

**LEEDS CITY COUNCIL**

**EXTRAORDINARY  
MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

Held on

Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> January 2009

At

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,  
CIVIC HALL, LEEDS

In the Chair:

THE LORD MAYOR  
(Councillor F Robinson)

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**VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS**

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VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF THE EXTRAORDINARY MEETING  
OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL HELD ON WEDNESDAY 28<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2009

THE LORD MAYOR: Good morning and welcome to this Extraordinary Council Meeting. I just remind you about the mobile phone situation and other electrical appliances - if you will make certain they are totally switched off.

ITEM 2 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

THE LORD MAYOR: I will invite the Assistant Chief Executive to make a statement with regard to the items of interest.

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE: I have been asked by the Whips to give advice regarding declarations of interest on this item. The White Paper motion and the amendment are very specific and relate to the Inspection Reports received regarding Adult Social Care and Children's Services. The motion and amendment relate to how Council should respond to the reports, take things forward and deal with things structurally. Therefore, I do not consider that members have an interest to declare on this motion if they have relatives receiving services from either Adult Social Care or Children's Services, or they are employed by an organisation that provides such services, or they are a Chair or a Member of any organisation that provides such services.

I think it is only extremely exceptional circumstances that any Member needs to declare an interest in this particular item bearing in mind the wording of the motion and the amendments.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. The list of written declarations submitted by members is on display in the ante room and on deposit in the public galleries and has been circulated to each Member's place in the Chamber. Are there any further individual declarations or corrections? I see none. Thank you, then.

I invite members to show by a show of hands whether they have read the list and agree to the contents that are already listed. Would you just signify, please? (*A vote was taken*) Thank you. We are all fully aware of the situation.

ITEM 3 - WHITE PAPER MOTION - ADULT SOCIAL CARE,  
INDEPENDENCE, WELLBEING AND CHOICE INSPECTION

THE LORD MAYOR: We come to the White Paper motion in the name of Councillor Coupar. Could I call on Councillor Coupar, therefore?

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Firstly, I must say how sad I and my group are that we have had to call this extra meeting of Council under such serious circumstances. The three recent inspections carried out by the Commission for Social Care inspectorate determined Adult Social Services as "poor" in carrying out its duty to protect vulnerable adults from risk. It furthermore states that it was uncertain in the Authority's capacity to put things right.

The Commission only rated Children's Services as "adequate" in their ability to protect vulnerable children. That is why, Lord Mayor, it is important that all members of Council come together in this Chamber to allow these failings to be debated.

We in the Labour Group are concerned that similarity between the inspections of those services demonstrate the state the Council's services have been allowed to

fall into. members of Council need to know how serious this is. The effect of us as a Council failing to protect vulnerable adults and children can be dangerous or even fatal.

Under the control of this administration we have gone from a "good" performance with promising prospects to a one star "poor" performance with uncertain prospects. This is completely unacceptable. So much for your confident statements that you know how to run this city. The only thing you seem capable of is running this city into the ground.

This is an appalling record of failure that is unprecedented. The three inspection reports are a damning indictment on the ruling administration's capability to protect vulnerable people. The inspectors noted that the Council had a record of providing services above the minimum standard but during the year some key weaknesses had emerged.

Let us take a look at the Independence, Wellbeing and Choice Inspection which took place in early August. The Commission stated that Leeds' safeguarding of adults was poor, the arrangements in Leeds were inadequate and did not satisfactorily protect vulnerable people. The detailed information on these failings is startling. For instance, investigations were inconsistent; strategy meetings sporadic and protection plans ineffective. They went on to say that risk situations are not being identified and workers had not understood safeguarding in the context of eligibility and risk and had failed to offer appropriate services. They further said the Safeguarding Board was weak and ineffective.

Even more damning was the judgment on the capacity to improve things in Leeds as being uncertain. The report states that leadership and governance arrangements in relation to adult safeguarding were unacceptably weak and that a cost rather than quality culture had evolved. The Annual Performance Assessment again raised concerns about safeguarding. The leadership and governance arrangements were seen as unsatisfactory. The inspectors of both reports found that elected members do not have adequate and timely access to information about the performance of the service.

The delivery of personalised services was judged as only adequate and they identified people experiencing difficulties with the service when leaving hospital. Again, the out of hours service was also seen as needing to improve and they recognised that large parts of the service was yet to be modernised.

This group on these benches has faith in the current Director of Adult Social Care and her staff to improve this dire situation. However, the same cannot be said for the administration and, in particular, the Executive Member. Surely, Councillor Harrand, having received these reports there can be no doubt that the department under your stewardship has deteriorated to such an extent that you must take responsibility for this decline and resign your post as Executive Member with immediate effect.

Some of my colleagues will speak in more detail about the Annual Performance Assessment of Children's Services. Members of Council must know that this report is just as damning as the adult service. The inspectors criticised the fostering service as inadequate, they raised concerns about the level of teenage pregnancy but, most worryingly, safeguarding children in Leeds was only rated as "adequate". Timely reviews of Looked After Children was still below the national average and NEET levels were still very high. The children of Leeds deserve better than this, Councillor Golton. You are failing these children and you are accountable

for that. It is time you took these criticisms seriously and did not treat them with the flippant attitude that you have done.

Lord Mayor, I did say at the start that this Group takes the inability of this administration to protect people very seriously and I will tell you why. In reality people's lives are affected in a detrimental way. It is OK for all of us to sit in a warm room and debate the issues raised. What about the people out there relying on someone intervening and protecting them? It seems they cannot rely on you helping them.

I have had a number of cases come to my attention where your system has failed the people of Leeds. For instance, an elderly gentleman living alone who was admitted to hospital after a fall. He was waiting in hospital for a social worker to arrange a care package for his return home. This was not done and he eventually returned home without any care whatsoever. He quickly deteriorated and had to be readmitted to hospital where a further request for social services was made. Unfortunately this gentleman died still waiting for social services.

Another case of a vulnerable adult living alone, still in the house he was brought up in but his father had died some time ago. Neighbours reported he was walking the streets half clothed; he would eat from scraps on the floor or out of the rubbish bin; the clothes he did wear were dirty and smelly. He would knock on the neighbours' doors requesting ambulances because he stated he had tried to kill himself. These neighbours were obviously concerned about his welfare and contacted Adult Social Care several times but to no avail until a major incident recently brought him to the attention of the Housing Department and Adult Social Care. Fortunately nobody died in this incident but it is only by the grace of God and not to any of your credit.

These cases demonstrate the fact that your failing leadership and mismanagement has impacted on the people of Leeds. It is clear that from these three inspections, all of which reveal the inadequacy in safeguarding, that you, the administration, are responsible. This is a shambolic, diabolical mess and you in those seats have reduced this once highly rated service to its lowest grade ever - in fact some of the lowest grades in England.

What is blindingly obvious is you neither have the political will nor the wherewithal to get social care in this city to the level it needs to be to serve the people of Leeds as they deserve to be treated.

Councillor Harrand, in your response to the publication of the inspection reports, you did not display one ounce of humility or sorrow for the people you have so disgracefully and shamefully let down. In fact, you belittled the findings, stating that you already knew about the failings and work had already begun before the inspectors came to Leeds. If that is the case, Peter, why did the inspector find such a shocking state of affairs when they arrived?

If we take a look at other Councils in our region, they seem to have policy, structure and leadership quite capable of protecting their vulnerable people. Wakefield, for instance, had three stars and a "good" rating for safeguarding. Sheffield has three stars and a "good" rating for safeguarding. Bradford has two stars and a "good" rating for safeguarding. Last of all and worst of all, Leeds, one star and a "poor" rating for safeguarding.

It must beg the question, even from your own benches, that if all these Authorities can make a difference and protect their people, why oh why can't Leeds? You know, colleagues, we keep hearing the same old carrot time and again from

Councillor Harrand - this time next year things will be better. A well known TV character used to say something similar and he was a comedian and a chancer as well. I do hope you did not learn all your skills from him, Peter.

I am sure you will try to convince Council that you know what you are doing and you are taking all necessary steps to put right this disgraceful mess, but it should never have been allowed to degenerate and fail so abysmally in the first place. In truth, Peter, you have let the citizens of Leeds down and it is time you took responsibility and stood down. Lord Mayor, I move the motion. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: I call on Councillor Mulherin to second.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. An amendment in the name of Councillor Harrand, and I call on Councillor Harrand for the amendment.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: I am told I have ten minutes, Lord Mayor. Is that your understanding?

One aspect of the review of the Adult Social Services Department 2008 was deemed to be poor. We accept the inspector's view on this topic and I accept responsibility. I am not going to defend the indefensible - this aspect of our performance was not good enough and I give the Council my assurance that we are putting it right. We were putting it right before we received the report.

We accept the opinion of the inspectors. We also accept his opinion of the five equally important areas where he said we were good. He said we were good on serving the health and wellbeing of the people in Leeds, improving the quality of life for people, making a positive contribution to society, the inspector reviewed our work on combating discrimination and said we were good, he reviewed our work on economic wellbeing and said it was good.

Thanks to officers for that. I take responsibility for the first bit. It would be appropriate, perhaps, if the resolution acknowledged all the good work that is going on and thanked the officers who deliver that good work for the city.

I have read the report from cover to cover. There are paragraphs that are seriously disappointing and I acknowledge this. We do not argue with the 2008 assessment report in this one important area. It was not a surprise. As everyone knows, a paper was brought to the Executive Board in July 2008, before the inspector ever got off the bus. Not many people read it and it was prepared weeks before that. It explained our concern and promised a massive investment to meet the shortcomings. These had been identified by our new Director within months of her joining the city and she had come to the conclusion that nothing short of complete review of the service was necessary and urgent. The paper came to the Exec Board and I do not remember any serious contribution or reservations from the Opposition. Like a patient who goes to a doctor and provides a list of symptoms, we had diagnosed our own problem and we were already prepared to take the expensive medicine.

Before we go into detail let us remind ourselves of the context of today's debate, the wider context of Adult Social Care. As part of a working area of enormous change, Adult Social Care covers a number of areas that matter much to the people we serve, which matter intensely to the people we serve. The number of households in Leeds with intensive packages of home care has risen again in the last

year. The number of people receiving direct payments to choose what they do with their funds has risen from 170 to over 800 in nine months. Delayed discharges from hospital have fallen by 33% in a year. The percentage of small items of equipment delivered within seven days - this really matters to people, this is what they look to us to do - 93% are delivered within seven days.

