

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Held on

Wednesday 15th July 2009

At

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
CIVIC HALL, LEEDS

In the Chair:

THE LORD MAYOR
(Councillor J Elliott)

VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

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VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 15th JULY 2009

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you and good afternoon, everyone. I would like to remind everyone that mobile phones and other electrical equipment in the Council Chamber need to be switched off when the Council is in session. There will be a fee if we hear any phones ringing. I hope it will be a £10 fine for my charity.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE LORD MAYOR: I do have some announcements to make. We have had three deaths. The first one I would like to announce was Eileen Moxon, the Labour Councillor for the Weetwood and Chapel Allerton wards; Brian Baines Parker, formerly Leeds City Councillor and Mayor of Morley; and Robert Rowe, former Director of Galleries.

I would like all members to stand, please, for a silent tribute.

(Silent tribute)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Council. Councillor Atkinson has asked that her apologies are offered to the Council, even though she is exempt from attending the meeting.

I should also like to apologise for there being no Members' lunch today. This was due to a complete breakdown in communications.

I am delighted to announce that the manager of Osmanthorpe Resource Centre, Stewart Simmons, has been named Council Worker of the Year by the Local Government Channel. Members will have notice, I hope, a stand in the ante Chamber and if you have not seen it already you might like to look at it at the interval or at the end of the meeting. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Congratulations and well done.

ITEM 1 – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21ST MAY 2009

THE LORD MAYOR: The Minutes of the meeting held on 21st May. Councillor Procter?

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Yes thank you, Lord Mayor. I move that the Minutes be received.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I would like to call for the vote. *(A vote was taken)* The motion is CARRIED.

ITEM 2 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

THE LORD MAYOR: Number 2 on the agenda, Declarations of Interest. I will hand you over to Ms Jackson.

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE GOVERNANCE): Just for the purposes of clarification I have been asked by the Whips to make a statement in relation to White Paper Motion 15, which is the post-16 home to college transport. I think some members have declared that they are a governor of various schools; some members have not. Just for the avoidance of doubt my advice is that members do not have to declare, so if there is a member who has not already put it on, therefore, then there is no need to do so.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Lord Mayor, in view of an amendment that has been put down to White Paper 17, in view of the fact that it is my 72nd birthday, I think I should declare a personal interest but also I do have a 97 year old mother-in-law so I think it is personal. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: We wish you a very happy birthday, Councillor.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Well, some do!

ITEM 3 - COMMUNICATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item number 3, communications. Chief Executive.

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

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Lord Mayor, on the Declarations of Interest, as Chairman of the West Yorkshire Integrated Authority on several of the White Papers that mention transport. Could that be recorded as well, please?

ITEM 4 - DEPUTATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. We now come on to the item number 4, Deputations. I have to report that the first deputation has been withdrawn.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: In that case, Lord Mayor, there are two deputations this afternoon, the first relating to Woodhouse Moor and barbecues thereon, and the second to provision within the city for the travelling community.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. I want to ask Councillor Procter to move that all the Deputations be received.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I move that all deputations be received.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second that, very clearly, that they be received.

THE LORD MAYOR: All in favour, please? *(A vote was taken)* CARRIED

DEPUTATION ONE

North Hyde Park Residents' Association and Friends of Woodhouse Moor

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

MR M STANIFORTH: Lord Mayor, Councillors, my name is Martin Staniforth and my colleagues are Sue Buckle, Professor John Kent, Tony Green and Richard Hallawell. I would welcome the opportunity to speak to you today to oppose the Council's unpopular, expensive and vastly damaging plan to concrete over part of Woodhouse Moor, though I am sad that it is still necessary to do so. I am speaking today on behalf of all the community groups in the Hyde Park and Woodhouse area and more importantly on behalf of the hundreds of local people who have objected to this scheme at meetings and in writing, and the thousands who have been denied a voice because of the Council's failure to deliver consultation packs to them.

Lord Mayor, I want to concentrate on three issues. First, the proposal itself. This would involve sinking 40 large concrete blocks into an open, grassy area of the Moor to allow for up to 80 barbecues to be lit at any one time. Local people have strongly opposed the plan, both because of the impact on the moor and because it is yet another sign of the Council's lack of concern and care for Woodhouse Moor. What used to be an open space for all to enjoy is becoming an area where, on sunny weekends, many people feel uncomfortable and unsafe because of the drunkenness, vandalism and anti-social behaviour which goes on there, apparently unchecked. Local people do not want to see money wasted on concrete blocks. They want it spent on improving the Moor, undoing the damage that has been done in recent years, and making it a welcoming, attractive and safe place for everybody.

Second, consultation. The Council claims to have sent 10,000 questionnaires to local households seeking their views on the proposal. However it is very clear, from public meetings and other surveys, that many people who should have received questionnaires did not in fact do so, but instead of investigating the complaints, Council officers have relied on assurances from the delivery company that they delivered to all households in the area, with one or two exceptions. Well, to quote Mandy Rice-Davies, they would say that, wouldn't they? Officers also seem to believe that because some people in a street responded, everyone in that street must have received a questionnaire. However, as I am sure you all know, people delivering house-to-house often take short cuts and miss out houses or whole streets to get the job done quickly.

Finally, we are told that replies were received from 155 of the 551 streets which should have received questionnaires. Statisticians say it is highly improbable that replies would be concentrated in such a small number of streets if the forms had been properly delivered. My colleague Professor Kent, Professor of Mathematics at Leeds University, would be pleased to answer any questions you or Councillors may have about the statistical analysis of these figures.

Now we have the truly bizarre situation that the Council's Scrutiny Board has said the consultation was carried out properly while at the same time the consultation has been extended to the end of July so that people who did not receive questionnaires – and we are told that there were not such people, of course – can send in their comments by e-mail. Quite frankly this is not a consultation, it is a shambles, it is a fiasco and the investigation is nothing more than a whitewash. It would be abandoned now and we should have an independent investigation into what went wrong.

My third point is the role of local residents' associations. We were all excluded from the group which drew up this proposal. I use the word "excluded" deliberately because a Council officer told me in an email that while associations had been invited to the first meeting, "subsequent meetings of this forum evolved into a partnership of agency representatives and Council officers providing a cohesive and constructive working group that are committed to and actively resolving the various issues on Woodhouse Moor". Apparently local residents have nothing to contribute

to resolving issues facing the Moor, despite our very real commitment to its long-term health. This is not the first time that proposals have been put forward for changes to the Moor which have not involved local people, and not the first time that they have strongly opposed by them. The exclusion of local residents from groups considering plans for the Moor is unacceptable, results in bad decision-making and it must be ended.

Lord Mayor, Woodhouse Moor is an historic park, dear to those who live near it and use it regularly. It is an asset that we hold in trust for future generations and we should leave it in better condition than we find it. If the current proposal goes ahead, our legacy will be 40 concrete blocks and a degraded open space. We therefore call for the current plans for a barbecue area to be dropped, for the flawed consultation process to be abandoned and for local residents to be fully involved in any group which is developing plans for the Moor in the future. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you for bringing your Deputation here today. I call on Councillor Procter to move that the matter be referred to the Executive Board for consideration.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: I so move, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: (A vote was taken) That is CARRIED. Thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Good afternoon and thank you. (Applause)

DEPUTATION TWO
Residents concerned at levels of local authority provision
for the travelling community

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

MR A SLINGSBY: The lady is Julie Freer, Peter Greenbush, David Smith and Bill McKinnon at the end. The Deputation is Local Residents concerned at levels of Local Authority provision for the travelling community.

I will not go into the Housing Act of 2004 but that gives a full definition of who has to be allocated for housing in the future, including children. I will start the speech.

For the avoidance of doubt by any members present and members of the public, we are not here as apologist for the appalling anti-social behaviour of certain travellers who have recently occupied sites around the area, or refuse to condemn their alleged criminal damage. We are concerned as much as everybody else with the continuous increase in the amount of money being spent on getting court eviction orders, legal reps to address and advise the travellers on their human rights issues, police involvement and clean-up costs with the preventative measures of boulder placement.

If all these costs were added up over the years and had gone to building enough small sites in several locations around the city, we would not need to be here today seeking common sense and wisdom on an issue that is like the Yorkshire

Water bill reminder – if you close your eyes and try to ignore it, the problem certainly won't go away.

It is time to grasp the nettle and try to find real solutions rather than tinkering at the edges. It is an ongoing problem that shows no real sign of being solved in the UK. Advocating about another five sites with ten or 15 pitches on each one is considered the road to madness by some critics so the tax payers of Leeds will continue to push their hands deeper into their pockets to finance the minimum cost of £10,000 a month and the £1.4m already spent since March 2006 as the sensible alternative.

The gypsy population is not likely to go down the last available count of illegal sites was 3,681 amounting to around four or five thousand caravans plus applicants.

Leeds Council is quick to point out that we are a multicultural society, so why do we have the inclusion of some ethnic minorities but the exclusion of others? Some critics say that the travellers leave rubbish, dangerous driving, noise, this, that and the other and everyone else abides by the law and contributes to the communities, so does that mean that Utopia is in sight if travellers change their ways and all start living in houses?

The travellers to be responsible in their actions by self-discipline and reciprocity. This is why the public feel threatened and vulnerable, as they are the people who keep picking up the legal and clean-up costs after travellers have moved on. It is unfair on all council taxpayers that very little action is taken against them and this really does need to be addressed.

What the UK is experiencing is a direct result of retribution from the 1994 Criminal Justice Act, arguably, one of the most repressive measures in recent history. It made the traditional gypsy an outlaw and made 5,000 gypsy families homeless. There could be similar repercussions if the proposed British Bill of Rights does not compel authorities to share an equal quota of legitimate local sites.

There is a Migration Impact Fund coming in. Leeds is going to get £750,000, so that it is a spit in the ocean to the problems we are facing.

There is much dismay caused by legal manoeuvrings which began at Government level in 1944 and have led to stalemate on the question of sites for gypsies and travellers to disadvantage of everyone. Gypsies are our oldest ethnic minority group. They arrived in England about 500 years ago and their way of life is being more or less outlawed by means which would not be tolerated by on for others who have been in this country for less than a tenth of that time. Whether sites are run by Councils, housing association commercial companies or private individuals they must be found to bring an end to the constant merry-go-round of unauthorised camping which is harmful to owners, neighbours of that land, to the gypsies and travellers themselves, and the communities at large. Government guidelines say sites must be near GPs health services, bus routes, shops and schools, does that mean Cottingley Springs is not fit for purpose? Between 1996 and 1997 it became a virtual no-go area and in 1998 the B site was reduced from 36 to 26 plots.

THE LORD MAYOR: Mr Slingsby, I am afraid that the red light is on. If you are nearly at the end of your speech...

MR A SLINGSBY: Just one more, yes. At this point in time we would like Leeds Council to do all in its powers to try to make equal equality for everybody and just as a highlight of humour, the government Inspector of Education for gypsies said:

“Gypsies and travellers in Europe were the hidden jewel in the European crown” - probably he lived in a country with a moat round his garden.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Mr Slingsby. Councillor Procter?

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

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I call for a vote. (*A vote was taken*) This is CARRIED. Thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. (*Applause*)

ITEM 5 - REPORTS

(a)

THE LORD MAYOR: Item number 5, Reports. Councillor Brett.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Lord Mayor, I move in terms of the Notice.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Yes, Lord Mayor, I formally move the amendment.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: I formally second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Brett.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I will not take long but before I deal with this particular matter, I would like to put on record the sadness that I personally felt that former Councillor Moxon, after ten years as Chair of the Allerton High School, did not sadly live long enough for the opening of the interfaith building that was opened this Monday. I think that is particularly sad that she, after such a lot of work, was not there to see the fruits of the thing she had worked on for so long.

I simply want to say in this case that I understand the Greens' case. We simply disagree. We have an independent remuneration Panel and we on our side think we should accept their recommendations. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: We are going to have a vote now on the amendment by Councillor Ann Blackburn. (*A vote was taken*) This is LOST.

We now move, then, to the substantive motion in the name of Councillor Brett. (*A vote was taken*) This is CARRIED.

(b)

THE LORD MAYOR: I call on Councillor Brett again.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I move in terms of the Notice.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I call for the vote. *(A vote was taken)* This is CARRIED.

(c)

THE LORD MAYOR: I call on Councillor Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Move in terms of the Notice, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I bring this to the vote. *(A vote was taken)* This is CARRIED.

(d)

THE LORD MAYOR: I call on Councillor Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Move in terms of the Notice, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I call for the vote. *(A vote was taken)* This is CARRIED.

ITEM 6 – QUESTIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item number 6, Questions. I call on Councillor Lyons.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Thank you very much, Lord Mayor. I hope it is not said that Councillor Smith got sacked. It was nothing to do with me. *(Laughter)*

Can the Executive Board member for Environmental Services please tell me where exactly the administration plan to site their proposed incinerator?

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I see the Opposition are going to be keeping me busy this afternoon so I appreciate them starting me off with something I am familiar with.

I am sure, Councillor Lyons, you are familiar with the answer you have had in the past.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: I certainly am.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: The answer you have had in the past several times but I will reiterate for you. This Council has not selected a preferred technology for its residual waste treatment facility. The procurement process is still technology neutral. There are two sites still left in the bidding and the Council does not have a preference for either of these sites.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: They have taught you well to say nowt! *(Laughter)* A supplementary, Lord Mayor. You know where it is going to be, I know where it is going to be. You do not even know what you are doing.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: Where?

COUNCILLOR LYONS: I will ask a supplementary, Lord Mayor. Can Councillor Monaghan also confirm that by this Council opting to take third party waste – that is, if you do not understand it, bringing it from Bradford and all over the place here – you have said you are doing it – at the incinerator, how many lorries are going to be running through East Leeds and throughout the year how many loads are you expecting to move other people's waste from other cities and how many lorries have we got to expect in total with running what we have got? Quite simply, how many lorries are we going to have running through East Leeds?

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Councillor Lyons obviously thinks he knows something that none of us do. I am glad to see that he has given up the nonsense now of us providing a rail halt for bringing rubbish from all round the region. I think he is not listening so I will say it one more time. We have not selected a preferred technology, we are still operating on a neutral basis. We have not selected a site yet, we have no preferred site. The number of bidders will be reduced to two in January and we will have a final site and a final technology in summer next year. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Monaghan. Question two from Councillor Hamilton.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Executive Member for Environmental Services indicate the cost to the Council of sending domestic waste to landfill in 2008/09?

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: The cost of landfilling domestic waste in 2008/09 was approximately £11.5m.

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary?

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Given it is pretty clear now that the Labour policy on waste is to have no policy, and that their default position is actually to have more landfill, perhaps Councillor Monaghan could indicate what the cost to the Council taxpayer would be of Labour's continuing inaction on waste policy.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The European Union and the government are demanding that Councils reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill. If action is not taken Leeds could face fines of up to £200m between now and 2020. Councillor Hamilton is absolutely right and this is why the administration has a waste strategy until 2035 and is doing all it can to reduce waste going to landfill by recycling more and increasing the variety of waste that we are diverting from landfill.

We have already heard the usual comments from Councillor Lyons and Labour today...

COUNCILLOR LYONS: I am not getting the answers though.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: ... but they have still not told us what their strategy for tackling landfill is in this city. Perhaps the new Shadow Member for Environmental Services would like to enlighten us this afternoon, but I think it is clear that they do not have a strategy. It is about time that the people in Leeds realised that a vote for Labour is a vote for millions of pounds and a huge cost to our environment. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Monaghan. Councillor Bale.

COUNCILLOR BALE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Deputy Leader of Council like to share his views on recent media coverage concerning casting doubt on the proposed kidney dialysis unit at the LGI?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Members will be aware I have been one of the Councillors who has been expressing concern for some considerable time about the lack of dialysis treatment facilities at the LGI. I was extremely disappointed and very annoyed to discover that the NHS were considering reneging on their promise not only made to the Scrutiny Committee of this Council but to the number of people who receive dialysis treatment in the city and we beyond, on their pledge to reopen a ten bed dialysis treatment unit at the LGI.

I think members will recall it is just over three years ago that the dialysis treatment ceased at the LGI because the area where the treatment was carried out was deemed to be unsafe.

At that stage all treatment was then carried out in Seacroft or St James's. For people living in south-west, west and north-west Leeds this meant they had to be transported for long periods of time across the city. Increased waiting times ensued for all those people and, indeed, the people who come to Leeds from outside our borders; increased waiting times ensued and at Seacroft, let me tell you, there is no pharmacy facility and in Seacroft most of the people who go for treatment have multiple illnesses and often require medication or other treatments which they cannot get at Seacroft.

Quite frankly this is another example, I have to say, of departments, I think at the behest of the government over promising the things that they subsequently then fail to deliver. It is not acceptable.

As far as I am concerned the NHS Teaching Trust in Leeds has promised this Council through its Scrutiny Board, has promised the people who receive treatment, that the ten bed dialysis unit will be re-opened at the LGI and we should be doing everything we can as an Authority to make sure that that is the case. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR BALE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. A supplementary. I wonder whether Councillor Carter would agree that this is yet another symptom of an unsatisfactory balance between capital and revenue expenditure in the NHS - £100b a year on revenue, including a lot of bureaucracy, and just £4b on capital?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: My Lord Mayor, I think increasingly we are going to find national politicians are expecting the NHS to examine the bureaucracy but when they actually do, one particular example of the nonsense that seems to go on, they spent £3m on purchasing slimming vouchers which they pay for in advance. There has been a 60% uptake only in these slimming vouchers. The rest presumably have been torn up and thrown in the waste paper bin. Half the money has been wasted. You may think that that is a very small amount of money in the scheme of things. Well, this one is a lot bigger. They paid out £1.2b in compensation for negligence. That is a mind boggling amount of money.

We all want to see more resources spent at the sharp end of treatment and I have to say there seems to be something radically wrong with the balance of spending which allows only 4% of a massive amount of money to be spent on capital

equipment and buildings. I think that if they look at reprovision and rebalance some of the bureaucracy, we might then get the dialysis unit at the LGI that I mentioned a little earlier. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Carter. Could I call on Councillor Lewis, please?

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Does Councillor Brett agree with me that honesty is the key to successful communication with the public?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: The answer, of course, is yes but within the constraints – you have not had the answer yet so why you are laughing before you have even heard it – of the Council's constitution.

The Council's aspirational culture includes a key section on communications and engagement which states:

“Our communications are open, honest and trustworthy. We believe communication is everyone's responsibility. We are committed to meaningful consultation, engagement and involvement both internally and externally.”

We are working hard with all our services to ensure that this culture is embedded. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Do you have a supplementary?

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Yes, Lord Mayor, thank you. Can Councillor Brett therefore confirm two things? First of all that officers working on the EASEL development are negotiating with EWS railways to build a freight rail head adjacent to the Council's preference site for its incinerator on the Pontefract Lane site? That rail head is going to come up, of course it was, Councillor Lyons's rail head. Secondly, can Councillor Brett confirm that the Executive Board report agreed on September 11th 2007 clearly states that the introduction of weekly food collection by the Council will, and I quote, “enable the frequency of residual waste bin collections to be reduced”?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I think we are playing a game here where if Councillor Lewis or anyone on the Labour side want me to try and find answers to real questions I am very willing to do it. Much though I have in the past been commended for having an amazingly good memory, you will be surprised I think to learn that I do not know the answers to the specific questions that you have raised.

My suspicion is that there is nothing at all for you to be concerned about with EASEL and a rail head but of course I will investigate, I will investigate the other matter to which you referred and I will get back to you by letter. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Brett. I now call on Councillor Ann Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Member for Environmental Services explain why the waste solution for Leeds is now going to take waste from neighbouring authorities as well as commercial waste from Leeds?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Monaghan.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. As a principle we do not support imported waste from outside of this city.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: You are going to do it anyway.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: We are not going to be shipping in waste as Councillor Lyons suggests from other Authorities en masse.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: But you are.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: Third party waste has always been part of the discussions around the residual waste treatment facility to provide for flexibility and cope with variations in the waste produced within this city.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: It will be railroaded in.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: However, it is important to note that the limited amount of waste permitted to accommodate the logistics of waste collection rounds that are not constrained by city boundaries, the successful contractor will be required to source the third party waste from within Leeds.

We are working with the remaining bidders to be sure that not more than one per cent of the waste for the residual waste treatment facility will come from outside of Leeds.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: They said one per cent.

THE LORD MAYOR: Do you have a supplementary?

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Yes I do, Lord Mayor. As you are stating one per cent of waste is going to be sent from neighbouring Authorities.
(*interruption*)

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: I did not say that.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: How many tonnes of waste do you envisage this to be?

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: I think actually we agree with the Greens on many things in that actually what we are trying to do is maximise the amount of recycling and divert as much as possible away from landfill. We have to find an alternative to landfill and the harmful methane gases it releases.

As I said, we will take some third party waste to allow some flexible...

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: How many tonnes?

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: How much?

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: I will get to that. We have said we are only in discussions to not take more than one per cent from outside this Authority. Can you imagine if there is a commercial refuse collection in your ward, perhaps on their round it includes some properties in Tonge, it would be ridiculous to say that they could not do rounds that are completely in Leeds. The amount is approximately 1,600 tonnes and to let you know on a weekly basis we collect 7,000 tonnes a week

of waste in this city, so that tells you what kind of level we are talking about.
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR LYONS: How many lorries will it take?

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Monaghan. I now call on Councillor Iqbal.

COUNCILLOR IQBAL: Can the Executive Member for Environmental Services confirm that the highest possible standards in health and cleanliness are being observed in his department?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Monaghan?

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: Thank you. Yes.

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary?

COUNCILLOR IQBAL: Thank you. Would Councillor Monaghan agree with me that these health and cleanliness standards and those of the public will be compromised if they proceed with their cost cutting plan to remove dog bins?

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: I do not think there are any plans to remove dog bins. You will have to speak to my colleague Councillor Procter whose department that is actually in and I am sure he will respond to you fully about that.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: They are mine.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: How many tonnes are you moving?

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: How many lorry loads?

