment in general about the administration budget. I have to say there are some things in it we welcome; there are some things in it which we might not welcome but we can certainly understand the necessity for them to take place; and there are other things that we are listening to during this debate to find out exactly where we are going.

In saying that I think in general we are generally supportive of the thrust of that budget and we will see what we do when we come to voting.

We have a question relating to the environment which I think Councillor Carter might actually have mentioned in his speech but I have got to say it was not quite clear, and that is regarding the funding of the extension of the two weekly green bin collections, because as far as we are concerned from the briefings we have had and from looking at the papers that have been prepared, it is not clear as to whether that is a two weekly green bin collection, an extra bin collection, or it is two weeks of our black and green bins. I think Councillor Carter just nodded there that it was two weeks.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I am very clear about that. If it turned out to be the other there would be trouble.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: OK. We note with some concern the current round of efficiency savings which, while we support the idea of improving services to the community by operating in a more efficient manner, we believe that there must be a point in time where efficiencies start inhibiting the possibilities of delivering services. I am not saying that we have reached that at this stage yet, but certainly my Group and I will be keeping our eyes on this over the next twelve months.

I note from Councillor Wakefield's amendment that they seek to do some additional efficiency savings in various areas. I have got to say that we are extremely sceptical of him achieving them.

On the Housing Revenue Account we are not happy about the proposals for the 6.2 increase in Council house rents. In saying that, we are not having a go at Les over there; we know the fact is that you work to a Government formula and we have ended up with this. Indeed, I would imagine if we did not follow that formula we would find ourselves at some financial disbenefit.

What we find objectionable is that we have an increase in negative subsidy at £3.9m. Negative subsidy is a strange animal. It is not a subsidy, it is a stealth tax. This will mean that in the coming financial year an average annual rent of around £2980 per household, they will pay of that £1236 towards this negative subsidy. While I realise some of that money comes back to ourselves, most of it goes elsewhere. I have to say from my point of view the whole thing is totally outrageous. *(hear, hear)*

As the Chair of Roseville Advisory Board I feel it necessary to comment about the situation regarding the Roseville door factory as referred to in the Executive Report on the budget. I have got to say - and I have told Councillor Carter this - I was not happy learning of it the way I did learn of it and I think it was done, the report in the Exec papers, was written in a way that I feel that it should not have been written, taking into consideration the group of people we are talking about.

As the Leader of Council knows from discussions over the last week or so that we have had, I am extremely concerned and, as a result of these concerns he has asked me to be involved in the redeployment process for the staff. The current door factor situation today is untenable and I have got to say - Councillor Wakefield has gone - I have got to agree to some extent with Councillor Wakefield that if we can find some work from somewhere to at least put us on, I think we should be doing that. (*hear, hear*) As I say, the current position is we have got three months' work in the pipeline and, bearing in mind the economic downturn, the chances of alternative work look thin. While I believe totally in the sincerity of the Labour Councillor regarding the assurances he has given me on this issue regarding the redeployment, I want to put it on public record as Chair of Roseville that as far as I am concerned, if required I will fight to the end to make sure the promises that have been made to these disabled staff are kept.

With regards to Councillor Wakefield's amendment, looking at the spending plans within it I have got to say that I and my group share much of the aspirations, but it is our belief that with the Council's current financial situation and the likely short to medium term situation, much of his plan may not be sustainable. Allowing for the current situation, my Group feel that they cannot support Councillor Wakefield's amendment but in conscience neither can we oppose it.

I have got to say that our problem in Leeds as more to do with a lack of funding which does not allow us to spend on things for our political aspirations or, for that matter, the aspirations of our citizens when the Government Grant Funding per head is so low compared to other. Leeds, we get £394 per head; Bradford and Sheffield get £522 per head; and Manchester, our main competitor, gets £723 per head.

I am not getting at the Labour Government for this because previous Conservative ones have been as bad and I have got to say I suspect that if Mr Cameron was elected at a general election, I suspect that he would be no better. I think we have problems with the Government, full stop, on this. Also, it is quite clear that some Authorities - it might be obvious that some Authorities - should benefit more than others but the vast inequalities that are occurring at the moment are affecting our ability to deal with many of the problems we have.

Let us not forget that after Birmingham we have the largest number of people in deprivation in any Authority in this country. It is just the averages that work out wrong and that should be recognised. Add to this the fact that we have one of the lowest Council taxes in the country, then spending on things we want, particularly Social Services, becomes a problem.

The fact is that the whole damn system requires looking at and we all need to learn that we cannot spend £1 twice, including Central Government. In this city we have a brilliant financial team who do wonders, but not even those can spend £1 twice. I believe that we need a debate in this city on its future direction. Do we want high quality services, do we want social care at its current levels and, if so, how are we going to pay for them? I know what my views are on that but I sometimes wonder about others.

Moving on to my budget amendment, I think that since I came to Council I have moved probably four or five budget amendments and have spoken in support of three administration budgets, and on each of those occasions I have supported the lowest possible Council tax and certainly in some - I think it was one or two - of the past amendments we have actually proposed a lower rate of Council tax than was actually proposed by the administration.

Today in what I am telling you is my last budget speech as Leader of the Green Group before I hand over to one of them back there in May, I am breaking new ground because, after much consideration, my Group are proposing the following: an additional half a per cent increase on Council tax, taking the total increase to 3.4%, which I am told works out at somewhere around an extra fiver per household per year; secondly, we propose to raise a further £1.6m on additional charges which will be specifically exclude any extra on Social Services or sports charges; thirdly, we are proposing that the Civic newspaper be reduced to one edition a year. We have got to say, we cannot totally agree with Councillor Wakefield, we actually think the Civic paper does actually serve some purpose, but we do not think it needs to be as often as that and certainly once a year it fulfils a purpose.

Finally, which I forgot to say and I do not think I am going to be really popular for, we propose a saving of £284,000 in Members' Allowances - that is those Members' Allowances to be frozen for two years. For members' information, this is the present scheme that my Group operate, so all I am doing is I am bringing the rest, the 96 other ones, in line with how we have operated for a number of years. Specifically what it will do is, it will reduce the basic allowance by 5% based upon the September 2008 figure and reduce the Special Responsibility Allowance by 25% based on the same September figure.

We further propose to prudentially borrow £1m this year for purposes of setting up a fund to supply loans to householders to cover the shortfall between Government grants and the actual cost of renewable energy and efficiency improvements to their houses. The honest fact is that many people are not taking up Government grants as they cannot afford the extra payments. Kirklees put a similar programme into place some time ago and what I am proposing draws on that model, which has proved to be the most successful. This scheme will assist in reducing our CO<sub>2</sub> emission levels, thus our impact on the environment and has a further effect of making our residents' energy bills more affordable.

The scheme I am suggesting would have a revenue cost of £100,000 this year which will come from the savings and charge increases detailed above.

We propose in our amendment to abolish for day care, homecare and meals for all social care users 85 years and older. Our view is that in these uncertain times with the credit crunch and ongoing recession, our older citizens are the most vulnerable in our society and need to be assisted.

As part of trying to increase the take-up of school meals and encourage health eating, we have considered a number of things and what we have come up with is an option in our budget that what we are proposing is a subsidy on all schools meals for five, six and seven year olds, meaning parents will have to pay one third less than they are currently paying.

Finally I said earlier that I was going to do the unheard of thing and suggest putting up Council tax by more than the administration's proposals. As I said, this will mean those of us who can afford it will be paying £5 extra per household per year. What I did not say was that all pensioners over 65 who are not currently getting Council tax benefit will have no increase on their Council tax, so effectively if you have a pensioner in the household over 65 you will have no Council tax increase this year.

Those people we are talking about, they are not all rich and a lot of them are working class people who have just put a little bit of money away, so for a fiver extra

what we are doing is, we are looking after our pensioners in the proper way in these uncertain times.

Before I close if, for some reason, my budget does not pass (*laughter*) - although my record is not very good on this and I will be happy if I get more than three votes, actually (*laughter*)...

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: *He* is the one who deserves three votes.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Can I say that if the present administration or any future administration actually seriously wants to take hold of this idea we have of the loan scheme, what I am saying, I think this is so important - it ticks two boxes about the environment, about getting people's energy bills down - that certainly at some future time through the year if you want to involve us in that and talk to us and work with us on that, we will work with anybody on that because the simple fact is we think it is so important.

Saying that, as I say, I thank those who are going to support me and I move my amendment. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Could I call upon Councillor Ann Blackburn to second?

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: I second. Can I reserve the right to speak, please? (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Accepted. I call on Councillor Finnigan for comment.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I wonder if we might first start by asking the Leader of the Council to send the Council's condolences to David Cameron, taking into account the death of his son today? That is something that no parent should face and I am sure we are all in agreement that we send our condolences across any party divide to David Cameron and his wife and his family at this particular point. I wonder if we might send those condolences through from everybody.

Usually when I stand up it clears this Chamber. Somehow I do not seem to have achieved that this year. The first thing that we would say is that we are grateful for the officers' support in providing us with some information to allow us to reflect on the budgets that are in front of us, to give us information, to look at some ways and some ideas and some suggestions for moving forward.

We think this is a reasonable budget that has been proposed. I said that in Executive Board and I will say it here. We think a 2.9% increase in the Council tax is difficult but appears justified under an attempt to try and make sure that we protect those services that are absolutely vital and important to all the communities that we serve.

Like any budget we would like to have seen other things in it. Certainly we would like to see more money into community safety - that is most people's views. We would like to see more PCSOs on the street, we would like to see more CCTV certainly around our town centres. That is something that is an aspiration. We would like to see more in terms of street cleansing but in these difficult times it is a budget that takes into account that and is reasonable.

There are positive aspects, we think, for all wards, including the two Morley wards. Certainly what we are doing in terms of community safety, supporting the

PCSOs and other initiatives is having a very positive effect in terms of bringing down crime levels across the city and particularly in Morley.

We are in a situation where I think the budget does allow us to start to develop support providing more affordable homes certainly for people to rent. It has been a long time coming. Certainly in these difficult times that is something that we all warmly welcome and certainly there are proposals that are particularly positive in Morley.

We do note that we spent more on Children's and Adult Services than the Government suggest that we should do. That is a good thing. Certainly there is work to be done in both of those particular departments and nobody is shying away from that particular fact. I think we are in a situation where with Children's or Adult Services, our services are either poor or inadequate as far as most of the residents out there are concerned.