We have improved service quality in the context of reducing costs and balanced our books over four years. I have said it before, I will never forget the day in 2004 when I was told of the budget deficit that was looming and driving towards us. At the same time we have stabilised our social worker base with a vacancy rate of just 9%, which is now normal for other large cities, and our retention rate is down to the same average.

Lastly, going into the details of the motion itself, I would like to point out that the Annual Performance Assessment which came after the inspection rated our prospects for improvement as "promising". That is not what you just said, Debra. If there had been the slightest doubt about it, it would have stayed at the "uncertain" that he provisionally gave us. He came back, talked to us again and the grading he gave us was "promising", not "uncertain" - a positive change that compliments the city.

Not in mitigation but for a better understanding of the situation, the Council might like to know the inspector examined eleven safeguarding cases out of 166 that were on the books at the time. The growing attention of inspectors on this aspect of Social Services work has had similar implications for other Authorities. There is a wave of these decisions coming across the country from inspectors clearly giving guidance, and it is important to realise that the inspector has not put the Council on anything approaching special measures. Future monitoring of performance will be conducted as it has been for years, with normal levels of contact with the local inspectors. There are many options available to Mr Willis in this direction and he chose the least stringent.

We absolutely agree that Leeds deserves the best safeguarding service possible and that is what we are doing to ensure that this will be provided in the future. Opposition members may have examples of individual cases where vulnerable adults have not been properly safeguarded and it is impossible to guarantee that in every sense they can be completely eliminated; that is just not true, but whilst I have been Exec Board Member for Adult Health and Social Care, no Councillor of any party has ever come to me and said, "There is a failure of safeguarding here, I wish you would take it seriously."

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: No, we have gone to the Director who should have told you.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: There is not much evidence of that either. I think I know the first of the two cases that you referred to, Debra, in your speech. I think it was one in East Leeds, was it not? I think you missed a rather important statistic out about the circumstances of that gentleman's death which would have been relevant to the point you made and you might like to clarify that later.

On receipt of initial feedback from the inspector and without even waiting for his interim report, we started on the following measures. A robust action plan was drawn up which went to the inspector who is going to return to Leeds for an afternoon in March just to monitor progress. I understand he does not think it is necessary to talk to any politicians at that meeting. The Council immediately made available £800,000 to fund the package of measures to strengthen safeguarding. All social workers who undertake adult safeguarding investigations have received extra training

to strengthen and refresh their knowledge and skills - everyone. Ten new senior practitioner posts have been established to carry out safeguarding investigating to improve control to monitor case files. We have had nearly 50 applications for these posts, two-thirds of which come from outside Leeds. A rolling audit of recent and future safeguarding has been undertaken, meaning that we now have systematic independent quality assurance of all our safeguarding work. This will be the best in the country and no doubt Scrutiny Boards will now have to take a closer interest in all that. A city-wide safeguarding partnership for Council, police, probation, health and my colleagues will describe some others, has been renewed and refreshed with a commitment from all organisations at the most senior level - there was a meeting in this building yesterday.

The partnership will be assisted for the first time by a Head of Safeguarding, a post which was advertised before Christmas and for which we have ten strong applicants. Interviews begin this lunchtime. The re-launch of the partnership will be complete by the end of February and will be marked by a major conference during the summer. All Councillors will be invited. The partnership of these bodies will have a written business plan which will be monitorable. The annual reports will provide transparency of the quality of safeguarding work. The Scrutiny Board enquiry into safeguarding is being held when we meet on 11<sup>th</sup> February, a fortnight today.

The advertisements for the new positions went out in December, applications were received this month and appointments will be made in the next few weeks. We are very impressed by the calibre of people who are applying, many again from outside the city. It shows that having Leeds City Council Social Services on your CV is a very desirable step forward in their social services career.

Back to the resolution. There is no mention at all of the good areas of practice or thanks to officers. How would you feel if you were an officer in the city and your performance had been rated "good" and it is totally ignored when the Opposition speak? All I will say is that whoever drafted the resolution should perhaps have spoken to the front benches first. I am sure you would not have missed that out, would you?

So to the section about my standing down. I see it is signed by two members of Council from the same party. That seems a rather restricted point of view. I have not received a single letter, phone call or e-mail from a service user asking me to stand down. I have not received a single letter, phone call or e-mail from any voluntary organisation asking me to stand down. There has not been a letter in the Evening Post. You could not even say that any of your own seven MPs have written a letter and join in - not even George Mudie, the chronic critic of the City Council.

I have received some messages of support from some really unexpected directions. No union branch has contacted me, no Neighbourhood Network has contacted me. Let me make it clear, not one individual body or organisation has asked me to resign. The only people ---

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: We are. We are asking.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: The only people who want me to resign are some members of the Labour Party. This is not enough to persuade me. If this is the only body of people who think I should resign, then perhaps they should apply their own criteria. Presumably the Labour party want all of us to resign at all times don't you? A few years about the Council lost control of half its budget, two-thirds of its staff, when Central Government sent a Minister down to tell us in this very room that we must surrender control of all the city's public education. Whatever you think of the Social Services report, it can be argued that the loss of Education was significant and

some may say more significant than a single “poor” out of seven areas of performance when all the others were “good”. Who resigned when we lost control?

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: I commend the amendment to Council, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Time to go, Peter.

THE LORD MAYOR: A further amendment in the name of Councillor Anne Blackburn. I am sorry, the seconder. I am jumping the gun!

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am afraid you have got five minutes of me before you have got ten minutes of Anne.

First of all I would like to say that I shall not be commenting on Adult Social Services - that has been ably looked after by my colleagues Councillor Harrand. I will, however, make reference to the motion and its comments on Children's Services, particularly the several key criticisms made in there concerning the safeguarding, the quality of our partnership, the quality of Scrutiny and also of course, most importantly, performance within the department.

None of these area are prefect, Lord Mayor, and all are developing areas, as they should be. However, I do find it unhelpful that this motion has come at this time and I do know that the Labour Party and going to try and imply that there is some complacency within the management of these areas. What I will say is that by making those assertions the Labour Party has shown its irresponsibility because the wording of this motion is trite, it is self-serving and, frankly, shameful in the way that it is trying to attempt to ferment disquiet within the people of Leeds in terms of the quality of the services that they are getting for the most vulnerable members of our city. I will address each of those areas in turn, Lord Mayor, being mindful that I have only got five minutes.

Performance. It is true that in our JAR assessment we got “good” and I reported that to Council previously. It is also true, of course, that in our recent APA we have been judged as “adequate”. What is not true is that that implies a deterioration in outcomes for the children of the city. What it does actually say is that there is frustration within the people who are checking our services on behalf of the Ministry that our improvements are not quite happening as quickly as they could be.

What I would say on that, Lord Mayor, is that if you do have a look at the figures for other Authorities in the country, it does become quite clear that this lack of positivity from the department has been spread throughout the country. Out of the eight core cities, six out of the eight have been judged “adequate”.

In terms of the core cities and all our colleagues within the Yorkshire region, not one of them has actually been scored any higher than last year but some have been scored lower. It just shows how serious the Department is to make sure that the ten year plan transformation in Children's Services, is achieved and that they expect the best from the cities' Authorities.

We also share that concern. We would also like to make sure that our improvements are made as quickly as possible and frustratingly, in some areas, they are not going as quickly as we would like.



Quality of partnership. Lord Mayor. I have to say this is particularly galling for me as Chair of the Children in Leeds Partnership, especially since the city has been given beacon status for the quality of its partnership work and the evidence upon which I think this basis was gained was through work done on the Children in Leeds Partnership. It formed the core of the evidence that went to the Department which was awarded that status.

To imply deficiency in this area, Lord Mayor, is an insult to the partners in the police, in the health services, in different Council departments and, most importantly, in the third sector, all of whom have worked with the different partnership bodies to ensure that safeguarding is looked at from all aspects, from all partners involved in the city, but also, importantly, to ensure that pooled resources ensure that every taxpayers' penny spent in the city is well spent and I do know, of course, that Councillor Wakefield has concerns about waste in this area through his previous comments and how much we are spending on making sure that children get transported to and from school in a safe environment.

In terms of the quality of Scrutiny, Lord Mayor - I am aware I am virtually at the end now - I will also say I am particularly encouraged by the attitude that I have from members across the party within this Chamber in terms of their attitude towards Scrutiny. I have got five minutes today to cover an area which involves hundreds and hundreds of people in terms of professionals working in the field and outcomes for thousands of children. Because the Labour Party has chosen to bring this to this Chamber at this point, I have got five minutes to address that, Lord Mayor.

With the Scrutiny Board with our friends and corporate carers I know that I am subject to continual, ongoing, in-depth evaluation and accountability from those people. I trust their judgment higher than I do the leadership of the Labour Party. Lord Mayor, I will leave it there. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: We do now go on to the other amendment and I call upon Councillor Anne Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you very much for that, Lord Mayor. I think your mistake must have been that you were really itching to hear my speech and maybe not Stuart's, but nevertheless I do always appreciate what Stuart has to say even though I might not always agree with him.

I want to try and be fair on this overall because, as a lot of members here will know, I do have a serious interest in social service across the board, adults and children here, as I am sure we all are concerned. I am not putting anybody down.

Let us look at these reports. First of all, the inspector's report for adult services. This was just on two matters that he looked at, preventative services and the safeguarding of adults. He stated that the safeguarding of adults was poor but delivery of personalised services in Leeds was adequate. He did also say that the delivery of preventative services was good and the capacity for improvement was uncertain. These are, as I said, the inspector's comments.

The extent and urgency of adult safeguarding problems have not been identified and overall leadership process and the cascade of performance and service user orientated culture remains inadequate. Case files did not show that referrals have been made to the complaints officer or record subsequent actions. In practice supervision was poor. Senior managers lacked awareness of the quality and practice with no systems in place to check compliance of staff and managers with the departmental policies.

Overall leadership had been weak for some years but had improved from a low base line in recent years. I will say that again. Overall leadership had been weak for some years but had improved from a low base line in recent years. Let us not forget that, OK?

I know that there is a 24-point action plan which has been given to the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board to scrutinise as a working party and yes, we are satisfied that points are in place to make improvements as things stand at the moment. Also, we are concerned that the Adult Safeguarding Board, which is made up of various bodies, outside bodies.

