

**LEEDS CITY COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

Held on

Wednesday, 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2012

At

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,  
CIVIC HALL,  
LEEDS

In the Chair:

THE LORD MAYOR  
(COUNCILLOR REV A TAYLOR)

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**VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS**

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VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON  
WEDNESDAY, 22<sup>nd</sup> FEBRUARY 2012

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon, everybody, and welcome to today's Council. Can I extend that welcome to members of the public who are in the public gallery.

I have two announcements to make. First of all I am sure that you will all agree that last Friday was an epic night for Leeds Rhinos (*hear, hear*) and they secured a remarkable record, equalling third world title at Headingley Carnegie by winning the Heinz Big Soup World Cup Challenge. They are a credit to the city and I hope that they will be further recognised at the end of this season. (*Applause*)

I now have the responsibility, and it is with great sadness, that I have to inform you that Graham Wilson died yesterday morning from a heart attack, at the age of 53.

He commenced his work for Leeds City Council on 19 September in 1977 at the age of 19 and he joined the Council as a Student Environmental Health Officer and had 34 years of service.

He has had various roles in the Council, managing Enforcement, Noise Nuisance, Environmental Health and Car Parking. Over the years, he has made a significant impact on these vital services, always demonstrating huge commitment and enthusiasm.

His most recent role was as Environmental Health Manager and he was only appointed to that position in April of last year.

Our thoughts are with his wife, Jo, and with his two sons, Jonathan and Andrew. If any Members wanted to express their condolences to the family, that can be done through Tom and the Chief Executive's Office.

As an expression of respect, would you now please stand?

*(Silent tribute)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Before we move on to Item 1 on the agenda paper can I remind members, please, and people in the galleries, that if by any chance they are carrying a mobile and that mobile is on, could they please turn it off because there is as custom that if the mobile does go off during the proceedings of Council, that the person whose mobile it is makes a contribution to the Lord Mayor's charity, and that is Voluntary Action Leeds and a worthy charity, but I would not like your mobiles to go off in order to support it but to support the charity in other ways. Thank you.

ITEM 1 – MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD ON 18<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2012

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we move on to Item 1? Councillor James Lewis.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lobley?

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: (*A vote was taken*) That is CARRIED.

## ITEM 2 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we move on to Item 2 and the list of written declarations written by Members. It has been on display in the ante-room. Are there any further individual declarations or corrections? Councillor Elliott.

COUNCILLOR ELLIOTT: I have my written declarations lodged with the Clerk. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR CONGREVE: Governor of Cockburn High School, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Lord Mayor, Governor at West Park.

COUNCILLOR EWENS: Governor at City of Leeds High School, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Just a brief one on my declaration it says "Foundation Governor Prince Henry Grammar and Governor Prince Henry Foundation, Otley." There should only be one declaration there. I am just on the Foundation Governors, not on the main Governors.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Any others? Councillor Kirkland.

COUNCILLOR KIRKLAND: Governor of St Giles's Roman Catholic Primary, Otley.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Any further declarations? Can Members therefore please show by hand that they have read the list, they agree to its content insofar as it relates to their own interests? (*Show of hands*) Thank you.

## ITEM 3 - COMMUNICATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: On Item 3 I am led to believe there are no communications.

## ITEM 4 – BUDGET

(a)

THE LORD MAYOR: Therefore we move on to Item 4. Councillor James Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Move in terms of the Notice.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lobley.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I second, my Lord Mayor.

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

(b)

THE LORD MAYOR: The second part of that for (b), Councillor Lewis.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lobley.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I second, my Lord Mayor.

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

## APPENDIX 1 TO THE ORDER PAPER

### ITEM 4 – BUDGET MOTION AND AMENDMENTS THERETO

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. We now move on the Order paper to page 9 and it is item 4. Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I was hoping that, given it was Lent, my colleagues would give up gambling but they have not and, as you probably know, there are huge bets on how long I take during my speech. If you see people sweating or groaning, it is nothing to do with my speech.

THE LORD MAYOR: Keith, are you ready to give consent? Is Council ready to give consent that we seek leave to accept the three bullet points under your first item? I am sure that they all are. Yes?

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: I don't know about that!

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Now you have started something, Lord Mayor! It could be all off!

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, sorry about that. You can start again. As you know, your time is unlimited.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Yes, I think that is the problem!

THE LORD MAYOR: Carry on.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you. Lord Mayor, I want to start our budget proposals by offering our thanks and appreciation to all our employees of Leeds City Council for their professionalism and commitment during one of the most difficult and challenging years ever faced in Local Government.

Despite the massive changes and reduction in resources, sickness levels have been at a record low of nine days a year as our staff have worked to maintain vital services to the people of Leeds in all weather, and this is really public service at its best. *(Applause)*

I would also like to thank all the finance officers of all the departments, but particularly Doug Meeson, Maureen Taylor, Helen Mylan and Alan Gay, who have been absolutely magnificent in steering us through a year in which we had to find £90m savings.

However, there was one moment when I reflected on mentioning this praise when I attended the Resources Scrutiny Board with the initial budget proposals. Councillor Les Carter, by no means a political cynic, congratulated the Finance Officers for making the presentation on the budget so easy to understand. My understanding of our history is that

every Leader except for me has made the budget so difficult and complex to understand that all of us have waved the white flag just to say yes, and I think this year that is why I reflected on whether we should praise the officers for making it so easy for us to understand, so my appreciation does have a caveat.