The capital programme has something for all wards and again has some positives for Morley. We are particularly pleased that the High School that has had to suffer using portakabins for the best part of 25 years will see the start of a programme that will end those. We are particularly pleased to see that Morley Bottoms, which has needed regenerating for a generation, is likely to get the help and support they actually need and we are particularly pleased to see that there is support for the Glen Road scheme that will bring affordable homes for local families who are struggling.

We have an acceptance of this budget under difficult circumstances. It has a lot of positives for all wards, including our own. We have had a look at David's amendment and, as ever, David's proposals are always interesting. Some of them we are not entirely sure about - certainly the non-increase of Council tax for those over 65 is something that we puzzle about - whether you should allow a millionaire to avoid paying his fair share of increases just because of his age is something that we have some concerns and would query.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: There are a lot of those.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: There are a lot of those in Holbeck.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Keith's amendment is, as ever, an interesting one. We think it is sincere but misguided in many ways.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Like Keith, really!

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: In terms of the Adult Services and the charging policy - and I think this is a very interesting area, the suggestion that somehow we kick this problem into the long grass and perhaps look at it again in future years. These are difficult times and difficult decisions have to be taken. We are in a situation where the demand on Adult Services is going to be greater and greater year by year and the point where we avoid having an honest discussion about how that burden financially should be spread is something where we are avoiding the challenges that we actually face and we do not think there is real merit in that.

The present proposals are ones that are difficult. Nobody ever wants to pay more, we understand that, but we are in a situation where the new charging policy does look at those that can afford to pay more and defends those who are on the lowest of incomes. I think that is something that we need to address. We need to have the debate not only locally but nationally about how we are going to support the demands that are going to come from Adult Social Care.

I am not entirely convinced that cutting Children's Services is something that will help protect those that are vulnerable and so we are a little puzzled with that. Some other decent ideas that we are not entirely and totally convinced.

To a degree we have the same arguments and I must admit I said to Tom we have heard all this before and you will hear a lot of the arguments re-run year in, year out. The biggest argument that we need to get our hats around is the fact that instead of trying to cut the cake in different ways, we need a bigger slice of the cake. We are in a situation where in terms of fairness we need a better deal than we have got at this particular point. David has given you the figures. The relative needs allowances for different Local Authorities - Liverpool 597; Manchester 572; Birmingham 516; Newcastle 427; Nottingham 435; Sheffield 370; Leeds 269; Bristol 292. That cannot be fair; that cannot be reasonable. I have visited many of these particular cities and certainly the difficulties and challenges that we face, certainly in our deprived communities, are as great if not greater than a lot of these. If that is the case I cannot understand how we get such a poor share of the overall national cake and that is something that I think is a disgrace and I think it is something where we have had difficulties with previous Conservative Governments who have made sure it is funnelled in one particular way, and Labour Governments. Some would say roll on a General Election that gives us a coalition and if Vince Cable won the Chancellor of the Exchequership we might get a better deal overall. We certainly come each year and we hear the Tories did this for the 20 years they were there, Labour did this for the twelve years they were there. The problem is Central Government of all persuasions does not like Local Government, does not want to let go, does not want to leave the control down at a local level and they are not keen on localisation.

In terms of things like the NRF funds and other such things, we do not get a fair deal. Keith is sincere and tells us every year that they will go back and lobby the MPs and I am sure he does all of that but it does not make a blind bit of difference, it really does not. It may be they are incapable of influencing the Government - I do not honestly know - but we get a poor deal and we have had from Tory Central Government, we have had from Labour Central Government. I think it is one of those things that we need to reflect on and we need to, as David has suggested, look at a different way of financing things because this patently does not work.

It have some sympathy - the Government says, "Fair enough, as Leeds, keep the money that you generate and run your own services" and this is where you turn to the business rate. The business rate is due to go up by 5% at a time when businesses are struggling with all sorts of other problems and difficulties. Increasing it by 5% is entirely inappropriate and puts an added burden on business. Where does the extra money that that generates go? To a degree you could say if it is ringfenced, if it remains within Leeds we can do something about offsetting the NRF problems, we can do something about building the infrastructure and supporting trading on those other issues.

It does not. It gets sent into a black hole and some of it - some of it - is redistributed. It is a question of saying other resources go from Leeds back to Central Government. If we look at the negative subsidy, the fact that we have to put up rents by 6.25% is a total and absolute disgrace and it is putting an additional burden on tenants who are already struggling enough. To a degree you might understand that if they could guarantee that all the money that that raises is spent improving their quality of lives either in terms of better homes, better communities, but it does not. £49.7m goes out of Leeds down to Central Government and that cannot be fair and that cannot be reasonable.

The business rates that are taken in Leeds, which is the hub, which is the dynamo in terms of economic development, provides all those employment opportunities, that disappears into the black hole and, dependent on whose view you take, we either give them £92m extra that we do not get back, or £32m extra that we do not get back - it depends on how you actually analyse that.

To a degree that means Leeds is handing over £80m of money that is paid in by local people or local businesses that goes elsewhere. If we were to get the whole £80m back you would not need to worry about NRF or training problems or any of those particular difficulties. It is that redistribution that is absolutely vital and important and that we do something about trying to move it forward because at this particular point we are a net contributor - we are paying in and one assumes some of this money goes to the Manchesters and the Liverpools and the Birminghams and the Newcastle upon Tynes and the Nottinghams and the Sheffields and the Bristols in terms of redistribution. We have significant problems and significant difficulties.

We should get a fairer share of the resources that we actually raise, not only because we need to help and assist our communities but, as Leeds is the generator in the West Yorkshire area, we ought to get a fairer and more reasonable deal.

The bottom line is we have these arguments each year about here is the cake and we want a slice that is slightly different from others and the amount of difference is reasonably marginal - we need a bigger share of the cake. This last year, we will say this year, unlike David I am not giving any pledges I will not be the Leader next year, we are in a situation, I know it is a shame but there we go. The only thing that keeps me going is I can persecute yourselves.

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: You are doing a very good job.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: I am doing a good job - thank you, Jim, that is a glowing reference!

The bottom line is we need a fairer distribution of the resources that we actually raise. We have to move away from this net contributor to getting more of our money back. We are generating this additional income, we are asking tenants to actually pay more; we ought to be getting a fairer deal.

In conclusion we would say that this is a reasonable budget. We have some reservations and some concerns about it but it is a reasonable budget. There are some positive things for all wards, including our own. Ultimately you will have to wait to see who we will support. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: We now which way, Robert.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking in support of Councillor Wakefield's amendment this afternoon. Unlike Robert yet again I think this administration's budget is not good enough for the people of Leeds. It hits those in most need the hardest - in their pockets and in their vital services. Did you not learn anything from the recent scathing inspections on your inability to show leadership and your shameful cost over quality culture?

Firstly, this Group does not support the significant increase in charges that services users will be expected to pay this year. In fact, it is an outrage that in these difficult economic times you plan to increase the cost for vulnerable people accessing care services. Local Authorities like Leeds should be assisting its citizens in turbulent times and not hindering them.

Not only are you causing upset and confusion to our service users, you have jumped the gun on the Government's Green Paper about the future funding of social care - another example of your tunnel vision approach to running this city.

Councillor Carter must have had lessons from Margaret Thatcher herself on how to make a perfect U-turn. He vehemently opposed the introduction of Fairer Charging or, as he renamed it, Unfair Charging, and now he is proposing to increase those charges significantly, generating nearly £2m in income. What a turn around. I wonder what those people you spoke about in this Chamber think of you now.

Lord Mayor, it is hypocritical at best and at worst it is using vulnerable people for political gain. What you seem to have no regard for is that people using these services like Homecare, day care, meals etc, do not have a choice of whether to have the care or not. They need that care to enable them to live every day life. We on these benches are concerned that some service users may not pay the increase and lose their services, as 70% of service users will see significant increases in their care costs. That is why this Group's amendment freezes any increase in care charges. This demonstrates that again this Group gives priority to those in most need, unlike the ruling groups who take the money from those in most need.

The in-house Homecare service has been decimated under your control. You have cut Homecare from those who need it - for example Tommy Place who we are all aware of - you have given more and more of the Homecare work left to the independent sector often leaving our directly employed home carers without work to do because you have privatised too much of the service.

We recognise the sterling work being carried out by the in-house Homecare teams who are loyal and responsive to people's needs, which is why in our amendment we put a stop to further privatisation of this most valued service. In older people's day services you are cutting the amount allocated by £600,000. Colleagues, let us be clear about what this means - without doubt closures of day centres.

I must say how disappointed I was to read this in the budget papers - again you are displaying your true colours by announcing cuts in services through a budget. You should remember what the inspector said when he came to Leeds, that modernisation does not mean closure. We believe that proper alternatives to day care should be in place before you cut or close these much needed centres.

Lord Mayor, I cannot finish without mentioning Roseville. The Advisory Board, which is cross-party and includes myself, Don Wilson, David Blackburn, Clive Fox, has worked tirelessly to save this fantastic facility and have offered many suggestions for progress. Can you imagine, then, reading in your budget report that the door factory will be closing and 38 people will lose their jobs? I have had several panicked employees on the phone, extremely concerned about their futures. The end of Decency work is being blamed for the lack of orders but this is not recent news. You have known this for three years. I have mentioned it in Council several times, hoping that the Leaders of the parties opposite would take this issue seriously, as the Board does, and stop this closure.

Let there be no mistake that this is about people who need to work in a supported environment. If you had taken the time, Councillor Carter and Councillor Brett, to go and meet them and speak to them you would know that they want to stay at Roseville. Some of the employees have worked at Roseville in excess of 20 years and do not know another type of work culture. They are scared and frightened of what will happen to them. We have heard here in this Council big speeches about how no-one will lose their job or Roseville will close - even resignations offered.



Well, Councillors Carter and Brett, none of that matters to the employees of Roseville now - 38 of them, each and every one of them, you have let down.

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, thank you.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Thank you. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Councillor Carter has stressed that the Governments are all in pushing up Council rents and has sought to portray the administration as the tenants' friends. I think we need to examine a little more carefully the Tory Government's record on rent increases.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: He is going back twelve years.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Plenty of us here will remember how they used the negative subsidy system which both David and Robert mentioned as a lever to increase rents above inflation in Council homes and then they reduce our ability to spent capital on housing, forcing councils like ourselves to push up rents as the only way of maintaining any kind of capital programme.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: It is like All Our Yesterdays, Richard. All Our Yesterdays.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Some of us will remember - I know you remember, Les, and I know you remember, Andrew, because you have got memories that go back 25 years and you are always telling us.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: 36 years.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: You will remember the acronym RCCO - Revenue Contributions Capital Outlay from those days when Margaret Thatcher let both Council and private sector rents rip and when she took the view that it is better to subsidise private landlords with housing benefit than to invest in public housing.