THE LORD MAYOR: We will move on now to Councillor Ewens, please.

COUNCILLOR EWENS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Leader of Council comment, please, on the proposals to promote a year of volunteering in Leeds in 2010?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It has been something that I have proposed that next year, 2010, be a year of volunteering in Leeds not just for the Council but for all the partners that we work with, obviously the voluntary community and faith sector and many other partners.

The context of this, of course, is sadly we have a growing number of people who are unemployed, without work, and we would hope to persuade some, at least, of those people to get involved in volunteering in some form.

The aims of this year, which I hope will not be something that divides us politically and I very much hope that all the main parties, everyone here, will be able to ascribe to the aims I am about to read out.

The aims of this year would be to celebrate and promote volunteering, to increase community engagement through more volunteering, to create more volunteers and volunteering opportunities and to deliver a range of quality volunteering experiences.

Volunteering provides a number of benefits to individuals and also to the wider community. In particular it promotes neighbourhoods, it promotes civic pride, participation, responsibility. It unlocks talent and creativity, very much needed to lead our communities. It helps people to develop new skills, confidence that can be transferable into a work situation. It recognises and strengthens the huge third sector contribution in the city. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Brett. Councillor Ewens?

COUNCILLOR EWENS: Supplementary please, Lord Mayor. Can I ask Councillor Brett, please, to advise how Councillors can get involved in supporting this year of volunteering?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. We are hoping that all councillors will be able to play a leading role in supporting this year of volunteering, generating enthusiasm at Ward level, community level, and supporting what we think will be a range of city-wide events. There is to be a steering group with representatives from all the political groups being established to oversee at a political level the range of events and activities that take place and through that I hope good ideas from all quarters, particularly from members, will be fed into the plans for this and that everyone will be involved. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Brett. I call now on Councillor Anderson.

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: Lord Mayor, does the Executive Member for City Development and Regeneration know if the Government has agreed the financial support package submitted by Yorkshire Forward as a contribution towards the Leeds Arena project?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Yes, Lord Mayor. First of all I have to place on record my thanks to Yorkshire Forward to sticking to their commitment made to the city some time ago in terms of support for the arena project. For the uninitiated, let me tell you, we are not asking the Government for any extra money. The money is already there as part of Yorkshire Forward's funding package. They agree with Local Authorities across the region priorities for support. We identified the arena; they agreed with us and various reports that have been put together well setting out the economic reasons why Leeds should indeed have a popular music arena.

Because the amount of contribution is in excess of £10m, then there has to be additional sign-off by the Secretary of State, who happens to be Deputy Prime Minister, general factotum, chief cook and bottle washer, Lord Mandleson, and there is where it sits.

We have had one contact back from the department asking for further information. I cannot, I have to say believe that even this Government would be so stupid as to refuse to rubber stamp what has already been agreed, but let me just use this opportunity to put a marker down for our colleagues opposite and, indeed, for the Leeds Members of Parliament – I include those who have jumped ship as well as those who are about to be thrown off the ship involuntarily.

If they yet again prove to be a bunch of political inadequates and allow their colleagues in Sheffield to get away with the lobbying they are doing against our project, our colleagues opposite and the Members of Parliament, I think, will feel the full wrath of public opinion of the people of this city. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I now call on Councillor Renshaw.

COUNCILLOR RENSHAW: Lord Mayor, will the Leader of the Council confirm his commitment to help equality across the city?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Brett.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The Leeds Strategic Plan for 2008 to 2011 lists under its Health and Wellbeing priority three strategic outcomes that we want to see achieved by 2011. They are reduced health inequalities through the promotion of healthy life choices and improved access to services, improved quality of life through maximising the potential of vulnerable people, and enhanced safety and support for vulnerable people through preventive and protective action to minimise risk and maximise wellbeing.

I fully support those aims. My Ward, Burmantofts and Richmond Hill, is one of the Wards with relatively poor health and a lot of deprivation. My record in this place does include a campaign to try and support the introduction of no smoking in public places. Some years ago I was very much to the fore in saying that passive smoking was something that caused more cancers than we wanted so, of course, I am happy to commit personally to working towards the health equality that we all want to see, I am sure, across the city.

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary?

COUNCILLOR RENSHAW: Please, Lord Mayor. Can you therefore explain why the residents in Ardsley and Robin Hood will not be considered in the Council's expanded cycle route plans? Why should these residents in this Ward have to miss out on the health benefits that these cycle lanes bring to the community because of a post code lottery?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Once again, if Councillor Renshaw wants the answer to a detailed question then she needs to go to the Executive Board Member responsible which I think, as far as cycle routes is concerned, comes under Transport and it is Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Read tomorrow's paper.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I have to say that Andrew Carter knows full well that I support cycling so it is something that one of us, I am sure, will be happy to get back to you and respond on.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Brett. Councillor Beverley.

COUNCILLOR BEVERLEY: Can the Leader of Council please comment on the recent admission by Gordon Brown that his Government's housing policy discriminates against the ethnic population of this country and his claim that this will be corrected so that immigrants and asylum seekers will no longer be put to the front of the housing queue and can he tell us what implications this will have for the housing policies of Leeds City Council?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Brett.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I want to take full on the thrust of this question by saying as clearly as I possibly can that I believe immigration has been good for Leeds. If we go back some considerable time, a whole host of

people have come to Leeds from a variety of distant places, whether they be Jewish communities, Irish, West Indians, Pakistanis, Bangladeshis, and more recently Poles and Africans. All of those people have contributed significantly, in my view, to our great city and I hope will continue to do so.

It is not my duty here today to comment on anything the Prime Minister said but I will say that the Council had a full debate on issues relating to the Council's letting policy in April and officers are going to be presenting a paper setting out proposals for implementing some change to the Executive Board next week.

Leeds City Council cannot by law offer homes to those who are in the asylum process but only to those who have been granted refugee status. The key issue in my view is the number of available homes. I think that is what the Prime Minister was referring to in making the statement that he did.

Merely refining lettings policies, which is what the Prime Minister I think was referring to, will not in itself produce more homes. The Council has taken a number of steps to increase the number of affordable homes in the city, whether through its affordable housing delivery or through innovative regeneration schemes. A report on this is also going to the Executive Board in July.

The bottom line is, there is not enough social housing – not enough in Leeds and not enough in many other places. On Day One as Leader of my party I asked for more social housing. I think we should aspire to building a thousand properties a year. The problem, frankly, is the Labour Government. After twelve years they are still waking up to the problem of not building enough social houses to rent. The Housing Minister's promise a few days ago to continue consulting about dismantling the Housing Revenue Account makes it clear that even now there is very little urgency in Whitehall.

Can I say in reply to Councillor Beverley that if you ask a supplementary, many of us will welcome your definition of what you mean by "ethnic English." Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Do you have a supplementary Councillor Beverley?

COUNCILLOR BEVERLEY: Yes I do, Lord Mayor. I would like to ask the supplementary question, does the Leader of Council deny that there is such a thing as an ethnic English person?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I think in the simplistic terms that you may be meaning, I am fairly certain I do. I recall that Councillor Harris some little time ago asked this Chamber at one point would all of us who had a grandparent who was not born in this country, please would they raise their hands, and over half the Council did that. That, I think, illustrates that in a very short period of time people come from far and wide to Leeds, to England, to the United Kingdom and to imagine that there is some pure ethnic English race that can be identified I believe is profoundly mistaken. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Brett. I now call on Councillor Jarosz.

COUNCILLOR JAROSZ: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Leader of Council reiterate the importance of effective financial management within the Council, particularly given the current economic circumstances.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Brett.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: It is keeping me fit, Lord Mayor, this bobbing up and down. The Council has a proved track record in effective fiscal management. This has been recognised by the Audit Commission through the achievement of the highest score possible, Level 4, in the latest Use of Resources Assessment. This means the Council is well above minimum standards and, in their jargon, performing well. The Audit has stated, "The Council identifies key risks and associated budgetary pressures in the budget-setting process and has a strong track record in delivering against budgets."

Following consideration of the Council's budget strategy for 2009/10, Scrutiny Board Central & Corporate actually minuted there was a consensus within the Board that the fiscal management of the Authority's budget is excellent. In 2008/09 the financial performance showed an overall underspend of £4.8m which has been added to reserves. This will provide the Council with a buffer to deal with issues arising from the present uncertain economic circumstances.

When setting the budget for 2009/10 careful consideration was given to the current economic climate and an income of £3m was taken out of budgets in the most volatile areas.

It is worth noting that the last time this Council was in a year where there was a significant deficit was at the time when the current administration came into power and inherited the deficit from the previous administration. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Do you have a supplementary, Councillor?

COUNCILLOR JAROSZ: Yes. How can this administration justify spending £185,000 on "About Leeds" and that is in one year, a publication described by one reader of the Yorkshire Evening Post as unbalanced and misleading political propaganda, at the same time closing the Roseville Door factory which provides valuable supported employment for people with disabilities. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I am tempted to start by saying what I said at the end, that the last time there was a serious problem – and it was way more than £185,000, I recall...

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: £17 million.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: ...was when this administration took over. Let us be honest, this has been controversial for quite some time but the bottom line is delivering a publication four times a year to every home in Leeds, giving information about what the Council is offering and costing 13p per household per edition, I think that is good value for money. It is not political propaganda. Councillors are not allowed to feature in it. We have to have a remarkable process, all the photographs, to try and make sure that by mistake no Councillor accidentally appears in any of the photographs, so it is not political propaganda – it is telling the people of Leeds what the Council is offering. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Brett. This brings us to the end of Questions, so all remaining questions will be answered in writing. Thank you.

ITEM 7 – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

(a)

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now on to Item 7, Recommendations of the Executive Board. I call on Councillor Brett.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I move in terms of the Notice, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I would like to call for a vote. *(A vote was taken)* This is CARRIED.

I now call on Councillor Brett once again.

(b)

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I move in terms of the Notice, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I will bring this to the vote. *(A vote was taken)* This is CARRIED.

(c)

THE LORD MAYOR: I call on Councillor Brett again.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I move in terms of the Notice, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I need now to take a vote for the Council's consent for the above. Can I just ask Ms Jackson to explain this?

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE GOVERNANCE): The report in front of Executive Board which is the basis of this recommendation contained two documents. One was the Interim Consultation Report and one was the Statement of Licensing Policy. The Interim Consultation Report included amended text proposed to be incorporated within the Statement of Licensing Policy in relation to the protection of children and vulnerable people, so the purpose of the wording at the top of page 9 of the Order Paper is to make it clear, with the consent of Council, that the document which is going to be available for public consultation is the Statement of Licensing Policy incorporating that amended text regarding the protection of children and vulnerable people.

The current vote that you are being asked to vote on is whether there is leave of Council to have that approval to the incorporation of that text.

THE LORD MAYOR: Right. I am glad that you have explained that, Ms Jackson, I would have found it very difficult. I would like now to take a vote on this. *(A vote was taken)* This is CARRIED.

I now need to call for a vote.

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE GOVERNANCE): This next vote, if there are no comments on the draft Statement of Gambling Policy that anybody wishes to make, then the next vote is that you do actually agree that the Statement of Licensing Policy, as just amended, be the document approved for public consultation.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you once again. We will take a vote on that please. Everybody will understand what is being said now. *(A vote was taken)* This is CARRIED.

ITEM 8 – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 8, the Recommendations of the Standards Committee. Councillor Campbell.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I propose that we receive these in accordance with the recommendations of the Assistant Chief Executive and can I recommend to the two or three members who probably have not had chance to read this yet that they find to do so. It is a very gripping read. *(Laughter)* They may well feel quite moved this afternoon by it.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I moving these, my Lord Mayor, may I just make a comment that I believe it is a historic day in this Council today because I believe – and I have tried to think if I am incorrect here – that we have our first woman Leader of a party and I think we ought to say well done. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Congratulations, Councillor Blackburn. Missing off the green paper is the fact that now we have to have a vote called for by myself, so we will take the vote. *(A vote was taken)* This is CARRIED.

ITEM 9 – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

THE LORD MAYOR: Item number 9, Recommendations of the General Purposes Committee. Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I move, my Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I will call for the vote. *(A vote was taken)* This is CARRIED.

ITEM 10 – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 10, Recommendations of the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee. Councillor Bale.

COUNCILLOR BALE: I move in terms of the Notice, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Second and reserve my right to speak.

THE LORD MAYOR: We are going through now to the vote. (*A vote was taken*) This is CARRIED.

ITEM 11 – MINUTES

THE LORD MAYOR: Item number 11, Minutes. Councillor Brett.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Lord Mayor, I move the Minutes be received.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Procter?

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Do we have any comments on these Minutes?

(a)

(i) Adult Health and Social Care

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. This is page 442 Minute 17, Changing Place Toilets, the deputation that was received last time.

Councillor Matthews and I had a visit to the Headingley Primary School on Sunday, where the HEART project is going to be launched. As you all know, we are very proud and pleased that the Council is supporting this scheme which will include enterprise units, meeting rooms, a café, art space, performance space. It really will be an excellent scheme I think and we were very impressed again with all the people that attended the site visit and we can really start to visualise what the scheme will actually bring to the people of Headingley.

There are some excellent people behind it and I think it stands every chance of success and we very much support it.

We were fortunate to see some architect's drawings of the scheme and the sort of things that will be in there I have just mentioned. I am very pleased to say that one of the things that will be in there is a changing places toilet. They are very keen to get on with that actually, they have had some very fruitful discussions with Councillor officers on that particular issue. It may well be that this is actually the first one that we are able to provide as a response to this deputation, so I thought Council might like to know that that is being progressed. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: I had actually got one speech but because of the way the Council runs its business there are actually two Executive members involved because half of what I am going to say is about Councillor Golton's portfolio, so unless Council wants to hear it all in one go, I will break it into two. Do you want me twice or once or not at all!

The report and Looking Forward to the Future is all very well, any Local Authority worth its salt can work with partners and have well-meaning words in a document which gets published and very often just gets put on a shelf and is ignored, but I want the Executive Board members response – that is both of them – to address their minds in addition to the report Looking at the Future, the very critical report and inspection letter we had from the Audit Commission in March of this year.

Those of you who are on the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee will remember that I rather blew my top – which is unusual for me – because I found the condemnatory remarks about Leeds City Council quite shocking, quite frankly, in terms of some of the things which are going on in the city. As a Council as a whole

we have dropped a point in terms of our rating - that is a step backwards. We are a Council covering a city with a whole number of diverse communities. We have got a lot of very poor people, we have got a lot of quite wealthy people compared to some other metropolitan districts. You can go to some other metropolitan districts and they are all very much of a muchness all over but Leeds has got this huge diversity, areas of great wealth and areas of significant poverty.

We talk, don't we, about narrowing the gap, about trying to make sure that services are delivered fairly to everybody but they clearly are not being. For example, in paragraph 17 of the letter that we got from the Audit Commission it says:

"The Council is achieving mixed outcomes in supporting people to live healthy, fulfilling lives. Inspectors found that adult safeguarding arrangements did not satisfactorily protect vulnerable people, procedures were weak and agencies were not working together effectively, elected members did not have access to adequate information about the service and there was not a culture of self-scrutiny amongst health and social care staff."

The report then goes on to say that the Council is going to make some changes to address it – you would expect that in any organisation, would you not, once there is criticism, but the fact is the criticism should not have been able to be made in the first place. This city has been a metropolitan district since 1974 and has bags of experience in dealing with all kinds of people, different age groups, ethnicities, etc.

Paragraph 19:

"Health outcomes in some priority areas are improving but not consistently in all areas."

If you look at the fine detail you see huge disparities in health in different parts of the city. The worst examples, I have to say, are in infant mortality, which I accept is Councillor Golton's area. Infant mortality figures are shocking. Leeds is criticised because we are significantly above the infant mortality rate.

When this came to committee I expressed the view I found that strange, because we have got the Wetherbys and the Guiseleys and the Horsforths you would expect the total Leeds figure to be diluted, would you not, but in fact even when you do that we are significantly above the national average when it comes to infant mortality.

The good news is that here are some of the best survival rates. These are figures provided to me by the NHS over a five year period and the average infant mortality in England is about 4.8 per 1,000 live births. The figure in Harewood is 1.2 deaths, so compared to the national average Harewood is good. Roundhay is 1.5 – that is good. Rothwell is 1.9, Adel is 2.1, Wetherby is 2.4. They are well within the figure that is the national average. Any death is one too many but those wards, none of which, of course, are represented by the Labour Party, are well below the national average. I care about everybody, I am sure we all do, really, irrespective of who they vote for.

The worse survival rates for infants are Middleton Park, 7.8 deaths, Kirkstall 9.1 deaths, City and Hunslet 9.6, Chapel Allerton 10.3 and Beeston and Holbeck 11.3. Here we are, one city – Harewood is 1.2, Beeston and Holbeck is 11.3. There is a huge disparity. Never more true was it to say that we have to narrow the gap.

Each child is born completely innocent to some parent somewhere, as we all were one day. How can we, in a modern, civilised, advanced nation like the UK, with all its great wealth and riches, have a situation where these mortality rates are tolerated?

I would like both Executive members who have both seen this letter because they both got it in March to say what they have done about it since the receipt of the letter. What are we doing to make sure that we have no wards in Leeds above the national average and that we do everything that is possible to make sure that people have a healthy, long, happy life? Thank you very much, members of Council.

COUNCILLOR YEADON: Lord Mayor, I also wish to comment on Minute 17 page 442 of the Executive Board regarding the provision of changing places facilities.

I should probably begin by declaring a personal interest as for several years and through my previous employment with MENCAP I sat on the National Project Team for the changing places campaign which lobbied for these facilities.

I welcome the comments made today about HEART and that is a great start. However, I want to talk about my motivation for speaking today. As a person who lives with a disability and having lived with my father who is a wheelchair user, I understand how these facilities would empower a group of citizens in Leeds to lead every day, normal lives which the majority of us take for granted.

For most people the event of popping to the loo is merely a trivial annoyance interrupting a busy day. For some and their carers, it is a painful, distressing, degrading experience, and for others accessing an ordinary disabled public toilet is a complete impossibility.

I do not intend to revisit all the arguments as to why these facilities are so desperately needed. The All Means All group clearly articulated these in their deputation a few meetings ago but I would like to comment on the Executive Board response. It is my understanding that, Councillor Brett, you committed to three changing places facilities and I am sure this has been done with the best of intentions, but I have to ask where is the ambition?

Here I have a list of all the towns and cities that already are home to these vital services. The list includes York, Hull, Warrington, Manchester, Sheffield, Barnsley and Preston to name but a few. Gateshead, a Local Authority considerably smaller than Leeds, already has seven changing places and Bradford, our neighbouring city, has an incredibly impressive nine with more planned. Leeds has none.

For a person with a more complex disability and their carers, Leeds is not the city in which to be and I have to be honest, that really saddens me. Leeds is failing to grasp that these facilities are key in successfully implementing the Personalisation Agenda and Carers' Strategy. Without these facilities the future aspirations of the Valuing People Now consultation document will be undeliverable. Your aim of three changing places. Is simply not enough. We want better than that and we want better for the people who rely on these facilities.

What also concerns me is that three definite sites are yet to be confirmed. The Trinity Development is on hold, which only leaves the Terrace Bar, an ideal location which I certainly support, but where are the rest going to go? We have missed out on some fantastic opportunities, such as the Leeds Museum, and we cannot let others slip through our fingers. The Council needs the political will and vision to do more.

Lord Mayor, I am sure some members are sat here thinking why on earth is Lucinda rattling on about toilets, but this issue certainly illustrates to me where the very personal becomes political. This is an equalities issue just as much as an access issue. It is our duty as a Council to ensure that every citizen has the opportunity to play a full part in our society. At this moment you are failing to meet this duty. If the administration is willing to demonstrate a lack of ambition on this issue, then you are demonstrating a lack of ambition for all of Leeds's citizens. Please show a great aspiration for all of us. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: I am wishing to respond to Councillor Taggart, specifically involving infant mortality rates.

Councillor Taggart is correct, infant mortality rates in this city are something we are all concerned about. In terms of it being highlighted in this particular report, it is an action for all other partners involved in Children's Services, particularly, of course, to do with our partners in NHS Leeds to ensure that action is taken to narrow the gap, shall we say, between different communities.

I have to say it is a little bit more complicated than Councillor Taggart has actually presented it to Council. It is not simply a matter of attention being paid to wards which are represented by Liberal Democrat or Conservative Councillors and Labour Councillors' wards are being neglected. I think that was a little bit simplistic and a little bit cheap, to tell you the truth.

The issue of infant mortality is one which is very complex and is associated with particular make-ups of different communities so that, for instance, we know that there is an issue with the Afro-Caribbean community where there are higher infant mortality rates to do with a certain condition and it is one of those areas where we need to do more work in those areas to make sure that all the help is given to that community to ensure that health is paramount.

In terms of other parts of this infant mortality there is also a risk with infant mortality to have births which are at a lower age. The work that we are doing in terms of reducing the teenage conception rates, which a lot of your colleagues are actively engaged in and I will, at this point, point out the work of Angela Gabriel and Vonnice Morgan in terms of taking a leadership role in their particular communities and work which is associated with reducing teenage conception will also have impact on reducing infant mortality because young women who are able to make better informed choices have better outcomes with the children that they have and if that means having them at a later stage in life, all the better.

Yes, there is work ongoing, Councillor Taggart, and I am more than willing to having him involved in taking that forward if you feel that you have something to offer. Once again, I will point out that work is being targeted specifically in those wards where the proliferation of infant mortality and teenage pregnancy is highest. Work and investment is actually invested in wards, Councillor Taggart, which are not represented by the likes of me. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harrand to sum up, please.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: Lord Mayor, to start with a PS to Stuart's comments there which are almost traditional in the circumstances. I have done research on this and 50% of parents are male. It is fine to say education the ladies and work for greater responsibility for ladies. It is the young men at least as much and the more education we can do to improve that, I think that is probably more constructive as the "It's nothing to do with me" sort of mentality or talk like that.