I read in the report that 90% of the membership of the Adult Safeguarding Board, as I said, were outside bodies who were renowned for sending substitute members and I have been told that our officers have now asked them to send senior representatives to this who can make decisions. Also, that the Chief Officer of Commissioning is now chairing the Safeguarding Board, so this is an improvement there.

We move on to the Annual Performance Assessment for 2008. Out of nine areas five are good, one adequate, one poor and one uncertain and one promising. The "poor" one is maintaining dignity and respect, the adequate one is increased choice and control and the uncertain one is leadership. This to me is the leadership of the department.

Now, I go on to the Children's Annual Performance Assessment, the Children and Young People. Out of seven areas we received "adequate" in five and "good" in two, although I accept that some of these grades are not helped when the government statistics they are measured against, as in teenage pregnancy, goes back to 2006. However, the other thing I have been informed of is criminal record checks which, as we know should be reviewed every three years, have not been done so in all cases in the case of our foster carers. Again while I understand this is being rectified, it is certainly something that we cannot afford to let slip.

I think we all know and believe that social services is special. It is special because it is dealing with vulnerable people and to us, the Green Group here, we believe it is not the job for Scrutiny to be doing. I do appreciate the work they do, that they are given to look after the 24 points, I do not want to put the Scrutiny Group down at all but we have to be concerned where we are going from here, once these improvements have been made. Therefore, that is why we are asking, we believe that we have got to go forward from there and that is why we have put this amendment today which is asking for an Advisory Committee to the Executive Board covering all aspects of social care, both for adults and children, to be set up.

We want things to improve, we accept that points are put in place and things are put in place for improvements but it is not something that we can let slip. We have got to improve and continue to improve and that is why I am moving this amendment today. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

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

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, to comment, Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The first point I would make is that the Adult Services report is a snapshot and is based on the experiences

of the inspector, good or bad, on a particular visit. Any reactions must be based on a rational examination of his comments in a reasoned and challenging role which we should adopt while accepting the report. A constructive scepticism is often wise and I bring my own personal experiences of adult services in another council area.

My mother had a minor stroke in December last year. This followed a severe stroke in 1996 which has left her without use of her right side. She was admitted into Pontefract Hospital - she lives in Wakefield - and the local hospital had no beds. Since the beginning of January they have been in discussions with Wakefield adult services to arrange her hospital discharge. I met social workers on four separate occasions and rung on four others in an attempt to get the care plan resolved. Action has been sporadic and has often been driven by the patient's representatives, not the social workers. At a recent meeting I was told that Wakefield's Homecare Services could not provide the care she needs and I needed to contact private sector care providers. My experience of adult services in Wakefield is that they are ineffective and abdicate responsibility to carers. Wakefield Metropolitan Council was inspected by CSCI in 2008 and was assessed as a three star authority, a "good" rating with a capacity to improve as "excellent." My personal experience does not match up with their assessment.

The point I am making is that the CSCI assessment on its own is based on the limited investigations of the inspection team and the reality may be very different.

The second point to make is that this inspection, even if it needs to be robustly scrutinised, does show some significant problems within adult services. It paints a picture of administrative shortcuts taken and a level of complacency challenging traditional social work practice. We must all accept some responsibility for these failings, whether it is the administration, Adult and Children's Services Scrutiny Boards, Executive Boards, and all Council members. We are all guilty of accepting previous positive reports without developing an environment of constantly challenging what is going on within those services.

The third point to make is to be clear that any failure is matched by failure in other organisations, in particular the Primary Care Trust. That they are failure on both the Adult Services and Children's Services reports is clear.

Calling for resignations of individuals on the PCT for this failure is as fatuous as calling for resignations of Executive Board members. What is required now is a commitment to genuine partnership to resolve the challenges we all face to improve the outcomes of both adult and children. Playing petty party politics might be fun for a political class but will do nothing to promote the strength of action we need to adopt.

The fourth point to make is that much of the work of Adult Services and Children's Services is good work and is recognised as such. We have problems, there is no avoiding this truth, but neither service has the bleak future many politicians would suggest. The White Paper from the Labour Group does not recognise the good work many undertake in both services and its constant negativity and demand for resignations does nothing to assist staff morale and to galvanise support for everyone to accept their personal responsibility to face these challenges.

The fifth point to make is that there are some significant structural and almost institutional attitudes to change within both services. The approach which some staff have that one size fits all must change. The traditional paternalistic view held by some that dictates how and when services will be provided has to be challenged as well. There are individuals who fully oppose this democratisation of such service

where the service user become part of the decision making partnership. They have to be robustly challenged. Their trendy approach to all talk and no action must end.

The final point to make is that any support we give is conditional support. It must be based on a thorough review and the introduction of welcome reforms to change present practice where it is unsatisfactory. Scrutiny Boards must meet this process and receive regular reports of progress.

We would also support the proposal for the Chief Executive to bring regular reports about the effectiveness of our key partnerships and those partners must accept their responsibility and not abdicate their role in developing the solutions that are required. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, if all things were as they should be I thought I might have had to declare a prejudicial interest in this matter. My brother was crippled in a road accident in 1983 and we have looked after him at home since he came out of hospital in 1990. We did try to work with Leeds Social Services for a while but they were worse than useless at that time. I am not sure how long it is since we last had contact with Social Services - it must be at least twelve years and possibly as many as 15.

Leeds may be better or worse than other Authorities but it still has some of the marks of a social service which are run for the benefit and convenience of the department. This is a national problem. Every Councillor in the land has had a booklet recently from the Local Government Association which, among other things, has a list of social services terms which are in and terms which are out for the 2009 season - a bit like the snakes and ladders list of celebrities in OK! and Hello magazines.

For the 2009 season we must say "not disabled", not "able bodied"; "has" instead of "suffers from"; "accessible toilets" and not "disabled toilets"; "parking for orange badge or blue badge holders", not "disabled parking"; carers must be "personal assistants"; "carers (only to be used when an individual disabled person cannot make a decision for her/himself)" is out and "family members, relatives and friends" is in, so I suppose I must be a family member, which does not really tell you anything at all.

Only in the world of social work can thousands of pounds be spent on such a thing when babies are dying for want of protection.

Peter Harrand has done a lot since he took charge. The inspection report has acknowledged that Leeds Social Services budgets were out of control in the 2004/5 financial year. It is likely that if nothing had been done the entire Council would have been ruined. More recently budgeting and financial controls have been much better and there are signs that cultural changes are beginning to take place in Social Services. Those who have read the paper will see that the inspectors acknowledge that elected members have given increasingly strong leadership in recent years. Obviously not enough is being done but momentum will be lost if Councillor Harrand resigned. The more obstinate to change resistant officers would claim that they had lasted him out or seen him off. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I feel a little like the accused without having had the charge sheet read out, so I am going to deal with some parts of this report on Children Services under the five headings that are there in Children Services.

The major strengths - Be Healthy. We need to know, I think, in this debate, that Leeds is well ahead of many Councils in the proportion of schools achieving Healthy School Status and, in fact, the Authority is a beacon Authority in this area.

On Enjoy and Achieve, the contribution of services to improving the outcomes of children and young people in this aspect is good, according to the report, and the Council's analysis is consistent with the evidence.

Enjoy and Achieve. The quality of education in schools and Early Years settings is mostly good, as shown by the Ofsted inspections. Standards are rising in Key Stage 4 and closing the gap with the national averages. The provision for children and young people with learning difficulties or disabilities is good, generally. The great majority of children with LDD are educated successfully in mainstream sessions. Positive contributions. Children and young people with LDD have good opportunities to contribute to decision making about their own lives and can influence the development of the services.

Economic Wellbeing. There is good range of 14 to 19 collaborative provision involving schools, colleges, workplace providers. The wide range of post-16 provision includes vocational pathways covering every sector subject and providing a range of ability levels. The proportion of young people achieving level 2 qualifications by the age of 19 is increasing and the gap between Leeds and similar Councils is closing.

A high proportion of children in care are moving into higher and further education and the number of children going to university from care has increased and increased.

The only two areas that so far have been mentioned on the charge sheet are NEET figures and the looked after children. I think I have dealt with looked after children. The NEET figures, yes, are always troubling.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Yes, they are.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Particularly not the NEET figures themselves, because those are young people we know and we are working with. It is actually the unknown figure that is the one to worry about, the children who disappear off our radar and we have done a vast amount in order to get those figures under control and to bring them down and they are much lower now than they were when I took over the portfolio and they have continued to drop. They fluctuate throughout the year. After young people leave school in July the figures do go up and they fluctuate, so you have got to look at the yearly figures. We are doing more and it is only about six months ago that I talked to officers because I became concerned that this group of young people, the unknowns, contained a lot of youngsters who have low level health problems that that more should be done. It is quite interesting that while I was talking to officers about what I want to see introduced here in Leeds, it was also the subject later of the Prince's Trust report into NEET figures.

We are working on NEET figures. We have put more resources into getting the NEET figures under control. We do not want any young person in this city not enjoying employment, training or education. I want a zero figure and I am working for that. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR CHAPMAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I feel that it is a sad state of affairs when I have to stand in this Chamber and educate some of the members opposite me on the principles and philosophy of Scrutiny. As a former

teacher, education is a passion of mine so if what I am going to say does not persuade you, I hope at least you will find it enlightening.

Scrutiny in Local Government Guidance advocated genuine non-partisan working which places the needs and aspirations of the community above the consideration of party politics. This principle I firmly uphold, along with Councillor Hyde and many of my other fellow Scrutiny colleagues, but I am worried. The Labour Group's White Paper motion calls for an end to this administration scrutinising itself. As the Chair of the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board I am not whipped and therefore have the autonomy to make my own decisions independently.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Really?

COUNCILLOR CHAPMAN: Is the Labour Group insinuating that their Scrutiny Chairs are whipped? I am most concerned by this. On this basis why would the administration agree that additional Labour Scrutiny Chairs are the best way forward? Interestingly, the composition of Scrutiny Chairs when the Labour Group was in power in 2003 - five were chaired by Labour, two by the Opposition - the same as in this administration - so you will excuse me, Councillor Coupar, if I find your statement a little hypocritical.

Members of the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board formulate and voice their own views and opinions which fuels debate but as far as the outcomes for the work programme, enquiries and recommendations are concerned, we form a consensus and agree a way forward as a Board. On these matters we should not and do not act independently.