Most important, you always look at just one aspect of what the Government is doing in terms of Council housing investment. You always look at the revenue side - you do not look at the capital side, which has brought hundreds of millions of pounds into Council housing in this city, the likes of which we have not seen previously and will never see again.

If you think that we are being unfair to Council tenants, you should be bending over backwards to be fair. That would be your kind of manifest duty, would it not? What do you do? You actually say 78% of antisocial behaviour cases come from Council tenancies, therefore, you say, those costs should be borne by the Housing Revenue Account - in other words, the good tenants should pay for bad tenants. Where is the logic of that? You take the same approach with the Noise Nuisance Service, so instead of that being a service which is paid for by everybody, you pile that on to Council tenants alone. You put a Council tenant with an exemplary record, who might have paid their rent all through their lives, into paying for their neighbours' loud behaviour. Is that is just, if that is fair, I am clearly on a different planet to you, but that is probably nothing surprising.

It is actually even worse than that. You have not just got the double whammy of a Council tenant paying twice for the same service; you also make it a triple whammy because those tenants, as tenants of ALMOs which put money into community safety and other initiatives which are of a community nature, they pay out about another million quid across the piece, so Council tenants have to pay both

because you top slice the Housing Revenue Account and then because their ALMOs choose to put money into services that are not purely related to what tenants get and benefit the rest of the community. If that is fairness, I do seriously wonder about you lot.

Several of my colleagues have mentioned the situation with Roseville and there is a serious concern about the relationship between this Council and the ALMOs which have seen us going from having six two-star ALMOs to having one and where the relationships are clearly problematical all the way round. Debra mentioned the very clear commitment across this Council to Roseville and we had discussions with the officers and we were told that there was no work available for the door factory to do and, regrettably, it would have to close, there was nothing else to do. Twenty-seven employees with disabilities would have to find some other kind of work.

We asked the question because I actually could not believe that there was no work for Roseville to do. I knocked on those doors; I know that there are plenty of doors out in our Council properties that are not fit and I am sure you all do, if you ever go on Council estates doing your work - some people might avoid them.

Clearly a lot of doors that are three-quarters glass, the kind of doors that 20 years ago I would say these are a bit rubbish, why have they not been replaced and they are still there. We asked the question and we got the answer back yesterday. Over the next two to three years there are 4,148 properties in the ALMOs requiring 5,722 doors. If there is only a month's work for the door factory they must be a bloody productive door factory to produce 5,722.

There is a clear injustice here. Clearly, if you thought across the piece and you did not just drip, you could sort out the problems at Roseville but you have chosen not to, my Lord Mayor. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Councillor Wakefield has already outlined the main differences between our budget and that of the administration opposite. Allow me to briefly expand on some of them here.

We are proposing to freeze child care fees in line with inflation to protect hard working families in these difficult times, unlike the administration opposite, who view Local Authority child care as a nice little earner with their rises set to bring in £49,000 above inflation.

Our budget proposals make savings on the unnecessary duplication of senior management and services such as human resources, communications and finance teams run from Education Leeds when the Authority already has the professional expertise to offer such services in-house.

We would re-direct such spending from the back office to the front line of education and Children's Services. We do not need two lots of directives, two lots of managers, two lots of back room spend. What we need is to improve the life chances of this city's young people. It is not about going backwards to where we were but about freeing up money now to help young people in Leeds.

Our additional spend concentrates on areas of concern and front line delivery that have been repeatedly flagged up in inspections: the safeguarding of vulnerable children; reducing the city's appalling high rate of teenage pregnancy; ringfencing resources for our children in care; improving educational outcomes; and reducing the number of young people who end up out of education, training or employment.

The APA Report into Children's Services was the subject of our debate at last month's Special Council Meeting so I will not dwell long on it here except to remind members that there is considerable room for improvement, with the service reduced to being barely meeting the minimum where child safety was concerned and the inspector questioned the capacity of the service to improve. Looked after children in Leeds are being failed by the city's education system. Only 13% got five A\* to C in this year's GCSEs. That equates to just 17 young people and only 6% got the gold standard including English and Maths - that is only eight pupils from a cohort of 156. Thirty-eight children in care out of those 156 were not even entered to sit an exam. Two-thirds got just one GCSE or left with nothing.

Children in our care are not only being failed by the education system in the city; they are also being let down by the Authority as their corporate carers. The sort of activity that any of us have to fund for our own children, whether they are trips to the theatre or a rugby match, a whirl on the ice rink outside, educational visits etc, are still not being funded centrally by the budget proposed by the administration opposite today.

As a Labour Group we firmly believe that such activities should be funded centrally and not paid for by charitable hand-outs. That is why we have again included a hundred grand in our budget to invest in the wider learning and raising of self-esteem and aspiration for our looked-after children that such activities engender.

Teenage pregnancy rates in Leeds are woefully higher than the England average. There was a brief reduction in the teenage pregnancy rate in Leeds in 2002/3 but a number of schemes that led to this reduction when we were running the city were dropped and there has been a steady rise in the rate of teenage conceptions since. Reducing the teenage conception rate is crucially important for the city, not only for the individual young people concerned. Research has shown that teenage mothers are three times more likely to suffer from post-natal depression than older mothers and the infant mortality rate of babies born to teenage mums is 60% higher. National statistics indicate again that young women in public care are three times more likely to become teenage mums than their peers.

The National Support Team for Teenage Pregnancy produced a report on the position in Leeds in November 2007. Their report shows clear links between low levels of educational achievements and under-age sexual activity. The fewer qualifications achieved the greater the likelihood seems to be that young women will conceive under the age of 18. There is clearly a link, then, between the high number of NEETS - young people who leave school or do not go into education, training or employment - and the high rate of teenage pregnancy in the city.

The Labour Group's budget puts an additional hundred grand into reducing teenage pregnancy - funding which should help ensure a comprehensive local day centre is developed and that better engagement with young people is achieved.

Finally, we are proposing a substantial investment in training, jobs and skills with new apprenticeships created to prevent young people leaving school and ending up out of work or training.

We believe that £1.25m of this can be funded from school balances creating apprenticeships in schools alone. By improving access to training, work opportunities and ultimately into jobs, we aim to break the cycle of poverty that too many young people in this city may otherwise be trapped in.

I recommend you support the Labour Group's budget. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak in support of Councillor Wakefield's budget amendment. In particular I would like to focus on the issues of climate change and leisure.

Firstly climate change. I firmly believe that climate change needs to be a top priority for this city. The current economic situation should not be an excuse for inaction. The truth is failure to act now, whatever the economic circumstances, will have grave consequences for the people of this city, both environmentally and economically.

We have seen the Green amendment and we welcome your bold thinking, particularly in regards to loans for householders for energy efficient measures. We too believe in being bold. That is why we are providing significant funding to ensure the Council fleet of vehicles includes 65 vehicles running on biomethane. Not only will this provide fuel cost savings of £2m over five years, it will also reduce the fleet's carbon footprint by three-quarters from 4,000 tons to 1090 tons per year.

On this side of the Chamber we are serious about our environmental responsibilities. Bio fuels is only one of our green initiatives. Councillor Lowe will say a bit more later on about some of our others.

Given the unprecedented challenges facing us, I hope that this will be the year the Council really moves forward with its climate change strategy. I do not dispute the fact that there are officers in this Council who are really committed to this agenda and doing some really good things. However, it is time for that to be matched by political leadership by this administration. That means each and every member of the Executive Board taking responsibility for this - it is not just Steve's responsibility, it is every member of the Executive Board opposite needs to be driving this in each of their own portfolios.

Enough warm words and bland strategies - it is time for action. I do fear this administration lacks the courage, conviction and commitment to make Leeds a greener city. I urge you to prove me wrong.

The second issue I want to address is leisure. The Council, I believe, has a vital role in providing opportunities for people of all ages with the opportunity to participate in sport and leisure. The benefits to the council in taking this lead are starkly obvious. For example in Narrowing the Gap, making sure that some of the most disadvantaged people in our communities can access leisure facilities which otherwise they would not be able to get to or to be able to afford at a private health club. Improving health, encouraging our youngsters away from the TV to have fun exercising, which can have a massive impact on tackling key issues such as child obesity. Building friendships and opening new social networking opportunities, allowing people of all ages, but especially our elderly, the opportunity to attend various classes and socialise with friends.

It is with these examples in mind that I welcome the Council's acceptance of over £600,000 funding from the Labour Government to assist in providing free swimming for all under 16s and over 60s over the next two years at a cost to the Council of just £30,000 per year. I would like to think that no-one in this Chamber would disagree that this is money well spent.

We in the Labour Group want to do more than that. We want to encourage people to use even more of the facilities on offer at our leisure centres. That is why we will keep any rises to charges to use leisure centres at the level of inflation. It is simply not acceptable that the Council should hike up the charges way above the level of inflation as it did last year.

For our elderly we will go one step further. We understand the fantastic service that our leisure centres offer to our elderly and we fully comprehend the ramifications if some were to be closed as you proposed last year. That is why we would make entry to leisure centres for the over 65s free. Not only will this lighten the financial load for our elderly, it will also increase usage at our leisure centres.

Lord Mayor, let us be clear. As the main Opposition party we will be watching eagle-eyed on behalf of the people of this city at what you propose for the sports centres and the threat of closure hanging over them.

At the core of this amendment is a commitment to fairness and a pledge that these difficult times will not mean that people of our city, especially the most vulnerable, lose or are priced out from using our leisure centres. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. First of all I do have a declaration of interest. My mother-in-law is in receipt of social care.

I am speaking to second my husband, Councillor David Blackburn's amendment, or what you might call the Green amendment. This is what could be called a real people's budget and it will benefit much of the population of Leeds.

Number one: no Council tax increases for over 65s. Number two: free social care for over 85s. Number three: a third off the cost of school meals for all five, six and seven year olds to enable more school children to benefit from the nutritious, health school meals, thereby going some way to help to cut childhood obesity. Number four: a recharge scheme for energy conservation and renewables which will benefit many people who currently fall through the gap of being eligible to have energy efficiency work carried out but do not have the necessary money to have the work done.