On a serious note, this budget has no secrets, no mysteries, no secret agendas because the scale of the cuts has not changed since October 2010 when we were told that this Council had to frontload cuts of 28% by 2015 which meant savings of £160m had to be found.

So far in our first financial year of 2011/12 we have had to find £90m savings from a budget that was already under severe pressure and next year, 2012/13, we will have to find a further £55m savings.

It is worth reminding ourselves that Leeds City Council, like other Northern Councils, is taking a far bigger share of the burden of cuts than Whitehall, whose cuts remain at 8½%. Indeed, the Joseph Rowntree Trust has just reported that it is now very clear that the Councils who have been cut the most are all Councils who have significant areas of need and deprivation, most of them in areas in the north with cities like Liverpool, Manchester, Barnsley and, of course, Leeds. All of the cities have experience around double-figure cuts while Dorset, Surrey and Hampshire have had actual increases, or cuts of no more than 0.3%.

Furthermore, a recent Parliamentary report has revealed that the North/South divide in public expenditure has been made even worse by the change in criteria for the allocation of NHS resources. Given Councils are now inextricably linked to the NHS in the delivery of vital services to our young and elderly, it must anger us all that cities like Manchester and Liverpool have had £41m and £33m cuts from their budgets. Even Leeds, a more affluent city, has been cut by £10m. Compare that to places like Surrey, which gained £61m, and Hampshire, which gained £52m. What happened to the phrase "We are all in this together"?

You can understand why people feel not just a massive sense of social injustice with a North/South divide, but feel that northern cities are being abandoned like they were in the 1980s by a Conservative Government.

Further evidence of this social injustice has been confirmed by the recent announcement that job losses in the North are four times higher than the South. Leeds, which has one of the strongest economies in the North, has lost 22,000 jobs in the last few years and, whilst we are addressing young people without education, employment and training better than other cities, we still have nearly 2,000 16-18 years olds in the city who are in the NEETs category.

A further depressing statistic relates to the overall unemployment in the city which includes over 24,000 people between the ages of 18-24 who are on some form of unemployment benefit. In addition, for every one job vacancy there are six people on Job Seekers' Allowance.

This bleak picture is right across the Yorkshire Region with housing stocks down 7% and homelessness up 14%, and all of these massive social sacrifices, which include three million people unemployed nationally, are part of an austerity package which was predicted by George Osborne to lead to economic growth of 1.7% this year. That was the Chancellor's forecast but instead we have a totally different picture.

Out of 27 countries in the European Union only Greece, Portugal and Cyprus have grown more slowly than us, which really does question the whole economic strategy of this

Coalition Government. As we have said many times, this Government is cutting too fast and too deep for it to work.

Let me quote you a once-learned politician who said, "We must not cut Government spending too soon and risk plunging a fragile recovery back into recession. Cuts without economic growth will not deal with the deficit." So said Vince Cable and so say all of us now, as our economy has shrunk by 0.2% in the last quarter and heads towards a double-dip recession.

It is in this context I want to move to the financial challenges of our budget. Let me start with the double-edge sword of Council Tax Freeze Support, which actually does further serious damage to our financial viability in future years. Yes, freezing Council Tax does help hard-pressed families and people with extra financial burden in difficult times. That is why we agreed to accept the £6.7m grant, worth about 2½% on Council Tax. However, unlike other years this is a one-off grant which means we will have to put Council Tax up by 5% next year just to stand still or, given the threat of capping, make even bigger cuts to services as we will have to find at least another £48m in 2013/14. Last month Eric Pickles had the arrogance to argue that the freezing of Council Tax would not be a cut to the base funding in future years. Everyone knows we will have to cut more in future years as a result of this freeze and you can understand why Local Authorities, some of them big, Conservative Authorities like Surrey and Peterborough, refused the offer and set their own Council Tax. You can understand why many Conservative Authorities also refused the bribe of returning to weekly bin collections because in a few years' time they would be left financially stranded as their grant ran out.

We have a Secretary of State who is more interested in public and political gimmicks than he is in helping us to address the pressures of our budgets. If the Government is interested in localism, freedom of Councils, then why did they not give the £1b underspend of his department to local Councils so they can decide on their priorities? Given we have a growing elderly population, given we have a growing crisis with youth unemployment, could that £1b not be better spent by all our Councils?

Before I move to the pressures and challenges of our budget, I want to say a few words about the possible breakdown of Local Government services at a time when they are desperately needed. According to the recent MORI poll, trust and satisfaction is now up to 64% in Local Government. Ironically, Parliament still remains around 30%. We are now at a record level of public satisfaction and trust at a time when we are experiencing the serious undermining of Local Government's financial viability.

Given the scale of cuts of 28% to our budget, it is quite clear that we cannot sustain the structures or provision of public services that we have done over many decades. In Leeds we have lost 1,600 Local Government officers and we have to lose a further 400 next year and 2,500 by March 2015. Inevitably we have had to cut services as a consequence of losing so many Local Government employees, and perhaps this is an appropriate time now to thank all those employees for their loyal service to the Council over many years.  
(Applause)

As I said earlier, we still have a long, hard journey ahead with further cuts but next year is particularly significant as we move to a new system of Local Government finance which sees us move from a grant system based on needs and resources to Councils with greater need were financially recognised, to one which favours cities with strong business rate growth. We know this will just add to the North/South divide and it will give all Northern Councils with struggling economies uncertain futures.

Fortunately, compared to many Northern cities, Leeds is in a very strong position given the success of our economy but, as one Chief Executive has already said, there is no respectable argument for linking a Council's ability to finance social care of adults and young to their success in attracting inward investment.