Councillor Coupar sits on this Board and has therefore participated in the formulation and setting of the Adult Social Care work programme. In fact, five members of the Labour Group - not always the same ones - have attended each Scrutiny Board since the beginning of this municipal year. These members knew that safeguarding had been a priority since July and have been party to a discussion on that very topic. It seems clear to me that there is a distinct lack of communication within the Labour Group.

To clarify, safeguarding was discussed in July, September and October. The Board, having expressed its intention to look at this matter in earnest, was advised that the information, the inspector's report it needed, was not available and was actually embargoed. Again, government guidance states that Scrutiny should work in a deliberative way which underpins an evidence-based approach. We needed the facts and they were not available until 3<sup>rd</sup> December.

When Councillor Wakefield wrote to you, Lord Mayor, on 19<sup>th</sup> December, the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board had already met on 10<sup>th</sup> December and agreed collectively a way forward. Monitoring overall progress of Adult Social Service performance against their objectives as set out in their action plan commenced on 12<sup>th</sup> December during a working group session. This was the first of many meetings scheduled to run until 30<sup>th</sup> April 2009.

On 10<sup>th</sup> December the Scrutiny Board resolved to undertake two specific safeguarding enquiries into strengthening the strategic partnership and implementation of quality assurance processes and procedures. The Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board has also invited the Health Scrutiny Board members to join them for these items for collaborative investigations.

On 10<sup>th</sup> December the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board also recommended that the Health Scrutiny Board undertake an enquiry into hospital discharges.

COUNCILLOR: That is incorrect.

COUNCILLOR CHAPMAN: This enquiry started last week and two members of the Adult Social Care Scrutiny Board joined them for this item.

I hope members will agree that the approach has been considered, constructive, informed and demonstrates best practice as defined by the Labour Government, not a fruitless and uninformed exercise which at the end of the day would not serve to best protect the people of Leeds. I am afraid, Councillor Coupar, our actions speak louder than your White Paper. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am not the Chair of a Scrutiny Board, I am not responsible like Peter or Stuart for Children's Services. I am just a lay Councillor - I think that is the best word - as we all are, actually, and I think we have a responsibility as corporate parents, responsible adults and local representatives to ask the question about how well the Council is providing services, particularly for vulnerable people within our city.

There has been a slight contrast today. We have had a very negative comment here and on this side we have had a lot of very positive steps that have been taken by ... *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: On the one hand and on the other.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: It is interesting, Lord Mayor, is it not, and I hope the people in the balcony picked that up, because as soon as we talked about positive steps for vulnerable people, who laughed? Who laughed at that point? This is not funny.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: We laugh at you.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: We are laughing at him, not at them.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you. This is about vulnerable people. What we are actually saying, and I think it is quite honest of the people over here, we say quite categorically there is something gone wrong in the system. We have admitted that, we have faced up to it. Not only have we faced up to it - we faced up to it somewhat earlier than the inspector pointed it out to us and I think as we have heard here, there has been a lot of work around what we do about it.

There is a lot right with what is happening within Social Services and Children's Services in Leeds. I think we have to get into context some of these things about safeguarding and in particular about what happened in the Baby P case, because that is the one that is on everybody's mind is it not? You say to yourself, that is a terrible thing, that should never, ever have happened, but what we forget when we concentrate on that one particular issue, if you look at the NSPCC they will tell you that every week in this country three children are killed - killed, murdered - by their parents or their parent's partner.

That does not get into the system but actually thank goodness in the last six years we have been running this Council we have not had anything like that in Leeds. *(interruption)*

COUNCILLOR ATHA: You just had two.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: I put that down to a very robust system that we have in place. As a local Councillor and as a corporate parent, as the responsible adult, I feel that we have to feel ourselves confident that our departments are working properly. I feel that confidence.

Councillor Coupar raised two points in relation to I suppose what you would describe as vulnerable adults and gave two cases where the system did not work well and I think Peter owned up to that. I think it is fair to say that I can probably echo that because if I look back over the last year I have been here about the people who have contacted me about social services, I would say that I have actually had two cases where the system did not work properly and I think it was a failure of communication, I will be honest about that, and I think once I invited Peter but if you just talk to the right person you get the conversations happening and it works.

What I will tell you is, I get regular compliments about our staff. Let us be honest, I have got a note down here, who would be a social worker when all that happens is that you are being attacked by the Labour Party?

I will put on record my support for all our social workers, be it the humblest care assistant all the way up to the Directors, quite frankly, to Peter and to Stuart. They are doing an excellent and we really ought to recognise that and ought to value their activity as, in fact, the inspections have done. Something is slightly wrong, it has been dealt with, it will be sorted out. I think that is the message we should be sending, not a negative political point scoring message that we are getting.  
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I start by saying that the most recent contribution to the debate in my mind totally justified why we have called this debate (applause) and I shall always be willing to change when I have heard what he has got to say.

I want to start by saying as well that it gives us no pleasure to be in the position of calling this Special Council but we believe that it is the purpose of Councillors to protect our vulnerable residents. It must be our most important role and we have superb people working for our services and they must have our support and protection also.

If there are any failures in any way in delivering that duty, then it is up to us to demand answers. There is no question at all that the tragedies in Haringey and other Local Authorities have brought matters into the spotlight of media attention. The public is therefore much more aware of safeguarding issues for both children and adults. I have to say we have always been aware of our responsibilities and yes, of course, we should celebrate our success but we make absolutely no apology at all for our determination to expose the weaknesses in our services and to keep putting pressure on you to improve.

Sadly, the tragic circumstances that families find themselves in are not new and the increased Scrutiny is to be welcomed. The frustration for us in opposition is that we have been highlighting weaknesses in both adult and Children's Services over the past three years and have had our concerns dismissed and brushed away. We have been told again and again that everything is fine and improving. This has happened in this Chamber, it has happened in the Executive Board. Now we are in a position where we have two reports, covering both adults and children, that both reveal deeply worrying weaknesses in our services and highlight the particular issues we have been questioning over the past few years.



Let us focus on Children's Services. I am not sure if you feel reassured by Councillor Golton's contribution.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: No.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: I believe he is still in denial about what is actually going on. Experience from our own Wards has told us that on the ground service delivery is not being given the top priority by this administration and it is no surprise that the APA flags up the high number of social worker vacancies and that is specifically highlighted in the report on Leeds. Isn't this the first thing that headteachers tell us again and again - there are not enough social workers on the ground to do the work that needs to be done. I have personally raised this about issues in my Ward and I still do not see that being resolved.

We raised this with Councillor Golton and he waves it away saying, "Look at the JAR report. Everything is fine." Well, Stuart, is not fine and we have been telling you since you came into this post that it is not fine. I hope now that you will start to take notice. Your complacency has been breathtaking. The APA report states clearly that key weaknesses have emerged over the past year. That is your responsibility, your failure. Perhaps now you will tell us what you intend to do.

What exactly were you thinking of? The detail in the earlier report clearly flagged up problem areas and also stated, I have to say, that at that stage our capacity to improve is good, but even then the staying safe and economic categories were only classed as "adequate". There were no areas of excellence.

I believe the children of Leeds deserve excellent services. Shame on you, Stuart, for not taking these signs seriously. The truth of the matter is that under your watch performance has fallen from overall "good" to overall "adequate". The signs of weakness have been there throughout but you have failed to take action to stop the decline. We want answers, Stuart. We want confidence that you are up to the job, which we do not have at the moment. How are you going to stop the further decline from adequate to inadequate? How are you going to stop the drift downwards that will result in our children receiving inadequate care? This is your watch. We want answers and, above all, we want action. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR E TAYLOR: My Lord Mayor, fellow Councillors. First I would like to thank Councillor Campbell. It is not funny, not at all. It is not funny for Shannon Matthews this minute we speak and many more in her situation.

We on this side of the Chamber have long stated that we have concerns about the way Adult Social Care. We have long argued that your priorities are wrong and that you are taking services away from people who look to the Council for support.

What is worse is that your decisions have meant that elderly and vulnerable people in this city are not being treated with the level of dignity and respect that they deserve.

The recent the Annual Performance Assessment (or APA) report of the Commission for Social Care inspector highlights this issue and was especially critical of the Council's ability to deal with risks that may potentially befall our elderly and vulnerable people.

This report of the Independence, Wellbeing and Choice inspector are very critical of this Council's record on safeguarding. Safeguarding is the protection of elderly and vulnerable people from abuse. Abuse can take many forms, such as

physical violence, misappropriation of someone's possessions or the withdrawing of medication. All of these things are unacceptable and must not be allowed to continue to happen. Unfortunately such abuse could be going on in our city right now and we could not know, simply because you did not or are unable to gauge if some abuse could be happening or is currently going on.

The report praised the quick response that takes place when such abuse is reported but this is not enough. We should be able to identify where potential risk may occur and eliminated them as soon as possible before they cause a problem. Sadly, this is not the case. Many of our elderly and vulnerable people are being left to defend for themselves. Management within the Adult Social Care Department are unable to identify potential risk and the basic level of case work administration to support this simply does not exist.

These problems stem from the lack of leadership and direction that you are giving the Director of our services. The whole safeguarding process is flawed because you have not set out a strong enough vision of what should happen and under what circumstances intervention is needed.

As a result, the APA report states that procedures are weak and poorly implemented, managers do not know when to intervene in cases and even if they did, they would not know how as the procedures either do not exist or have not been properly explained to staff. This is furthered by the protracted nature of *(inaudible)* meetings and the hit and miss nature of partnership working. We have also allowed the Safeguarding Board to drift so it provides no guidance. The Board should be giving leadership and guidance to other social care departments. Perhaps an independent Chair would make this Board more effective and give more direction to managers.

One of the most damning comments in the report is that the inspectors see it as a cost rather than a quality focused culture. As I said earlier, we for some time felt that you have got the priority wrong and I think this statement not only serves as indication of this view, it is essential that either the current Executive Board for Adult Social Care starts showing proper leadership on this issue or that you find someone that will as soon as possible.

We simply cannot carry on placing the elderly and vulnerable at risk of abuse because we are either too scared or too penny-pinching to take decisive action that is required. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR V MORGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Fellow Councillors, I also wish to comment in support of the White Paper submitted in the name of Councillor Coupar.