Yes, to pay for this it will put half a per cent on Council tax but because of the benefits it brings, we think it is worth it. Yes, it may be difficult freezing Councillors' allowances and cutting special responsibility allowances. As has been stated by my husband, Green Councillors already do not take the full amount. We think it is time that all - and I emphasise all - Councillors in this Chamber showed their solidarity with the people out there in these difficult times and accept a cut in allowances in good faith.

In all, we Greens believe that this budget is a forward thinking budget for a radical, forward thinking Councillor. Lord Mayor, I second. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I would like to speak in support of Councillor Wakefield's budget amendment. For the Labour Group community safety remains one of our highest priorities. It is absolutely vital that Council do everything possible to protect and support the law abiding citizens of our city. One of the main weapons in deterring and tackling crime has clearly been CCTV. I think most people, probably with the exception of ex-Tory Home Secretary David Davis, would agree that CCTV has been one of the leading tools in meeting the head-on challenge of making cities across the country, including Leeds, safer places in which to live.

With this in mind we are deeply concerned the budget will remove £100,000 from the maintenance budget for CCTV. We are told that this is because a review was undertaken and it was found that money was no longer needed. My colleague, Councillor Rafique, has informed me that CCTV cameras in his ward, Chapeltown,

there is at least one that has not been working for some time now. I cannot image that is not a situation that is not replicated across the city.

Before we start talking about pulling money out of the maintenance budget, let us at least make sure that every single CCTV camera is working. It is for this very reason we are keeping the money in our budget amendment because the reality is we cannot afford for any of our city's CCTV cameras to be out of operation in our ongoing fight against crime.

Touching on burglary, if we look at statistics there is some very good news. We recognise that crime in the city has gone down as a whole, but there numbers of burglaries has risen from 7746 in 2005 to 8874 last year. It is interesting to know at this time that whilst burglaries have gone up, funding from the Council for alley gating has dropped £41,000 from £121,000 in 2005 to just £80,000 last year. It is clear to us that more has to be done to tackle burglary and we are determined the Council should be at the forefront of this action. That is why we are committed to providing an extra £100,000 in our amendment so we can tackle this head on.

I would also like to voice concerns over plans to cut and redefine the role of Neighbourhood Wardens. I think it is important to remember - and I am sure members right across the city can testify to this - the fantastic relationships that many of these wardens have built up with local residents over many years and they are still very much the eyes and ears of the various agencies who service our communities.

I think to pension them off to the Environment Enforcement could be potentially damaging to the Council. If we are going to press ahead with this idea then I hope that the results of redefining the roles of the wardens will be closely monitored. If it is found this is to the detriment of the communities they have served with distinction over many years, then I hope we will be big enough to accept the mistake and reverse this decision.

Finally, just to touch briefly on funding. I do not think anybody would question the Council's need to fund the Antisocial Behaviour Unit. Of course that money should be found. As my colleague Councillor Richard Lewis has pointed out, 78% of the cost of this - that equates to over £1m - will be picked up by Council tenants. I, like Councillor Lewis, believe this to be wrong. I think the Council have decided to effectively tax ratepayers twice over, some of whom are the most vulnerable people in our society.

I believe we as members need to have discussions about this change as to whether, first, it is the right thing to do and, secondly, should it continue to be funded in this fashion in future years? To me it simply seems wrong, ill-conceived and, frankly, unfair.

Our budget amendment is one that is not only committed to tackling crime in the city but also to providing the tools for that prevention and I urge you to support our amendment. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Lord Mayor, I would like to speak in favour of the budget amendment in the name of Councillor Wakefield and specifically about the Labour Group's plans to extend training and offer substantial increases in apprenticeships. These plans, necessary in a recession, are the centrepiece of our budget amendment.

Why do our Group think that investing in training and apprenticeships is so important? Everyone has spoken in the Chamber today and said the country and almost the whole of the world is currently in recession. A report written by the IPP

Centre for Cities predicted that Leeds would lose between 11,000 and 28,000 jobs before 2010. Lord Mayor, I do not want to think what impact that will have on the city.

Already yesterday, Lord Mayor, we have seen one of our major volume builders go into administration. KW Linfoot PLC has pulled out of building now and gone into administration. They were behind many of the schemes in Leeds, flat building and regeneration, and it is a major blow to this city.

The proposals in our budget, as Keith has said, is in three parts: plans to offer job opportunities, provide training and to co-ordinate the Council's efforts to keep and create jobs in our city.

Firstly, our amendment pledges to create 500 new apprenticeships, with all the training and support that is required. 250 of these apprenticeships will be with schools in Leeds and will be paid for out of the System School Balances which have spiralled to over £12m this year. The real cost of each apprenticeship could be as low as £5000 - money well spent, Lord Mayor.

We would, as Leaders of the Council, go into schools and explain to them the importance of this project and our Group is confident that we could persuade 250 Leeds schools to use their balances in this way.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Stealing from schools.

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: The other 250 apprenticeships would be provided by this Council. We would extend the proposals already in this budget and make sure that your fanciful, uncostered and voluntary scheme was made compulsory, ensuring that all departments, all officers and all Council services are playing their role in recruiting jobless young people.

Secondly, our amendment strengthens the Jobs and Skills Department and helps it to regain some of its former glory. Let us not forget that when the current administration took control of the Council in 2004, Labour left them in a very strong position towards achieving the Government's Aims for Jobs and Skills. Yes they did. *(interruption)*

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: £54m backlog on highways.

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: Lord Mayor, they inherited from us Tech North, East Leeds, West Leeds and South Leeds training centres and the partnership between our Training and Skills department and Job Centre Plus has helped more than 60,000 people into jobs through training.

East Leeds's enormous achievement was recognised in 2002 when they were awarded beacon status for their excellent work in partnership with Tesco in Seacroft. Lord Mayor, this legacy has been squandered by this administration at a time when it is most needed. However, we are committed in this amendment to second 25% of the staff in the Regeneration Department to Jobs and Skills, providing them with all the support and training they need to be professionally competent in this area. This is a bold move but this Council must be prepared to react to the needs of the day and tackle the problems we face. We must be flexible. We cannot just keep doing things the same way we have always done them. The jobless, the redundant workers, the young and unskilled unemployed young people of Leeds deserve our support and best efforts during this recession.

Finally, we are committed to co-ordinating a Task Force to co-ordinate our response to this economic crisis. Our Task Force will work with partners such as the NHS, our universities which have large capital programmes, and local businesses. This Task Force will work to ensure that every pound spent in Leeds is spent in the interests of Leeds people and it would also work with all employers to retain and create new jobs in the city.

This is what the Council need to do; this is what we must do, Lord Mayor. The people of Leeds need to know we are on their side. The Labour Group is pledging to create 500 apprenticeships, strengthen the Jobs and Skills Department and create a Task Force to co-ordinate our response to the economic crisis. We will also keep Roseville open. This underlines our commitment to helping the people in Leeds to find work. Thank you Lord Mayor, I move. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR GRAHAME: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, fellow Councillors, I too wish to speak on the budget amendment in the name of Councillor Keith Wakefield. I would like to add to what Councillor Coupar has said about our concerns regarding Roseville and what you have said in the past.

Roseville provides a vital service, it provides disabled people with meaningful employment and a respite for parents and carers. We implore you to think again about shutting it and also keep in mind what you have said in the past not only in this Chamber but also at the 2006 Transforming Services Scrutiny Board, where members from your benches insisted time and again that Roseville will remain open and that no-one would lose their jobs. I quote Councillor Harris at Council June 2006:

"If whilst I am Leader or Deputy Leader of this Authority we issue redundancy notices and make those very needy people redundant from Roseville, I will instantly resign from Council and I give that absolute undertaking."

Does this apply to the present joint Deputy Leadership in 2009?

Unfortunately, as we have already heard, thanks to your budget proposals there will be closure. We would urge you to look again at closing Roseville before you make a terrible mistake that would have a devastating effect on lots of people. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR ARMITAGE: Lord Mayor, fellow Councillors. I wish to speak in support of the Labour Group budget amendment put forward by Councillor Keith Wakefield and specifically to cover the area of Adult Social Care.

As my colleague Debra Coupar has already pointed out, your performance in this area is greatly lacking, as the recent inspector's report demonstrated. As we discussed at length at a Special Council Meeting last month, the inspector's report was particularly scathing about safeguarding standards in this city; so scathing in fact it said that Leeds City Council had failed to protect vulnerable people and deemed the service to be inadequate.

It is simply not good enough for our citizens and you should be ashamed of yourself. You have created a structure in which staff and managers do not have a clear understanding of when they should intervene or proceed, they should follow-up or protect older people.

These failings have meant that you have spent £800,000 this year on improving safeguarding and have set aside a further £1.25m from next year's budget.



This money would provide our excellent staff in Adult Service Care with essential training that they need to protect vulnerable people, which is so long overdue.

What worries us on this side of the Chamber is what services may fall away to pay for this extra money that is needed to put right your mistakes. One of the areas that have obviously been hit is Relate. This is a subject that has been discussed many times in this Chamber and one that we feel shows the difference between us over here on this side of the Chamber and you lot over there.

We feel that Relate provides vital services to people living in our city who may be going through difficult times and is something that should be funded. That is why the Labour Group amendment includes £20,000 for Relate. You, unfortunately, do not recognise that the Council has a role to play in supporting and protecting people when they are having problems. This is why this money is not in your budget for Relate. Your claim that you were going to look into this issue has proved nothing but hot air, Councillor Brett.

As we know, the UK economy is suffering from problems created by the world economic downturn.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: By Gordon Brown.

COUNCILLOR ARMITAGE: Price rises for every day items, especially heating and food, are affecting everybody, especially those who have fixed incomes. To try to offset this, the Labour Group's amendment says people over 80 would not have to pay a rise in Council tax. This would hopefully give them a bit more money in their pockets to go some way to protect them from the worst credit crunch.