Whatever our strengths in our business rates, the limits imposed on our spending threaten frontline services, there is little room to manoeuvre. We have already taken the big efficiency savings. Last year we saved £25m on procurement, £13.6m on cutting back office operations and, of course, we cut 25% off top management. These were vital parts of our £90m savings but we still have some very difficult decision in Leisure, Children's and Adult Social Services. I want to pay tribute to the all-party we received on the Adult and Children's Services decisions which were extremely sensitive and difficult. Big efficiencies have now been made and we cannot repeat them again, so we really do have a real serious challenge in the future to maintain public services. Everyone now recognises there is simply not enough money in our budget to ensure we can look after our elderly with dignity. No-one in Local Government believes the recent statement by the Government that we have enough money – plainly nonsense as has been demonstrated. We need a new system for financing Adult Social Care, something all Governments have failed to tackle.

In the meantime, having had to reduce Council-run residential homes, libraries and sports centres, our commitment has been not to abdicate our social and political responsibilities. By encouraging social enterprise, community transfers, voluntary and independent sector led bids, we managed to make sure that provision was still there in the community and I do want to pay tribute to Councillor Yeadon, Sandie Keane and Councillor Ogilvie and his team for using their creative efforts to make sure those services are surviving and still there. *(Applause)*

That civic enterprise is going to be vital as we move forward next year to achieve a further £55m saving. In short, if we want some services still to be there, we have to innovate and work closer with our partners in the voluntary, independent and other public sectors.

In the savings of £5.1m in Social Services there are proposals to find new ways to work more closely with our partners – for example, three Neighbourhood Networks have set up Community Interest Companies to extend the services they offer beyond the current social activities and signposting.

Next year's budget proposals include focusing learning disability services into smaller, friendly community bases, so reducing the number of large centres. By making these services more personal for people and improving access for them to other local services, we also save on cost. Following a visit to Hillside where the Cabinet met people with learning disabilities, we were reassured by the positive response from the people using this new model of delivery.

A further £2m saving is being proposed by the reduction in Home Care staff and changing working patterns to fit the clients' needs more. Again, that is about the staff showing much more willingness and flexibility to change a life-time's practices in order to carry on with public services.

However, making savings in Children's Services will also be incredibly difficult at a time when £17m has been cut from Government funding to services for our children and young people. On top of this, since cases like the tragic one of Baby P, Leeds has, in common with other Councils, been faced with a surge of referrals. In the ten months since April 1211 we have had 25,000 referral requests. In relation to child protection and safety, every person and every agency is under huge pressure to refer every child they have concerns and fears about. Next year we will have to focus our efforts to reduce the pressure

of over 1,400 looked-after children. Given this is a priority, we believe that systems will be in place to control and reduce numbers needing our intervention, but let me say this, although we will make every effort to limit the financial pressure on our budget, we will never turn away children in need. (*hear, hear*) Our priority must always be to put vulnerable children first.

Further challenges in the budget include the costs of residential and independent fostering care, which we will address. However, it is important to note that the work of Children's Services is also bringing its good news with the Improvement Notices being lifted after a series of positive inspections and culminating in an Improved Annual Assessment rating – excellent news and I know all of us have expressed our appreciation and support to those members and officers of the Children's Team in achieving this. (*hear, hear*)

Further savings have come from the Environment and Development Departments amounting to £6.2m, including centralising CCTV, closer work within Parks and Environment Action Team, and much tighter and sharper procurement and order practices. Finally, given it is my portfolio, I want to mention the £5.1m savings target which has come about through innovation, tighter procurement practice and cutting down on services to Councillors, including a further freeze on allowances as a way of demonstrating we are all taking our share of the burden.

Whilst these savings are vital to protect frontline services, we cannot pretend that we can protect all of them this year without using short-term funding resources to avoid catastrophic and deeper cuts so, along with the £5.3m of the New Homes Bonus, we are using £9.9m PFI reserves and £6.9m from our general reserves to support services. The pressure of frontloading cuts makes it difficult for all Councils to prepare a more rational and phased reduction of services.

To make matters worse, we are also faced with pressures from the new localism in planning, which will cost us a further £1m, even if only 40 Neighbourhood Plans are developed by our Parish and Town Councils or Community Groups. Not a penny has been given by this Government to assist our communities to protect their areas.

One of the most vicious pressures placed on us next year comes in the form of devolving Council Tax benefit to the Council with a deliberate 10% cut of £5.5m. This benefit is to protect the poorest people of our city, some of them who have been publicly bullied and persecuted, so much so that six of the country's disability charities have spoken out about the substantial increase in abuse of people with disabilities.

We are for benefit reform and we welcome the idea of universal credits but cuts to people who are on low incomes, along with cuts to Council and disabled people, are socially and morally totally unacceptable to a civilised society. (*Applause*)

This shortfall of £5.5m now means this Council may have to administer cuts of 15% - 20% to people who rely on this benefit and we know families will have to face decisions whether to feed the family, keep warm or pay their rent or Council Tax. Inevitably there could be serious consequences for income in the housing and Council Tax budgets as people struggle with their financial situation. One can understand why some people think that the Government's publicity on benefit cuts are all efforts to distract attention from the fact that, despite the withdrawal of Stephen Hester's £1m bonus, this year the Royal Bank of Scotland, so-called public servants, will still share a bonus pool of £500m and there still will be £4.2b bonuses paid in the City.