On the subject of changing places, I suspect this is the one item this afternoon that everybody completely understands and we do sympathise and we wish we had more as well. We are nearly there. We now have one in the Harewood Centre, we have one down on its way for the Trinity Centre. We want this year, the financial year, to have one at the art gallery and central library just across the road. The two leisure centres at Armley and Morley will both have change places centres and the Holme Park Wellbeing Centre, which I accept is over the horizon, and the Leeds Arena will both have changing places toilets, so we have not done enough yet but we are on the way and we take your point entirely that it is not to be dismissed.

Neil's point about the report, I think it is this same report that we discussed at a Special Council Meeting on January 28th this year of which I still bear the scare.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: It was not sent until March.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: It reached you in March; we received it in August. We started work in September. Safeguarding we got a "poor" for, I remember that quite clearly as well. Work began before you actually got the report. We started recruiting at once. We have now got a safeguarding structure which is the envy of the Local Authority world. I met the staff last week in the Director's office. We are well on our way. We got the good news last week that the Inspector, Mr Willis, who did this inspection last year, will no longer find it necessary to come back and look at us, we are just passed to the ordinary routine regional examiners for social services, so in as much as that is a point of comfort, we take some comfort from it as well.

I just want to make a point in finishing. This is a plan written by Mike Simpkin largely, who has left now, to whom we are very grateful. The plans and documents and strategies and visions I am, I hope, known to be quite cynical about. The actual application of these policies on the ground is not up to Councillors in pompous meetings in committee rooms. It is up to individuals and we take our role as far as we can but responsibility for smoking, alcohol, drug abuse, obesity and sexual health, whilst we are doing what we can, is largely a matter for the individual. We should not try and pretend that there is any political responsibility. We should not assume or pretend that we can deliver things that we cannot. These things are up to every individual to deliver on their own on his or her behalf.

If you want a detailed briefing on the update on safeguarding you can have it but we like to think we are making progress and certainly have a structure and a cost base vastly different from what it was a year ago. *(Applause)*

(ii) Central & Corporate

THE LORD MAYOR: I now call on Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I speak on the Reference Back of Item 23 on page 444, Procurement of a Corporate Interactive Voice Response Solution.

I must preface my remarks on this item by saying that I find it quite a sad reflection of the way this Council sometimes operates that many members of this Council from all sides of the Chamber participate fully in the Scrutiny process, take it very seriously, make their contribution in good faith, common sense, speaking up for their constituents and I find it sad after a cross-party agreement on this item that it should be called in and referred back to the decision-maker has effectively been overruled by the Executive Board who are simply railroading through the original report that a cross-party Scrutiny enquiry called in.

I think that is a very sad comment on the behaviour of the Executive Board and it is a very sad comment on democracy in this Council today.

Why did some elected members want this report to be called in and want the decision to be reconsidered? Because we believe this is a technology that is not needed, that does not work and works against not for the people in the city. I believe this Council is here to work for the people of this city.

I am particularly concerned about the suggestion that bulky waste collections can be booked using a computer, using an answerphone, using a computer answering the phone. It is a complex piece of information to give a description of the items involved, to book a collection date and to give a name, address and post code. We have all had plenty of examples of case work unfortunately where misunderstandings have occurred, where the wrong items have been taken; people have requested the sofa being taken and the garden furniture has gone as well.

I think this system will not improve that situation; it will make it worse. It is commonly accepted in the industry that interactive voice recognition is only 95% accurate on single commands – people saying “Yes”, “No” or giving a number for an option. It is only 95% accurate on that. How can it take the complex information needed for a bulky waste collection?

I believe this application of interactive voice technology is wholly unsuited for this purpose and I am shocked and saddened that this is one of the first things introduced and to be rolled out on us. I think in terms of the climate we are in, I do not believe this is an appropriate use of scarce capital resourcing this Council has. I think it is shocking that in a time of rising unemployment this Council is pushing a project whose stated aim – stated aim – is to cut jobs and finally, and most importantly, I think the important thing about this is do members of the Council want the image of this organisation presented to the citizens of Leeds to be an answerphone and a computer? You cannot talk to a person at the Council – you have to talk to a computer. You have to talk to somebody that cannot respond. I think that is the wrong image for this Council to present to the citizens of Leeds and I call on this Council to send this wrong decision back to the Executive Board and make the Executive Board do exactly what they should have done in the first place and listen to the decision of the cross-party Scrutiny Board instead of behaving like a tin pot third world dictatorship and refusing to listen to any alternative point of view and anything that demurs from their point of view. *(interruption)* I call on the Council to make the right decision, overrule the Executive Board and send this decision back. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR LOWE: Lord Mayor, I want to speak on Minute 23 page 444 and the Reference Back relating to the procurement of a Corporate Interactive Voice Response Solution, the IVR. I believe this decision should be reconsidered. As it stands the proposals to introduce IVR are not the right ones for this city and definitely not for the people of this city.

Specifically our Group is worried about the plan to use the bulky collection service as part of the initial pilot. A cross-party Scrutiny Board, which I was a member of, raised concerns about the very same issues and I do not believe that the recent paper that was brought to the Executive properly addresses the issues that we raised.

I think at the Scrutiny Board meeting I talked about the vision of the city, which is to bring the benefits or the wealth of the city to all of the citizens of Leeds and I do not believe that the IVR will do that. It will not engage people in the way that

proper people speaking to each other does but I also think that it will discriminate against vulnerable people and particularly people from BME communities. In Leeds about 11% of people are from BME communities. We have a large number of refugee and asylum seekers in Leeds who are very welcome – from my perspective very welcome - but they will (a) not be able to use this system and (b), the system will not be compatible with some of the accents that are in the city. We have got Yorkshire accents which we think are fantastic. Maybe even our Yorkshire accents will not be compatible with this system – we do not know.

I know that IVR can work effectively but only when it is used to handle simple high volume transactions and bulky waste collections as we know are not simple and they are very complex and my colleague has already told you some of the difficulties that have been encountered over the years, which I will not repeat.

Even if we had the bulky collection service we do not have the technology to make the IVR system work. Your own business case tells us this. Furthermore the Siebel(?) development team do not know when the technology will be developed, so why the bulky waste collection service as the pilot? It does not really seem to make any sense.

I worry that cross-party concerns about IVR have been ignored and I am really worried that on this occasion the Executive have got it wrong. I know that we think that that happens on many occasion but particularly on this.

I am calling on you all to reconsider this decision and let us make sure we get it right, get the basics right before we embark on what I think is a very flawed decision. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR DRIVER: Lord Mayor, I want to speak on the same Minute, 23 page 444, in support of the reference back.

I am asking that this decision be reconsidered. Like Councillor Lowe I am very worried about the way all party concerns expressed through the only mechanism that many of us have, the Scrutiny process, and it is important that really we need to be seen to be heard in using that process.

I find it very unsatisfactory that plans which have clearly worried members from all parties who were involved with that hearing come back to the Executive Board with so little amendment. What does that say about the way Local Government works? Is that really taking seriously the views of the community and all members of the Council?

The Scrutiny Board raised concerns about very specific issues and I agree with those concerns. Consultation has been poor and I am sceptical, like my colleagues, about the bulky waste collections being chosen for the pilot project of this kind. However, I want to consider the wider problems with the plans. As I see it, more automation means less engagement with our residents and particularly those residents who most need to use the services that the council provides. I think this is a dangerous trend.

I am very concerned that the city will eventually be left feeling – and those people in particular who I mentioned be left feeling – ever more remote from the Council and that is not a good thing to happen.

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- Some of us saw with the ALMO inspections only earlier this year, and that was about IVR, it was about just their call centres, how many people reported to

the inspectors how unsatisfactory even talking to a call centre was compared with talking to their local Housing Office. You, Lord Mayor, I think were involved with some of that discussion in the ALMO in the south of the city when it was discussed some weeks ago.

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• What about the elderly? What about the vulnerable? What about those residents who simply want to speak to a person when they pick up the phone? It is all very well to say that callers can opt out of automation but not before they have actually met it and that is the problem. It is clearly already an impersonal approach when they first hit it and they have got to work out what to do with it. I think this is really very poorly considered in the proposals as they stand at the moment.

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• It is easy, Lord Mayor, to get blinded by the benefits of technology but at the end of the day we must not forget our responsibility to protect the vulnerable and to provide assistance for the needy. Lord Mayor, I believe that comes first and I have real doubts that the system can deliver on this. Thank you. *(Applause)*

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• COUNCILLOR BRETT: Lord Mayor, I think there has been some misunderstanding about what is being proposed here. Nobody, and certainly not me, is saying that vulnerable people will be stopped from talking face to face at One Stop Centres or anywhere else. This has been an additional way, not instead of – I repeat, an additional way – of making what are in the main routine transactions. If somebody wants to make a choice based letting bid, it is a straightforward process. If somebody wants to order a bulky waste collection, in many cases a straightforward process.

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• COUNCILLOR LOWE: No it is not. It is not.

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• COUNCILLOR BRETT: What this does is to make possible something that is not possible at all now. We are trying to make possible someone way into the evening picking up the phone and making either of these transactions. At the moment that is not possible. We are not going to stop any of the other ways of doing these transactions, whether it is via the web for choice based lettings, certainly not in person.

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• We cannot demonstrate the system to you; it needs to be developed. One of the things I have asked for as an absolute guarantee is that these systems will have very quickly a default position that if the user gets in any trouble – and that could be just a long pause where they do not know what to do – they will either be put through immediately to the operator to sort it out or, if it is late at night, will be given a message as to who they ring first thing in the morning.

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• I agree with Councillor Lewis on one thing, that if there is Scrutiny working properly, it does ask Councillors sometimes cross-party to get together and ask us to think again and in this case that worked, we have thought again. I understand that the Scrutiny Committee concerned has had some of the thinking from James Rogers explained to them.

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• I have to say, Councillor Lowe, that the comment which maybe I misheard you and you may want to tell me that I did not hear this right, but I thought I heard you to say that people from the BME community might not be able to use this. I have to say that is condescending.

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- COUNCILLOR LOWE: I did not say that.
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- COUNCILLOR BRETT: The situation is quite simple.
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- COUNCILLOR ATHA: Do not misrepresent what she said.
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- COUNCILLOR BRETT: This is an addition. This is not something that has suddenly been thought out of a strange box. To say, as Councillor Driver did, that the consultation has been poor is to ignore the evidence of the consultation that was done. The consultation that was done involved a number of tenants who when asked the question in the way I have put it, "Would you welcome being able to make these transactions on into the evening" said, "Yes, of course."
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- I am very confident that the position we have from the other side is a Luddite position. Labour Luddites against progress. *(Applause)*
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- COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: There is nothing wrong with Luddites. They are protecting jobs.
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- THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lowe.
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- COUNCILLOR LOWE: I want to say that Councillor Brett misheard me. As an older person clearly he will not be able to use IVR either! *(Laughter)*
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- THE LORD MAYOR: We would like a recorded vote please. We have a seconder from a number of places.
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- (A recorded vote was held on the Reference Back)
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- THE LORD MAYOR: We have the result in. The number present was 93. "Yes" was 43; abstaining 1; "No" 49, so this has been LOST.
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- I now call for comments on the Central and Corporate portfolio Minutes and call on Councillor Dunn.
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- COUNCILLOR DUNN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I wish to comment on page 443, Item 18, the Criteria for the proposals for reduction in age of taxi private hire. The deputation from the GMB trade union came to the Council on 22nd April 2009. Following this the proposals came up before the Licensing Panel on 7th July. I have to say that I have never seen as many people in this Council Chamber at that Council meeting. There were over 200 representatives of the trade and general public which was enlightening. The meeting was a fantastic successful proactive community involvement in local politics.
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- A frank exchange of views was exchanged from the GMB and the licensed trade and the general public. Our views are unswerving. Our views are that we want a private hire licensed taxicabs and all of this business, we want a safe private fleet situation and our views have always been that our priorities are for the safety of the general public.

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- I think that after this meeting we got some measure of agreement that the private hire which has been sometimes lacking in attending meetings are going to make an effort to come to the meetings because we intend to look at the best practice for taxis and private hire and together, if we can get these implemented together, and only together can we make it successful, then we have the makings of a tremendous leap in this city.

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- Much reference has been made to other cities but we do not care about other cities – this is Leeds. We want the private of Leeds, we want the general public to feel safe when they use our private hire and taxi vehicles. In an age where at last is coming home the failures of the public transport system, more and more are we going to need these private hire and taxi vehicles. The general public are turning to them so it is relevant that we do not put too much stringent pressure on the trade to put them out of business. We must work together and I am confident that by working together we can make a successful fleet on both sides and I look forward to that. Thank you.
(Applause)

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- COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Lord Mayor, I think I must congratulate Geoff and his colleagues on the hard work they put in on this because I think the jobs that we do as a quasi-judicial function are very difficult and completely unglamorous. As a Panel they have come to the right decision.

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- What I am worried about is what has happened over the past few months before we have got to that decision. Clearly there has been a huge amount of disquiet and unhappiness amongst taxi drivers who have felt that the Council has been attacking them, is against them. It is generally felt that the Council is taking a kick-ass hard line with them instead of working in co-operation with them. Large attendance at the meeting in here a few days ago but large attendance at a number of consultation meetings and, from the information that I have got from taxi drivers, at GMB meetings where people have been incensed about where the Council is going and how it is treating its taxi drivers.

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- Over the past few months there have been real concerns about drivers being picked up for minor infringements of the rules, a real nit picking view of minor problems, minor issues rather than the Council being prepared to work with the trade. It is as if the Council has taken on a view that it must police the taxi trade rather than co-operate and develop a good working relationship with them.

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- We have had, as I say, minor infringements being picked up, the push of English comprehension testing and the proposed age limit was seen as yet another attempt by the Council to inflict more difficulties on the trade.

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- I just feel that as a Council it would have been so much easier to have taken a line of actually trying to win hearts and minds of taxi drivers to work with them rather than take them on, go through the whole procedure that we have had with a lot of people coming to meetings, being very aggravated, quite a lot of nasty scenes happening at those meetings where tempers have been frayed and lost. I do not think that was at all necessary and we could have had, as I say, a good working relationship where we tried over a matter of months to win the hearts and minds of the trade to

what the Council was doing instead of saying, “This is what we are going to do, this is what you are going to accept.”

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- It is in everybody’s interests to have well-maintained, safe vehicles. There is nobody who should argue about that. It is absolutely a win-win situation we should be in with the taxi trade and we seem to have been in one where we have been talking about conflict.

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- I just hope that now we have reached this point where we have had a very sensible compromise agreed by the Panel that we can now move on and have good working relationships with people across the taxi trade, that we can now move forward together and not repeat the unfortunate problems that we have had over the past few months. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

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- COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I wish to speak on Item 21 on page 443, the Annual Report on Risk Management. My comment is about embedding future risk into it and now that this administration’s stated policy is that the waste strategy will be building an incinerator, one off the short list of four – a short list, by the way, that was sneaked out in a delegation decision notice, not a call-in, so nobody in this Council had the opportunity to scrutinise the decision that this administration were building an incinerator – now that the administration has decided its approach is incineration for dealing with household, third party and commercial waste, I would ask the Executive Board member what work has been done to update the risk strategy with the inherent problems that have been observed across the country and across the world with incineration in terms of emissions and what are sometimes called putative emissions or when it goes wrong, or if the incinerator has a catastrophic failure as we have seen just down the road in Huddersfield.

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- Also, it is quite clear in the waste strategy that the food waste collection, the decision by this administration to abandon the weekly black bin collection in favour of a fortnightly black bin collection and a weekly vegetable waste collection, the risk of particularly young families having to leave used nappies in their black bin for two weeks rather than one week waiting for collection and also other waste, I wonder if those risks will now be included in the risk register.

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- COUNCILLOR LOWE: Lord Mayor, I would like to speak on page 443 Minute 21 regarding the Annual Report on Risk Management and specifically the Council’s future waste strategy.

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- Last month we moved one step closer to what we have always known would be the case, moved to the development of an incinerator. My colleague has already talked about the fact that we have already said that an incinerator would be built several years ago and that there are now four bidders for that. What I am worried about is the time frames that are being proposed. We were told that the final decision was going to be around summer 2010 on what the final solution is going to be. I want to know why there is such a delay because, as we know, the penalties that are proposed are likely to lead to...

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- COUNCILLOR: What is your solution?

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- COUNCILLOR LOWE: ... millions of pounds in extra costs for this Council, the very likely cessation of some essential services if not a denuding of essential services and I think that the delay to summer 2010 is I think probably political because the elections are obviously in the May. I think it is a bit mistake and I wonder whether or not the election has got something to do with that. I would ask you to review your timing because summer 2010 is clearly too late.

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- We also move on to the planning permission. You allege that you are going to have your solution in place by 2014. We have talked about Belvedere before and I would remind this Chamber that it took twelve years to get planning permission for Belvedere and I do not think that there is any evidence to suggest that it will take us the four years that is planned by the proposal that we have heard. I think again we need to really show some leadership on this issue and up the time frame in order to be able to deliver a solution to your proposal.

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- I think it is important that whatever we are doing we start to talk about those communities that are likely to be affected by the decision. We have said for a long time that East Leeds was going to be the main community affected and now we are one of the two short-listed sites. I know you say that you have not got a preference. Forgive me for saying I do not really believe that and I think that it behoves you as leaders of the Council to start consultation with those affected residents because if you do not it is really going to be quite shameful. (*Applause*)

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- COUNCILLOR FELDMAN: I did not intend to speak because really the subject that Councillor Dunn raised, which is page 443 Minute 18 about the taxis, is not on these Minutes at all but will come on the next set of minutes, Seeing he has raised it I would like to respond to it.

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- It was my suggestion to the officers is that we have the meeting in this Council Chamber because any of the other committee rooms will take 20,30, 40 people about and I have no doubt whatsoever that the majority of the private hire drivers would be whipped, so to speak, to turn up to let us know exactly the same thing that they have told us previously and had been announced here.

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- While we were at the meeting several people said to me, "You know, this is not a real meeting about the taxis; it is more a political meeting." I now have had it confirmed by Councillor Richard Lewis that Jack Dunn did a great job by getting them all to turn up. You cannot beat getting people to turn up if you are going to tell them a falsehood because nowhere whatsoever – and it was repeated at least six times in this Council Chamber and four times by me sitting where Councillor Harker is – that no way on earth were we going to close down taxis that were over six years old.

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- That was not mentioned at all. It was never the policy to do it. What the policy was was to say that if a vehicle is six years old – and I do not think many of you here would keep a vehicle six years old that had possibly knocked up 100,000 miles or so...

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- COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: There are loads of cars on the road like that.

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- COUNCILLOR FELDMAN: ...if it is six years old we wanted to give it a stronger inspection. Nobody can complain really about that who is a member of the public. I asked various members. I said, "What do you think we should do with a car that is six years old? Should we just give it a cursory examination or should we check it thoroughly?" Answer, "Check it thoroughly" but when they were all told, because that is the only answer that we can come to, that if they had a vehicle over six years that their licence would be withdrawn, as I say time after time they were told that this was not the case.

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- At the end of the day, we found out that we were not going to be able to do this on a six year basis; it would be a seven year basis. Now the department already had full authority to check vehicles three times a year. The members, some of the taxi drivers who were here, said to us, "Why aren't you checking those who are villainous more often?" Thank you very much, we will do. They told us that we should be watching carefully to see that those who come into the city also from outside, that we monitor their vehicles. Whether we can or cannot we will find out shortly because I have already arranged a meeting with Licensing Legal Officers to check what went on at the meeting.

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- I personally feel very, very upset - not worried about the decision because the decision is somewhat irrelevant, whether it is six years, seven years or eight years that so many people pay reference to safety in the vehicles, the vehicles must be safe yet we want to double check to make sure that they are safe, not only for the public – a driver is driving the vehicle. If he is in a vehicle where the steering is faulty, where the brakes are faulty, where most probably minor matters to them affect their driving, if it is pouring down and your windscreen wipers do not work, I do not consider that very bright. It is only a minor matter. None of them were stopped with that. All they were told if they were minor matters, "Go away, repair it, come back within seven days and all is well."

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- This no doubt will come up at the next Council meeting because it will be on the Minutes then so we can all, I am sure, have a further go. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

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- COUNCILLOR J WILSON: Lord Mayor, I wish to speak to the same Minute as Councillor Feldman. To a large extent he has stolen my thunder, if you like, but there are still a few facts that I think should be put out in this Chamber. In Leeds we have 3,500 private hire taxis, 537 black and whites. With the downturn of the economy I suspect that what the big problem is with the taxis is not enough business to service those 3,500 private hire. There is no limit on how many can apply to become private hire. I suspect that they are struggling to make a living at the moment and that the thing that will be forgotten will be the maintenance. That is the Panel's worry.

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- What I did say on the occasion when we sat in here last week is that six years, eight years – as an engineer it leaves me a little bit cold – I was an engineering in my working life. You could have a wreck of a car after three years. It is all to do with maintenance.

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- COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: You are absolutely right.
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- COUNCILLOR WILSON: That was my worry, that the bulk of the taxi drivers thought that we were going to scrap the cars after six years. No, we did do to some extent a compromise but with the provision of increased testing.

- As I say, it is the numbers that are in Leeds and I think we ought to be looking at some way of controlling the numbers because I honestly think in this day and age the taxi drivers are struggling to make a living. Thank you. (*Applause*)

- COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Lord Mayor, before I speak on Minute 18 on page 443 could I sent my condolences to the family of Rifleman James Backhouse who, as I am sure you all are aware, is a young soldier from Castleford who was killed in Afghanistan recently. I am sure everyone in the Chamber would join me in sending condolences to his family and I am sure our thoughts are with them at this time.

The issue of taxis or private hire vehicles is one which has become rather somewhat of a political hot potato and appears to have developed a life of its own. The issue is that the Council is actually responsible for policing private hire vehicles. We have a legal obligation to ensure that they are safe. In this room there were more people in attendance at that meeting than there are at this meeting.