Another area where the Labour Group would demonstrate their commitment to the elderly would be to halt your programme of privatisation and care services. We do feel that the private sector does not offer the same level of service as the Council and we feel that our elderly people deserve better. Our priorities are, as we demonstrate, older people and vulnerable people living in Leeds would be better off under our protection and care rather than your lot. They deserve an Adult Social Care Department that receives a strong leadership from the people they elect to run Leeds for them and one that puts their care best and their wellbeing and not *(inaudible)* by the quality of care over the cost. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I wish to speak in support of Councillor Wakefield's amendment and tell the true story of this budget - the true story of the budget of Councillor Carter and his pitbull, Councillor Brett *(laughter)*. I have to say, members of Council, we always thought that Councillor Brett and his Lib Dem colleagues filled a canine role but we thought that role was lapdog, not pitbull. I am glad that Councillor Carter has put us right and the savage and withering attacks from Councillor Brett earlier really showed his role in this administration.

Members of Council, I wish to talk about this real budget, the real budget that Councillor Carter and colleagues are trying to hide behind - hide behind their spin and deception about the headline rise in Council tax, and that is rise and rise and rise in charges right across this Council, right across every service that are not like the Council tax increase below the rate of inflation but are well above inflation. I am going to show that this miserly administration is trying to squeeze every penny out of the citizens of Leeds.

Lisa and Debbie have already discussed the disgraceful increases in charges for young people, charges for Children's Services, charges for child care and charges for old people this administration are trying to sneak in and Adam has spoken about

the increases in leisure centres. Anyone who reads the budget carefully will see that right across the Council their charges are going up and up and up. Parking charges have gone up and I thought Richard was very brave to publicly admit that they are introducing for the first time Sunday parking charges. To come up front and say that, the charges at car parks are going up, including the Becket Street car park opposite the hospital. It seems that when you are ill this miserable administration will still be trying to wrinkle money out of you. This is their approach.

If you look across, if you look at Leisure Services, allotment charges have gone up above inflation; even people who want to fly model planes in our parks have been charged an above inflation increase. Is this just not an administration that is after every penny it can get? People visiting Tropical World have an above inflation increase in charges; people visiting Temple Newsam have an above increase inflation in charges and even when people die they do not escape this administration's dead hand reaching into their pocket, when we have seen crematorium fees and cemetery fees and surcharges rising.

Members of Council I appeal to you - and I notice that very few members of the back benches of the Conservative and Lib Dem Groups have got up to support their Leader's budget and maybe that shows the true state of the level of support for the Leadership from the back benches over there.

I hope people will support Councillor Wakefield's amendment which goes some way to ending these disgraceful charges. I urge people to vote for Councillor Wakefield's budget amendment. Thank you, Council. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak in support of Councillor Wakefield's amendment. My Lord Mayor, I think judging by the comments that have been made all round this Chamber today, that there is probably no doubt that this is the most serious financial situation that our city finds itself in, certainly in the 30 years or so that I have lived in this city. I cannot think of a time where there is so much difficulty out there in industry.

I am quite sure as we go round the Chamber there will be different points of view at how we have arrived at this situation - there will even be people who will blame the Government, believe it or not, Lord Mayor, but there we are. Some will blame the bankers; other will blame the FSA; the American sub-prime market that we mentioned and the list goes on and on, Lord Mayor. We are where we are and that is the concern that I had at this particular moment in time.

What can we do as a Council? What is our responsibility as elected members? I am aware that we are from different parties but we carry a responsibility to do what we can for our employees and we carry the responsibility for businesses, we carry it for elderly people, we carry it for children. It is a very, very difficult time, Lord Mayor.

We know for sure that we face redundancies at the moment, not just in our Council here - businesses, virtually every business in the city is affected at this moment in time. The words that you repeatedly hear, the downturn, the four day week, the savage cuts in wages and salaries, banks that are almost shut for business investment.

My Lord Mayor, in the Council economy we know that there has been a tremendous drop, as others have said, in planning fees and legal fees and I understand that there is something like £1m shortfall in those alone. We know that land searches are down, we know that rental income from the markets is down,

capital receipts are down, income from sports is down and yet at the same time we know that there is increased demand for social housing and various benefits, etc.

Lord Mayor, at this time in my own industry it is not just the bricklayers and the plasterers that are walking about the streets doing nothing. The attack is with architectural practices, it is with professional engineers, it is with senior construction staff and those people are being laid off in the country and in our city and in many areas it is by the thousand. We face a very, very difficult situation.

It has spread into other areas - lawyers, accountants - the list goes on and on about the really serious situation that we find ourselves in.

Lord Mayor, I could go on and state how good the Government has been and we are doing all we can, we have offered tremendous support and given tremendous support to the financial system, we have offered help to the car industry, we have supported families, mortgages. I could go on and on but I do not think that is the purpose of today because I think the question is what can we do? What can we do here that will help our employees - and we have got 35,000 or more of them - and we have got a tremendous number of businesses that are beginning to struggle.

Lord Mayor, what I would like to see, already one of my colleagues, Councillor McKenna, has used an expression that I wanted to use today, and that is I want to ask the Exec Board to immediately set up a Capital Expenditure Task Force. I totally support the way Jim has approached this. This is the most serious situation that we have ever had in our city.

Lord Mayor, we know from the figures that have been produced by Alan Gay and Maureen Taylor and others - and I certainly support all the comments that have been made about those officers - we know that by 2012 we will spend about £900m on capital expenditure and Richard has referred to this. We know that in the next year this is about £240m.

I urge - urge, Lord Mayor - that the Exec Board set up this structure and we ask for contributions from around this Chamber, we ask for contributions from our MPs, from business, even the bankers, Lord Mayor. I think the situation is absolutely dire and I believe that if we do not use the capital expenditure that we have got - and I do not advocate more, I just advocate that we get on and spend the money. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR LOWE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak in support of Councillor Wakefield's budget amendment. Having looked in detail at your administration's Environmental Services budget, three words spring to mind - malaise, incompetence and cuts.

Let us first look at recycling. You are so satisfied with your current progress on recycling you are actually cutting £50,000 from the budget because you say the target can be achieved with fewer resources. How exactly is cutting money from the budget a demonstration of your commitment to recycling and why are you only aiming to achieve the target? Why do you not want to better it? Have you no ambition? In any event, the budget states that a recycling rate of 36%, which you are expecting to achieve next year, will save £1m in landfill costs for this city, so how much more would we save if we were able to achieve a rate of, say, 37%, 38% or even 40%? Therefore, a cut of £50,000 could be costing us many more hundreds of thousands in the city. Bizarre.

Luckily on this side we have both ambition and sense and that is why we are keeping that £50,000 in the budget because we want to hit the highest recycling

target we could possibly reach, not settle for one that might potentially cost us, as citizens and taxpayers, money.

It has become a common theme that when your administration uses words like “rationalisation”, we on this side of the Chamber brace ourselves for cuts to important services. It is no different this year. This time it is household waste sites that are to be rationalised or, to use the proper term, cut. Maybe Councillor Smith would inform us which waste sites are to be dispensed with and again tell us how this will achieve the strategy to recycle, reuse and reduce. Unlike you we understand the importance of providing residents of our city with waste sites to recycle their rubbish, which is why our amendment keeps them all in.

Now we move on to the cuts to the bulky waste collections. Once again this promises to be a disaster, especially when you couple this with your decision to reduce access to household waste sites. Bulky waste collections in this city are already at best hit and miss. We remain unconvinced that this new system of yours, which relies on less resources, will maintain the same service or even improve it. You might call it more informed utilisation of the service. Then again, we call it a cut, which is why the money you are taking out we will be keeping in.

Now to the bins and specifically the introduction of the weekly food waste collections. Let us make it very clear. The Labour Group fully supports the idea of a weekly food waste collection and you may remember that I have asked for this as part of a coherent waste management strategy many, many times over the year. However, despite Councillor Carter’s protestations today, we have been told that this weekly food waste collection is inextricably linked with a move to fortnightly waste collection, so a black bin will go to fortnightly waste collections. You might not remember this but we have been told and Councillor Blackburn may not clearly remember but I can tell you, Councillor Ogilvie remembers, Councillor Lowe remembers and colleagues remember who were all briefed by the same officer. You need to get your facts right. Someone is lying and it is not me.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: We are not, I will tell you.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: Can anyone in this Chamber really say hand on heart...

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: She knows us; she knows everything this lass.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: ...that this service, the refuse collection service which is being delivered in this city is of a decent standard now, because if it is not of a decent standard you cannot even contemplate moving to a fortnightly collection service.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: We are not. We are not. (*interruption*)

COUNCILLOR LOWE: We have to be told. You need to get your facts right. Speak to your officers because they have told us in briefings.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Who has told you?

COUNCILLOR LOWE: We are not telling lies. We have been meeting residents who are unhappy with their bin collections. For some residents are having their bins collected on the designated day is a miracle

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Have you been telling these lies, Michael, again, like Arthur Bolton?

COUNCILLOR LOWE: Only last month we heard stories of residents in a block of flats in Morley not having their bins collected for ten weeks; a gentleman at Cross Gates whose bin has been collected three times since August; and in my own ward in Armley a lady had her bin emptied just twice since November. It was emptied last week because the Armley Councillor intervened.

Side waste is also not being collected in Armley even though there has been no policy on side waste in this Council, but it is not being collected in Armley and I have got the facts to back that up.

The people of our city deserve better than the service you are offering at the moment. A malaise in leadership, incompetence across the board, cuts the vital services. It is not good enough and if you have got any decency you will support our amendment and put the people of Leeds first for a change. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Before I call the next speaker, I am wondering if we could only have one meeting in here. *(hear, hear) (Applause)* There must be lots of room in the ante Chamber really. I only ask you to respect our speakers.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Sit down or get out. Look at them all.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Disgraceful, disrespectful. It is disrespectful to the Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Particularly to the Lord Mayor it is disrespectful.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: We do not need lectures from you, Peter, about respectful.

THE LORD MAYOR: Come on, let us have some co-operation. I call on Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I do not mind if they want to stand up and give me the respect of standing while I speak, so thank you very much over there.

When Councillor Carter came to the end of his budget statement I was waiting for the immortal words of, "I commend this budget to the voters of Farsley and Adel and Thorner and Harewood", because this is not a budget for the city; this is a budget for the rich living in the leafy lanes who can afford the extra charges. *(interruption)*

This is not a budget for people who are sick in this city who, unless they have money, will see their charges increased. This is not a budget for people who lose their jobs because they will not be helped. This is not a budget for people who work for this Council because they will start losing their jobs.

Who will lose their jobs? I will make two or three assumptions, here. I will tell you.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: With any luck, you.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: It will not be any Chief Officers. Anyone in this city who is earning more than £70,000 will not lose their job. They might be talked out of a job and get a package and go happily into yonder land.