A further pressure is related to public sector pay, which has already been frozen for some for two or three years. Mr Osborne has already announced a further freeze with 1%



cap until the end of the review in 2015. He now has the audacity to be claiming back about 1%, £4m, on the grounds that he has saved us money. Not only does this add further pressure to our budget but, as we know, punishes public sector workers who are already experiencing 8% to 10% cuts due to inflation and these are workers who sweep our streets, look after our elderly, feed our children and empty our bins day in, day out.

I am not surprised there is growing anger in our streets about excesses of bonuses by top executives and I want to make it absolutely clear, we are lobbying in the national negotiations to make sure that we offer a small pay increase for those low-paid workers. They deserve our support for the vital work they do and we will do everything possible to reward them.

Frankly, the Secretary of State, Mr Pickles, is in no position to refuse local Councils to do so. After years of criticising Chief Executives and top officers for being overpaid fat cats, he brazenly appointed a Finance Officer in his own department at £435,000 a year from capita – such hypocrisy from a man who has been preaching to us about that.

I will now turn to our budget proposals, which have been through an equality impact assessment as well as intensive consultation. Indeed, over the last two years thousands of people have responded to our consultation exercise, including our citizens, our staff, the Youth Council, voluntary sector, trade unions, Leeds Initiative and the Scrutiny Board, and many have made some very constructive and helpful comments, particular about partnership working. It is worth remembering that the combined budget of all the public sector in this city is £4.8b. That is why, although there can always be improvements, the State of the City meeting was an important start in bringing us together. However, needless to say, if we are pooling budgets, working closer, we need to ensure local Councillors form the democratic framework to oversee this partnership working. This budget, more than others, is about the start of that journey in building those partnerships.

For example, Social Services Care and the Health Service. We know that our elderly are living longer. In the next 20 years the post-65 group will now grow by 44% and the 85-plus group will grow by 200%. Two-thirds of the NHS clients are already over 65. No one single institution can afford to pay for support for the growing complex needs of an ageing population.

We welcome the £6m from the NHS this year to assist integrating Health and Social Care and we should also welcome the strong direction of Social Services to work with the independent sector, social enterprises, co-operatives, voluntary and faith sectors to ensure our elderly still get the vital support they need. We are proposing an extra £7.7m in next year's budget to ensure we achieve the innovation and change we need.

I have mentioned the pressures and savings from the Children's Services earlier and, as we know, the population of Leeds is expected to grow by 35% over the next 20 years. To address the growing needs and help manage the pressures, we propose an extra £10.2m for Children's Services. This will also include £180,000 for Leisure and Children's Services to work together to ensures our children capture the excitement, enthusiasm and inspiration of the Olympic Games. We know this city will have a massive economic boost as a result of our Chinese and other international visitors and athletes being based here, but we also need to leave a legacy our schools and communities we can be proud of.

I am also pleased to announce that £300,000 has been put aside for the Inspire Project in Leisure to nurture and develop our amazing young talent, which is gaining national and international recognition.

In total, our Adult and Children's Services proposed budget represents 55% of our total budget and I believe that is a very clear statement of our priorities in this year. *(Applause)*

Despite the setback in this Government's commitment to the solar panel energy schemes, we have not given up our commitment to tackle important environmental issues. We are proposing £837,000 to spend on a home insulation scheme which will address the need to reduce carbon emissions and tackle fuel poverty. This will benefit 15,000 homes, provide jobs and will also lever in £4 - £5 to EDF Energy. I would also like to thank the Green Party for their enthusiasm and support in this project.

As we know, community safety is a very high priority for our citizens and this again was highlighted in our consultation with people over the last two years. Despite the planned cuts of 249 police officers across this region by the Government, this Council is committed to maintaining the 170 Police Community Support Officers who play such a vital role in protecting and reassuring our communities. To repeat, there will be no cut in the number of PCSOs in this city for our community. *(Applause)*

Furthermore, we have maintained the £470,000 to support the excellent work of the Burglary Reduction Team and, in addition, we are increasing CCTV which does so much to deter crime in our communities.

As I stressed earlier, our partners in the voluntary sector are absolutely crucial in delivering our agenda of change and innovation. The Third Sector has been hit extremely hard by the cuts announced at the Emergency Budget of June 10 onwards. Last year some faced two rounds of cuts from local and national organisations. Our proposed cuts are minimal with some grants frozen and some down by 5%, but to ensure none of our voluntary sectors are forgotten or neglected, the hardship fund set aside last year will be increased from £100,000 to £250,000 and we are prepared to go further to protect their vital role in our communities. Again, I think it is appropriate that we should thank those people in the voluntary sector who work so closely with us to look after our people in our communities. They do a fantastic job for so little.

Before I finish I want to say a few words about the future role of our Council in ensuring we maintain Leeds as the key economic hub of the region. I think sometimes we forget the role Local Government played in helping to build the great cities of the North in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. All our utilities, like gas, water, transport, public health and education were created through Local Government and, as we can see with our great civic buildings here, they did so with great ambition and imagination.

Given there will be a massive reduction in public expenditure for our cities, we will have to try and recapture some of that great ambition and entrepreneurship so that Leeds does not fall into decline. Developments like the Trinity Shopping Scheme, the Arena and John Lewis are worth investment of nearly £1b and will create 9,000 jobs, and they have all been led by this Council over the last two administrations.