Keeping children safe from harm has always been something that this Council has striven to do. I am happy to say that and at no time has this been more relevant than now in the aftermath of the terrible case of Baby P in Haringey. The huge amount of media attention that this issue has received highlighted it and it has meant that people are now questioning the way that the Local Authority safeguards the wellbeing of its children, and rightly so.

Unfortunately the APA assessment of services for children and young people has not done a great deal to reassure those living within Leeds. The report, as has already been mentioned, deemed the way the department for Children's Services here in Leeds deals with this as only "adequate". That word will pop up a few times in this speech. This is simply not good enough and, coupled with the failings within Adult Social Care demonstrate that this administration has failed to put in place a

provision to safeguard its citizens during the two most vulnerable periods of their lives.

We on this side of the Chamber are yet to be convinced that you have put in place an action plan to improve this situation or that you will be able to show the level of leadership the department needs to enable them to do so. These are concerns that are shared by the inspectors who only rated your capacity to improve as “adequate” - that word again.

As a member of the Children Services Scrutiny Board, I want to know that as a Scrutineer we have done all we can to make sure children are safe. We need to know exactly what is going on and we must be free to ask all the right and most pertinent questions. I note that in the Independence, Wellbeing and Choice inspection in Adult Social Services it was highlighting that elected members did not have access to adequate - again that word - data, and therefore could not be confident that minimum standards were being achieved. The same could easily be said, of course, of the Children’s Services. Hopefully we can assume that in the light of this less than excellent inspection you will be taking swift action to improve these matters.

Just to finish, I would like to remind those who may remember, just under three years ago I stood here and made my maiden speech on the poverty and deprivation of children in my Ward and I cried. Just under three years ago, and here I am back again. You have all seen the advert - it is no good crying - no-one comes. I say no more. Thank you. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR YEADON: My Lord Mayor, fellow Councillors. I would like also to support the White paper submitted in the name of Councillor Coupar. I do not believe that anybody in this room believes it is acceptable to intentionally put vulnerable adults at risk but I do believe some of you fail to recognise the every day human cost of what we mean when we talk about neglecting the needs of vulnerable people.

I have first hand experience of the human cost of neglect. I have seen what happens when the system fails. Sadly my neighbour is one of those individual adults who has been left uncared for, forgotten and alone. I want to tell you about my neighbour because I want you to really understand that your failure to protect people like him strips these people of their dignity, independence and security.

My neighbour is 88 years old. Having fought for his country, worked and paid taxes all his life, for the first time in his 88 years he needs some help. Realising this in itself is tough but just before Christmas this frail gentleman fell while walking to get his shopping. Frightened and in pain, he managed to get himself home. He physically could not leave his house and so he stayed at home alone with no food for five days until another elderly neighbour happened to call in.

COUNCILLOR: Do you live next door?

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Good neighbour, aren’t you?

COUNCILLOR YEADON: He lives at the end of my street. (*interruption*)

COUNCILLOR ATHA: My Lord Mayor, can we ask - this is the way they spoil things.

COUNCILLOR YEADON: Would you like to listen to what happened to my neighbour? No. At this stage the neighbour who found him called me and a doctor,

desperate to find him some help, so I referred him to emergency social services. I referred him to the people who I believed would protect him, the experts, but the experts failed him. Due to his health he was unable to speak on the phone so they sent him a letter but due to his failing eyesight he could not read. The letter told him that he had to contact them within seven days if he was to receive help. It was only when I visited that he was able to hear the letter.

If I had not been there what would have happened? He would have been abandoned. He would have been a prisoner in his own home, frightened, ill and in pain, physically unable to get to the shops he would have gradually got weaker and I fear we would have been talking about the tragic end to the life of a wonderful man.

What is often forgotten is that in many cases a lack of care affects more than just the vulnerable individual. This is certainly the case for a female constituent with learning disabilities. She is supposedly getting support from social services so she can live a safe, independent life. Unfortunately, this is not the case. The gaps left in her care have led to gangs of young people exploiting her and her home. I was alerted to her circumstances by an elderly couple who were terrified by the youths that had targeted this young lady. These kids had befriended the woman so that they can use drugs and drink alcohol in her home. The police have been called out on countless occasions and the couple living next to her had been threatened with violence.

The lady's care had collapsed. She is not being protected, she is at risk. On top of her individual risk the elderly people living near her are scared and questions have to be asked regarding the welfare of the young people, many of whom are under the age of 16.

This would not have happened if the right care had been put in place. I know that there are many dedicated members of staff in Children and Adult Services and we do value them, but the failures in the Civic Hall can be demonstrated in every community. This should not be happening. You are responsible for making sure vulnerable people are safe. You are responsible for making sure they can live independently. You are responsible for making sure that they can do so with dignity. Isn't it about time you started to fulfil your responsibilities? *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR KENDALL: My Lord Mayor, I would like to deal with the section of the Labour motion that comments on the effectiveness of our co-operation and partnership with outside bodies. As well as the Local Authority there are many organisations involved in adult safeguarding. There are many, many more involved in Adult safeguarding than the Labour motion mentions. To list just a few, the motion mentions the NHS and the voluntary sector. Yes, they are vital partners but why is there no mention of the police or the private sector? Surely there is a need for safeguarding vigilance here just as much as in the public sector.

I could list well over 20 partners on the Leeds Safeguarding Adult Board. Those outside the Council range from the Crown Prosecution Service to the Service User and Carer Alliance, to name but two. Among those within the Council, in addition, of course, to Adult Social Care Service and Children Leeds, are Supporting People and the Intermediate Care Team. If that is not evidence of a wide-ranging partnership I don't know what is.

We have accepted that in the past partnerships in safeguarding have been weak - the inspectors told us so. He also said that partnership workers health organisations had been hindered by the restructuring of the five PCTs into one. However, crucially the inspector went on to say, "Sound progress and good relationships were established in 2007." Partnerships are something Leeds is

renowned for and as soon as conditions within the new PCT permitted, we immediately began rebuilding those working relations.

You have already heard Councillor Harrand say that the city-wide safeguarding partnership has been renewed and refreshed. Importantly it now has its membership drawn from the most senior levels of the component partners. It is hugely encouraging that such a highly committed fresh start has been made.

Here are a few more things the inspector had to say about partnership in Leeds: current strategic partnerships were strong; the new corporate strategic management arrangements had improved partnership working in the Council; and good vision was given through the Local Area Agreement; lastly, corporate partnerships were improving and the council had secured beacon status for strategic partnership work in 2007.

Not all partnerships are high level or strategic. On the front line where the work gets done, there are contacts and partnerships taking place all the time between hospital discharge and intermediate care. There is partnership working. There are partnerships between GPs and Community Chair to make sure people get the support they need in the home. The Council has funding partnerships with our fantastic Neighbourhood Networks, who support so many older people. There are partnerships between the NHS and our equipment service. These ensure that people get the help they need to remain safely at home for as long as possible. Our Telecare service works closely with the NHS. It uses the latest assisted technology so that people can be discharged early and safely from hospital, or avoid having to be admitted at all.

I could go on but I hope I have made the point that there are many hugely effective partnerships going on all the time. The one is safeguarding that gave cause for concern and that has been reinforced and strengthened in response to the report.

I will end by mentioning our most important partnership to people, especially those who are vulnerable and need our social care services and not forgetting our carers.

It is a sad thing that this debate, far from assisting the people of Leeds has served only to raise anxieties in a totally unnecessary way. In putting down this motion the group opposite has sent out a strong message that they put politics before people. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR W HYDE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I rise to refute what I consider anyway to be the disgraceful and scurrilous attack on both myself and Councillor Chapman which appears in the first bullet point of this appalling White Paper.

What I am talking about is the astonishing implication that to ensure proper accountability Scrutiny Boards should not be chaired by members of the administration.

Really, Lord Mayor, this is amazing. I would have thought sound advice would have been given by the leading members opposite to point out that Scrutiny Board Chairmanships and memberships are in fact based on central government - their government's practice in Westminster. Let me enlighten you, Councillor Coupar. They are called Select Committees. You might have heard of them. Select Committees, there are 31 of them. Ten are chaired by Conservative MPs but no fewer than 17 are chaired by Labour MPs. This is the model on which our Scrutiny

process is based, so it rather puts you between a rock and a hard place, does it not? Either you are saying your own government has got it wrong...

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I think you are the rock.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Don't you believe it.

COUNCILLOR W HYDE: You can say that if you want. If you are not, you can only be alleging that Councillor Chapman and myself are failing to uphold the impartiality of Scrutiny. This, I would suggest to Council, is demonstrably untrue and I would ask ourselves to remind ourselves of four points which clearly illustrate that.

The first is that Scrutiny is a consensus activity, therefore the political party of the Chair is quite separate and has nothing to do with the conclusions of the Board. The second point is that the rules on Scrutiny require political proportionality which usually allows the administration majority on any board, regardless of the political party of the Chair.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: That is all right then.

COUNCILLOR W HYDE: I say "usually" because in the case of Children's Services, as again you should know, there are ten co-opted members alongside the eleven Councillor members. Five of these have statutory voting rights so this means that there can never, ever be a political majority on Children's Services Scrutiny.

The third point is that any member of the Board is entitled to ask for an item to be added to a work programme - any member.

The fourth point is the Children's Services Board has never in living memory had recourse to a minority report - it has rarely, in fact, had recourse to a vote at all. The recent call-in meeting, as everybody knows, was unanimous in agreeing to release the call-in decision for implementation. If that does not prove the independence of the Board, I really do not know what does.

Clearly, the administration is not scrutinising itself, which is what appears in your paper.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: It is.

COUNCILLOR W HYDE: Just a couple of other quick points. The Joint Area Review Inspection Report in 2008 said this about Scrutiny of Children's Services:

"Children's and Young People's Scrutiny function is also adding value. Wide representation, clear focus on key issues and performance and a good tracking system to ensure that recommendations are followed through."

Earlier Ofsted said this:

"The Scrutiny function is performed exceptionally well. There is a good participation by schools and by officers and representatives. members have adapted to their role well and issues are treated on their merits without recourse to party lines. The Scrutiny Committee is increasingly and usefully involved in commenting on draft policies. The

challenge function of its work is performed well. It instigates investigations on major topics and hold officers and Executive members to account.”

I am quite sure, Lord Mayor, that Councillor Coupar is either unaware or has forgotten, perhaps, that the preceding body to the present Children’s Service Scrutiny was the Lifelong Learning Board and this was chaired by her colleague Councillor Geoff Driver very ably, I must say, but he was a Labour member and it was a period of Labour administration in Leeds.