Directors will still get their ten per cent bonus. The people who lose their jobs are the low paid, women, part-time and they will be the fallen 50 or so who will cop it for your incompetence. They will cop it for your incompetence.

We were directed on the intranet to a website entitled, "Changes to the Size of our Workforce". I do not often go on that because I have not got the time that John has, but I actually went on this one and I thought, I am going to get it explained now where these 450 jobs are that might be lost, and there will be a few nice warm words to people saying, "We will go through all the processes, the procedures, we will talk with the trade unions, we will talk with line managers, we will talk with you. Nothing will happen quickly. Do not worry. We will support you in this process."

*That* is what it is. Four paragraphs about the announcement saying we are going to have 200 new jobs but there will be 650 people leaving the Council. Again, only someone at the Press Office could have wordsmithed that one. Not, "You are going to be sacked" but "going to be leaving the Council." Then it says, "In some instances we will need to offer staff redeployment." Not, "We will look as a first alternative to talk sympathetically with staff and offer them some redeployment opportunities." Nothing about training. Just saying, "Hope you will be open-minded."

After these two or three paragraphs it says, "In summary at this stage we do not expect to have to make staff redundant." That is the sole communication to staff who may lose their jobs in the next few weeks.

Are we surprised? We are not surprised because we know from Councillor Harris onwards how low pay staff have been treated in this Authority. We take away the weekly wage, we force you to have a monthly wage you do not want to. We take away your overtime. We take away as much as we can. We can penalise the low paid staff but not the high paid staff.

Then they are preached by Councillor Brett about the leadership showing courage. Richard, I do not want your leadership, your style of leadership of shoot first and ask questions afterwards.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Whose leadership do you want?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Yes, that is the question, whose leadership do you want?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: That kind of leadership of shoot first and ask questions later was the leadership style in the Second World War 60 years ago and you have not learned since.

There is leadership about taking decisions for the benefit of the whole of the city, not for part of the city; not for the burghers of Wetherby and elsewhere but for the inner city people, for people who are our tenants who are facing a huge rent increase.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Yes, by whom?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: By your Government.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Your Government.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Not at all. Hang on, you cannot say all the time, "The Government is not doing this, is not doing that, we are defying the Government." In his speech he said, "We are not being bullied by the Government,

we defying this and that” and then he is saying, “Well, we are doing this because the Government is forcing us.”

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Where is that in your amendment? We are cutting it.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: You are putting up Council tenants’ rents by that amount. This is a budget for the few and not a budget for everyone. It is not a budget that commends itself; it is a budget we shall have to vote against. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to take us back a couple of hours to Keith Wakefield’s speech. I find it very interesting that Labour Ministers and Labour Councillors do not understand how the school balances in this city are managed and so they decide to raid and rob our schools to pay for their policies.

In fact, the Schools Forum looked at all the school balances this year and only three schools were found to have balances which were illegal and the money was taken back and it came to a few thousand pounds. They forget that our schools now have a three year rolling budget. They have to plan for three years. They have to keep money back. It is interesting, our schools will need to find collectively an extra £12.8m this year from their budgets because of budget pressures. Because of the Dedicated School Grant Settlement our schools will have to find the £12.8m in budget pressures, the money that the Labour Party are going to use to force them to take on apprentices. I think it is a great idea, I think the city should have apprentices, but you cannot take money that does not exist to employ them.

I would like now to go to a second point that Keith had in his budget. He is going to make major savings by merging Education Leeds into the Children’s Services. It might interest him to know, particularly Councillor Gruen, if he cares to listen, that in the time we have been in office Education Leeds has one less Deputy Chief Executive and we have gone from twelve Strategic Managers to six. We have already saved well over £600,000 a year. If you were to merge City of - sorry, if you were to merge---

COUNCILLOR: Freudian slip.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: What a giveaway. You are going to close it, we all know.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: If you were to merge Education Leeds into the Children’s Services we would not get the staff savings that they are talking about. I can only assume that not only are we going to take away school balances that schools need, we are also going to take away front line staff who are in their for school improvements.

It is really, I think, time we reminded you again as to why Education Leeds exists in the first place.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Oh, here we go.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: It was in your hands that Education did get into quite a mess and I am going to say no more than that. It is interesting, is it not, that Education Leeds has been flagged up by The Times newspaper to be one of the top hundred companies in the country to watch out for this coming year, but we are going to get rid of it.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: We must be in a bad state!

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Finally, on the NEETs figure, somehow or other I think you failed to notice that we again have put an extra £1m into this programme. I agree with you the size of our NEET figure has not come down as fast as I would have wanted. Not only are we putting in an extra £1m, there will be more Connexions personal advisers to do it.

I would like to say to James Lewis before I sit down, perhaps on this side of the room we have shown a little bit more discipline and support for our Leaders by not standing up and taking hours to get through a budget paper you are going to lose. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Lord Mayor...

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

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: It is called democracy, Councillor Harker.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Anybody (*inaudible*) that's what they want to do.

THE LORD MAYOR: I asked you to sit down, Councillor. I call on Councillor J L Carter.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: My Lord Mayor, may I just make one or two observations on some of the points that have been raised? First of all, Keith's very poor speech which may have had a bit of spin in it which was not all that good, but it also definitely did not have content and it did not have accuracy and that was something that it lacked completely.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Other than that it was all right.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: If you talk about regeneration, which he did...

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Soporific, yes.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: ... and he referred to cutting a million-and-a-half pounds out of our budget. If we did that we would not just be going into Regen where we have 32 people - which, by the way, is less than they have in Birmingham - it will be the Area Management we would go at, it would be the Signpost we would go at, it would be the also Sue Wynn's team that would go, so it would be a massive cut within the department. He might want that cut but that is what he is talking about. Do not let him kid you.

Some of those people it is fair to move. Some have got skills in jobs and training. They might be Regeneration people but he thinks oh, it does not matter, the only retraining would be them because they will have to find out how to do the job. What a nonsense it is.

In addition to that some of those people are dealing with over £400m-worth of capital work at the present time, which is going to see this city through in the future and possibly up to £1b, £2b in the future.

My Lord Mayor, can I just go on to another question? Councillor Lewis. Councillor Lewis, I thought it was fascinating. He gets on about HRA spending on the ASBO Unit. Do you know who set it up? Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Yes, for Council tenants, Les. For Council tenants.



COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Do you know what Councillor Lewis did? He charged 100% of its set up to the HRA. He charged it in the same way.

If he had not have had NRF money taken off us we would not be charging this rate but he charged 100% of the Antisocial Behaviour Unit to the Housing Revenue Account and he ought to be ashamed of himself to think he can kid everybody and say that he has not done it. It is a disgrace.

Can I go on to CCTV, which was raised over there? What a pile of nonsense. Let me just tell you a bit about CCTV. We are putting £900,000 into CCTV. We are moving it from video to digital. The £100,000, it is not a cut, let us get this £100,000 which can be spent, first of all, all your Area Committees who have CCTV, half of it was going to be paid for by this £100,000. Half of it was going to come out of there, so if you vote with the Labour amendment you will still be paying full whack in your Area Committees for CCTV. In addition to that the other part was going to help fund CCTV.

Let me go on to Roseville for a second. Very interesting listening to Councillor Coupar.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Gordon will get sacked.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I apologise if we did not come early enough to you but at least when we did come to you, you were there, so was Councillor Fox. Unfortunately Councillor Coupar was not bothered about the poor - she was skiing with her rich friends somewhere, that is where she was. *(Interruption)*

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Lord Mayor...

THE LORD MAYOR: Oh, here we go.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: She is up! She is up!

THE LORD MAYOR: Just a minute, just a minute.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor ...

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Lord Mayor, Lord Mayor. Can I leave the room? Yes, you may leave the room.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Carter, will you just hold it a second?

COUNCILLOR CARTER: Certainly.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: And apologise.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: And apologise.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Bad manners and it is disgraceful behaviour.

THE LORD MAYOR: Would you care to rephrase that? I am certain you would.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: No, Lord Mayor, a point of personal explanation, please.

THE LORD MAYOR: Point of explanation. Where is my legal person?

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: No, Lord Mayor, it is not within - Lord Mayor, there is no such thing.

THE LORD MAYOR: Just a moment. Carry on.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: I have got a point of personal explanation, Lord Mayor, about what Councillor Carter has just said about me not being at the meeting.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: No.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: *(interruption)* It is lies.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: It is lies.

COUNCILLOR: He's behind you!

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: He is lying, Lord Mayor. I was in hospital, actually.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: She was in hospital.

THE LORD MAYOR: Please, please, please. You have made your statement.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: It is a disgrace.

THE LORD MAYOR: I am asking...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: She was in hospital.

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE GOVERNANCE): A point of personal explanation needs to be where...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: She was in hospital, Les.

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE GOVERNANCE): ... Councillor Coupar is stating that she has been misrepresented in something she has said in the debate today.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Lord Mayor, it does not need anything of this. If she was in hospital, if she was then I apologise.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: I was in hospital, Les, yes, I was.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I withdraw that comment. I have no problem with withdrawing that comment. The thing I was told that you were skiing, actually, with people, but if you are in hospital I can assure it is withdrawn, and it is withdrawn. *(interruption)*

Let us go back to the actual...

THE LORD MAYOR: I hope you accept that.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Shame.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: No, you start apologising.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I have just apologised to her, you fool. I have just done it, you fool. (*interruption*)

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, it is up to you. It is up to you.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Lord Mayor, I do need more time if these people are going to start interrupting.

THE LORD MAYOR: Come on.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: No, your explaining time.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Two more minutes.

THE LORD MAYOR: Come on.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Just disgraceful.

THE LORD MAYOR: Would you continue it in a nice, easy manner.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Now, if we can go on to Roseville itself. Let me just tell you a little bit about what is happening. Every disabled person, everyone, has a guarantee of a job. No disabled person is being dismissed because Roseville is closing. We have guaranteed that, it is in the budget. They can all go into the Management for Change Scheme, they remain out of that and it is the people who are not in that obviously who will go, but the disabled people, they have jobs guaranteed.