To maintain our economic growth we propose to set aside £15 capital over the next three years to work closely with the private, public and social sectors to provide homes, schools, jobs and apprenticeships for our people. In addition, we will set aside £500,000 a year for Kirkgate Market to borrow the millions it needs to invest in one of our great retail assets *(Applause)* that provides affordable food and items for hundreds of thousands of people in Leeds. I am grateful to the Scrutiny Board for their support in supporting the market and supporting us in trying to work together.

Perhaps it is worth saying, to avoid misunderstanding, that Leeds City Market will stay in the hands of Leeds City Council in the future as we try to build our partnership for many years in the future to be a successful one.

The last administration's initiative on town and district shopping areas was one worthy of support. The money is due to finish in March but we recognise the importance of our local centres as vital economic and social hubs at the heart of communities. We propose to make our town, village and district centres eligible to bid for the £15m capital and we shall make £100,000 available immediately to continue the work that may be unfinished. *(Applause)*

Furthermore, to show our commitment to get people on the property ladder, we will participate in the Local Authority Mortgage Scheme designed to help first time buyers. Limited to 100 first time buyers, evidence demonstrates that one home bought support up to five additional house movements. In short, 500 house purchases will be able to take place because 100 first time buyers can get a mortgage with an affordable deposit. *(Applause)*

It also generates other business activities with solicitors, estate agents and so on, so for £2m, which is a low risk project, it actually makes money for us and above all it is a clear message that this Council is passionate about helping first time buyers, who are getting older with the average age of 38, and getting more desperate to buy their first home.

Finally, let me address one of the most important priorities in our budget, which is the growing crisis of young people in our city without a job. As I said earlier, there are now over 24,000 unemployed young people in this city. As I said at the start of my speech, 2,000 16-18 years olds are what they now term NEETs. This is a generation who have suffered the greatest set-back since the 1930s. Some have faced university fee hikes, 9,000 in Leeds face the loss of Education Maintenance Allowance and hundreds face the loss of Future Jobs Funds. Frankly, none of the replacements schemes have worked and only 20% of people get a job under the Government's work programme. We all know that the failure and scandal of work schemes where young people are being asked to stack shelves for nothing is now coming unravelled, and I am not surprised that Tesco's and other major retail shops have refused to exploit youngsters on this scheme. *(hear, hear) (Applause)*

Unemployment now runs across ability, ages, gender and ethnicity and our priority must be to do something urgently. To complement our work around job creation we propose a further half a million pounds to work with our partners like the City College to create an apprenticeship hub, a retail academy, so that jobs created in this city can be targeted at unemployed people, particularly the young. *(Applause)*

Our priority must be to work with everyone in every sector to remove the stigma and despair of many unemployed people, particularly the young generation in our great city.

Lord Mayor, our budget shows that Local Government can show leadership and enterprise to make sure this city maintains its crucial role as a major economic driver of jobs, skills, prosperity and hope and at the same time it can show its compassion and commitment to the vulnerable young and elderly of our city.

I urge all of those who actually believe in tackling social injustice, believe in prosperity of the future and hope, to support this budget proposal. I move, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: For the benefit of the members in the public gallery, we are now moving to page 16 on the Order Paper and I am calling upon Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, I formally second and reserve my right to speak.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Staying on page 16, Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Can I begin, before going through the budget amendments in my name, which will be seconded by Councillor Procter, by thanking the Deputy Chief Executive, Mr Gay, and all his staff in the Finance Department once again for the way in which they have not only put together the budget papers for this particular year, our forthcoming year, but how they, over the last year, have managed the Council's budget.

I make no excuse for the fact that Councils like Leeds are facing significant challenges and significant requirements to make savings, and I think the fact that Leeds over this last financial year has been able to make those savings – and, I have to say, whilst difficult decisions have been made I do not subscribe to the Armageddon theory that is being expounded by Councillor Wakefield – I think that is actually a credit not just to officers but also the Members of this Council of all parties.

It is undoubtedly the case that we will be facing difficult times in this coming year, and I will come to that in a moment. I want to start by concluding the thanks to officers but making this more critical comment. I was very disturbed to discover that some departments asked for information about the budget by members of my team who, on my behalf, were gathering information did not get those answers in a timely fashion. Indeed, one extremely important piece of information was finally passed to us nine hours before we had to submit the budget amendment and that is not acceptable. I exclude from the criticism the Finance Department, incidentally, because when I put a budget amendment forward I never, ever word it on the basis of what the departments themselves might have said until I have thoroughly checked it with senior members of the Finance team and it is not acceptable that members in Opposition should be given information in a way that is not timely, and I want to place that on record and I will be pursuing it further via the Chief Executive.

My Lord Mayor, this actually could be a very historic moment for this Council because this could be the last time that Opposition parties are able to table an amendment to the budget. Next year 99 Members of this Council quite possibly could be sitting here whilst another person presents a budget upon which we can only comment, we cannot amend and we can delay for a very short space of time because we are legally required to make sure we have a valid budget in place by the end of the financial year. I am, of course, referring to the prospect of a directly elected Mayor.

Many of you may think that this ritual that we go through once a year, the Budget, actually does not achieve anything because the party in power listen politely sometimes (and less politely other times) to what other Members are saying, but let me tell you from experience – and I think Councillor Wakefield will bear me out – very often while a budget may not be amended in this Chamber, the party in power or Members of it start scratching their heads and thinking, “Actually So-and-So might have a point there” and very often you find the following year things coming into the budget that you actually suggested the year before and, to be fair, that has happened whoever has been in control of Council. I do not make a party political point.