I might, with all due immodesty, remind colleagues that it was me as a Conservative Chair that commissioned an urgent enquiry into safeguarding issues immediately in the wake of the Baby P case in Haringey.

In addition to all this, the Centre for Public Scrutiny has recently referred to the principle of sharing chairmanships on an Authority as good practice.

By way of summary, Lord Mayor, this White paper motion is not only a disgraceful and scurrilous attack on Scrutiny Chairs from the Conservative and Liberal Democrat parties, it is also an attack on the Labour government. I think we all really know that Scrutiny in Leeds is both impartial and independent. Councillor Coupar should act honourably and withdraw. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, at the last Executive Board I made two statements on behalf of the Labour Group. The first statement was that we in the Labour Group had every confidence in Sandy Keane in turning round these services on behalf of this Council and that statement is still true today. It has actually been quite a red herring to say that we are criticising officers - far from it - and I think it is just a diversion from some of the administration to take us off the track.

The second statement I make was that we on this side of the room would do anything possible to turn round Adult Social Services that we could and as yet we have not had one response to include the Opposition in helping to turn round one of the most important services that we have.

I say it is political because it is and if you have looked at some of the quotes of that inspection you will realise there are massive political failures of this administration. Let me read you through. “The Council must urgently address the shortfalls in the leadership and governance arrangements in relation to adult safeguarding.” This is the Council - that is us. We are responsible for that.

The second one, very overt: “Elected members did not have access to sufficiently detailed and accurate information about the performance of the service.” Thirdly, just to absolutely reinforce that point, the criticisms of the inspection: “These serious shortfalls raise concerns about the leadership capacity of the Council.

They are three very clear statements from the inspection which reflect on this administration and I have to say I think that is why we have the cases that we have heard from administration Yeadon, we have the cases that we have heard earlier from Councillor Coupar about old people who have been denied services they desperately need.

I have to say this, if anybody else got one star on this side, we would be asked to be accountable and I believe in political accountability and responsibility and so do the people who elect us. I would say this, if you have got one star you are being inadequate, you are letting the old people down. You have to take

responsibility and accountability for the poor services you are offering our elderly, Peter, and that is why I agree with the sentiments - you have to show that leadership and responsibility.

With Councillor Golton, I actually think he is worse because he is perpetuating that culture that other people identified of complacency and arrogance which started off with his Leader, Brett. Councillor Brett came in here in June 2007 and said this:

“We are making improvements to Children’s Services you ought to be proud of.”

It is there in the verbatim. Councillor Golton came to the last Council meeting on this report and, as usual, you do not have to follow the logic because there is not but it is worth bearing in mind, he was talking about the JAR report which is not just the Council but others, but he used it to kind of insinuate the Council was doing brilliantly:

“It also came at the back end of the inspection process and at each stage of that inspection process the process got harder and that is why I mention”

- this is it -

“that to get ‘good’ at that stage means that you are very good, to get ‘good’.

I ask you, frankly, is that not somebody who is totally complacent and burying his head in the sand, like he was with his report to Executive Board denying responsibility?

This man has perpetuated the tradition of not involving elected members. There were 968 papers go to Executive Board in the last four years. Only 50 have covered children - that is just over five per cent. What is worse, only three per cent have been actioned. I tell you, that is why you get looked after children being failed, that is why you have got problems with the adoption service and throughout both reports there is something as a common thread - lack of monitoring, lack of scrutiny and lack of leadership by you.

I say this to Bill, does it not strike you that your Scrutiny Board is far too big? Why do you not come up - never mind the philosophy, it is far too big to take on the massive and important issues affecting the Children’s Services in the way that you do. I say, if we do not we are trying to make constructive suggestions. You have got problems with your Scrutiny, you have got problems with your monitoring, you have got problems with your leadership. You should leave it to the Opposition to try and drive those improvements and give the children and elderly of this city the service they deserve, not the inadequate that you are now. Thank you, Lord Mayor.  
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. First of all, I will stick to our amendment. Basically since we have moved to the new structure I have got to say this, this is not just from the Green Party. I saw some members in this Chamber and I think across the piece we have all said this. One of the failings in the new structure is that social services is something special, something particular and it needs special arrangements and it needs something doing part of what the old Service Committee used to do to look into things - not what Scrutiny can do but that part of it.



The Exec Board, if you remember when we first set the Exec Board up the first part of the Exec Board was Social Care Planning, but the fact is the Exec Board cannot do that in detail. We need something like the old Service Committee to take part of that on and in that way then we can support the Executive members and the Lead members in their jobs. I think that is far, far more important. I think some of the failings here probably bear that out.

Moving on to the motion, I have got to say, I am sorry, Keith, but it is a bit like the pot calling the kettle black, isn't it?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: These are different times, Dave. These are serious.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: I can remember half way through the year you got, if you went in for care half way through the year you got a different standard of care than you did if you went at the beginning of the year, because they have run out of money. I give Peter credit - millions of pounds in deficit a few weeks in of taking office, he cleared that up. He has done a wonderful job, has Peter. I have got loads of time for him. *(Applause)* To call for his resignation, I think he is one person in this Chamber across party that I have got time for and I believe tries his best to do the job. There have been some failings, he has admitted his failings and he has been trying to do something about it. Let us support him in doing that. *(hear, hear)*

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Well said.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: As I say, that is wrong.

Regarding Scrutiny Boards, Keith, you have not got a very long memory. I remember when we first set them up, your Soviet style Scrutiny number 1, Scrutiny number 2, Scrutiny number 3. Les and me were on same board.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I remember you, David.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Who chaired them?

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: You did, David.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: No, when we first set them up there were three committees, three Labour members, three from administration. I have got to say we had a debate about it and Les and I commented on that, commented in that debate and the thing was, we were not bothered what party the Chair came from. Actually what we were saying was we thought the committee should elect them. There may be some that in future the actual Committee elects its own Chair, although Les and I disagree.

The fact is, if Scrutiny is being done properly the Chair is independent, it should not matter where the member comes from if they are doing it correctly. I had no problems at that time - all right, the Chair of number 3 was somebody at the time I respected but probably would not do now who I took over as Adult Services Scrutiny Board Chair from for reasons which we will not mention here, but the fact is at that time that person was doing a good job and I felt that of all three. It is the person that is doing it, not the party they come from.

When you go through a door at Scrutiny you put your party outside. It is about what is delivering services. It is about criticising your party, it is sometimes actually coming to an opinion that is different to your own party's policies. You have got to accept that but some people here do not accept that.

As I say, what we need here is to put some structures in to support our Executive members. We do not need tit for tat things, party political, what is purely party political. What we need is to look after the people of Leeds. Social services will always have failures because we are not perfect.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: So they are not accountable then? They are not accountable.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: But the fact is we do our best. Let us support the Exec Member in doing that. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, in 2004 new legislation created a new remit and new powers for Children's Services. It came on your watch. You created a new department, appointed a new director and appointed a new structure. From Day One we criticised that structure and successive Shadow Cabinet spokesmen for Children's Services have said that it is monolithic, it is dysfunctional, it is not inclusive, it is not localised, it is new silo and it is a failure. We say so today again. You spend £1.85m on bureaucracy, on well paid officers at the centre sitting on top of other structures and you have not reached out to the localities despite having so-called Locality Co-ordinators. Five years later they have still been a failure.

This is illustrated by the callous disregard and how you have removed the last services provided at East Leeds, just like that - gone, scrapped. Councillor Hyde, Councillor Chapman tell us about Scrutiny. Councillor Hyde, can I remind you, your behaviour stands here for scrutiny on the last calling. What did you do? You had a four hour Scrutiny Board meeting and then you attached at the end of that, when members had already had four hours, an important call-in. That is the importance you gave to that call-in. It was just tagged along, it was not worth a separate meeting, it could be held there and then. Members told you throughout that meeting they were leaving and then you say and brag about you had a unanimous decision. Why do you think that was? It is because the Labour members, unwhipped, not instructed, agreed on a course of action, as you say the call-in released a decision. Other Labour members at other call-ins have also freely voted. I have yet to see one single administration member of any Scrutiny Board vote any differently to how the administration wants them to vote.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Hear, hear. *(interruption)*

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I have yet to see that, an administration member - have yet to see, despite having research from my colleagues, when Councillor Chapman has ever uttered a word, certainly publicly, in criticism of her administration. It is interesting that the only member today from the administration who spoke, was Councillor Kendall, who is not on the payroll vote. Anybody else it is on Councillor Carter or Councillor Brett's payroll vote and, of course they are going to support keeping their own jobs...

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: That is disgraceful. That is typical.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: ...and of course this portfolio. Of course it is. From Day One - who did you appoint to Children's Services? Who was the first Executive Member? Councillor Jennings. That is the importance you gave to that portfolio there and then. Thankfully he did not last very long and officers had such confidence in him I think they gave him one paper to present to Executive Board every six months. So there is a lack of adequate information - that is what the report says.

Who puts information to the Scrutiny Boards? Who releases that information? Who controls that information? It is the Chair of the Scrutiny Board. If your members of the Scrutiny Board have inadequate information as the report says, or on the Executive Board if there is inadequate information, is there not a lack of governance by the Chairs of those particular Wards? They have to ensure, certainly if you are even-handed, as Councillor Hyde said you, that the information is available to all to see and to scrutinise.

What is important today is not how we vote but how the public hold you to account. The votes in here are pre-determined and even our Morley Borough friends, we know how they are going to vote. They have had their pay off too, so we know how they are going to vote.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Disgrace. Disgrace. *(interruption)*

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: We will see in May, won't we? We will see in May what the payroll vote provides for you.

There we are, this is an inadequate performance by yourselves. At least when Councillor Brett and Councillor Carter speak they can hold their hand up and say "We are sorry", as Councillor Harris used to say "Sorry" when he was wrong. Are you going to say it? "We are sorry and we apologise for the people of Leeds for our failures"?

COUNCILLOR ARMITAGE: Lord Mayor, fellow Councillors, I wish to comment in support of the White Paper submitted in the name of Debra Coupar.

I do not think anybody in this room believes it is acceptable to compromise when it comes to safeguarding vulnerable adults in Leeds. Safeguarding means identifying and responding to the risks of some of the most vulnerable people in this city. You have a responsibility to provide vulnerable individuals with support. You have a responsibility to ensure their independence and not threaten and make sure that they have the fullest range of their rights but in fact you have failed to fulfil this responsibility.