The thing that I found quite astounding was that people thought it was acceptable that their vehicles were not in a particularly roadworthy condition – “Well it was only a brake light that was out. It was only the windscreen wipers that were not working.” Quite clearly if you were driving a vehicle in the wet and it is raining you need to be able to see where you are going. It is not beyond the wit of man to realise the outcome if you cannot, which may very well be an accident or a fatality.

Vonnie Morgan proposed that we went with seven years for looking at the more rigorous inspection of vehicles with the condition that there are more regular checks, and that is one of the conditions why we went for seven years. However, one of the things that does concern me is the way that one of the Council officers has been targeted with calls for his dismissal. Whilst I am more than happy to deal with any queries that people field to me and at this stage as a member of the UNITE union I should declare an interest - but I have not been contacted by UNITE, by the way – what I cannot and will not have are people bullying, intimidating members of the staff of this Authority. It is not acceptable and I have made it clear to the taxi drivers that that is not acceptable.

Let me assure members in this Chamber and members of the public that the safety of people using private hire vehicles, the taxis in Leeds, is of paramount importance and we will ensure that the taxis that are not roadworthy are removed from the road.

What also gave me a great deal of concern was the number of people who simply did not turn up for the test. There you are, “Come in, we want to inspect your vehicle” – “I cannot be bothered to go. Why am I going?” It is a nonsense. You are offering a service to people and part of that service is that your vehicle has to be checked and inspected. Simply, “I am not coming.” That is not acceptable and it does not send out a clear message. Whilst everything is a learning curve – and I do take on board comments that perhaps with hindsight things could have been done better – what we cannot have is a case of the tail wagging the dog. I am afraid that may very well be where we are going with this if we do not find a sort of choke chain for that party and bring it to heel.

We are going to have to deal with the situation but, as I say, I would reiterate, the safety of members of the public is of paramount importance and that is where we are going.

I also think, unpalatable as this may seem, that there are some political motivations in why people have been so excited about this particular issue and that really is not helpful to anyone when we are dealing with matters which should be above politics and are far more important than politics.

I notice that the light has gone amber, Lord Mayor. I would not wish you to have to chastise me to tell me to be quiet, so at this point I shall sit down.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Nor would I, Councillor Grayshon. I now call on Councillor Ann Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on page 444 Minute 21. I am speaking on this because we have heard about the fact that we are going to have an incinerator, or people think we are going to have an incinerator. My understanding is that, being a member of the Leeds Waste Strategy, sitting on that, that this has not been decided yet but it seems as if there is a choice between either incineration or gasification. I wish to make it known that the Green Party does not hold with either of those. One may argue that gasification is slightly better than incineration, that is a very valid argument, but nevertheless neither of them is acceptable to the Green Party. I do accept what has been said that as far as safety goes there are figures to show that incineration is not the safest thing in the world to have, but nevertheless I would have liked to have seen some more, greener options there. I accept we have to do something, I accept that refuse, reduce, re-use, repair, recycle, though we do a lot of that there will still be some residual waste to sort out but we would have preferred bidders coming forward and maybe they did come forward, because obviously I am not involved with which companies actually are successful in this process, but I was just disappointed to see that the ones who have got through the hurdles so far are not what I would call green solutions. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. I now call on Councillor Richard Brett to respond.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. If I start with where we finished and deal with the issues connected with the Risk Management paper. Councillor Blackburn and others may need to understand that whatever we decide at the end of this process, we have had for many years in my ward two incinerators. Two incinerators that were put there in the 1990s by Yorkshire Water with planning permission, as has been said in this Chamber before, where a number of Labour members were involved. Really it is not factually correct to say we are going to have an incinerator, partly because we have not yet made the decision but essentially because we have already got two.

I understand the Greens' position. I do not agree with it but I understand their position.

With regard to Councillor Lowe, the twelve years for planning permission, yes, that has happened in certain cases and that is why we are taking a little bit of time once we have got down to two final bidders for our waste strategy to consult. In one breath you are saying to us you have not had enough consultation and in the next minute, why have we not reached a decision quicker? We get to the point where we have two left in the race next January and I think with such a big decision we do need

a lengthy period of consultation and it is perhaps only right and proper that we make the decision in a considered way after next year's local elections.

The business that James Lewis asked us about, were we hiding away, could it not be called in. There are times when I think members do not understand the way in which this place works. There are certain things that are decided by the Executive Board and a process is set up. The Executive Board is as transparent as it gets. All the papers are made public, next week's papers, I think, were made public yesterday, everybody can see them and the decision on how we were to get from eight bidders to four in a very transparent way went through the Executive Board.

On emissions, I am not an expert on emissions from waste plants but what I have read and what I do understand is that 21st Century plants, whether they be incinerators, whether they are gasification plants, whatever they are, they have moved on from where we were 20 years ago, so if anyone is concerned about the dioxins that potentially come from any plant, the only logical situation if you really are concerned is to campaign for banning fireworks, because fireworks produce far more dioxins than any plant of whatever sort we might eventually come to.

If I move to the business of the taxis. As has been made clear by Councillors Feldman, Wilson and Grayshon in some detail, there was at the meeting that took place here some considerable misunderstanding. I had a number of people talk to me over the last few months who, as was made clear by the remarks we have heard, somehow thought that the six years was a time when a machine would come and crush your car instantly, that that was the outcome of this process and that was never what we were about.

Can I say to Councillor Dunn I absolutely agree with him that what we all aspire to is taxis, private hire vehicles that are safe, that make us proud to have them in our great city.

I have to say that some of the things that have been said to me about will you turn it down on a small thing because it is not clean – we are in the middle of a swine flu pandemic. It really is unacceptable to say we do not give a jot about what a taxi or private hire vehicle is like inside.

I would like to respond positively to what Richard Lewis said about the way in which we deal with the trade, but the bottom line is we are the Licensing Authority. You either accept a vehicle is fit or you do not, and if you do not then there are clearly implications for the individual. We might not particularly want to make life difficult for the individual but putting safety first means we have to make sure that there are tests in the right way and, where necessary, a small number of vehicles that have serious faults are taken off the road.

In conclusion what I want to say is that shouting abuse about an officer at a demonstration outside a large meeting is totally unacceptable. If the unions want to shout abuse, it needs to be at me. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. I now call on Councillor Grayshon.

(iii) Development & Regeneration

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. How could anybody wish to shout abuse at Councillor Brett, I wonder. I would like to speak on page 439 Minute 9 and page 440 Minute 10, so a bit of a special offer, two for the price of one – a credit crunch special.

The situation with regard to the South Leeds Regeneration Area Governance. I welcome this initiative which I feel is very long overdue because Morley once was crowned the Cinderella town – we never got to go to the ball but Cinderella has now got a carriage and appears to be having things thrown her way, so to speak. That is no reference to yourself by the way, Lord Mayor.

It is welcome that we are now having some regeneration in an area which covers Morley, which is vitally important and, as I say, it is long overdue. There are a number of issues which face the regeneration and these include economic and social imbalances, pockets of multiple deprivation, limited local access to job opportunities, poor quality environmental conditions in some areas, housing stock which is inadequately integrated due to severance by roads and railways, and so on and so forth.

In short, it is a good idea and it is about time that we have this kind of thing in Morley.

I now turn to page 440, item 10, 45-57 Chapel Hill Morley. Again, something that would not have happened in Morley, I believe, a number of years ago. It is happening now and it is to be welcomed. That is very, very long overdue and will regenerate a major gateway into Morley when it is a completed project. I would like to thank officers for their work on this particular project and in particular Joanne Gommersall, who I believe has been so successful in her dealings with this project that she has now been head-hunted to go and work and do another project when this one is finished. All jolly good for Joanne and the other people and, of course, it is a major investment in Morley.

Thank you to Councillor Finnigan who is not here today, he has something else to attend to, but all very good and it is welcome.

I notice some of my colleagues are saying where is he. It is irrelevant where he is because he has actually achieved more in the time that he has been on this Council than the Labour Councillors did in Morley for the period of time they were there.

At that point, Lord Mayor, I have got them going so I think I will sit down now. I have had my fun. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I refer to page 430, not Minute 9 but Minute 257 – there is a misprint – and page 438 Minute 7, referring to the bid for the World Cup for 2018.

While my Group support the idea of bringing football home in 2018 and particularly bringing it to Leeds, we have concerns about the effects on the communities around Elland Road football ground, which include part of my ward. Most of this is in Holbeck and quite a bit of Morley. We hope that the administration will draw up plans to do with this and will take that into consideration and make sure that a wonderful festival is not spoilt for the people who live round it.

Secondly, Councillor Harrington and I were in Manchester a couple of weeks ago at a meeting and at lunchtime I went and had a walk round the front of Manchester Town Hall and there is this big notice – as brash as Manchester is – saying “Manchester, bidder for the 2018 World Cup.” I do not want us to be as brash as Manchester but can we start advertising it a bit because we might get a bit more out of it if we do that. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR SHEL BROOKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor, speaking on page 439 Minute 8, the playing fields at Royds Lane Rothwell and Fleet Lane, Oulton. I would like to welcome the inspector's recommendation in this instance of rejecting the application which went in to build on this greenfield site. However, I do note in the statement that he speaks of "Greenfield release will be expected in the next five years."

I think it is important for this Council to note that we have been lucky this time that the inspectors all along decided the arguments we put forward. However, as we know in many cases around this city we do not have control over what happens. We can reject things in this city and they get taken down to appeal and then passed.

Why is this? We are quite frankly now under the influence of these unelected quangos with these unsustainable development targets that are put in place on us and as a party nationally we really want to bring those powers back to the Local Authorities.

I think this is very important. I note that slightly further down Councillor Richard Lewis is speaking on the same Minute and I am sure will be speaking about social housing and the needs to put it in place, but I feel that what we need to do is hand those powers back in this city. It is something I would welcome from my own party to do that because we are best placed to understand where building should take place in this city. It does not have to be at the behest of the developers who just decide to go and put it in a place. We know where it is unsuitable to build because of flooding issues, we know where it is unsuitable to build because of the quality of life and the impact on it and we are best placed to understand the real brownfield sites in this city and the brownfield sites that can be released for development and not classified as people's back gardens.

Of course, Leeds is the major financial centre of the north of England. The Leeds City region creates almost £3 billion in just innovation research alone through the higher education institutes that are around the whole of the Leeds City region. We do not need, and we recognise that as a city, to be building a huge number of houses just because Leeds is the centre of the financial district. People want to commute in from the outside, they want to live in other areas.

This city would be far better placed in having the power returned to it locally and concentrating the investment in better transport links, high speed rail networks, better rail links within areas of the city which have no rail at all and a proper integrated city transport service. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I turn now to Councillor Andrew Carter. Councillor Lewis does not wish to speak. I am sorry, I missed Councillor Ogilvie. I am so keen to tell everybody that Councillor Lewis does not wish to speak! Councillor Ogilvie.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak on Minute 257, page 430, about the invitation received from the Football Association for Leeds to become a host city for the World Cup in 2019.

We very much welcome this chance for Leeds to play its part in the 2018 events and recognise that it would be a really good way for Leeds to sell itself as a city to the rest of the world, so an opportunity we should grab with both hands.

I do hope, however, that as part of the bid we make sure that the people of Leeds benefit directly from this. We must use this as an opportunity to get as many people involved with football and other sports and leisure activities as possible,

especially those individuals and communities across our city who are currently not engaged and under-represented.

This includes, of course, making sure that football for our young people is something that girls as well as boys are encouraged to get involved with.

As part of this bid I believe we have to showcase the very best of our city and, without wishing to be negative, I am not sure we managed to achieve that goal in the recent official launch. Of course our senior politicians should be there but why not the Leaders from all political parties, including the largest single party on the Council? (*hear, hear*) Councillor Wakefield was not invited.

Of course, stars both past and present from Leeds United should also be present, but surely we could offer so much more. Where were our stars from other sports? More importantly, where were our young people and where the representatives from the many diverse communities that make up our city?

Lord Mayor, we welcome and support this bid. We have a lot to shout and be proud about in this city and I am sure most of us agree with that, but if this bid is really going to be for everyone then you have got to do much better at involving everyone. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I now call upon Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. OK, I will fairly briefly deal with the issues raised.

First of all, I thank Councillor Grayshon for his comments. I am delighted the Morley Regeneration Plans are moving forward now as we have worked very hard at them. I must say one thing, I do not wish to denigrate at all the excellent work done by the Morley Borough Independents in promoting Morley, but to do better than the people you replace, really you need to break sweat, to be frank with you. (*Laughter*) You have done a good job and you have kept Morley to the front of my mind as well as everybody else's.

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- COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I wonder why.

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- COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Can I also say on the South Leeds Regeneration generally, we have a real opportunity and members of all the parties have been invited to join the Steering Group. I have no doubt that as the Steering Group progresses there will be a divergence of views between all of us and our developer partners and we have made it very clear that we are going to work together for as long as we as a Council and them have a shared interest in regeneration and redevelopment. What we shall not be interested in, to be frank, is the sort of thing that Council Shelbrooke was referring to – easy money on easily developable sites at the expense of the regeneration we want to see happening. That will be made very clear. I do think we have got a great opportunity to move the South Leeds programme the way we have in the Aire Valley.

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- If I could just touch on the Royds planning appeal. It was a good result. Councillor Shelbrooke is spot on. We were lucky and we are not going to be lucky with all of these appeals.

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- Let me just tell the party opposite what is going on. Because your Government refuses to scrap the meaningless RSS figures, because they refuse even to suspend them in the case of Yorkshire and the Humber, house builders supposedly without warning who have the begging bowl out to your Government for money seem to be able to find money when it comes to landbanking greenfield sites that they think your Government will allow them to get a planning consent on before the next general election, and it is noticeable that over these last few months as the general election gets nearer, the builders are slapping planning applications in on greenfield land all over because they know after the general election the RSS figures will be scrapped and that will mean we can go back to a sensible level of new housing provision - which we know we have to provide, nobody is saying we do not have to provide more housing, nobody is saying and we have done a great deal more than you ever did in providing low cost home ownership and we will continue to do it. You may mutter, Richard – look at the figures. They show it year on year on year.

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- You should tell your Government, because when we vote on these issues here about saving greenfields and green belt, it is noticeable your group splits into three parts: the part who generally agree with us that we should be protecting these greenfield areas; the ones who are doing it because they are scared stiff of the reaction of the electorate if you do not; and then the very odd one who votes against the rest of the group but is not in the Chamber at the moment – oh yes, he is at the back (not you Councillor Illingworth, not you) – Councillor Hanley has the courage of his convictions and votes to build over anything which is I think something that you quite regularly tell people, Ted, so you do not hide that away.

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- We will continue, my Lord Mayor, to resist what we regard as unnecessary development on greenfield sites. We shall fight every appeal vigorously, we shall continue to do so, we shall continue to say to the Government we are not against building more houses on the right land, the brownfield land, and our record stands comparison with any other Local Authority in this country in terms of building more housing and regenerating brownfield land, but we will not have our environment ruined because we will need our environment, our green environment, to help us attract business to relocate in Leeds. People come to Leeds because of our diverse environment and because there is so much to offer. We do not want to be like Manchester, when you drive into Oldham at one end of the A62 and drive through Manchester through into Salford and Trafford and never pass a farm, never pass a green field – hardly pass a tree. We do not want Leeds to be like that. We have got much more to offer than that but we can still provide the houses that people need, but only on brownfield sites.

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- Finally, the World Cup. Councillor Wakefield has had an apology for not being invited to the launch. He should have been, he has had an apology from the officer concerned, he has had an apology from myself, although I did not even know he had not been invited, and he was invited to the briefing last night. Unfortunately through no fault of his own he was not able to attend but he has been invited to a briefing meeting with the FA tomorrow.

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- It is essential that the bid goes forward on an all party basis and we are committed to that. Please do not be mealy-mouthed about it. This is a massive opportunity. With due respect, in 2018 or 2022, whichever World Cup we achieve here in England – and I hope it is 2018 – the chances of any of us actually being in positions of power in the Council are probably fairly remote, so it will be other people

who will get the benefit as well. All right, Lucinda, with a few notable exceptions. That is, of course, if you manage to hang on to Kirkstall.

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- I digress. It is very important because the World Cup coming to England will bring a great deal more in terms of benefit to local communities than the Olympics ever will. We have a chance for a real legacy in footballing terms in the city. We have a chance to get some real, important inward investment over a fairly short space of time and I believe that if England is successful in the bid, I think we will be part of it. I am very confident, I hope I am not proved wrong. I think it is in all our interests for that to be the case and certainly tomorrow we shall all be singing of the same hymn sheet. What I can promise you is there will be full and proper consultation and protection of local communities. What we want is for Leeds to be part of the bid, the bid to be successful and to have a real festival for the city of Leeds in 2018 when the World Cup hopefully will be staged in England. *(Applause)*

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- (v) Neighbourhoods & Housing

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- THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor. I now call upon Councillor Ralph Pryke.

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- COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. This is on page 431, Minute 261 and it is on the Garnets regeneration, particularly about the Garnets and Beeston Hill but more generally on regeneration in Leeds.

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- I think most of us recognise that over the last probably ten years regeneration has had a rather bad name. This is because it seemed for a long time that all it meant was demolition. For years, for example, in Leeds East Homes area, in South East Homes, in Leeds South Homes area, we had many, many boarded up homes with no hope of being brought back into use, the ALMOs did not have enough money to even demolish them for years and years and the roofs got stripped and so on. That is what people came to see as Leeds meaning of regeneration at the time.

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- Things have changed but they change very, very slowly. Council has had to jump through innumerable hoops with all sorts of different levels of Government, particularly regional Government in its many different forms over the last five years, currying favour to get money for things like the Regional Housing pot and elsewhere, to take small but significant initiatives and I will pay tribute to the officers of the then Neighbourhoods and Housing, whatever it is called now but Les's department anyway, for the work they have done in moving us towards having more affordable housing replacing frankly places that should have been demolished a long time ago.

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- If property becomes uninhabitable and no-one can afford to do it up to make it habitable, it makes sense to knock it down and replace it as quickly as possible with stuff that is habitable. This is happening in the EASEL area, as we know and it is starting to happen elsewhere.

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- Regeneration takes other forms as well, particularly repair work near where Angela lives, Cross Flatts, is really excellent and if people have not seen what is happened to the housing on the Beeston Hill side, take a drive round and look at what has been done and that is an excellent example of partnership working between

the Council and the social landlords and private households. It is not your ward, Angela – it is their ward.

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- COUNCILLOR: Did you say Beeston?
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• COUNCILLOR PRYKE: I said Beeston Hill. What we have all had to deal with, of course, is the lack of social housing and this Government, in office for twelve years, has prevented Local Authorities from building social housing. Lists are longer and longer, pressure has grown and they have made it far worse by encouraging the housing bubble by extending credit where perhaps it should not have been extended, particularly for the buy-to-let “investments”. Some of those bubbles have burst but we end up with situations where we do not have enough Council owned property and so in this week’s Leeds Homes paper you have Angel Homes – not my favourite landlord organisation – offering a two bedroom house with no double glazing, no central heating, back-to-back terrace in Harehills for a mere £450 per calendar month.

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- COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Les, why are you letting them advertise?
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• COUNCILLOR PRYKE: That is a symptom of the illness or disease that your Government has allowed to run on and on.

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- If you acute readers of Regeneration and Renewal you will have seen in this month’s edition that local housing companies seem to be foundering, but the article in the magazine does say rather good things about Leeds, so I will read the bit out for you:

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- “Leeds has pressed ahead with an alternative model devised before the advent of LHCs. Its affordable housing strategic partnership board”
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- - that is one of Les’s mini-quangos – *(laughter)*
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- “has identified 31 hectares of Council owned land and is following the more conventional route of working in partnership with a number of private development housing association partners. So far it has started building 276 homes.”
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- So a tribute to the department for that work.
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• The Garnets proposal which went through Exec Board the other month is just the latest stage in that and is to be welcomed. I understand at the Exec Board meeting that Councillor Wakefield commenting on the proposal which did go through, thankfully, said something to the effect that he could think of many other parts of Leeds which he would rather demolish before the Garnets came down. He is not here with us today but maybe his representative on earth could tell us which areas the Labour Party propose to blight by proposing demolition before the Garnets. Thank you. *(Applause)*

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- COUNCILLOR A TAYLOR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on Minute 5 on page 437 and it is following through the remarks that have already

been made regarding the Leeds housing within the city. On this occasion I am very happy indeed to say that we as a city have done remarkably well insofar as we have been creating 28 much needed social houses that have been brought back into use in Harehills and Gipton.

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- GIPSIL is one of those providers and I really want to go on record the amount of good work that that organisation does within the Gipton Area in providing social housing for many people who find themselves to be weak, wounded and marginalised within our community. It stands on the side of many young people and gives them a footing on the ladder whereby they can take decisions for themselves, become proud occupiers of property and care for that property.

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- Long term, of course, the need for social housing and affordable housing is desperate within the city and I do hope that this initial work that has gone on, certainly in Gipton, can be repeated elsewhere. Equally within the miscellaneous properties in the Harehills area that have been derelict now, some for 15, 20 years. At last they too through this scheme have been brought back into usage and in so doing I believe it is all part of that greater vision for the regeneration of those areas within the city that in the past have been so much neglected.

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- I am very pleased, Lord Mayor, that we are taking this bold and daring move and long may it continue. Thank you. (*Applause*)

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- THE LORD MAYOR: I now call on Councillor J L Carter to sum up, please.

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- COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I did not write many comments today, these are totally volunteered from yourself and I am delighted to receive them.

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- There is this problem in housing. Andrew raised one earlier which is concerning me more than any other at all, that if developers get into greenfield sites, then we can kiss goodbye to our brownfield sites and we have got to fight that off like mad. The credit crunch at the moment and developers going for those and they do worry me. We have got to push them as hard as we can to one side and get them back to know the sites to develop are the brownfield sites, not the green belt. I am sure we will all come together on that particular one.