I am aware that there are people in this Chamber who believe that an elected Mayor would be a good thing. *(interruption)* I am not naming names, no. I cannot believe that people really want to sit in this Chamber while one person gets up and delivers their budget, a budget which you can have absolutely no effect on whatever. *(hear, hear)* *(Applause)*

That is the first time I have had everybody applaud me apart from three on my own side ever! *(laughter)*

I am warming to my theme, Lord Mayor, I am glad we have suspended Standing Orders! My Lord Mayor, it is not a laughing matter, actually – it is not a laughing matter at all because I suspect those people who think for whatever reason, and I respect their views, that an elected Mayor would be a good thing, if they are sitting here when they hear that first budget presented and they can do absolutely damn all about it except delay it for two or three weeks, they are going to start to wonder why on earth they bothered standing for election anyway. *(hear, hear)*

What saddens me, my Lord Mayor – and this is not party political – I have to tell you, if any political party is playing a slippery game over elected Mayors it is the Labour Party. It has not gone past my notice that the people leading the campaign for an elected Mayor are both former Labour Cabinet Ministers and it seems to me that the Labour Party are wanting their cake and eat it, as they say.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Not locally.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Certainly not here.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I accept that, Keith, not locally, I accept that.

What worries me about this debate, and I guess I have Council's permission to wander slightly from the issue of the budget, *(laughter)* what concerns me is that there is a massive lack of understanding as to how big city Government works and you cannot compare it with capital city Government, and people do on all sides, and I think we are an example in Leeds of how you can have good City Government whilst we have many differences, and I will come to those very graphically in a few moments. I think there is a massive misunderstanding of how City Government works.

My Lord Mayor, it could be – I hope it is not but it could be – a very historic moment because next year we could just be left with having to nit-pick around the edges, and I guess in fairness none of the 99 Members in this Chamber want to feel as though they are in that position when a budget is presented.

My Lord Mayor, having given you all a foretaste of what is to come I could almost be accused of what I have just accused Councillor Wakefield of, the Armageddon scenario. We have a habit of surviving these things in Local Government.

Actually for once Mr Pickles might not be too upset about what I have just said because I think it is well known that he is not one of the Mayor enthusiasts in the Government, or in the major political parties. I can tell you after my last budget speech when I was extremely critical of the Secretary of State, I had a meeting in London shortly afterwards and a friend of mine who happens to work with Mr Pickles said, "I wish you two would become friends again and we could take your picture off the dart board in the office." *(laughter)* I am still here and I have no particular feeling of pain, I have to say.

My Lord Mayor, in praise of Mr Pickles, who is sometimes quite wrongly criticised, the fact we have got a freeze in Council Tax the second year running is not down to our dear colleagues in the Liberal Democrat Party Coalition. It is down to the Conservative pledge at the last General Election that there will be a two year freeze in Council Tax when money would be offered up to match a notional two-and-a-half per cent increase, and for that full praise to Eric Pickles because it is his scheme, he has driven it through against opposition in the Cabinet from Liberal Democrats and I hope that he does it again next year and that we

have a third year of Council Tax freeze because actually it helps everybody who pays Council Tax and, in these difficult times, that is what is required.

Now, my Lord Mayor, to move on to the budget. I thought I was listening to Ed Balls a few moments ago when I listened to Councillor Wakefield and I think perhaps we have to accept that Labour seem to love re-writing history, don't they? They really ought to have a reality check. The Coalition Government has been elected for the last 20 months; Labour were in power for the previous 13 years. We are paying off a debt the interest on which is £42.7b last year and slightly less this coming year. That was the toxic legacy left by your Government. I am sorry, you cannot ignore it, you cannot start history from the day on which the Coalition Government was elected because they inherited – and never forget the words of, I think it was Chris Bryant, the infamous note “Sorry there is no money left”. You know, that was your problem – you denied it when you were in office and you are denying it now your party nationally is in Opposition, but just to remind you, that £42.7b in interest every year is enough to employ 1.3 million nurses; a million teachers; a million prison places; or 350,000 doctors and, actually, it would also fund 129 new generation transport schemes. It is worth repeating. That is the scale of the economic crisis that this Government is having to clear up.

My Lord Mayor, I do not know how Councillor Wakefield has the temerity to mention Greece. You wonder whether at the next General Election Labour's poster will be a picture of Balls and Miliband as two shady travel agents saying to the British people, “Visit Greece, Portugal and Ireland without ever leaving your own home – Vote Labour”. *(laughter)* That is the sort of economic situation your last Government would have had us in.

I am sorry, Keith, you cannot walk away from it, you cannot deny it and I do wish, as somebody who cares a lot about Local Government, you would not join the ranks in your party of the deficit deniers of which Ed Balls is the first.

I am not pretending for one minute that we do not face extremely difficult times because, quite clearly, we do. I was interested, though, in looking at things that people have said previously in Council budget meetings and so to lighten the mood a little bit, we will have a little quiz. Who said, in his 2009 Budget speech in this Chamber, “The raiding of over £5m in PFI reserves to top up our revenue spending is an irresponsible and reckless decision creating a negative dowry for future administrations”?

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Go on, tell us who.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Who said in his 2010 Budget speech, “This administration's budget is a risk to the future of our services. Again, despite our warnings we are using millions of one-off spending such as Section 278”?