It is OK messing about with door numbers. Unless we force the ALMOs to do certain things, which he would not accept, neither would Peter accept, that we would force them to do various things, unless we could do that, which we cannot, they have something like 500 doors next year to manufacture. Five hundred doors they can do a month at full capacity. To be quite honest, we have got to take care of the people who are there and I am giving this undertaking, Andrew Carter has given it, so has Richard Brett - they have a job. The disabled people have a job, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: My Lord Mayor, come on, they...

THE LORD MAYOR: I have given you 20 seconds.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Yes, ten seconds. Thank you, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I understand where you are coming from, Lord Mayor. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Oh dear, oh dear. That is outrageous. Come on, Les.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I understand where you are coming from.

THE LORD MAYOR: Please stand up.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Yes, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Could you explain that last remark?

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Yes, I understand where you are coming from. You said you wanted me to sit down, the red light is on. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: No you did not.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: No you did not.

THE LORD MAYOR: I am not so certain about that.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: You are a bully.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Well, that is your own interpretation, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I am not.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Come on, Andrew. Apologise.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Can I express our disgust, my Lord Mayor, at the way he has treated you.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Sit down. You can sit down.

THE LORD MAYOR: We will not make it any worse, put it that way. Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Right, fair enough.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: My Lord Mayor, a different tone, I feel. Lord Mayor, the amendment from the Labour Party, I have to say when I did have it sent through to me I was somewhat surprised. Having had the Special Meeting that we did have only a matter of weeks ago and obviously being, with myself and Councillor Harrand, the two prime focus for the issues that were being raised by the Opposition, I was very, very surprised to find that the Labour Party decided to spend less on Children's Services overall after all that fire and brimstone in terms of how they felt that we were complacent, that we were flippant and that we were arrogant in our approach to Children's Services.

It seems just nonsensical, therefore, for a serious Opposition party to come forward with a reduction in spending in this area.

I know that they are talking about finding duplication within structures. I have to say, Lord Mayor, as Councillor Harker has pointed out already, we have already slimmed down our structures as far as it can go in terms of making sure that our money is sent to the front line.

In terms of the few areas the Labour Party have actually pointed out our specifics in spending, I do find it actually very, very dangerous that one of the areas that they have chosen to reduce spending on is in terms of transport and taxi fares

for the most vulnerable of our children. I say this because I did see it in an article in the Evening Post that Councillor Wakefield had a quote in. It was obviously one which was promoted by the Taxpayers' Alliance which pointed out that we spend a supposedly £4.6m in this city transporting vulnerable people, be they children or adults, around. Councillor Wakefield, of course, said this was a terrible waste of public money.

I did think that this was a bandwagon that Councillor Wakefield might not have wished to jump on...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I used to work in the area.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: ...if he had known the actual facts...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I do, I used to work there.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: ...so I offered him the chance of not supporting this on two occasions. He chose not to. He has now come to us with this budget amendment which actually specifically talks about reducing the money in this area.

I will give an assurance to Councillor Wakefield, if there was money to save in this area it would have been saved. We do try and make sure that the children that we are looking after are as independent as possible if they are being looked after, that they use buses where possible, that they walk to school where possible. What I will point out is that transport policy cannot be based upon cost. It is based upon the needs of each individual child that comes into our care. It means that some of our children are escorted to and from school. It means that some of our children are so severely disabled that they do not have an option other than a taxi and paid-for transport.

Lord Mayor, to include this within the budget is irresponsible.

In terms of the other areas, I was a little bit nonplussed in terms of the £200k which has been put forward for teenage pregnancy. Councillor Mulherin and, I have to say, a lot of the other members within the Chamber here were interested enough to turn up to our Members Development session on teenage pregnancy. There is a lot being done in this area and it is a big result of work that has been done by Scrutiny as well as ourselves in Children's Services to make sure that the PCT works with us and aligns their budget with ours.

I was not told today what benefit another £200,000 in this area would achieve. I would be grateful in terms of taking forward this issue together if the actual detail of your policy could be given to me at a later date.

Another element which I was a little bit nonplussed by was the reference to how you were going to be putting more into safeguarding children when there was nothing in this paper which talked about extra funds being placed there. There was another one in terms of getting extra resources into our Looked After Children to make sure that their outcomes are better in terms of exams. There was nothing in this motion.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: There is.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: There was nothing in your debate either in terms of specifics...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: There is something there.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: ...which would actually show that you are going to do anything different to what we are already doing in these areas. Once again, I will be very interested to know your ideas because...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Do not worry.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: ...being one Council we like to make sure that we take on all ideas from wherever it comes from.

I have to say, though, when it comes to things like attainment for our Looked After Children...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: 100,000.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: ...and when it comes to things like transport, as I said, it is not a matter of cost. Some of our children are extremely traumatised and to expect them to achieve the same level of exam results...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: They do in other Authorities.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: ... as those of children who come from very stable families, who have all the input that good parents can give them, I say is not realistic in some cases.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: A disgrace, that.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: In some cases, and I will take – Councillor Wakefield, I am quite willing to take you to some of our homes and let you meet some of our children.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I have been.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, then. Thank you, Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Mine is going to be a very brief contribution. Could I ask Councillor Brett if he could give me two moments of attention? You spoke about the Capital Programme. The Capital Programme includes a very long list of sites for disposal. Assuming disposal means either give away or sell, is it right that West Park should be hidden amongst, out of alphabetical order, in this list as for disposal when at our last Council meeting Councillor Bentley said it was not going to be sold, Councillor Hamilton said it was not going to be sold, the nine Lib Dem Councillors voted for it being taken off the list and only changed their mind when they were put under pressure by Councillor Carter, who leads the Lib Dems. Is it true or not true that West Park Centre is to be disposed of in accordance with the schedule? I need to know because I want to tell every person who uses that centre and who lives in that area what the truth is and I would not wish to mislead them, I would not wish to do anything dishonourable of the kind of nature which we have seen just a few moments ago in this Chamber. I simply want a straight answer. Is it for sale or not?

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I want to start, before I second the amendment, to say as Councillor Coupar's ward colleague how outraged I was by the comments made by Councillor Carter. All of us on this side know that Councillor Coupar is one of the hardest working Councillors and if it was not for her the budget proposals in your budget for the most vulnerable people in this city would be even worse than they actually are.

I am seconding this amendment in the name of Councillor Wakefield and I acknowledge that this city, along with all others, is facing a great challenge. It is a challenge that we can embrace, respond to, deal with. We can and must act responsibly on behalf of the people who live and work in our great city, or we can listen to you. What a shower you are. I have to say...

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: You even have to have that written down for you.  
(laughter)

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: The interesting debate is about what type of animal Councillor Brett is – we have had pitbull, lapdog. I thought you were going to come out with bulldog. Do you remember at the last Council he was talking about setting up a War Cabinet with regular meetings to inform Council and keep them informed? Would you not have thought that a budget debate would be the one area where you would actually come up and acknowledge the particular issues that are facing the city and tell us what you plan to do about it?

Surely now it is time to stand up for our communities and to show them that we are on their side, to demonstrate what we can do and that we will be the powerhouse of recovery and the means to get through the economic downturn. Our budget gives us the means to invest in skills, in training, in transport and in new, green technologies.

We saw how the Tories dealt with recession in the 1980s and 1990s, the devastation and generation-long decline that have resulted are still issues that we are dealing with today. Your budget will do the same. We must invest in our people and support them through the bad times, instead of what comes from you – a raft of proposals that damage confidence, that threaten jobs, that cut services to our most vulnerable. This is of your making, your legacy to this city.

Councillor Wakefield's amendment is based on fairness, a clear message to the people of Leeds that Labour is on your side.

It is about making the Council face up to the priorities of the day with practical measures and it is an amendment to make sure that the green agenda is not allowed to be marginalised as the Council seeks to make savings. Investments in a low carbon future for Leeds, reducing carbon footprints but, crucially, expanding jobs, putting money into the pockets of Leeds, reducing their fuel bills and yes, David, we will talk to you about these measures because nobody else is clearly talking to you from that side.

Councillor Carter, we knew we would get an attempt to deflect blame and you took a significant amount of your speech trying to do that, excuses for doing nothing, but what people are looking for is what you are going to do. Were there any new initiatives in his budget? Did you spot any at all? As you know, Councillor Wakefield's amendment has been fully costed and approved. It introduces real savings.

I just want to remind Council what Councillor Carter said in 1999 about the Civic Newspaper. He said, "It is a waste of time and if you are doing the job right you do not need to blow your own trumpet, somebody else will blow it for you."

On Education I would just like formally to thank Councillor Harker for the formal announcement that City of Leeds School is going to close. Thank you for that acknowledgement.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: No, it is not. It is not.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Both you and Stuart are in denial...

COUNCILLOR HARKER: It is not.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: ... about your – I have to say, have you seen the Guardian today? Chief Officer for Children and Young People in Social Care, £103,000. That is the salary that you are putting in. We want money on the front line to help our children prosper and achieve.

Councillor Wakefield's amendment is clear and transparent. Your hypocrisy comes through when you talk about Roseville. Lord Mayor, there is...

THE LORD MAYOR: Would you just hold it, Councillor Blake, for one moment.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Under Standing Orders personal explanation, Lord Mayor. I did not announce the closure of City of Leeds School. If Judith wants to go and check the paper I am taking to Executive Board in May, she will not see the word "closure" attached to City of Leeds School anywhere. I did not announce the closure of City of Leeds School and she should apologise.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Apologise.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Apologise.

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: Apologise.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blake, would you just answer that?

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: There is an alternative to the budget that has been put down today. I am looking at the members on the benches opposite. Come and join us. Last year both the Greens and the Morley Boroughs said they would not support a budget that proposed job cuts. We will hold you to that now. Here is your chance to support progress, fairness, protect jobs and create opportunities for all in Leeds. It is simple – support Councillor Wakefield's amendment. Thank you.  
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, under – I am frantically flicking my pages here – Council Procedure Rule 22.1 I propose the suspension of the procedures to allow the movement of tea later than five o'clock and for Items 5 and 6 to be heard.

COUNCILLOR: Seconded.

THE LORD MAYOR: All those in favour?

COUNCILLOR: Does it mean...

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Work it out. That is your problem. Work it out.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, I want a recorded vote, please.

COUNCILLOR: Seconded.



THE LORD MAYOR: I call on the Chief Executive.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Before the vote on this item is taken...

THE LORD MAYOR: Hold again.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Lord Mayor, can I ask, do they realise what this involves?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: No, you cannot. Ask your Whips.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: I am asking a legal question. Does this mean that we will not be discussing the Minutes of the Executive Board?