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- There will be a lot of good news I hope this week – I am not allowed to say any more than that but a lot of good news. I will probably get shot for saying that. There should be some good news for us all.

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- COUNCILLOR: John Healey?

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- COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I would like to say, of course, I believe I can say this, I believe Morley Bottoms is just about OK so that will be good news for you guys over there and there will be a lot of other good news this week. It does take determination, though, to get things through and we have two PFI schemes. I keep saying can we move on faster, can we move on faster and I think we are pushing for these things. They are difficult and we have to push hard.

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- As far as selling Council houses which somebody mentioned over there, I have lost my blue Thatcher rush – I think I have sold the least ever in this city. I am the poorest salesman of Council houses we have ever had. Richard was far better than me. His colleagues before him did it in their thousands.

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- COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Supply and demand, Les.

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- COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I am down to penny numbers. That is a thing of the past. The point that Richard made, Richard Brett, was it is rebuilding, we need rebuilding for social housing and that is the important thing. That will come along. We will have to wait and see where it is going to come from, how it is going to come.

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- In the meantime, as I said, I think we have got some good news. Thank you for the comments from the two speakers, they were interesting comments and comments which I think we should all listen to. That is all I want to say. Thank you. (*Applause*)

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- (vi) Children's Services

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- COUNCILLOR DOWSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to move this reference back to add the following to the end of Item 11:

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- “...to ask the Executive Board to reconsider the decision in relation to Expanding Primary Place Provision as contained in Minute 15, page 441 of the Executive Board Minutes of 17th June 2009.”

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- I have to wonder how sexy you all think education is. We have all been through it; lots of us have children still going through it; lots of us are actually school governors at the moment as well.

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- Richard, we have got ourselves in a right old mess, haven't we, really? Education Leeds are saying that Local Authorities all over the country are facing unprecedented levels of demand for new primary school places, so I hear we are not the only ones managing this issue and I am sure that is right, but that does not make it right. It cannot be an excuse for a lack of planning for what we consider is a fundamental issue and a fundamental problem with the current plans.

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- Let's face it, these extra children have not just appeared from nowhere. If I recall there is at least nine months' lead in time and then once a child is born there is four years until that child enters school. At a meeting last night Education Leeds employees said that the population started to increase around 2001/02 and that you have been keeping a careful eye on these figures and that you are monitoring the situation, yet we are seeing Education Leeds employees careering around Leeds from school to school attempting to persuade the schools to take more children, and all this at what I consider to be the eleventh hour.

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- Not a lot of forward planning, I would have said. We are not asking for crystal ball gazing – just for some officers and you Richard, and perhaps you, Stuart, as well, to look a little harder and do your jobs a little bit better.

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- Councillor Pryke was going to ask question 19, how Education Leeds got the figures so wrong but we did not quite get round to that one. We never do get round to everything. I can tell you I am talking in quite measured tones but there is a lot of anger across the city, there is a lot of anger from members on this side and from what I have been reading there is actually a lot of anger from members on your own side as well about how we got into this situation.

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- The annual schools census is collated in January each year but what about other indicators? Early Years and the PCT, they should have had accurate records of births. Why were these not collated a lot earlier? If you knew and were keeping an eye on things, why wait? Why not be proactive? Why not go out and find the figures if you knew that there was an issue from 2001? Why not ask the questions, do the research?

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- Over the last few years Councillors across the city have been faced with school closures and all sides of the house have been stating that your calculations were wrong. A good example, perhaps, would be Ardsley and Robin Hood. You were told that new houses were being built and the area was expanding but the schools were still closed. Now those schools are full and you are looking at options to increase the intakes there as well.

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- On Council estates built in the 1930s and 1940s, which actually links in quite nicely with Council house sales, you have got a lot of people who moved into those houses as families and now the families have moved and you have got older people living there who are perhaps looking for smaller accommodation or for sheltered housing, and when those houses come back to let, they are going to be let to families. Has that figure been taken into account? We do not know. We do not know what has been taken into account.

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- Twenty-six schools have effectively closed and no one area of the city has been left unaffected – Meanwood, Garforth, Otley, Osmanthorpe, Rodley, Morley, Little London, Beeston, Miles Hill, Tinsill, Becketts Park and also Royal Park.

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- We are told all primary school headteachers and chairs of governors along with ward members, diocesan bodies, neighbouring Local Authorities were all consulted over the proposals for two weeks at the end of June, which was far too late when you were aware there was a potential problem back in 2001 when the birth rate started to rise. This late consultation was far too late for many schools to include your proposals at governing bodies' meeting, with only six weeks till the end of term. Some governors have not been consulted at all and I dare say some Councillors in this Chamber have not been consulted either.

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- This is not the first time Education Leeds has been criticised for its inadequate and disappointing level of consultation and, along with Councillor Moreton and myself we took this issue of consultation to Scrutiny in November 2007 and issues were found around consultation and we were informed that it would be done better. If anybody wants to see that I have actually dug that report out from 2007.

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- Indeed, Councillor Ewens and Councillor Pryke have also asked for Scrutiny, clearly citing Education Leeds’ – and I do quote – “extremely hasty procedure with no consultation other than the governors and staff and that it contravened most concepts of democracy.” Big words, but we need to do something about it.

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- I would ask you to look again at Education Leeds’ hasty consultation, especially if it were extensive enough for accurate consultations. This is already a critical need for extra places in some area.

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- Education Leeds have asked eleven schools to take on extra pupils in September. I could list them – in fact I have got the list in front of me. Six weeks from the end of term – that gives the schools just six weeks to organise for staffing, for classrooms, for all the ancillary services that these children will need, so eleven schools this year, this intake in September, will be taking on extra children they did not know in six weeks were going to arrive. Far too little far too late for a problem we knew existed a long time ago.

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- 2010 seems to be the big intake – Victoria, Greenmount, New Bewerley, Hugh Gaitskill, Highfield, Thorne and Millfield – they have all been asked to increase numbers but that is to fill classes that already exist so they are making up the classes, but in Beeston, Ireland Wood, Iveson and Ebor Gardens, England Road, they have all been asked to increase to new class sizes.

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- If we link this in with recent closures in Beeston, in Meanwood, in Cookridge, near Ireland Wood and in Woodhouse, we really need to ask if you really have been keeping your eye on the situation, why are you insisting these schools close and in some cases while your administration, Richard, have been acting with undue haste to actually demolish some of them? The one I am going to quote is my own in my own area, Millfield, which was a perfectly good building which now exists no more and you are looking up the road from Miles Hill at Millfield to taking on extra children now. I suppose demolishing schools and getting rid of land, we must draw our own conclusions on why you do that.

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- You are saying there are 6,000 spare places across the city yet, as we can see, you have been reducing the number of places over the last five years and in areas you are now wanting to increase those numbers again, despite assurance that some schools are worried that this will have a detrimental effect on their intake as other schools increase their size. What they are looking for is some support and some assurances.

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- There is an issue with the size of primary schools. Education Leeds stresses parental choice, which we have always been in favour of, but we are also in favour of good local schools and we are concerned that large primaries do not provide a suitable environment for our young children. What I am afraid of is the development of ‘superschools’ with three now and perhaps even four form entry. Economies of scale would suggest that this is a good thing but will it give the children the quality of education we all want to see? Is three form entry right for Gipton or Harehills? Ebor Gardens’ intake is to be doubled.

- I have argued before the benefit, like I did at Miles Hill that in areas that are suffering from extreme social challenges, the benefits of small class sizes actually outweigh the cost and not increasing numbers in those areas actually would be a good thing, providing more places in another way.

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- What about school budgets? Where are the answers around staffing and building costs and what about schools that are concerned because they are not expanding? They are worried that larger schools will at some point reduce their intake.

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- What we are really looking for are assurances that children are not going to be bussed around the city, that children are not going to spend their whole education in temporary classrooms and, finally, we need assurances that you will look ahead. There is a demographic time bomb waiting for Leeds six years' down the line. The Government have put a lot of money into the school estate, along with the academies, and this has resulted in new secondary schools being too small and over-subscribed already. Temple Moor, David Young, John Smeaton and Swallow Hill which Councillor Harper has been trying to speak on for several Council meetings now, they are all too small now.

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- The Government have always argued that good buildings lead to good education and that is why they have put millions into transforming the school estate.

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- Do you not think that increased demand would be the result of the fantastic new buildings that Leeds now have? Why didn't you think of that?

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- THE LORD MAYOR: She has nearly finished, have you not?

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- COUNCILLOR DOWSON: I have, just one sentence, Lord Mayor, if that is all right.

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- If every child does matter and if we are absolutely truly going to narrow the gap, what Leeds really needs is for you to come up with a strategic plan for the whole city and we need you to do it now instead of lurching from crisis to crisis. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

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- COUNCILLOR MURRAY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to second my colleague supporting the reference back, though I suspect there is not a great deal more I can perhaps add to the picture that she has created. What I would like to focus my comments on, I would like to focus my comments on Education Leeds' letter, the letter we got from Chris Edwards dated 8th July, which most of us probably got last Friday.

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- I think at some stage generally most of us initially would have been a bit bemused because even I thought that the central problem, the central challenge for Education Leeds was addressing surplus places. That was the big challenge. We still have 6,000 surplus places in the city. What is happening? I would be wrong about that, you would be wrong about that because we have got this bigger headache that of course you described, Jane.

- Fifteen schools in the letter, the admissions limits are going to have to rise. We need to expand 15 schools over the next 15 months. What that means to me is that over the next 15 months if we do not do this, there will be families not able to send their children to the local primary school. It is as stark as that and that, I think, is the simple message that most of us picked up when we read the letter.

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- The other thing that we picked up when we read the letter was in the back, where is this happening? We have got the list of schools – in other words what Education Leeds have written to and asked for help – help us to get out of this mess. To do that what they have done is they have written to all headteachers, Chairs of Governors and schools within three miles of some of the hot spots. This is the one for Inner East. This is a letter dated, by the way, 18th June:

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- “For some time now the birth rate in the city has been rising.”

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- That is all the information you are going to get but the truth of the matter is, as Jane has just said, the birth rate in this city has been rising now for nearly ten years. It is well understood. It has been rising slightly to begin with but from 2004 it has been rising pretty steeply. We should know where we are. It goes on to say that:

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- “The normal consultation for changes to admission limits for 2010 are now closed.”

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- So get the picture in your head, with the figures that they had, the facts that they had, the information that they had, by March 2010 they had decided the admission limits for next year, but:

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- “It looks significantly more children than expected are requesting places.”

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- Let me just tell you what that means. I will just take the figures from the letter. In Inner East, for example, we are talking there are currently 320 reception places but we might need 450. 320 to 450 – that is not just getting it slightly wrong, that is getting it madly wrong. I could actually turn to other letters to other headteachers. Inner South, same letter:

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- “Currently 600 reception places in schools but we need 700.”

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- Wrong – getting it badly wrong.

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- If I go back to the schools and look at the schools on the list and comment on one or two of them. Ebor – we all know about Ebor. A couple of years ago we were going to close Ebor. If we had not kept it open what would be happening is now hundreds of children would have to be bussed out and taken to other schools around this city. It is a good job we kept Ebor open.

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- New Bewerley is on the list. New Bewerley, new school. It is a lovely school but it is too small. This is a school, I think, that has won architectural awards.

This is a school in Building Schools for the Future that is probably now going to have 30 years of temporary classrooms. Brilliant, isn't it?

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- The one that gets me the most, the one that I just cannot get my head round, is Thorner Primary. We all know where Thorner is, Alex, don't we? We all know where Thorner is. How can you get the admission limits in Thorner wrong, for God's sake? They are going to have to push up limits in Thorner by 50 per cent.

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- COUNCILLOR SHELBOOKE: Why is he looking at me?
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- COUNCILLOR MURRAY: Has it got anything to do with you, Alex? *(Laughter)* The point I am making is, it is amazing they have got it wrong. With four to five years of figures and statistics, we have got people working on this full-time, we have had four years of Children's Services, we have had four years of the Children's Plan, we have been working with partners, we have been working with the DWP – we have got all these people with all this information and you would think we would have a reasonable idea, would you not, how many young people wanted to start school next September or the September afterwards, but apparently not. We are in a state of panic. We do not know what the heck is happening.

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- COUNCILLOR GRUEN: There is no Plan B.
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- COUNCILLOR MURRAY: And there is no Plan B.
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- COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: There is no Plan A.
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- COUNCILLOR MURRAY: What this letter does, and I am sure it did it to not just our side, I am sure it did it to you as well because it affects Thorner, it does not just affect Labour areas, this has rung the alarm bells, has it not? Why? What are you doing about it is one thing but I think the questions that we want to ask are why did it happen? What the heck is going on? Who was the weakest link in this decision?

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- COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Richard.
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- COUNCILLOR MURRAY: When did Richard know?
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- COUNCILLOR GRUEN: The truth hurts, Richard.
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- THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you very much. *(Applause)*
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- COUNCILLOR HARKER: Thank you Lord Mayor.
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- COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: The weakest link. *(Laughter)*
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- COUNCILLOR HARKER: I think that today we have been entertained with two things. One is the performance of Alice in Wonderland and also to the Labour Party admitting that they did not hold Education Leeds to account when schools were closed because, let us look at some figures.

- Thirty-five schools were amalgamating into 18. Thirty-two were done by Labour, three by myself. Nine primary schools were closed. One was in the pipeline when I took over, Asquith Hill. I closed one school, the Catholic Church asked us to close another and the others were closed by Labour, so I cannot be accused of closing the schools that you now say are needed. *(interruption)*

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- COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Rubbish.

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- COUNCILLOR HARKER: There are - and I need to say this – 6,000 spare places, still 6,000 spare places in our primary sector. The rising number is 300, Jane was right, but Jane assumes that every single one of those was a live birth in Leeds and therefore we would know from the National Health Service or else.

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- I now want to actually deal very quietly with some facts. There is a crisis across 36 Authorities. The Government also accepts that they have a hand in that crisis and today they have announced that they are going to put up some money which we can bid for, £200 million.

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- COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Bail you out.

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- COUNCILLOR HARKER: It will not be enough but it might help us. We did and we have looked at the figures coming from Early Years – we saw no increase in the figures in Early Years that would alert us to this 300 children. The causes are not just the birth rate. If it was the birth rate alone I am sure we would have seen this coming. I have to talk about the paralysis in the housing market brought about by the economic downturn manufactured by the party opposite. *(Applause)* We know that in the past people have moved into the suburbs in order to secure the primary school they wanted. That sort of movement in house buying has stopped in this city, so social mobility, which would have distributed some of this 300 further abroad, is not there.

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- COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Who has written this drivel for you?

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- COUNCILLOR HARKER: We also know that one private school, a small one, granted, in the city, has gone out of business and we know that in other Authorities where they have checked they have found that more children who were in the private sector are now looking for places in our own sector, particularly as primary education in this city is of the standard it is.

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- We also have to take account of economic – I am sorry you find this strange but we have serious economic migration into this city and that is not measured by Government and it is very difficult for us to measure...

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- COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Stop it, you are killing me.

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- COUNCILLOR HARKER: ...that economic migration into this city. I was in a school recently, a wonderful school doing a wonderful job, a high school which has turned itself round and if you looked at the surnames you would see the economic migration and, before the red light goes on, I am not playing down the economic migration. Many of us in this room are economic migrants to this city, I

was. I am talking about internal not necessarily external migration and I couple my remarks to those made by my Leader earlier.

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- We should welcome these people. The 300 extra places in this city that we are looking for are not just down to the birth rate. They are down to economic reasons, they are down to internal – and by that I mean people coming to work in this city from other parts of the UK – as well as other people coming in from the economic union that we belong to, and they now need places in our schools and we will have places for every child. *(Applause)*

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- THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Harker. We now need to have a vote, please, on the amendment.

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- COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Recorded vote please.

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- THE LORD MAYOR: A recorded vote has been requested.

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- *(A recorded vote was taken on the reference back)*

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- THE LORD MAYOR: There were 93 people present, the “Yes” is 39, abstentions one and against 53, so this has been LOST.

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- (vi) Children’s Services

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- THE LORD MAYOR: I now want to call for comments on the Children’s Services Minutes and the first person to speak is Councillor Chastney.

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- COUNCILLOR CHASTNEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It is minute 264 page 433. It is actually speaking on the Chief Executive of Education of Leeds’ report. It is about the Achievement of Looked After Children. I know a couple of other members will be speaking on this and I hope they pick up on some similar points.

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- The point I want to pick up, hopefully of universal interest, it is fair to say the report in all fairness does reflect there are significant ongoing challenges with the work with looked after children and the challenges that we face. However, I think it is naïve to expect otherwise, given the subject matter that we have got and the individuals concerned. I hope other members who speak on this Minute will acknowledge that point.

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- I would also hope that they would recognise that although yes, there are challenges, they do acknowledge that report highlights many areas of success with the work that is going on. For example, one that I picked out that I think is particularly important, there are actually high levels of attendance for the looked after children. It is actually particularly high compared with their peers at primary school. I thought that was actually very commendable and actually particularly vital because surely regular, consistent learning, particularly during those early formative years, that has got to be essential to ensuring the positive outcomes that all of us would want to see with our looked after children. I take this opportunity to congratulate all those involved in delivering that kind of outcome and that kind of result.

- Of course, we do not actually have the update on the academic outcomes as yet until the next set of exam results are ratified in the autumn but I want to wish all the looked after children the best of luck with that.

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- Looking at that, I think in terms of progress and actually delivering the improved services to the looked after children, there is actually a lot of effort, targeted effort to ensure that the results are likely to be as high as possible and as good for the children that they can attain.

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- Obviously there is a lot of work going on but one example I would like to pick out is the targeted work, personalised work that is actually going on that was the sort of thing that has helped deliver these high attendance rates, for example. It is the one-to-one tutorial sessions which are going on with specialist teachers and it is happening outside the school day. Already up to now we have got over 130 looked after children and young people who have benefited from that provision of tutorial themselves. This is a provision that will actually go on throughout the entire summer holidays so there will not be any gap and it is there whenever the carer or the child want it. It is positive actually that the carers and the child or young person do want this. We have had very positive feedback on that tutorial programme from both groups.

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- Moreover, for example, independent reviewing officers – these are the people who are responsible chairing care reviews – have been similarly positive in their analysis of the impact of this sort of tutorial support. They are saying it is very positive on the children's self esteem and on their confidence, which I am sure we would all agree is essential for their long term positive outcomes.

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- I think it is also important to note that this provision in particular, this tutorial work, is to support children and young people in accessing provision to schools but none of this work is actually replacement to any kind of school provision. It is in addition to that. This kind of work just simply recognises that many looked after children, we acknowledge, they do have poor educational histories prior to entering care and this programme seems to help them catch up where it is required.

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- This tutorial work is just one example of the targeted personalised work that is going on and the simple process areas were identified in addressing specific needs that our looked after children undoubtedly have.

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- I will finish by noting that yes, our looked after children are clearly a priority, I am sure we will all agree on that point. That is incontrovertible. I will also try and acknowledge that it is actually a priority that we have a collective corporate responsibility for. I think that is another point I want to finish on. On that I was certainly pleased to note that that is actually closely reflected in the recent Children and Young People's Plan and looking round I can see it is actually a plan which a lot of people here today and actually outside these walls contributed to.

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- Essentially the priorities that are directly relating to looked after children are restating that this issue that we are looking at here is everyone's responsibility, not just to improve the outcomes of looked after children but also to prevent looked after young people and children actually becoming looked after in the first place.

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- In conclusion, as the report we have been talking about actually displays, much has been achieved but a lot of difficult work needs to be done on both the priorities and the plan. On that point I say a thank you to all those involved in delivering the current achievements but also urge everyone to recognise our collective role in meeting the challenge that we face in the future. Thank you very much.
(Applause)

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- COUNCILLOR LANCASTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking to page 440, Minute 11, which refers to the Playbuilder Initiative money. Moortown Councillors are extremely pleased with the substantial investment to be spent refurbishing the play space in Meanwood Park. Councillor Harker and myself led the public consultation with young people and their parents to make sure users of the play area get the layout and equipment they want.

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- We met them at the time in the park when the schools had finished, between 3.00 and half-past three, and were surprised but pleased when play workers turned up with extra equipment. It took me back a bit because they brought a sheet and some tubes where you make a play tent and also, for the younger members in the Chamber, there was the good old bogey that a lot of us remember and no babies' pram wheels were ever safe when we wanted to build our own bogeys and race them.

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- We actually saw how much enjoyment they got out of equipment like that and it was a really good addition to the consultation, getting the young people involved.

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- This is just, we hope, the first step in bringing new investment in this much used and well loved park. It is many years ago since I used to take children that I child minded and fostered and my own children spent many happy hours in the park and I know that even today it is very well used. My colleagues and I look forward to the commencement of the work early next year. Thank you very much, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

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- COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking to Minute 264 on page 433. The reason I want to speak to this Minute is to highlight to Council the report that has been brought forward on looked after children in this city. I believe it highlights very clearly how these children have been let down by this administration.

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- I have to say that we have pushed, from this side, repeatedly for a report of this detail to be brought forward and I welcome the report and welcome the detail that it gives. I would also like to pay tribute to those who work with looked after children and to those who have achieved good success and good results but, sadly, we know that progress for far too many in this city has been too little too late and extremely disappointing. I have to say as a member of this Council I think all of us should be saddened and appalled by what is revealed in this report.

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- We have to assume parental responsibility for these young, vulnerable and often deeply emotionally scarred youngsters, and I am saying that you are still failing too many of these young people. We are supposed to be protecting them from

harm and I have to say that the statistics that are in this report reveal a great number of failings.

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- We want all children to reach their full potential but already in Leeds the failures start early. At foundation stage 11% of looked after children only reached the benchmark levels. This compares to 47% of all students. By the end of Key Stage 2 less than a quarter of looked after children were entered for maths and English tests. At this young age these young children are already missing out on what is essential, I believe, building blocks for wider achievement, literacy and numeracy.