This is the same person who is now proposing a budget that proposes to use £5.5m of Section 278 funding, £10m of PFI reserves – one thing you can never accuse Labour of, if we say we should borrow money and you say you should borrow money, they can always double it. *(laughter)*.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: You are accepting it in your budget, Andrew.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: You can never say that Labour do not borrow more than previous administrations, so we have a budget moved by Councillor Wakefield that is supported by one-off funding to the tune of £21.6m. £10m has to be paid back, £5.7m from the Government to set against notional Council Tax increase, which, as has already been said, may or may not be a one-off this year, and also £6m from the NHS, which we do not know we are going to get, although we suspect that we are. This money, incidentally, that is

coming from the NHS hopefully every year is thanks to the Government. It is the Government who has persuaded the NHS and said to the NHS that they should be prepared to take on board a share of the cost of caring particularly for elderly people.

Actually, if you look very carefully, the Government might have reduced the revenue grant by £26m but they then paid us back in different Government initiatives £17.7m of it and on top of that, of course, as ever, Labour has borrowed to spend more. If we were in a risky place, Keith, in 2009/10, then your budget puts us in an even riskier place.

You have built into this budget significant Council Tax increases for the citizens of Leeds in years to come and not because of one-off Government funding dropping out, but because of one-off Council reserves that you have used to bolster the current budget.

Last year when I was preparing my budget amendment I was very careful not to put in place proposals that could not be funded. I suggested a whole series - one relating to car parking, one relating to Bramley Baths – things that have now come and gone because you have not dealt with them. I do hope that, on the subject of issues like car parking, you are going to grasp the nettle because, although we have not included it in our budget amendment this year, you need to realise that the goose that lays the golden egg in this city is the £1.2b generated by City Centre business, retail business, and increasingly we are getting people complaining about the ability to park reasonably and, whatever the green agenda may or may not be, the economic agenda is far more important at this point in time, at this point in the economic cycle. It is crucial that people come into our city centre to shop and I do hope that you will live up to what you said last year when I was assured in the Executive Board that there would be a thorough review of parking policy in the city centre. It is twelve months ago, it has still not happened and it is time it did.

There are other areas that I want to come on to in more detail touching on bigger areas of the Council's spending in due course.

I want to turn to our amendment because I have very carefully put forward an extremely modest amendment, because I do appreciate, absolutely appreciate, that the Council is in difficult financial times. I have given my reasons why I think that is the case; Keith has a different view. I suspect most people will realise that the legacy that the current Government was left with has in large part resulted in what we are having to deal with here today.

Once again, Labour's budget brings forward an unallocated budget of employment initiatives of £1m. We just think that is another way of indicating that money is available that you can then use for all sorts of things you do not spell out in the budget speech. We want to see that money allocated to Area Committees for discretionary revenue spending. One of the reasons why we will not support the Green amendment is because they are very specific about how that money should be spent. I have a view that if we believe in localism and you pass money to the Area Committees for discretionary spend, those Area Committees should decide on the priorities in their own area. By putting more money into the Area Committees, bearing in mind they have been cut back, it would allow local priorities to be met and that in itself will help generate work.

One possible use that Area Committees might want to look at, for example, in some areas would be to spend some of the resource on the employment of a Neighbourhood Plans Specialist to help prepare local areas for dealing with the implications of the LDF, but there are other areas and one could well be Street Scene and, certainly in the west of the city, I think, members would probably think that was a good idea.

I do not think if you are putting money into Area Committees you put with it a rider telling them where to spend the money. I am sorry, that is not Localism, that is not allowing local Area Committees to do what we want them to do.

I was interested and at the last Executive Board I challenged Councillor Wakefield on the subject of the structure and the financing of Area Committees and he said, and I think I quote exactly, I have it written down word for word, "I promise you there is no intention to alter that."

I wonder, then, what he makes if his colleague, Councillor Gruen, getting officers to prepare a report which has not been shared, I understand, with Chairs of Area Committees, which will have very far-reaching proposals as regards the number of Area Committees, the groupings of Area Committees and things of that nature. I would like specifically when he replies at the end of the budget perhaps to make comment on this.

We also are proposing a moratorium on office furniture which excludes operational and schools' furniture, and it would generate about £400,000 – just a moratorium for one year. We are proposing that £300,000 of this should be used to reverse the planned increases in charges in Adult Social Care. This will represent the reversal of Labour's planned increases for charges for caring and telecare and to other non-residential services.

I have to say, I think there is becoming a view not just in Leeds but elsewhere that we are perhaps going too far and unnecessarily too far with some of these charges and, as I say, it is not just an accusation to be levelled at Leeds but elsewhere, and here we are talking about very, very modest amounts of money to provide vital services, in this case to the elderly.

Telling you a story, I am sorry to see my former joint Leader Councillor Harris is not here, because the first budget that we did, officers came along from one particular department and they had precisely these proposals for us and we just said to them, "Actually, we have been looking at this and we have another proposal. We are not prepared to increase the charges. Actually, you can go away and abolish them" and that is what we did, because these small areas of expenditure, particularly this one where there is a lifeline – a lifeline – to elderly people in all sorts of circumstances but nevertheless in the same difficult predicament where they need to have a link to the outside world and I really do not think that we should be doing it.

We also want to save money on staff travel and we think we can do that by better monitoring of staff travel and by, again, saving a fairly insignificant amount of money but one that would enable us not to put in place the rise in nursery fees of £2 a day. On the one hand we are all saying how people are feeling squeezed, and they are. Why do we then go for these very minor increases in charges, which we do not need to do and, in the scheme of things, do not actually alter the budget by much at all?