You have failed to put adequate arrangements in place to protect individuals. Through your actions you have put adults in Leeds unnecessarily at risk. Abuse of vulnerable people can be wide ranging. Let us be clear - it can be physical, sexual, psychological abuse. However, in the case of adults we also need to consider financial management and abuse, neglect and acts of omission.

I therefore read the recent inspector's report conclusions with horror. Leeds' safeguarding of adults is poor - yes, poor. The inspection report judged that Leeds does not - and I quote - satisfactorily protect vulnerable people. What an awful disgrace. To read this report is to read a catalogue of poor practice - inadequate training, inefficient communication and inept co-operation with partners.

This is not the way I want Adult Social Services to be defined. Sadly you are creating the weak and ineffective service that the inspection report describes. Without question Leeds deserves better. This Council has not managed to deliver adequate safeguarding arrangements and you should be ashamed.

What I found most frightening about the inspector's report was the conclusion that staff and managers did not have a clear understanding of when they should interview or what processes they should follow in order to provide protection. Our hard working front line staff have not been provided with essential training to enable them to protect vulnerable adults, so how on earth do you expect the department to

function successfully? How can these professionals actually do their job, actually identifying when an adult needs support if they themselves are not clear about circumstances which they need to act upon?

I want to know how this administration allowed such an appalling situation to come about. Councillor Harrand, now is the time to take responsibility. You have let vulnerable adults in Leeds down. You have failed adequately to protect them. Please, please take this responsibility for your failure. Do the right and honourable thing now by resigning. Thank you. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Let me say first of all that I am grateful to members on all sides of the Chamber for the way in which this issue has, in the main, been debated today. Child protection and safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children is at the core of any Council responsibilities. Meeting the needs of the weakest, most vulnerable, most helpless in our society is our duty and protecting the lives of vulnerable children is paramount.

The reasons on your performance assessment of Children's Services in Leeds, as member of the add opposite have pointed out, did identify some goodness in the way that this Authority is helping children and young people to achieve and enjoy and make a positive contribution. We welcome any findings of good practice in Leeds's services. We believe that our children and young people deserve the best.

Let me remind you, however, that Children's Services in Leeds are judged to be merely adequate for staying safe, being healthy and for capacity to improve. The inspector's covering letter states that, "Leeds City Council delivers services to children and young people that meet the minimum requirements for users overall." Meeting the bare minimum particularly where child safety is concerned and when the inspector questions the capacity to improve is unacceptable to members on this side of the Chamber and should be unacceptable to members on all sides of this Chamber.

As Councillor Blake and Councillor Wakefield pointed out earlier, the attitude of the Executive Board towards member towards his portfolio has been, quite frankly, complacent at best. He repeatedly referred to the JAR report into Children's Services earlier last year as "very good" and seemed unwilling or unable to acknowledge the areas of concern that were flagged up by us. The contents of the JAR report should have been a warning sign but this warning sign was not heeded and may well have put vulnerable children at risk.

The Executive Board report on the APA was again dismissing, referring to the inspection as a lighter touch desk top assessment. This is not taking the weaknesses identified in Children's Services seriously. Unlike the JAR, the APA looks solely at the Council's services. Its criticisms need to be taken on board by the administration running the city and lessons need to be learned now in order to ensure the protection of vulnerable children. As Councillor Morgan and Councillor Taylor set out earlier in the debate, the practice of this administration scrutinising itself is not working.

As Opposition members we have repeatedly flagged up concerns in this Chamber about the level of support looked after children receive, about their much lower educational outcomes, about children missing school and about the high proportion of young people in this city who are not in employment, education or training. The inspectors picked up on each of these areas of concern.

The Children's Scrutiny Board held an enquiry and produced a report in 2005 into the recruitment and retention of children's social care staff because of concerns

then about high vacancy rates, staff workloads and their capacity to cope with demand, yet nearly four years on the Ofsted inspection has identified a number of unfilled posts for social care staff working with children and families as a major weakness with, and I quote, "too much reliance on temporary staff and social care vacancy rates may be twice those found in similar councils."

Doing some research on one of the inspector's other areas of concern for this Council region, I discovered that teenage conception rates in the city did in fact dip in 2003, only to rise again and continue to rise thereafter. Some analysis was done to pinpoint why and a number of factors were identified. These were that a number of training packages that had been running effectively came to an end, the C-Card scheme which helps young people get access to contraception was frozen. A media campaign that had been running also came to an end and a number of key posts were vacant for a time.

I am sure that these factors are now being addressed but, given that a reduction in teenage conception rates had begun in 2003, you have to ask why the decision to cut those schemes, that were clearly starting to take effect, came about. In Leeds the administration opposite chose to establish a quite different structure for Children's Services to that created by most other Local Authorities. This group expressed its misgivings about the new structure from the start and in light of these inspection reports we have to ask, are Children's Services in Leeds fit for purpose?

Councillor Gruen referred to a prime example which clearly shows where the new structure has failed to ensure joint working - the successful multi-agency team in East Leeds being broken up while the Youth Service, Children's Social Care and Educational Leeds still operating in silos with no joined-up thinking or consideration given to the knock-on effect of different services' budget cuts on the overall service provision.

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

COUNCILLOR MURRAY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I also wish to comment and support the White Paper that has been submitted by Councillor Coupar. I do sit on the Adult Services Scrutiny Board. When these reports came to those boards we, all of us, were clearly worried. I suppose after this morning most of us are still worried because as members we never believe anything until it has been officially denied. I suppose there has been a lot of that this morning.

Put simply, the fact is that it is the picture our there, is not it, that officers and members did not know and do not know what is really happening. It is a shambolic state of affairs. I think it is fair to say that the standard of leadership should be challenged and yes, David - wherever he has gone - leaders can get it right; leaders can get it wrong. No-one is perfect but this is a situation, I do not think anyone will not agree someone has to accept responsibility, the buck must stop with whoever leads.

We have in this city a Child Protection Register. We know who is on it, we know how many are on it and all those children will have action plans, will have some support. However, in this city we do not have a vulnerable adults' protection register. (*interruption*) The point is, it does not exist and we are nowhere near having one. We simply do not know how many potential vulnerable adults are out there in this city - a very poor starting point for being able to deliver good quality services. According to the inspector, as has been mentioned earlier on this morning, we cannot because our workers are not trained well enough to identify potential vulnerable adults. That is pretty basic for a service that is supposed to be as good or as poor as ours. They

are not trained well enough and the few processes which we do have are not being put into practice. We believe the inspector's strong message.

I also believe the officer who confirmed at the Safeguarding Seminar last week - and I will quote - "Our systems are old. They are not set up to deal with the current numbers we know and those numbers are growing." Peter hinted at it earlier when he spoke - 300 last year; 900 this and growing. Concerns are growing by about 100 a month. That is the picture, is it not? We are starting to realise we have a big problem. We do not have a handle on it in this city. Getting a handle on it but what is making it worse - and it does not help the inspector criticises us for not working effectively with partners. I think that must be felt in the department. I think the workers on the ground, the good work that they do, know that leadership is needed to get things done. It is needed at a strategic level. Leaders need to set up the structures, set up the networks, set the vision, monitor and track what is being done. Clearly that has not been done, there is a leadership vacuum because, of course, at the big partnership meetings that matter substitutes have been turning up. Substitutes have been turning up - not good enough on an issue like this.

The good news is we have got an action plan. We have heard a bit about that. The inspector likes it. I think from our side an action plan is nothing but a bit of paper. That is all it is. We want to see actions. I think as members we have got to see the evidence at Scrutiny, at Executive Board of better effective training. Technically what that means, a complete overhaul of training needs to happen. Existing old, inadequate procedures need to be kicked out. We are currently spending, Peter, £800,000 on more staff - it is more of the same because if it is more of the same it just will not work.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: It is not the same.

COUNCILLOR MURRAY: Act quickly - I know you should - on appointing that independent Chair to the Safeguarding Board. The reason why I am mentioning it is you need someone like that again to strengthen your leadership because what we have had in the past has not been good enough.

We all want to see something. We want to see an excellent range of services for adults and their families. We want a system of safeguarding that gives the elderly and vulnerable people in this city peace of mind, no cause for concern. To get there from our point of view there is a lot to do. It needs a complete overhaul. It needs a new model. Councillor Harrand, start showing the leadership the department needs, change things but, as an old Conservative you stand for progress, change and innovation but not yet. That is our problem. If you cannot do it, do the honourable thing, you are an honourable man - go. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR GRAHAME: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to say first of all that I support the motion in the name of Councillor Coupar but my comments are on a point of clarification on the comments from Councillor Chapman.

Councillor Chapman, if you recall we at both Boards were asked from Sandy Keane a request by John England to look into certain issues after the call-back from the audits. Fortunately for the Health Board we had already had a request for when people come out of hospital and that was from Councillor Denise Atkinson in October as you are aware as you are a Board member. I would just like to comment again on your comments on being Whipped regarding our group. Do you not remember at our last meeting before the Board meeting when one of your colleagues commented, "I hope the press are not here because we have been told not to comment and watch what we are saying." Thank you. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: So much for your independence.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I want to make it clear that I personally - and I think the vast majority of people on our side - accept that these two reports have found serious weaknesses. There is no complacency on my part. In these circumstances I accept that it is absolutely right and proper that the Labour Party have called this meeting and that we are here.

I would have thought one of the things that is surprising is that we have not heard enough about the action plans which are not just this paper. We all want to hear the report back to actions that have taken place and I am well aware that many already have.

I would like to say to Robert that I believe he is right that all of us - all of us, all 99 Councillors - must accept our responsibility. We are all corporate parents and it would be welcome, Keith, if you could encourage the representatives of the Labour Party who should be going regularly to Corporate Carers, some of whom have spoken this morning, to improve their attendance because if they are really concerned about vulnerable children, that would be helpful.

I would like to say to Anne Blackburn that you have at least made a positive suggestion about how things might be improved. I welcome that. I disagree with the suggestion but at least you have tried to be positive.