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- It would be unacceptable in any situation and even unacceptable if it actually fitted in with the national picture, but it does not and I want to ask you why the gap between the achievement of looked after children and the achievement of all pupils is so much higher in Leeds than the national average. I have to say, this is down to you and your responsibility and we want answers to these questions.

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- No-one can under-estimate the challenge that tackling this issue will take and no-one denies, sadly, that many of these young people, for the experience that they have been through, are troubled and, as I said before, bearing emotional and behavioural scars from stability that too many of them have already experienced in their short lives.

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- I have to say, the debate at the last Executive Board on this subject, Councillor Brett referred to these children as “difficult” and I have to say I find that a very unsatisfactory way of describing them. If we are not careful this becomes an excuse and actually reinforces everything that we know about low expectation from people who work with them, from the young people themselves and this in turn reinforces low achievement.

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- There are positive role models out there; we must bring them in and help use them to raise the expectation and aspirations of people we are working for and, you know, there is a lot of detail in this report about attendance and exclusion and I would just like to know, for example, why so many more of looked after children have to have their medical and dental appointments during the school day. I think there are some things that we could deal with really quickly that are being ignored.

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- These young people have the same rights as all children in the city and it cannot be right that at secondary 50% of looked after children failed to get any A-C grades at all. 20% of looked after children are unemployed after Year 11. Where is the aspiration? Where is the support?

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- We have a chance to change these statistics, Lord Mayor, and I am calling on this Council to be more radical, more creative, more ambitious on behalf of these young people and particularly in approach to the educational achievements of looked after children. There are young people who rely on us. We need to raise our game and to demand and expect better for I have to say from the performance of the Executive Member responsible for raising achievement just a few minutes ago, I have my doubts as to whether this will be achieved. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

- THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you very much. We are going to call that a day now and I am going to call on Councillor Richard Brett to exercise a right of final reply.

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- COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Going back to the start of the Minutes and Adults, I want to welcome Councillor Hamilton's remarks about HEART and hope that the HEART project does quickly put in a changing places toilet. To say to Councillor Yeadon thank you very much for the passionate support you gave to the campaign. I think we are both on the same side on this. If there has been some misunderstanding about what I said at Executive Board, I may have mentioned the figure of three but if anyone ever thinks that I was going to be satisfied with only three they are wrong. If somebody has got that impression I completely withdraw that. Three might be a start of what we might hope to do fairly quickly but clearly we are not going to be happy with any number that is in single figures. We need to do as much as we can. You are absolutely right, this is an equalities issue and you can be sure that this is something that I will support with all the powers that are at my disposal.

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- With the debate that we had with Councillor Taggart about the NHS, I find it interesting that we are having a debate in this Chamber which I suspect some years ago we would not have done simply because PCTs, the NHS would be not thought to be within our area of responsibility, so I welcome the fact that you have brought that up. I am certainly not complacent about some of the things that you mentioned. You have had some sort of answer from Councillor Golton and from Councillor Harrand but I agree with you, there is a great deal more to be done in that area.

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- Turning to Development, because I have already commented and summed up on the Central & Corporate, I want to make it clear, because I support football with a different shape, that the Rugby Union are, I think, highly likely to get the World Cup in England in 2015 and it is my hope that Elland Road in Leeds would actually be used by the Rugby Union for the rugby football World Cup. That might not be quite on the same scale as the World Cup for soccer, for football, but it certainly would mean that any effort we put into enhancing the facilities at Elland Road will tackle more than one agenda and will not just be for the FA.

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- I would like to stress that the whole business of the World Cup 2018 should, in my view, be a city region bid. I think this is already in hand, I do not think I am speaking out of turn in stressing this, because what is quite clear is that the FA are going to look at what the city region has to offer – not just in terms of the stadium but in terms of hotels, in terms of cultural activities, because the expectation is that if a team comes to Leeds to support in 2018 the World Cup they will not be here for 24 hours, they will be here for several days and there may well be a number of ways in which cultural activities outside Leeds – whether it is York and whether it is the Bronte area in Bradford, the Dales, all of that – will add to Leeds's bid.

What is also part of this, possibly, will be areas in which fans can support games if they cannot get in to see the actual game. There can be fan parks and there is no guarantee that those fan parks have to actually be in Leeds, so in a very real sense this is something which may well become a city region bid.

I welcome the remarks that have been made about greenfield and brownfield and I want to stress and make ever clearer my personal view is that regeneration

now is going to be incredibly difficult for the next few years. Some of the things that Leeds has managed to succeed over, working with the private sector, I think are going to be virtually impossible during the recession. It means that we are not just wanting building on brown field sites because we do not want greenfield. We are wanting building on these brownfield sites because – and I do not think there is disagreement between us over this – we actually think those are the right sites for regeneration.

I think it is therefore very important that we all try and work together to get that message across and there is some work being done with the core cities on accelerated development zones and other mechanisms to try and think of new models that we can bring in for regeneration.

On the business of Council housing I must say that I welcome at national level the Conservatives saying that they too want to see Council houses built. They have obviously learned from what our Conservatives have done in Leeds 18 months ago in saying here in Leeds that we want to build Council houses here. With the benefit of hindsight I actually think that we should have used the receipts from selling Council houses to build Council houses. I am not saying that as a party point. With the benefit of hindsight that would have got us to a much better position.

I want to turn, finally, to Children's where I am not sure that I heard Councillor Dowson correctly. I wear hearing aids and they do need clearing out from time to time so if I have misheard I am very sorry, but I think the implication from Councillor Dowson was that we closed Royal Park and that is certainly not my understanding. I think that was closed under Labour and I want to reach out in a sense because I do agree with Councillor Dowson that very large schools can cause problems and, as Chris Edwards knows only too well, I have my doubts about whether large, three form entry schools are what we should be encouraging.

To be honest, as I think is fairly clear, we have been surprised by what has happened. I have been involved in Education for well over 30 years, been through a number of ups and downs with school numbers and I recall being involved, as Mick Lyons was, over the threatened closure to Mount St Mary's Catholic Primary about three years ago I think it was, Mick, where I am happy to say in hindsight that you were right to press for keeping it open at that time.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: I am always right.

COUNCILLOR: No you are not!

COUNCILLOR BRETT: We are now in a position where we are moving on but we really must be careful that we keep local schools because some of the remarks that have been made about the threat to bussing youngsters well outside where they live, that is something we have very definitely got to avoid.

Can I turn to looked after children and the remarks that Councillor Blake made? If somebody has the impression that I caused these youngsters "difficult" I would like to be shown where I said that. I think that has been lifted out of context because when I was in charge of the Children's area I am certainly aware that some of these youngsters have special needs. 71% of the cohort that we have in Leeds, 71% of our looked after children have special needs. The average across Leeds is 19%. In that sense they do present us clearly with extra difficulties, but if I have given anyone the impression that I said they were difficult, I want to renounce that.

We recognise absolutely there is work to be done here. That is why the detailed paper was brought, why we were transparent over this, because that paper

gave sufficient detail to show all of us, warts and all what needs to be done.

It was this administration that appointed Alan Rees to oversee and co-ordinate the education work. We have in some areas, as Councillor Chastney has said, a very good record. We have a very good record of getting our looked after children into higher education, but I am the first to say that a lot more work needs to be done and I would welcome the Opposition supporting wholeheartedly some of the structures that Councillor Golton and others have set up to try and make sure all members are involved in that support. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Brett. I now want to call for a vote on the motion to receive the Minutes. *(A vote was taken)* This is CARRIED.

We have come to the end of this session of the council meeting. It is now time for tea. I am sure everyone is ready for tea. I would welcome visitors in the gallery and elsewhere to come along to the Banqueting Suite. Thank you.

(Short adjournment)

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now all refreshed, hopefully, and raring to go again. We come on to the White Paper of Councillor James Lewis.

ITEM 12 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – WASTE COLLECTION SERVICES

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I know we have got four important White Papers this afternoon so I am going to be brief and to the point about this White Paper.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Don't upset them.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: No, I will upset them. I try not to upset anybody, David. I try to be tactful and diplomatic. *(Laughter)* Tactful and diplomatic in the way I address this Council Chamber.

I have to say I am quite surprised at our very simple and straightforward White Paper has even had an amendment because I thought everything we set out in the White Paper would be accepted by all sides of this Council Chamber as something that the citizens of Leeds could expect from the Council.

The only conclusion I can draw is that those people moving the amendment have a lower expectation of the service that people should expect than we do in the Labour Group.

Moving on to the content of the White Paper, I think all of us in this Chamber are probably shocked that 26,000 households in this city in this day and age do not have a kerbside collection of recyclable waste. We were all talking about the need to increase recycling rate and I think we would all pay tribute to those households in Leeds who do spend time and effort separating out their items that can be recycled from their black bins and putting them in the green bin. I think we would all want to pay tribute to people who do that and put the time and effort in, but unfortunately because the Council has not moved forward over the last four or five years in terms of reaching this 80% of households, this 26,000, there are plenty of people whose efforts to recycle have been badly let down by this Council. I hope that our White Paper addresses that by making it clear that the clear message from this Council Chamber that we want everybody in the city to be able to access recycling facilities and we want to make sure this Council is fully signed up to narrowing the gap – not

just commitments on bits of paper but fully signed up to making sure there is equal access to Council services.

Our White Paper would end the post code lottery in recyclable collections and I am sorry that the administration feels that they want to amend that commitment out.

The second thing I want to turn to is the slightly coded reference because the amendment, I have to say, is not as straightforward as our White Paper. It refers to another document that is not on the table today. When you see these reference to other documents and things that are not on the table and things that have been sneaked in, I thought I will have a very quick look at the Executive Board paper that is referred to and I have to say, anybody that votes for the amendment in the name of Councillor Monaghan is voting to end the weekly black bin collection. On this side of the Chamber we do not want to see that weekly black bin collection go. We do not want to see weakly worded waffle and weasel words about weekly collections, because those of us who have read that paper understand that we want to see weekly collection of all rubbish, not just a weekly collection of selected rubbish, and that seems to be the approach the administration is taking.

I do not think, I have to say, they are not being particularly transparent and open about it. I think people understand the need to move on and I think the way that citizens have accepted the garden waste collection and it has been warmly welcomed, shows that people are prepared to move on, but I do not think people want to see the end of the weekly collection and I think people want to see openness and honesty from the administration.

I know lots of people want to speak on this and so I am going to draw my opening remarks to a close, but I also want to say there is not a single reference in the amendment to the White Paper and in the Executive Board paper referred to, to consulting people on changes that are made to our refuse collection and I have to say I think that highlights and illustrates an arrogant, high-handed approach that this administration has taken to the refuse collection in this city.

All they want to do, it would seem, is impose more and more constrictions. We look at the £75 fine for people that leave their green bins out. I think, frankly, that that is a wheel to crush a butterfly. I think if there is a problem there it needs dealing with and I think fining people is the wrong approach to take. Once again, it illustrates, we spoke about the voice recognition earlier, that this administration believes the Council should work against the citizens of this city, not for the citizens of the city.

Our approach on this side is to work for people. We set out very clearly our vision of how we want to see things move forward, our vision for how we want our citizens to be served by this vital service and I move my White Paper, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR A LOWE: I second and reserve the right to speak.

THE LORD MAYOR: I now call on Councillor James Monaghan to move his amendment.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Believe it or not I actually welcome this opportunity and this White Paper from Councillor Lewis to actually have a debate about Streetscene Services at this important time but, a usual, local Labour Party and national Labour Party are facing in two completely different directions on this and yet again Councillor Lewis spoke about waste in this

city but not shed any light whatsoever on his party's waste strategy, what they would do to deal with the issues facing this city.

Let us start by having a look at the wording of the motion, which condemns the recent service changes. Do you really condemn the additional brown bins and green bins that are being rolled out across the city? Do you really condemn the efforts we are putting in to increase the amount of waste that we are recycling and diverting from landfill?

I suspect he might have been referring to the action we take, as he referred to, against people who leave any bin out in the street, continuously blocking footpaths. This is not a new policy and I think I would like to spend a minute or so just to clarify this.

We have been using Section 46 notices, which is the technical term for this, since 2006. It is not a new thing. Between May 2008 and July this year we have actually sent out 1200 Section 46 notices saying to residents that they should not leave their bin, once emptied, out in the street blocking the pavements. Of those 1200 notices we have issued, we have actually only issued 65 fixed penalty notices – that is less than five per cent of the warnings that we have issued.

We always ensure people have plenty of warning if they leave their bins out. We do not rush around issuing fines left, right and centre. Our mantra with enforcement has always been firm but fair.

Indeed, our pledge now that we will not issue any fixed penalty notices to those who wilfully obstruct pavements or roads making life dangerous for the elderly and the youngest in our community without issuing warning notices.

I would just like to say as well, it is worth mentioning, of those 65 fixed penalty notices that have been issued, 48 of those have been in my area, the student dominated areas of north-west Leeds and action is only taken on specific complaints from residents or ward members and I believe that Councillor Matthews might expand on that later because he has been doing a lot of work on that.

The motion also says that citizens of Leeds are entitled to Council services that are delivered on time to highest possible standards. I think we all in this Chamber agree that and that is why we have kept that in our amendment.

We need to think about what that actually means. Surely it should mean we should always be striving to achieve a better quality service for the people of Leeds, better quality and better value. Councillor Lewis referred to missed bin collections. It is understandable and I do not think that anyone in this Chamber would ever promise we will collect 100% of the bins every time. There are always unforeseeable circumstances that we have to deal with, but let us look at what has actually happened in the past.

In 1999/2000 Labour were failing to collect 2,046 bins for every 100,000 bins collected in this city. Even you realised that was unacceptable and you did try to improve it. By the time you lost control in 2004 you were failing to collect 552 bins per week. This may have been acceptable to you but to us it is completely unacceptable. Since this administration has taken over we have reduced the number of missed bins to 86 out of every 100,000 (*applause*) down from 2,046 under Labour. That is a missed collection rate of less than 0.1% of bins in this city. Do the people of Leeds really want to return to the service levels under Labour? I do not think so.

Returning to my amendment, it really is a simple proposal and it is much simpler than what Councillor Lewis was proposing. We are saying that we should stick to the policy agreed back in 2007. My predecessor, Councillor Smith, made substantial progress in working towards the aims and objectives of that strategy and I will continue that work.

This administration has more than doubled the recycling rate in this city since we took over control from 14.6% under Labour to 30.4% this last year, so we are going to take no lessons from that party on how we should be doing our recycling.
(hear, hear) (Applause)

We also remain committed to our target of 50% recycling and an aspiration to go well above that in the future.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: What dates?

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: In order to achieve that we are increasing the opportunity for local people to recycle more and more of their waste. Labour may call for every household to have a recycling waste collection but we know that that is not necessarily possible. Some households do not have the capacity to store wheelie bins or bags. Some households do not want to because it is better for us to provide communal facilities –for example at blocks of flats this is essential and those estates that were built in the seventies that are very difficult to reach.

However, this is no excuse. Comparatively in 2003/04 under Labour only 76% of households in this city had access to a kerbside recycling collection. That is now up to 92% of households in this city. I want you to be sure that we are absolutely committed to ensuring every citizen in Leeds has access to recycling facilities that are suitable to them, their household and their locality and we pledge to ensure that everyone has access to those recycling facilities.

We will do this and at the same time we will ensure that every household continues to have a weekly waste collection.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Yes, but what kind of waste?

COUNCILLOR: We are not going to wheel you off yet, Mick!

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: I think given that there are several more people to speak on this it is only right that I touch on some of the discussions that have taken place with the Unions and the paper that will be going to Executive Board next week.

We have been attempting to ensure that the Council tax payers of Leeds get value for money from the waste collection service. Despite constant negotiations with Unions and staff to try and improve the service, we have been unable to meet certain key objectives, mainly around re-organising the routes, amending working practices and reducing sick leave.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Cutting wages.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: The service is not failing but it could be improved. To provide better value for the Council tax payers of Leeds we have identified that there are potential savings of £1.7m a year and we have since been involved in negotiations with the Unions and the workforce to see if we can make those changes.

Unfortunately we have not been able to reach agreement and as the Leader of Council said last week, we are taking a paper to next week's Executive Board which calls for market testing of the refuse collection services. It appears that bringing in external contractors may be the only way to make the improvements necessary to improve the service to the citizens of Leeds and save the money that we need to because of reductions in funding from your Government.

COUNCILLOR: Privatising.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: Finally, it is worth noting that the only national party proposing a bin taxes and fortnightly collections is your Labour Government. Locally you have no plans to deal with the city's waste; how on earth can the voters of Leeds take you seriously on the waste pledge that you are proposing? Lord Mayor, I move the amendment. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR WADSWORTH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am pleased to support the amendment in the name of Councillor Monaghan. The amendment covers the commitment to the waste strategy made at Executive Board in 2007 and reiterates this Council's commitment to weekly waste collections.

The Council was made aware in the Council meetings in February and April this year of a number of improvement plans for waste collection, including a further £1.5m for the waste strategy and the continuing expansion of recycling; a further £70,000 homes will receive a garden waste collection and other measures to increase our recycling rate of 36%, saving millions of pounds in landfill tax on this Authority which we were saddled with by Central Government – your Government.

This Council also was made aware of the food waste collection pilot to be carried out in Rothwell and I would like to thank Councillor Smith for agreeing for it to be carried out in Rothwell. The food waste plan is proposed to commence in October this year and run for six months, including weekly collections of food waste and improved recycling collections. This will give the department the opportunity to evaluate how much more waste can be recycled and reduce further landfill payments.

We are also continuing to improve collection services with a more modern approach and can hopefully achieve a service that is suitable for the 21st Century around recycling and waste collection needs.

We have also moved significantly in the last five years since this administration took control in Leeds. The recycling rate then in 2003/04 was 14.6%. The recycling rate now in 2008/09 was 30.4% and it currently, in May this year, was 34.1% - a significant increase, I think you will agree. *(Applause)*

We are also working on collections to ensure that the bins are collected on the days promised and this has improved significantly as well since 2003/04. We are now currently collecting 99.9% of bins collected on the scheduled day. It is in everyone's interests that bins are collected on the scheduled day. Missed bins have a significant effect on people's lives and are costing the Council so I would hope that the public would help us in this by putting bins out on the correct day by the correct time and also removing them after the collection has taken place. The public can also help by ensuring the highway does not become blocked on the day of collection and large vehicles can pass freely.

I would also hope as well as members of the public helping in recycling and putting bins out correctly, our own staff can contribute to this by helping ensure the

improvement and efficiency of the service and helping us strive to give a good service and better value for money.

It is clear that this information to hand means that one size does not fit all. A different solution may be needed for such areas as Roundhay and Alwoodley to areas of Beeston and Morley and the department is committed to delivering the correct service for each area. However, with all this kerbside recycling and additional collections of both green, garden and food waste, I feel it very unlikely that we could ever get into a position where we would not have a weekly waste collection. People deserve a high quality service and they should receive one.

I therefore hope that members can support this amendment in the name of Councillor Monaghan. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. I now call on Councillor Ann Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: You sock it to then, Ann!

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Yes, I suppose we could all have a go at the various things that are put down here, certainly to do with our wards anyway. All bins will be collected on the day promised. That is a nice thought (*Laughter*) but I have got to be honest here, I know that sometimes vehicles break down and that sort of thing, so yes, it is a nice thought but to achieve it, I do not know whether we could. The idea is a nice one.

What I would say is that if they cannot collect, they go around during that week. I have had problems in my ward where a certain area – and I thought we had got it sorted out at Christmas – for some reason or other there just seems to be a blind spot there. They have changed the collection route, they told me it had been sorted out. It seems to be sorted out for a bit and then I get phone calls and we are back to square one. This is actually the greens bins. Somebody's green bin was not collected for three months. You can imagine saying yes, people should recycle, I would totally agree with that, but if we are not collecting the bins, what are they going to do with them? I will tell you what they do with it, they put it in the black one. There are problems there.

Other problems, I think all over Leeds there are some that do not even have a green collection service, whether it be bin or whether it be bag. That concerns me. When I was at Scrutiny the other day, Neighbourhoods & Environment, I got the impression that it was a case of if people do recycle then we will give them all the facilities that are going, but if there is a problem – we all know in some areas people do not recycle for whatever reason – to me there should be education there because we need everybody to key into this, not just people who are into recycling and would do it anyway. To say, "They do not do it so we will get our figures up, we will give the others that do all the facilities at our disposal and they can just do with a bit there because they are not going to do it anyway" and that to me, that mortifies me, that really does. I accept that some people there is a problem with, that for whatever reason they do not key into it, but we have to educate them to do this. To just leave them is not the answer.

When we say about having green bags, I live in a ward that has got a lot of hills, certainly the Farnley End does, and so I have some areas that have green bags. I mentioned it the other day to officers and an officer came to the Residents' Association on one of these estates and he came out, he was saying, "In that estate we get very little back in these green bags" and the residents are saying, "Yes, because your people do not leave us them, that is why." I am chasing that up now. I

have had it happen before but it goes all right for a bit and then we go back to square one.

It just concerns me a lot that we might find certain areas that key into this, having all the bins that we can afford and all the collections that we can and people in some of my ward and other wards in the area that do not key into it for whatever reason, that we are saying well, tickle to them then. That to me, no, as a Green I cannot allow that. I know there are difficulties but we have got to get over them.

I know on this particular estate that has green bags that there are a lot of people there that are keying into this, but when they tell me they are not getting bags, what are you supposed to do? We have got to play the game and if we are going to provide facilities, then it has got to be to provide facilities for everyone. Let us do a bit more with the composting. I know that they do not go on your Government figures but composting is something that we should do a lot more with and as it is we are doing all these brown bins and I know a lot of people like the brown bin collection but we all have areas that do not even have a green bin collection as well. Some new houses and that are sharing the black bin. Thanks very much. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR HUSSAIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I want to speak in support of Councillor James Lewis's White Paper which calls on this Council to improve waste services. I firmly believe that, firstly, people in this city have a right to bins for their rubbish and, secondly, people have a right to expect those bins to be emptied regularly.