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE GOVERNANCE): Correct.

THE LORD MAYOR: Correct.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: What you are voting for is...

THE LORD MAYOR: Do not start giving a speech. I will ask the Chief Executive.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Yes, the Council Procedure Rules provide for a break to be taken at 5.00 and that is unqualified. It has been moved that that be varied to allow the completion of this debate and for Items 5 and 6 on the agenda to be completed before the break. That will conclude the meeting.

COUNCILLOR DRIVER: My Lord Mayor, can I challenge that? That was not in the statement, Lord Mayor. *(interruption)*

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Yes, it was.

*(A recorded vote was held on the suspension of Standing Orders)*

THE LORD MAYOR: The vote is present 93, "Yes" 50; abstentions 0; "No" 43, so the motion is CARRIED.

We will continue now with the budget debate and I think we are now on to Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Can I say first of all I thank Councillor Finnigan for his comments with reference to the sad news about David Cameron's son, Ivan, today. I have already written, as Leader of the Council, to David and Samantha Cameron. I can think of no worse tragedy than to lose a child.

My Lord Mayor, the second point I want to make is that Councillor Carter withdrew his comments immediately upon being informed that Councillor Coupar had been in hospital. I heard him apologise and I heard him withdraw it and I sit right next to him and I may be a little deaf but I am not that deaf. I can always hear what Councillor Carter says.

Thirdly can I say, my Lord Mayor, this has been the worst – the worst – budget debate I have ever had the misfortune to witness. I have to say that there are certain niceties which are usually engaged in to make sure that we roughly know who

is going to speak and say what. That certainly was not the case in this. At the end of the day it is the Opposition who pretty much have control over the timetable in terms of what they want to lead on and if they wanted to spend the whole of today's meeting discussing the budget, that is precisely what they have achieved, so do not moan, do not pretend you did not know. The amazing thing is that Councillor Wakefield talks about leadership – it is perfectly obvious...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: It is a democracy. The Opposition are entitled to speak.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: ...that the (*interruption*) – here we go.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Point of order.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Sit down, Bernard. Sit down.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: My point of order is to ask simply, is Councillor Carter winding up the debate?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I am.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: If so is he not bound by the rules that he winds up with reference to what has been said and not a totally additional matter because the apology that he is quoting and referred to was not involved in that debate.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: He is out of order, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I presume, my Lord Mayor, that that is another attempt from Councillor Atha to ensure I do not get my full ten minutes.

THE LORD MAYOR: Right.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: You will get your full (*inaudible*)

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I think we have had quite enough from members of your family, Michael, for a while.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Yes, and we have had enough from yours as well.

THE LORD MAYOR: They are baiting each other!

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: My Lord Mayor, could I continue, Lord Mayor?

THE LORD MAYOR: You may continue and we will give you a full minute.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I was commenting on the fact that it was perfectly obvious to me that the front bench of the major Opposition party had no idea what they were leading themselves into. We had a series of what I can only call inconsequential speeches on something that should be the major debate of the year – that is the budget – particularly in these very difficult times.

My Lord Mayor, there is a film going around at the moment with Brad Pitt starring in it. I am not suggesting for one minute that Councillor Wakefield is Brad Pitt...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: He can only do personal insults.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: ...but I would like to discuss The Curious Case of Keith Wakefield who appears, having had five years to grow into the role of Leader of the Opposition, to have shrunk into it. *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Is this the kind of thing you like?

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Does this really make you Brad Pitt?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Yes.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: My Lord Mayor, it takes a great deal of, I think they refer to it as chutzpah, if I have pronounced that correctly, if you are a member of the Labour Party to get up and lecture anybody on consultants and PR when Ed Balls, who thinks he is going to be the next MP for Morley, has managed to double the spending on consultants in the Department for Education, or whatever they call it now, to £72m a year, and that Jack Straw can bring in art worth £170,000 to furnish the Home Office at a time of such difficult economic constraints.

My Lord Mayor, we have put in place a budget that we admit is going to be very difficult and very tight. I refer back to Councillor Brett's comments – and I thought, incidentally, the personal attacks on Councillor Brett earlier on today were wholly uncalled for.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Kettle.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: We have made it absolutely clear – absolutely clear – that we are protecting front line services, we are not making disabled people redundant at Roseville - we are absolutely not making disabled people redundant in Roseville. We have made it clear that we believe it is right to get the lowest Council tax possible because it is those on fixed incomes, those people you are been talking about all day who are going to be the most affected by heavier increases. It staggers me that the Government are today attacking councils across the country for average increases of three per cent when they – and thank you for reminding me, Councillor Finnigan – are saddling the commercial sector with five per cent Council tax, non-domestic rate increases, which will push a lot of other small businesses to the wall, creating more people unemployed.

Let me just return to this business about the Regeneration Department. Today you have single-handedly, I think, demoralised and threatened to destroy the Regeneration Department. If, Keith, you honestly believe – we will take West Leeds, you said, "My colleagues tell me we are not going ahead..." Your colleagues want to get their ears to the ground – I am glad you pointed at Councillor Lowe, she is the one who said that we are going to stop weekly bin collections, so we know that she does not know what she is talking about because we absolutely are not going to stop weekly bin collections.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: Ask your officers then.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: So does Ann Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: To go back to West Leeds, let me make it crystal clear...

COUNCILLOR LOWE: I do not tell lies.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Officers are briefed that it would stop.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: You ask the officers. I will give you the name outside this Chamber.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Officers are briefed.

THE LORD MAYOR: Will you let the speaker carry on? Carry on.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Councillor Gruen is still continuing, Lord Mayor, and I do not propose to begin until there is some semblance of order.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Just for you, when you stopped everything else.

THE LORD MAYOR: Will you please stop interrupting for the rest of this ten minutes? I am hungry and I want to go home. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: You are not the only one. My Lord Mayor, what we have seen from the party opposite is a party preparing for a long time in Opposition, not only locally but nationally. Their whole budget proposals were putting them in a position where they could make all sorts of comments still in Opposition when a Government of a different political complexion is running the country from Whitehall. They are going back to the 1970s, that is where they are going and I wish they would all get back there as fast as possible. They are nothing more than a bunch of political featherweights with fear in their eyes. When we see the front bench – and that is presumably an example of Councillor Wakefield's leadership – all standing up and making the sorts of contributions on a series of very serious issues that affect 750,000 people and doing it in the way they have done, they are nothing short of a disgrace.

What they have done today is to destroy what is left of proper, cross-party working on serious debating issues like the budget. They are still at it, Lord Mayor, they are still at it and they cannot sit still and quiet. (*interruption*) They are in denial about the state of the country. You have only got to hear what Judith Blake bleats on about at other meetings when she honestly believes the recession has not hit Middleton. I will give her a load of facts and figures to go and look at where she can jolly well find out that the poor burgesses of Middleton know it has.

My Lord Mayor, this budget will be introduced. We shall make sure it works. We shall also make sure that the people of Leeds get value for money, get protected services and those who are the most vulnerable in our society are protected from the disaster that Gordon Brown and their party have visited upon them. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: We now come to the vote.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Recorded vote please, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Seconded.

*(A recorded vote was taken on the amendment in the name of Councillor Wakefield)*

THE LORD MAYOR: The results again. It is present 93, "Yes" 40; abstentions 3; "No" 50, so the amendment is LOST.

We go to the next.

*(A recorded vote was taken on the amendment in the name of Councillor D Blackburn)*

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: My Lord Mayor, I would be grateful if we could have clarification on this matter. On the recorded vote that was taken on suspension of Standing Orders 15 minutes ago, 93 people were present to vote. That is what we were told. On the first recorded vote – on the budget amendment – taken a few minutes ago, 93 people were present to vote, yet clearly members of the Opposition benches were not in the Chamber when that vote was taken. They were brought in after the vote was taken. I am simply asking for clarification to make sure that votes were not cast for people who were not present in the Chamber. A simple clarification, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: We are in the hands of the computer people.

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE GOVERNANCE): Perhaps if I could just explain. You may have noticed that Councillor Rafique has come in. Councillor Rafique had a personal and prejudicial interest on the amendment in the name of Councillor Wakefield because of his employment with Education Leeds which is referred to in Councillor Wakefield's amendment, therefore he could take no part in that particular bit of the debate, so he has therefore now come in.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: It is nothing to do with you. You are impugning the integrity of members.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: No, I am merely asking for clarification.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: We know your way of asking.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Lord Mayor, I understand what was just said. That means – I was not asking about Councillor Rafique. You have raised that issue so I accept Councillor Rafique did not vote on the first amendment. Nevertheless, 93 people voted on the amendment and 93 people voted on suspension of Standing Orders. Because it is 93 in both instances and Councillor Rafique was not voting on the amendment...

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE GOVERNANCE): He was not here for the suspension either.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Thank you.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Well done. Welcome back.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Just a reminder, this is the outcome of the vote on the second amendment in the name of Councillor David Blackburn.

THE LORD MAYOR: Present 94, "Yes" 3; abstentions 0; "No" 91. LOST.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Finally, with regards the three votes on the budget, we come to the motion in the name of Councillor Andrew Carter

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Recorded vote.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Seconded.

*(A recorded vote was taken on the substantive motion)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, here are the results. Present 94, "Yes" 49; abstain 0; "No" 42, so the motion is CARRIED.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: If it weren't for your friends over there.

#### ITEM 5 - REPORTS

(a)

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, we turn back to page 2, item 5 and I call upon Councillor Bentley.

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: I move in terms of the Order Paper, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second.

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

(b)

Again on Reports, (b), Councillor Bentley.

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: I move in terms of the Order Paper, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I call for a vote again. Those in favour? Against? Thank you, that is CARRIED.

#### ITEM 6 – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 6, Recommendations of the General Purposes Committee. Councillor Andrew Carter.

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

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Second, Lord Mayor.

(a)

THE LORD MAYOR: Those in favour? Against? That is CARRIED.

(b)

THE LORD MAYOR: Those in favour of (b) on your Order Paper. Those against? That is CARRIED.

(c)

THE LORD MAYOR: Then we go to (c). Those in favour? Those against? That is CARRIED.

(d)

THE LORD MAYOR: We are on (d). Those in favour? Those against? That is CARRIED.

I am pleased to announce that is it for the moment, or for today. Enjoy your tea and thank you for your attendance.

*(The meeting closed at 5.25 p.m.)*

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