We have had a lot of detailed criticisms of individuals - two in particular. If we sit back and think what are the key points that have been made this morning, it would be nice to think that we had a detailed solution from Labour. I have to say, without meaning this to be funny, that it sounds a bit like the solution is Alice in Wonderland's Queen of Hearts - off with their heads. That really does not get anyone very far.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: We do not want your head, Peter.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: The only positive thing I have heard, Peter, is the repeated suggestion that the structures of Children Leeds are not what you would have chosen. We know that. We know that the command and control model would be what you and the Labour Party are used to and what you would prefer. We did not go into the model that we now have by accident. It was carefully thought out.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: But it doesn't work.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: The reason we believe that the DCS works best as it is is because a lot of Rosemary's responsibilities are actually outside this Council. They will be partners and it is for that reason we fundamentally disagree with what you have suggested.

I want briefly to contrast this special occasion with several that happened in the year 2000 and I have in front of me the verbatim of the Council meeting on 9<sup>th</sup> February 2000 where a vote of no confidence was suggested where, amazingly, in view of what has happened this morning, the majority party, the Labour Party, refused to take part. They refused to speak. I do not want to say any more about that except to make the contrast that we here are facing up to the problems and difficulties that these two reports have brought before us.

If I were wanting to say more - and I do not want to stress this - the difference between then and now is that there were then some very detailed suggestions...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Weren't children at risk, or older people?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: ...of individual Councillors who had done things which even on their own side many people found impossible to accept and that following four successive years of the District Auditor giving warnings.

We do not believe that the situation is anywhere near as dire as that. We believe we are well on the way to putting right the faults that have rightly been identified and I would urge members to support the amendment. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I am not going to defend poor practice or accept that our performance has been good enough either in the inspection of Children's Services or the inspection on Adult Social Care. Quite clearly a number of extremely serious issues have been raised and they have to be addressed. Not one of the 99 Councillors in this Chamber believes we should do any other than address all the comments, all the recommendations made by the inspectors, extremely seriously indeed. At the end of the day let me make it quite clear, we are the administration of this Council, I am the Leader, along with Councillor Brett and, of course, we take responsibility. I have never believed you should walk away from responsibility and I am not doing so now.

However, I have to say it does stick in the throat somewhat when you hear Councillors Wakefield and Gruen complaining when they were, of course, part of the administration virtually named for the loss of the education service in this city and when Councillor Murray gets up and lectures us when he is the man who said he knew nothing about the £18m black hole in the Social Services budget despite the fact he was in charge of Finance at the time. We did not expect the then Exec Board Member for Social Services to understand what had happened to the £18m but the good electors of Morley made sure that she was not in the position to make the same mistake again. *(laughter)*

My Lord Mayor, this is a very serious debate and I have already expressed where we believe our responsibilities lie, but I have seldom seen a resolution worded so badly because it has been trivialised and personalised by the mover in particular and by Councillor Gruen - we would expect Councillor Gruen to plumb depths even he has not plumbed before and he has not disappointed us and now, of course, he is leaving the Chamber.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I am not.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I have no doubt, my Lord Mayor, we can return to Councillor Gruen later today over and over again, and that could be interesting.

When the inspector came to Leeds he found that Adult Social Care had simply not changed enough. The demographics, the pace of change has been, in both Children's Services and Adult Services, massive and unrelenting. Seven different pieces of major instruction passed to Adult Social Care in the space of three years and we have not changed fast enough. We have not adapted to the government's new agenda fast enough and we have to take responsibility as an administration for not supporting the Exec Board member enough in driving forward the pace of change. Too often as an administration we have listened to your complaints, we have listened to your unnecessary and unwarranted criticism, we have reacted when you have wheeled out bogus clients in front of photographs for the press...

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Rubbish.



COUNCILLOR A CARTER: ...outside institutions they had never even attended instead of pressing on with the urgent agenda for change, but we are now going to do that with a will because the people of Leeds deserve it.

My Lord Mayor, the one sentence in the inspector's report that has been omitted quite deliberately by the party opposite is this:

"Political leadership is sound."

That is why Councillor Harrand will not be resigning, why he continues to have our absolute confidence and why he will lead the process of change for the benefit of the people of this city. We are not prepared to accept reports such as we have had without firm action. The officers know that, they have our confidence, they will deliver that support.

I will say this to Councillor Blackburn and to Councillor Finnigan. They have once again demonstrated the constructive side of Opposition (*laughter and applause*) whereas our amused friends over here have identified without any mistake that they are part of the problem and not part of the solution. (*Applause*)

I agree with Councillor Blackburn, not with his remedy (*interruption*). I hope you will give me the extra time, my Lord Mayor. We will take on board the suggestion that elected members want a greater involvement in Adult Social Care and Children's Services. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Scandalous behaviour.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Even on a bad day I can beat you, Bernard.

THE LORD MAYOR: To sum up, can I ask Councillor Coupar?

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. After that circus act it is a shame that the Leader does not respect the Lord Mayor when the red light comes on (*interruption and applause*).

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: You can't help yourself, can you? You can't help yourself.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: To suggest that we are not supportive of officers is clearly wrong. In fact, I said earlier that we have complete faith in the Director and her staff and we always have had since she came here and we continue to give her that support.

We acknowledge that an action plan has been drawn up but it is yet to be put in place properly to get the results for the people of this city and only commenting on failure that you made was to recognise the fact that you knew about it before the inspectors came. The point about this extra Council meeting is that you have not taken the failings seriously enough.

We know that Social Services have got some things right, we are not saying that they are getting everything wrong, but we are bringing the attention of the failings to the whole of this Council Chamber, as we have every right to do so and, in fact, a duty to do so as the Opposition.

Councillor Blackburn, I thank you for recognising what the inspectors actually said in the report, unlike the gloss the administration have been giving. That is actually the first stage in moving on along to put things right.

Councillor Finnigan, actually for a change you made some positive comments in recognising the failings.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: I will not be doing that again. *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR: Think again, Robert.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: After all, your conditional support of the amendment tells us more than you think. You know, Councillor Finnigan, you cannot have your cake and eat it. *(interruption)*

Councillors Chapman and Hyde. We are pleased that Scrutiny is holding an enquiry into safeguarding and, in fact, if it was not for the people on these Labour benches requesting that, we are not sure that that would be happening.

COUNCILLOR: Rubbish.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Your personal integrity is not in question here. The fact that you are members of the administration and the Chairs of Scrutiny should be questioned. In fact, Councillor Chapman, after you spoke in the Chamber this morning you went directly across to Councillor Harrand for a quick chat about things. What does that say about your independence? *(laughter)*

Councillor Yeadon brought to this Chamber the experiences that she had in her ward which is very important that you realise what these inspections actually mean on the ground. People are being failed. People are being failed. People are actually being neglected, even dying.

Councillor Kendall, your contribution was most welcome and in fact I would suggest you have a word with your Leader and apply for the vacancy pending. *(laughter)*

Councillor David Blackburn raised support for Councillor Harrand and mentioned money over care. Remember, David, if you did read the inspections that the inspectors brought that up and said that cost over quality had evolved. These benches think that is wrong. David, in your speech you advocate that the Opposition should not call the administration to account.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: I did not say that.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: I can assure you that we will continue to do so.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: You have done a pretty poor job of it, haven't you? *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Councillors Brett and Carter were the only people opposite to acknowledge the problems but they still did not go far enough. Councillor Carter, to reduce this debate to a game of tit for tat just shows us your skills are still in the playground. *(laughter)*

It seems you are happy to pat yourself on the back for the positives but do not want to talk about your failings. You just want to brush them under the carpet. It is all well and good extolling the virtues of the reports. However, you are still failing to address and recognise the blatant mismanagement and lack of direction by the political leadership here of the Adult Social Services and Children's Social Services that have been criticised by the inspectors. You seem to deem this part of the report

as not worthy of the prominence in your amendment. Shame on you. How long will it be before we have another Doncaster or Haringey? Going by these reports it action is not swiftly taken and not just talked about, not too long. It is absolutely disgraceful.

The inspectors raised the same concerns that I have been arguing all along - cost rather than quality of service is not acceptable - in fact it is neglectful. I do hope that this administration does not use these reports as an excuse for a reduction or closure of current services under the guise of modernisations. Savings at the expense of people who need our care is wrong.

The blue sky thinking and vision for the future for this service by the administration does not offer credible alternatives to current provision, only cash savings and closures. The inspector recognises in saying that the aspirations of the department are not being transformed into specific and monitorable targets for improvement. It is time now to cascade this blue thinking down to the people in the front line delivering these services on a daily basis.

Stop pontificating and get the real work done. You have had five years, Peter - enough is enough. Your rebuttal - in an article of 2 January this year you stated - and I quote, "We are getting on with the job of looking after the people we are supposed to." Well, Peter, I have got news for you, that is not what the inspectors found when they visited you.

It is time now to choose someone else that can put the meat on the bones for the modernisation of these vitally important services. Lip service is cheap and degrading and you have shown that well this morning, by the way. How on earth you can sit there and hold your heads up high whilst these important services are crumbling and degenerating into a one star, poor performing department with uncertain prospects is beyond me. In the private sector if a person in a position of power as you are, Peter, in this Council, had achieved these disgraceful results, do you think they would wait to be sacked or would they hang their head in shame and resign? I will leave that one for you to ponder on.

Let me tell you that this monumental failure and lack of leadership will be your legacy to the people of Leeds. Lord Mayor, I move the White Paper. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: We come to the vote.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Recorded vote.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Recorded vote, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: We have got to see what we are voting on first and then I can say we want a recorded vote.

THE LORD MAYOR: The White Paper, the amendment.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: A recorded vote, please.

THE LORD MAYOR: We are voting on the amendment moved by Councillor Harrand. I have had a request for a recorded vote so I leave that now to the Chief Executive.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: There are 93 present, "Yes" votes are 49, abstentions are 4 and "No" is 40. The amendment in the name of Councillor Harrand is CARRIED.

We now go on, then, to the further amendment in the name of Councillor Anne Blackburn. Still a recorded vote?

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Recorded vote.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Yes, Lord Mayor.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: The total is 93 again present, "Yes" 9, abstentions 40, "No" 44, so the amendment is LOST.

We come to the substantive motion, then and we will vote again. Recorded?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Recorded.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Seconded.

THE LORD MAYOR: Again, to the Chief Executive.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Present 93, "Yes" 49, abstentions 4 and "No" 40. The motion is CARRIED. *(Applause)*

We can end the meeting now, thank you indeed, and I look forward to seeing you this afternoon.

*(The meeting closed at 12.26 pm)*