This seems to be too much for this coalition. You simply cannot get it right. Everyone in this city pays their Council tax so everyone should expect to receive the same level of service when it comes to the bins but this does not happen in Leeds. People in this city do not get the same service. The service you receive depends on your post code. That is a fact, like it or not.

It is also a fact that it is often the inner city area that suffers from the poor service. You have said the people in Leeds should trust you to run a really important service. How can anyone possibly trust you to do that when you cannot even get the bins right? *(hear, hear)* What you fail to recognise is that this service really matters to the residents and yet you just do not listen to them.

Residents ring up time and time again to complain about missed collections and fly tipping. They tell you about the rubbish and the bulky collections where there are the wrong item disposed of. Time and time again they ring to tell you your service is just not good enough and still you cannot organise yourselves to make sure these bins get emptied on time.

In my ward residents tell me a clean neighbourhood makes them feel safer. Clean neighbourhoods affect business and a clean neighbourhood creates a sense of pride. Residents tell us that it matters to them. It is the time you start to listen. I am calling on you to get the basic services sorted, get the bins emptied every week, delivered on the time promised week in, week out. This is what people want. It is what the people expect and I think everyone this side of the Chamber would agree this is what every resident in Leeds deserves. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR COULSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking in support of Councillor Lewis's White Paper. I am going to be repeating a lot of what has been said. Ann said quite a lot of valuable things which seem to be happening all over Leeds, not just in Ann's area. It is a bit of a post code lottery, I think is the way to mention the collection of refuse in Leeds. Different parts of Leeds get a

different service, that is quite obvious. The problem is city-wide. The Leeds residents are suffering because you cannot or will not deliver an efficient service.

Take brown bins. I have had four in the last five days complaints just on brown bins alone: residents who want brown bins and cannot have them; residents whose neighbours have brown bins and they are told that they are not on the list to have one so do not get one; another one, a full street of brown bins delivered nine weeks previously, never emptied. When the resident rang up to the waste department she was told, "You will not get them emptied." Very helpful for the recycling of Leeds, and those are factual stories.

Garden waste. Garden waste is a huge problem. It is recyclable. We have some lovely figures from the Councillor over there, percentages of what you have increased and what you have not increased. If you gave the residents the service that they want, they want to do the recycling act, they would love to do the recycling act; they are not given the opportunity. Your figures could be probably another five to seven per cent higher than what you are quoting and feeling good about if the people of Leeds had the right service.

A massive 20% of household waste in England is garden waste which a lot of us do not seem to realise – I did not realise it, anyway. The waste can be recycled but sadly not enough people have the means, which I have just said. No doubt you will tell me that in some areas brown bins are just not suitable because of access. Access should not be an excuse for not recycling.

I was in Birmingham one day last week and I drove through the suburbs to get to the city centre. They do not bother about bins. It is a big city is Birmingham, as you all know. They have plastic boxes, plastic bags provided by the Council. Bins do not come into it. They will do anything to get the recycling in Birmingham and they have the backing of the residents who help them by filling these boxes with paper, with glass, with garden waste – anything that can be collected. If a city like Birmingham can do it, a city like Leeds should have been doing it some two, three years ago...

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Not ten years ago?

COUNCILLOR COULSON: ... when we had the first intimation of the brown and green bins. What I am asking you is that we be more flexible, more creative, more innovative and get this collection up to scratch. I would say, seeing as Councillor Monaghan did mention trade union business that it is a well known saying in management circles, to get good service you need a happy and successful work team. I think we need to start on the baseline and get a happy and successful work team and then we might have our recycling that we should have. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR IQBAL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. A very difficult act to follow after Councillor Ann Blackburn, Leader of the Green Party.

My Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, I wish to speak in support of Councillor James Lewis's White Paper and to highlight what I view as the large inequalities in our refuse collection service across the city.

I draw your attention to a case in my ward where for the past two years residents have had to put up with vast inconsistencies in their weekly bin collections. The small terraced streets off Tempest Road in my ward suffer persistent poor service when it comes to bin collection service. I am also aware of similar problems that have been raised by my ward Councillor, Councillor Nash. In the examples I am

aware of, the areas which are persistently affected by these inequalities are narrow streets with back to back houses on them. The logistics of these streets do amount to a challenge for the collection services, such as parked vehicles blocking accesses. However, the Council cannot hide behind these challenges as an excuse to provide an inconsistent level of service. It is simply not good enough to blame poor service on the type of street. A solution must be found.

The number of missed collections in my ward, City and Hunslet Ward, are far greater than any other ward in the city and it has been going on for two years. I have rung the officers, I have called the head of the department to the area and it just seems as if the bin men are just looking for any excuse to miss collections.

(interruption) I am sorry, that is the truth. I raised it for the last two years. I have had Steve Smith there, Graham Wilson, you can speak to them, I can show you copies of all the emails. These inconsistencies that the residents in these areas face are simply unfair when you consider that they pay their Council tax just like any other residents in Leeds. They are not receiving an equal level of service when it comes to their refuse collection service, especially their general household waste collection.

The Council is overseeing a post code lottery like my colleague Councillor Coulson says when it comes to their refuse collection service. All residents in Leeds should be entitled to an equal service and not have to face different levels of service simply on account of where they happen to live.

Bin collections are at the forefront of residents' expectations when they pay their Council tax. They are a reflection of the level of service being provided by the Council. The fact that many residents are having to put up with an unreliable service not only shows an inequality in the provision of services across the city; it also creates a sense of deep frustration towards the Council and the view that they are failing to do their job properly.

In January of this year Councillor Brett said, "If people think that all Leeds City Council ought to do is simply empty bins and clean the streets, then they are very much mistaken." Indeed, it seems that people are very much mistaken as the Council cannot even perform this task properly.

The Council needs to start looking into solutions to address this issue. There needs to be greater interaction with the community and more of a "can do" attitude when faced with the problems. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Can I first of all just comment on the last two speeches. They seem to me to be advertisements for market testing, really, because there seem to be more complaints about the service provided on the street and that is what we are seeking to improve by more modern working methods.

Just turning to Councillor Ann Blackburn's comments, Councillor David Blackburn will remember that three years ago in our budget we included a quite substantial sum of money for education on the need to recycle. The party opposite in their budget amendment removed every penny of that training money and so we have nothing to learn from over there about the importance of the need to make sure people are aware how to recycle, when to recycle and what to recycle.

On matters green, my Lord Mayor, some mischievous person has sent me a little slogan from the Conference of the German Greens – "Bündis 90/Die Grünen" and the strapline is "Sexy and intelligent". *(laughter and applause)*

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: That's Ann!

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: My Lord Mayor, three issues. First of all the fixed penalty notices. As Councillor Monaghan has made extremely clear, they were used particularly to address issues in one, in fact two wards where the issues were extremely particularly and I think had any of us been the ward members for those wards, we would have wanted some action taken.

The department know full well that they have no political support whatever for blanket coverage of these notices all around the city and indeed I know they are taking on board the fact that often the problems are created by our own operatives who go into a street where people have left their bins for collection in convenient and safe places as required, they are at work all day and come home to find six or seven bins all in the middle of the pavement where they have been since the early hours of the morning. They have not left them there, have they, so we can hardly start trying to fine people who are not aware that the bins are in the middle of the pavement when they get home from work where the Councillor staff have left them, so these are issues which also need addressing.

I am delighted with the amendment. We have made it crystal clear our commitment to a weekly bin collection and I want to underline something that James quite correctly said. There is only one political party who has a policy of fortnightly bin collections and that is your party. Increasingly meeting after meeting we have watched you step back from your own party's policy nationally but it is there – yes, Councillor Gruen is nodding, he is, of course, extremely accomplished at stepping back from people's policies (*laughter*) and, indeed, other political parties, so beware.

My Lord Mayor, there they sit – the party of bin taxes, the party of landfill taxes ever increasing, the party of fortnightly bin collections. It is no good James Lewis or any of the rest of you trying to distance yourselves from the party that has tried to bribe and browbeat Local Authorities – and they have – at the express instructions of your Prime Minister, Gordon Brown, to introduce fortnightly collections and introduce taxes on people and bins. That is wrapped round your neck and it will stay wrapped round your neck. You cannot escape it, it is in black and white. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I just want to share a quick note with Councillor Lewis on the bin fines. I am not sure what your line is – actually we are not sure what your line is on anything any more. It is a note from someone in my ward, a nice handwritten letter from a 90-year old gentleman:

“Dear Jamie,

Just a small note but a big thank you for your efforts with the wheelie bin problem. Looking forward to seeing the Enforcement Team in our back avenue. Don't know how the students will manage without their goalposts and wickets blocking the avenues of Headingley, so keep up the perfect work.”

That is a ringing endorsement. (*Applause*)

That said, we have the backing of long-suffering residents, we have the backing of the blind lobby, we have the backing of disabled groups, so I stress, we have the backing of the people of Leeds of this one and you are out of touch.

COUNCILLOR GRAHAME: Some people do not get them emptied or delivered.

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: I might stress this policy of fining is a preventative measure, as has been said before, and it is working it is preventing the problem. I support this scheme – I don't know about Labour. Once again it masks all the speeches today. I really, genuinely thought today we would get a policy from Labour. No, nothing of the sort. A policy from the Greens? Nothing of the sort to deal with residual waste. Residual waste is a myth – it does not exist, according to the Labour Party. We have increased recycling – you never increased recycling.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: A lot of people have stood in Ann Blackburn's shoes. *(Laughter)*

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: Just thinking about it actually, I think what we have understood from today's speeches from Labour is that their policy is to have a rail halt where we bring in waste from other cities. I think that is what you are saying, is it not? I will leave it on that note. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think we have got a statistical problem in the Council. Listening to Councillors Hussain, Coulson and Iqbal obviously waste collection in their areas is a total disaster, bins are missed so frequently we could not possibly be missing half a per cent across the whole city. If it is so bad in your ward it must be absolutely perfect in all the other wards, which is nearly impossible.

There are missed bin collections – shock, horror, gasp – in Burmantofts and Richmond Hill and when it happens the residents phone up the care line and deal with it. It happens in Harehills as well, where I live, but it is not a frequent occurrence and I do not believe it must be in your wards all the time. There is a slight danger you are over-egging the pudding.

COUNCILLOR GRAHAME: I think you need to ask your neighbour who lives in Crossgates.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: If you want to destroy your own credibility, carry on the way you are going. On the subject of bins left on pavements a number of people at residents' meetings in our wards said to us as soon as they saw the evening paper article saying fines were being levied on the people in either Headingley or Hyde Park, I do not know which, they were saying please, please, please can we have them here to deal with persistent people who will not take their bins in.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: That is not what they told you.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Not for one day – weeks on end. It goes on for weeks on end and news for you, Councillor Hussain, it happens in your ward all the time on Roundhay Road. What are you doing about it? Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Like many on this side of the Chamber we were rather hoping that at some point this afternoon we would get a view from you about what your waste strategy is and we were disappointed yet again. The waste strategy seems to comprise of Councillor Lyons shouting at us all the time. *(Laughter)*

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: It makes good sense though.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: We enjoy every minute of your contributions.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: You will be talking on Transport before long.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: I am just going to reiterate what our waste strategy is. It is quite simple. We are committed to maximising recycling within this city and we will do everything we can to do that. Part of that strategy is wheelie bins

If we just tease out one or two of the things that have been said over there. Let us use Councillor Coulson. He is saying to us our system in Leeds – green bins, brown bins and the bottle banks and all the rest of it – is not very good, we want to go to the Birmingham system. Our system, unfortunately, only recycles 34% at the moment and rising, but we want to go to the Birmingham system which is boxes and baskets. The Birmingham system recycles 20% of their waste, so I will assume from that that we are being asked to actually downgrade our commitment to recycling. I cannot understand that.

I think it was Councillor Hussain who said we have got a right to bins and we have got a right to have them emptied. Actually the figures show most of you have bins and most of you get them emptied all the time, so we are probably doing that. It just seemed to me that Councillor Hussain and Councillor Arif – and that was a particular point he was mentioning about the difficulty that bin operatives have actually getting down the road. We had that similar situation in my ward and so what did we do? We had a meeting with the bin people, the members had a meeting, we have actually had a meeting with the residents and talked to the residents and the residents actually came up with the solution. You talked about road testing – I suppose you talk about road testing the bins. I think it is about road testing the Councillors. *(Laughter)* These two Councillors just cannot cope with this. It is too difficult for them.

Post code lottery, which is another one. They want the same system throughout the city. I cannot help but feel it might be rather strange if I think about your ward and one or two of those tower blocks up on top of the hill. If you get up there and you find a brown bin outside the door. *(Laughter)* If we want an equal system – and that seems to be the Labour policy – then everyone in a high rise block is going to get a brown bin. *(Laughter)* I do not know what you are going to do with it, but there we are.

There was a reference to a happy and contented workforce. In an aside to my friend, Councillor Taylor, I said, “I wonder if Gordon Brown knows about that”.

The bottom line, Lord Mayor, and I think we can pull it together, we really do need to get some semblance of proper discussion. We are quite happy to have a debate...

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Well give us an example then.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: ...about how you move forward the basic principle and that is we recycle as much as possible. It is not just for me to stand up, it is not for – oh, Councillor Coupar has woken up *(Laughter)* - it is not just for today.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: What are you going to do about the flats and their recycling?

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: This is an issue that affects us now, it affects Leeds, it affects our children. We cannot sit here with no policy from the Labour Party and constantly sniping at the people who do have a policy and that policy is we will recycle. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I now call on Councillor Lowe.

COUNCILLOR DRIVER: Lord Mayor, can I point out that you have had five speakers from the other side already and not looked in this direction once.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I just stop you there, please? I have got three of your people down here so they are already on this list of mine and I now call upon Councillor Lowe. I am sorry, Councillor Coulson.

COUNCILLOR COULSON: Lord Mayor, I know you were talking to two people at once. Councillor Campbell has just deliberated misquoted me and I strongly object to that. My quote in my speech was I drove through the suburbs of Birmingham and saw boxes and bags. They did not bother about the bins. Nowhere in that dialogue did I recommend that we use the Birmingham system. Councillor Campbell deliberately put those words in, which are wrong.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: You said if they can do it we can do it.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Campbell.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Apologise.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: If I have mis-quoted Councillor Coulson I am deeply sorry and I apologise wholeheartedly. If I get facts wrong I am quite prepared to do that.

COUNCILLOR COULSON: Accepted, Councillor Campbell, thank you.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: A fact that you might be pleased to hear, Councillor Coulson, is that last year Birmingham incinerated 55% of their waste. *(laughter and applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. We move on now to Councillor Lowe.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Yes, I just wanted to make it very clear because it seems to have passed people by that the Leeds Waste Pledge forms part of this Group's policy on refuse collection. When David Cameron produces his manifesto for us to look at, then we might produce our manifesto for you to look at. Until that happens we are going to reserve our position.

The Leeds Waste Pledge is not a promise of world peace. It is an attempt to say to the citizens of Leeds that they matter, that their taxes mean that they are entitled to have their expectations met. We have forged a contract with our citizens because they give us money and we given them a service, an effective service that meets their needs every time.

You say that only 86 bins out of every 100,000 are missed. For the 86 people whose bins are missed that is not great; that is bad service. I do not think it is a problem to compensate those 86 people for our failure to deliver an effective service, and that is what we are saying. We are saying, deliver a service that people are paying for and that they are entitled to expect.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: If you came back in charge you would bankrupt the city.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: If we cannot do that, then I just think it is time for all of us to go home, to be honest.

I do not think the Leeds Waste Pledge is asking for impossibilities. I accept totally Ann's point that mistakes always happen – we are all human. This is an aspiration. I am not going to slash my wrists and make this promise in blood, but I am saying I aspire as a Leeds City Councillor representing the constituents in Armley and across the whole city, I aspire to give them the service that they deserve and they have paid for. I think Arif said, what every resident in Leeds deserves.

I think every resident in Leeds deserves a weekly black bin collection, access to recycling facilities whether that is through a green bin or to other mechanisms that means that they can recycle, and also to be given a day when their bins will be emptied and those bins to be emptied on that day. It is not rocket science and, as I said, it is not promising world peace. It is promising people a service that they are entitled to. You should be giving them that service and if you cannot give them that service, you should at least be giving them the respect that they deserve by saying we are aspiring to that, that is what the pledge means. Sign up for it today or else tell people you do not care about the money that they are giving us and you do not care about the services you are doing for Leeds. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR RENSHAW: Lord Mayor, after listening to many points that have been raised this afternoon, one of the things that comes to my mind is that one of the main features of any in collection problems that we have had in Ardsley and Robin Hood and throughout many other wards I am sure, is the fact that although many new developments go up, the workforce are not increased in order to deliver the service that no amount of bin men are capable of doing.

Obviously that has an impact on other streets and other areas within our wards and bins are missed. Many of the root problems of all our bin collections is the lack of support that those bin men get from the administration.

What level of staff have increased in comparison to the number of new builds and properties that they now have to deliver to? Why am I having to contact officers in order to get green bins delivered to the new properties? Why are they not having them supplied immediately for the efficient service that this Council is capable of having delivered put in place for the residents that deserve an adequate service, or an even more effective service? Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, I think someone referred to a budget speech earlier on. I recall this budget speech this year by Councillor Brett when he was talking about making 650 people redundant in order to put money into the front line. Money into the front line.

The bin services are services in the front line – absolutely clear. I think Councillor Lowe has made our policy abundantly clear and it cannot be misquoted by anyone else because it is crystal clear.

What matters in this Chamber is what politicians in this Chamber say and not what politicians elsewhere say. We have always said that and the wheels will turn at some stage and you will find it very difficult when other people say things that you may not actually agree with.

Our spokespeople have made it very clear about a weekly black bin collection. It will stay, it is in our pledge and we have been courageous enough to state that publicly.

The reason I want to speak now is to pick up another point from Councillor Monaghan, which is really about why this administration is depriving working class people of up to £5,000 of their wage and then believes that they will actually go out

and work 100% or more efficiently and do everything they are told to do and they will have a perfect, happy workforce. Of course they have not.

You could recoup that money by not sucking up to your consultant friends and bringing in all these people on highly expensive daily and hourly rates and actually investing in your own workforce, in the bin lads and lasses who are much admired throughout this city for the job that they do.

Councillor Monaghan, you and your Headingley intelligentsia might think you are on to a good wicket – you are not. Most of the people in this city will support decent, hard working, working class people who deserve a decent wage and you are depriving them of this. Your record as an administration does you no proud at all. You started picking on the porters and deprived them of their weekly wage. You took away the Personnel Panel so people could no longer complain through the normal systems about bullying and grievances and disciplinaries, etc. Consistently you have attacked your own workforce and now you are depriving people of massive amounts of money and then complaining and saying, “Oh well, we will now go ahead with privatising.”

This group will not support that. There is crystal clear blue water between us. We will not support further attacks on working class people and the blue collar workers in this city. (*hear, hear*) (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I had not intended to speak in this debate but the misrepresentations that have just occurred, I feel I have got to get to my feet and say absolutely crystal clear to Councillor Gruen, that on this side we have made no-one redundant. I did not use that word, it was very clear in the budget speech. That is a wholesale misrepresentation of what we are about...

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Absolute distortion.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: ...and, to the point, you know full well that that is the case.

COUNCILLOR: Apologise.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: He is desperate, Richard.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: If we are talking about budgets I think we need to be quite clear that the Labour Party budget amendment actually reduced the Streetscene budget. It really means that a lot of what we have heard is hot air.

If we are to talk sensibly about the difficulties we have over the bin collection and the difficulties that we are trying to face – and for many years you just ducked pay and grading, did absolutely nothing, it was too difficult for you – I would say, because we have been involved with the Equal Pay Act and every job having a score, does limit the flexibility of what we can do with our staff. Enormous efforts with the Unions have gone into trying to solve this problem in recent weeks and the sort of simplistic remarks we have just heard about how we are supposedly picking on staff when our officers have spent ages in the last few weeks trying to solve a real problem and the root of the problem is quite simple.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Who is losing money?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: For years a significant number of female staff were underpaid. That is why I support the Equal Pay Act. It has given a score to all the

jobs and that is what means we have less flexibility now and is in one sense the cause of the difficulty.

I would love to feel that there were some ideas about a way forward within the law with where we are at the moment coming from the Opposition, but we have heard absolutely nothing. Simplistic remarks about how we are taking away money – nothing can be further from the truth.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: You are.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: We are trying to get the best possible service we can with the limited resources we have in circumstances where, Mick, the outlook, in case you had not noticed, is in the next year or two there are likely to be even less funds for us. If we do not get a more efficient bin collection service, other things will be difficult to provide. We must make progress on this and that is why we are saying we must have more efficiencies from this service. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: I now call on Councillor James Lewis to sum up.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I will try to sum up the debate. First of all, turning to the £75 fine. Quite frankly, if the only answer that people have to bins on the street is finding someone, it makes me think members of the Liberal Democrat Group have an unhealthy obsession with punishment and I will not say any more about that. (Laughter) When it comes to this debate and when it comes to who has a clear vision for where waste treatment goes in this city, it is absolutely clear we have set out three pledges. What have you done?

COUNCILLOR: Come on!

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: You have referred to a historic Executive Board paper, you have waffled, you have tried to create smokescreens, you have distracted, you have gone on about Government, you have gone about this – you have not committed to providing an equal service to every single citizen in Leeds.

We believe in fairness – you believe in complacency. Yes, some properties are harder to collect the bins from than others. (interruption)

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Is there a doctor in the house?

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: You want the easy option of giving up; we want to give everybody a service on the basis of fairness. Yes, we are on the side of people; you are on the side of doing nothing, that is absolutely clear. We will end the post code lottery in recycling and we will keep the weekly black bin collection.

I have to say, Councillor Carter, there is only one Executive Board in this city that signed up and agreed to a policy of introducing residual waste collections on a fortnightly basis. I am reading from a report you have agreed, so do not lecture me about (interruption) because you have signed up for fortnightly black bin collections in this city and however many smokescreens you try and blow around, we know exactly where you stand. End the black bins, you are against weekly black bin collection and everybody knows that. Everybody knows that, despite what you signed up to.

Turning to the issues of workforce, my colleague Councillor Gruen has eloquently outlined the massive assault (laughter) on working people this administration has implemented continuously, relentlessly, over the last five years.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: You will never get elected saying things like that!

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Weekly pay, privatisation, cuts, cuts, cuts. You have tried to isolate industrial relations in Streetscene but we look at it in the broader context of your approach to this Council's workers. You have been obsessed with privatisation, you have been obsessed with cuts, you have been obsessed with taking pay away, you have been obsessed with taking jobs away and you are now trying to hide behind the Equal Pay. It will not wash with us because we know exactly what you have done.

I think it is quite clear from this debate – quite clear from this debate – that there is separation between this Opposition that takes things seriously and the complacent – is it a joke, Andrew? Is it a joke to you, Andrew, this Council? Council tax payers' money is a joke to Andrew Carter. *(interruption)* That is what I see in this debate as well.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: It is with you in it. You are the biggest joker here.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Point of order, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: A complacent and out of touch administration and the party over here has a clear vision, a clear vision for taking things forward.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Clear vision?

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I missed the last four minutes. Can you repeat it? *(Laughter)*

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Any time!

THE LORD MAYOR: I am coming now to call for the vote.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Recorded vote.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: We have the result now. Present 92; "Yes" 49; abstentions one; "No" 42, so the amendment is CARRIED.

This now becomes the substantive motion. We are now going to the vote on the substantive motion and we will have a show of hands, then. All in favour, please.

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: Recorded vote. Can we have a recorded vote, please? I did say it before but they could not hear it over the noise.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Those men in the front row wouldn't let you, would they?

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Stand up for your rights!

(A recorded vote was taken on the substantive motion)

THE LORD MAYOR: Present registered as 61, "Yes" 49; abstentions 2; "No" 3, so this is CARRIED.

ITEM 13 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – NEIGHBOURHOOD WARDENS

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now moving on to the White Paper and I call on Councillor Ann Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am doing a lot of speaking today, more than what I normally do! I am speaking about neighbourhood wardens and the reasons to keep them.

I have some neighbourhood wardens in my ward. I have not always had them but I know that since I have had them I have seen the difference that they make and that is why I am speaking about them today. I think that the neighbourhood wardens do an excellent job.

One of the estates in my ward we cover is called the Bourne estate and anybody who knows it will know that it is like a rabbit warren. People have told me that the Beck Hills is similar as well, I do not know. Certainly it is a rabbit warren, little paths running all over the place, making it an easy target for littering and fly tipping and the wardens work with the local people to keep it clean and tidy and also the gardens as well. They try and they have improved the estate. As I said, I saw what it was like before, I do not live that far away from it, I do walk round there and when I walk round now I can see the difference to what it was.

They do not only do that. They have the trust of the residents. We have to remember that some residents, if there is a problem, do not always ring the relevant Council offices or the ALMO to say anything and I know, I have got a lot of people in my ward will stop me if they see me but they will not ring me up, will not come to surgeries, it is if they see you, so with the wardens they see them, they tell them if there is a problem and it has led to a much improved estate.

The local residents, tenants and residents' group, unfortunately they have problems as well because not everybody wants to key into doing that, so they struggle. I have to say they have said to me, "Ann, we are not going to go back to not having any wardens, anybody to cover our estate, are we? We are really concerned about this. We have seen the improvements, we do not want to go back to square one." I say, "Yes, I understand it. I am totally with you, wholeheartedly." That is why I have put this White Paper today, not just for my area. I do not know every area in Leeds personally that has wardens and I would be telling lies if I said I did. I can only say what I have seen in my area and how the area has improved because of these wardens and the work they have done and they have helped the local residents and the tenants and residents' association and also they will help anybody. I have had them come to me when they have said look, there is a problem here with this vulnerable – I had a vulnerable old man that was in one area. Again, they did not say that there were problems then because we know a lot of people do not. The neighbourhood warden was so concerned she came to me, she said, "What can we do? He is leaving the gas on. He is going to blow the place up." She worked with the various agencies and I helped her. He had been robbed because people knew he was vulnerable. It should not happen but we know it does. Again, they are walking the estates thereby you can tell them.

I am not walking the estates all the time. I live in the area, people can ring me up, I do walk round but these wardens are there all the time – a brilliant service. We do not want to lose them, it is as simple as that.

I have to say that where you have wardens there are reasons for it. I do not have wardens in a lot of my ward but, as I said, in this particular area it is like a rabbit warren. It is unfortunate it was built like that, we live with it but yes, there are improvements there now.

We have to remember that these wardens are in place because for one reason or another the estates they cover have problems. I will say that again. The wardens are in place because for one reason or another the estates they cover have problems, so that is why, yes, I have some areas like that, I do not want to lose them. I fear that by removing this coverage any progress made in these areas will take a retrograde step and the estates and the people on them concerned will suffer because of this.

Please let us keep our wardens. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR PARNHAM: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would just like to second the White Paper motion and reserve the right to speak.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: My Lord Mayor, I recognise there are strong feelings on this particular issue. I believe they are caused by two particular points of view. One is the one that has been expressed by Ann Blackburn, and that is the appreciation of the excellent work carried out by the wardens; the other one is misinformation coming from the Labour Group.

Lord Mayor, this administration is acting to ensure wardens' community role continues and that is in the face of Government cuts. Many will remember the crocodile tears that poured out from the Labour members when the Labour Government cut the Council's NRF allocation. Labour, as usual, are now in denial. They know that these funds were used to pay for 20 of the 30 warden posts. The NRF paid for 20 of the 30 warden posts. However, they have not got the guts to stand up and say these reductions are the fault of the Labour Government. They have not got the guts to say that.

They have not got the guts to stand up and remind people that in their last year in office they cut ten wardens – not seven, ten wardens – in order to contribute to 25 PCSOs. That was their policy, that was a few years ago and it was their policy. They have not got the political honesty to acknowledge that this administration has increased the number of PCSOs to 172, which has resulted in the largest improvement in public satisfaction in the West Yorkshire Police area. Now 70% more people feel safe going out at night. That is a phenomenal improvement.

They will not stand up and say that their Government do not believe that the 149,000 people in Leeds living in the poorest 10% of the country are not eligible for Working Neighbourhoods Funds. They will not go and tell the people that. Indeed, my Lord Mayor, a senior Leeds labour anonymous source in the YEP was quoted as saying...

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Oh, Les, come on.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: It was in the YEP, this is the quote, "We still have pockets of deprivation in Leeds. If we were poorer we would have got it." I wonder if they are advocating that now as their policy, make everyone poorer, because that is what they seem to be doing.

My Lord Mayor, we are certainly not making £200,000 as was claimed in the press by Councillor Rafique. Indeed, my Lord Mayor, to keep the 23 that we are

going to keep we need to be investing of something between £300,000 and £400,000 extra, not reducing the cost, so I am afraid you have got that wrong, Councillor Rafique.

The restructure will not change the Area Committees' delegations – this is important, is this. Area Committees will continue to decide on staff deployment at a local level. Comments from Councillor Rafique that a reduction in the number of wardens will hinder the fight against crime borders on stupidity. Seven people – seven people – who are down there are going to increase the crime. I will tell you what, if it was true I would get rid of the police force and put 14 wardens there.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Don't be ridiculous.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: It is totally and utter stupidity, Bernard, and you know it.

To date this administration has funded 172 PCSOs and if we had not suffered the NRF cuts, we would continue with the 30 wardens. Councillor Rafique has ignored the facts about PCSOs, he has ignored the facts about neighbourhood policing, tried to make out that if we lose seven wardens it will hinder our fight against crime, even though 70-80% of the wardens' work is currently spent – you should be interested in this, Ann – on environmental issues, not community safety.

There are wardens managed by the Outer Area Committees in Councillor Blackburn's ward. They are part of the 30 which have been funded which will come to 23. Remember that those two extra posts were put in by this administration as I said on an earlier issue, reorganisation.

May I assure her of this, that the warden coverage remains in her ward. All the areas currently who have wardens will continue to have coverage. It may not be at the same level but they will continue to have coverage.

One of the things that has been suggested by my colleagues over here is that they continue to wear recognisable green fleece jackets, that they keep the same phone numbers – I do not know if that is possible but that they keep the same phone numbers – and they keep working on the same streets and neighbourhoods and they are also trying to work out of local bases. I hope that that can be achieved. It is something we are going to try to achieve.

My Lord Mayor, I must say to the Armley members, the wardens in New Wortley, which is part of the Armley Ward, the Inner West Area Committee, which are funded by the Area Committee and the ALMO, are not part of this restructuring.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Absolutely. That is as it should be. For the benefit of the community.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: They will remain as they do at the present time, so there is no question of anything happening to them.

Lord Mayor, under our plans the new Community Environment Officers will still operate at a local level, working with the community and using their community skills. There will not be an expansion of the service into areas that do not currently have it – in other words we are not going to say there are areas like mine or areas like Pauleen's, they are not going to expand into those. They will not get any further – there will be no expansion of the service there.

The work the restructuring teams will be doing in the future will concentrate on environmental improvements but in the main that is what they are doing now, and will continue to maintain a strong community link in the neighbourhoods they serve.

In future they will be able to deliver and organise direct action, including enforcement where appropriate, to respond to problems rather than just report and refer for assistance. The massive advances made in community service will continue as a result of these massive investments that we have made.

Finally, Lord Mayor, I want to quote now from the staff themselves. The wardens in West Leeds when responding to staff consultation have said, "We, as the West Team of neighbourhood wardens, are ready for the change and look forward to joining a more structured and professional organisation."

My Lord Mayor, this change will bring about that structured and professional organisation. My Lord Mayor, I ask people to support my amendment. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I call on Councillor James Monaghan to second.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: I call on Councillor Rafique to comment.

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak in support of Councillor Blackburn's White Paper regarding the neighbourhood wardens. Since the introduction of the neighbourhood wardens, Lord Mayor, in our city by the then Labour administration in 2001, I do not think any person in this Chamber would disagree with the statement that they have been a fantastic success. The work which they are undertaking in our community has been absolutely brilliant and the wardens deserve all the credit in the ward for their professionalism in tackling a wide range of challenging issues.

For eight years now they have led the fight against crime and antisocial behaviour, they work in partnership with the police and the local communities, they have led on environmental problems and they are a vital buffer between the residents and a wide range of other groups, organisations and agencies, including the police. Councillor Blackburn said local residents trust them, as we have seen on our wards, and in the YEP recently when the focus on Inner West Leeds, including Wortley. Young people especially respect them.

Members of the Council, why do you define their role? Why define their post? Why take some of them off to other departments? So they can issue penalty notices and generate income for this administration when they are already providing a valuable service in their current role.

It was interesting that Councillor Les Carter in his letter to the YEP spoke of a review that was undertaken into the role of wardens and he backed it with percentages and stats but there is always one thing that is more important than percentages and stats and that is the people. The real people have come to rely on the people and support of these wardens in their every day lives. Did anyone from the Council in this review go out and speak to those communities who will be affected by the loss and changing role of the wardens?

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Yes.

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: And ask them what they thought of this proposal? No you have not, not in my ward, certainly not in Councillor Blackburn's ward. Unfortunately, judging by the outcry in areas like Wortley and Beck Hill estate which falls in my ward, the answer seems to be no. Unfortunately not for the first time under your administration, Les, your supposed consultation has been trying to sneak in through the back door. We flagged up our concerns about this proposals back in February's budget. My colleague Councillor Dobson here told you of our fears but rather than listen, Les, you did nothing.

In the process you are also axing seven posts and you tell that the Council cannot afford the £186,000 to keep the wardens the way they are, but in the next breath we discover that you are paying hundreds of thousands of pounds to external wardens, ending up funding the Civic newspaper which is costing the Leeds taxpayer over £185,000 a year. What kind of priorities are these?

Councillor Carter, good governance is about getting your priorities right. It is about taking appropriate decisions that benefit and matter to the people in our communities most. This kind of spending on pet projects has to stop and the needs of our communities put to the top of your list.

You said in your amendment you actually recognise the excellent work done by the neighbourhood wardens. If you say to me that, then please do the honourable thing and put your money where your mouth is and reinstate the wardens. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, it is the old adage that when the Tories are in trouble they wheel out J L Carter and he spends five minutes attacking the Labour Group.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Who do you wheel out when you are in trouble?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Look again – have we put down a White Paper on this? Have we spoken on this? He spent five minutes attacking us for a White Paper put down by the Greens.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Because you cut the money.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: We are supporting the Green White Paper.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: You messed it up.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Let me say, in order to have some – Richard, you have suddenly cheered up because you are past your bad event earlier on in the afternoon and now you have got nothing to look forward to but heckling other people.

I want to say this. I think that, Les, you have a fair point, in terms of the money being switched off. There is no point denying it, but what you did get wrong is actually Richard Lewis, Keith Wakefield and others argued very strongly in terms of that money that should have come to Leeds. The Labour Group stood up publicly and argued for that.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Absolutely.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: So please, if you say that then why do we bother in the future? Just think about our political relationship if every time you stand up publicly and say that you are right and we fight for money with you and then you deny it afterwards, there is no point actually doing anything in the future.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: We were not successful, Peter.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: The reason we support neighbourhood wardens is because the public, who we are here to serve, actually like the service they get. Wherever we go in the Outer East Area and other colleagues and the Chair, Councillor Parker, can support this, they get a good press, they get a very good, trusting relationship with the local people. If we mean anything by cleaner, greener and safer streets – which is a jargon we all use – then why are we – and this is the important thing – changing their job description? They are no longer going to be neighbourhood wardens. They are going to be some environmental enforcement officers. They are going to be that because you are not putting enough money into enforcement. No planning enforcement, no health enforcement, no environmental enforcement – it has all gone kaput.

Now you have found a nice little pocket here and you want to use the resource that is hugely popular with local people and say, “We will switch it off and we will make them environmental officers.”

It is the wrong time. Any administration is about priorities. Clearly the neighbourhood wardens are not your priority because you are not putting the extra bit of money in that, as I said before and meant, was paid for differently but you have a big budget in this city and you could put some extra money into neighbourhood wardens.

We believe – we are not saying they would do a perfect job, we are not saying there could not be improvements in terms of efficiency and effectiveness – of course there could, but we like the structure, we like the fact that they are on the ground supporting local people, intervening, giving comfort, high visibility and I think those are important assets that we would throw away foolishly.

In terms of consultation, I agree with what Councillor Rafique has said. I think it was last week that the Outer East Area Committee met and for the very first time we had a paper about the neighbourhood wardens. I tell you this, the neighbourhood wardens I speak to have not said what J L Carter has said. Nothing of the sort. They actually are worried about their jobs, they are worried about what they can do and what they will be drilled to do in the future, they actually like the kind of close contact they have, particularly with the elderly and the vulnerable people in our communities and, frankly, I will tell you this, I do not know if they are brave enough to stand up and say so in this Council Chamber but Councillors Hyde and Schofield support the neighbourhood wardens. They stood up publicly and said so at our meeting.

I am not telling tales out of school. That is exactly what they said. They wanted us to support the wardens and I look forward to their vocal support because they are right and we are right. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: Lord Mayor, I think it is very decent of Councillor Gruen to acknowledge that this was actually caused by the Government funding cuts in the NRF funding. It is a shame that his colleague Councillor Rafique, though, did not acknowledge that when he sent the press release to the paper saying that it was us cutting £200,000 from the service, which is complete scaremongering and lies.

We are the ones, this administration is the one picking up and mainstreaming that reduction from NRF into our budget. Councillor Gruen says you raised this in your budget but was this in your budget amendment? Would you have been able to fund these and keep the wardens in? No, you would not.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Give us a chance and we will show you.

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: I just want to refer to a couple of points raised by Councillor Rafique who said that the wardens in his area lead on environmental action. The new Community Environment Officers will continue to lead on environmental action. Councillor Blackburn raised the issue that they were improving estates, dealing with problems of littering gardens, fly tipping, litter – they will continue doing that. In fact, they will have more powers. Rather than noting that and not being able to back up what they see, they will actually be able to tackle these problems and deal with them. We are giving them more powers to make them more useful to this Council.

Also you talked about the trust of residents and made specific reference to the man who kept leaving on his gas. When you look at the actual job description for the new officers, one of their key roles is to communicate with residents, businesses and members of the public about environmental issues, also to signpost facilities and relevant service providers and conduct presentations at residents' meetings, schools, sheltered housing complexes, etc., provide assistance to ward members and it goes on. A lot of the work that you value them doing will be continued.

The Council maintain that the locality focus for these positions and will be working with the most deprived areas, the most vulnerable people in this city. I welcome these coming into my portfolio. I think they are going to be a big addition to the resources we have. I think our Area Committee when we discussed this, we were very positive in the changes. We welcome it in our ward, I welcome it in my portfolio so I look forward to working with them very closely.

The other thing I just want to talk about in terms of specific issues in our ward and in our area, which I think our Area Committee acknowledged they were very useful, is to tackle graffiti, particularly offensive and racist graffiti. In the past the wardens have just been able to spot this and report it – the same with many other issues, they have been sent up there to spot things and report it. They felt they are impotent in some of the things they had to deal with. We are giving them powers to actually deal with that and they will be able to initiate and support investigations identifying and prosecuting perpetrators of these environmental crimes.

I think this is going to be a big addition to our arsenal and Area Committees will have say over where these people are allocated and I think that is very, very welcome. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Monaghan. It is now seven o'clock and we cannot take any more speakers other than Councillor Blackburn to sum up, please.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you very much, Lord Mayor. I have noted what has been said and I do know that yes, there are 23 posts out of 30 so there are going to be seven that will be lost somewhere along the line. I noted what Councillor Les Carter has said in that the coverage will still be there in the areas it is now and so yes, that sounds a bit positive. I do not know how much, will it be once a month or whatever, we do not know because a lot of it is sketchy there. That is why I have brought this today.

It has also been said that the wardens in my area are happy to go over on to this new system. I do not know when he has heard that because the last I heard, in fact, they were telling me that they were very unhappy, so unless he has heard something that I do not know, I do not think that is right.

It does worry me and I think one of the worries that I have is, if they are going to be handing out fixed penalty notices as well, then what about the trust that they have got? Now they have got the trust, they are building it up, and yes, they get letters sent to them, they arrange for letters to be sent by our environmental department, but if they are going to do all this and they are going to go to court, then where is that trust going to go? That is what worries me.

Yes, I appreciate what Councillor Carter has said but there is still questions there. Yes, I also appreciate and know that a lot of the funding from the NRF is gone and so there is not as much money there.

As has been said by others about the enforcement officers, the trust that they build up. Councillor Monaghan said now the new environmental officers, wardens, whatever you call them, can deal with graffiti. Yes, it is good, but graffiti could be dealt with, but should it be the wardens? What worries me is that you have people in what can be dealing with sometimes difficult people, you are trying to build trust there, work with people and then you have got them saying, "OK then, I can serve this on you now and I can go to court" and I think some of that trust is going to go if we do that. Yes, I understand that money is tight but I would just ask you to look and think of that again and particularly talk to the wardens concerned because I know mine were not a load of happy bunnies when they saw me. Thanks very much.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Blackburn. We are now going to take the vote on the amendment in the name of Councillor Les Carter. *(A vote was taken)* This is CARRIED.

This now becomes the substantive motion. I would like to take a vote on that.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Recorded vote please, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Seconded, Lord Mayor.

(A recorded vote was taken on the substantive motion)

THE LORD MAYOR: 92 people present; "Yes" 49; abstentions four; "No" 39, so the substantive motion is CARRIED.

ITEM 14 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – NEW GENERATION TRANSPORT.

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now out of time and moving on to the White Paper number 14. We shall have no discussion or debate on these. I ask Councillor Downes, please.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: I move, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Second, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: I move the amendment, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Yes, to second formally, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Lord Mayor, I understand from previous discussions that I am to beg leave of council to withdraw our amendment.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Is leave of Council given? AGREED.

We will move to the vote on the amendment. (*A vote was taken*) CARRIED.
This becomes the substantive motion.

Vote on the substantive motion. (*Applause*) CARRIED.

ITEM 15 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – POST-16 HOME TO COLLEGE TRANSPORT

THE LORD MAYOR: I now call upon Councillor Dowson.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: I propose, Lord Mayor, but it needs amending slightly. Under “Provisions of Council Procedure Rule 14.10 to seek leave of Council to alter the motion by adding the words, “The Executive Board be informed that so far as Council is concerned” between the words “resolves that” and “travel”. I move that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Is leave given? AGREED. Councillor Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harker to move an amendment.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: I move the amendment, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: We will take a vote, please, on the amendment in the name of Councillor Harker. (*A vote was taken*) CARRIED.

It becomes the substantive motion. (*A vote was taken*) This is CARRIED.

ITEM 16 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – (Procedure Rule 3.1(d)) BUS SERVICES IN LEEDS

THE LORD MAYOR: We are on to number 16, the White Paper in the name of Councillor Shelbrooke.

COUNCILLOR SHELBRooke: Lord Mayor, I beg leave of Council to withdraw the White Paper in my name.

THE LORD MAYOR: Do we give leave? All in favour? AGREED.

ITEM 17 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – (Procedure Rule 3.1(d)) USE OF NOTIONAL INCOME SAVINGS IN CALCULATING COUNCIL TAX BENEFITS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 17, White Paper in the name of Councillor Bentley.

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: I move the White Paper, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR FOX: Seconded.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lowe to move an amendment.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: I move my amendment.

COUNCILLOR JAROSZ: I second the amendment.

THE LORD MAYOR: I would like now to take a vote on the amendment in the name of Councillor Lowe. *(A vote was taken)* That is LOST. I am lost as well!
(Laughter)

We are now taking a vote on the motion. *(A vote was taken)* The motion is CARRIED.

Thank you very much, everybody, it has been quite an experience for me and no doubt you and thank you very much for bearing with me this afternoon.
(Applause)

(The Council meeting closed at 7.12 pm)