The key thing in our amendments is this, that we are putting £3m more into reserves. We have taken a significant sum out of contingencies. I have no doubt Keith Wakefield will say, "You are just saying that staff should not receive an increase." Actually that is not it at all. If you check with other Local Authorities you will find that the vast majority have made no provision in contingency for a pay rise at all. That does not mean that – and these things are nationally negotiated – there should not be a pay rise, particularly for those staff at the very lowest end of the scale, because one thing I will agree with Keith about, our staff across the piece do an excellent job and, do not forget, in Local Government staff have faced a pay freeze for longer than the Civil Servants in Whitehall and in Government departments, and so there can be a very strong case made certainly for the lowest paid to receive some form of modest pay increase, and we are not saying we are against that.



What we are saying is, we should do the same thing as other Local Authorities – if it is to be found, it is to be found out of the budgets of departments and that we should not be denuding reserves or anything else to meet those costs.

We also indicated that we would like to see a half of one per cent efficiency saving across all suppliers and service budgets. It is a pinprick, it is a small amount of money – I think £650,000 – and out of that we want to spend £300,000 to encourage, if you like – they say imitation is the sincerest form of flattery, it is interesting that we put our amendment in three days before the Government announced their scheme yesterday to get young people not in education, employment or training into jobs. We have a much smaller scale proposal but I do believe (and here I do not think there is much difference between us all) it is essential – it is essential - that we do everything we can nationally or locally to make sure that young people who are not in education, employment or training have a reason to get up in the morning.

What happens in those first years – and I will not take lessons from the other side on this because in 1997 they inherited a figure of youth unemployment which was too high but was falling. They left behind for the current Government a much higher level of youth unemployment that was rising, so nobody actually in the main political parties can start to try and score points backwards or forwards. We all have to face up to the fact that there is a major, major social problem here and if young people have no reason to get up and go to work – and I do not buy this nonsense about slave labour, either. The most important thing of all is when young people leave school, even if they do so without qualifications, there is an opportunity for them to get a job and we have prepared them, at whatever level, to get those jobs. If we can do something in a small way – and my colleague, Councillor Lamb, wanted us to plough £1m into this and find money all over the place, quite rightly so, but my view was I was not prepared to do anything that jeopardised the level of reserves, for the reasons I have given, but I do believe that as an Authority we should be looking very carefully at how we can play our full part in making sure young people not in education, employment or training are given the best of possible starts by this Authority doing its bit. Do not pooh-pooh the Government scheme to get 55,000 young people so trained up and so into the habit of working, because while it could go a lot further and I would be the first to agree that, it is imperative that we get on and do something.

What really saddens me – you mentioned Tesco, Keith – Morrisons, not long ago, were covered extensively in the national press, they are opening a store in Salford and they were quoted as saying they were having to send back two-thirds of the young people that they said they would take on to get basic – basic – education again - the ability to read properly and write properly and do basic arithmetic.

My Lord Mayor, something is going wrong somewhere and it brings me to education. I will just say very briefly, because I intend to return to it some time in the not too distant future, I am very concerned at the ability of the Local Authority in the last two years to move the Education agenda forward. I will say simply this, I made the comment at Executive Board, I realise that the top priority was to make sure we got the safeguarding of young people issues right and I congratulate the administration for moving that forward, but the saying goes you have got to be able to think and chew gum at the same time, not do one or the other and I have the feeling – and it is shared by a number of people – that we were focused on one part of the agenda and we went to sleep slightly on the other part of the agenda, which is to ensure that young people leave our secondary schools, whether they are Local Authority schools, Academies, Trusts or whatever, with us having given them the best possible start that their ability will enable them to have and I think, I will be absolutely blunt and say I think on the Education side of it, your administration has taken its eye off the ball.

Whilst I do understand that you are under all sorts of pressures from Mr Gove and his colleagues, let me just tell you, we were under just the same pressures from Ed Balls and Lord Adonis. They were on the phone all the time and you cannot, in my view, be obsessed about something you can do little about. What you should do is concentrate on what you can do something about and that is to make sure that educational standards in our schools are driven up. I think the time has come for a really, really serious look and serious debate about exactly where we are going with that particular area.

Before I conclude just let me mention very quickly on the amendments, we are not going to be supporting most of the amendments with the exception of the Employment Initiative Amendment in the name of Councillor Golton, which we will support. The reason we are not supporting the others is very simple – they all entail taking money out of reserves and I do not think it is the time to be taking money out of reserves, particularly given the things I have said to you about the reliance on one-off funding. You cannot on the one hand have a budget so reliant on one-off funding and then pull money out of reserves. It is a recipe for an even more serious situation than we are currently in.

Just let me, however, address one of Councillor Golton's amendments before he actually speaks. His initiative that he is proposing on foster caring – quite a lot of sympathy with what he is getting at. I would not want to use reserves to do it but I think we need to have an urgent debate – and this is another matter that should absolutely cut across all party political lines. We are budgeting in this budget for 30 less foster carers which will save us one and a half million pounds, but it will cost us approaching £6m to place the kids that are currently fostered into care either in our own Authority or with outside placements. That cannot be right at whatever level you look at it. It must be better for these young people to be in caring and loving foster homes – it must be better – than in care. Financially it is far better for the Local Authority and so I have absolute sympathy with the argument that we do not actually pay our foster carers to what is, I think, the national standard, and that clearly needs looking at but it needs looking at a lot more deeply than that and I would like to think that the major part of all parties could get together and really drill into the issue of fostering young people because there must be a better way of doing it that will provide much more stable homes for the young people involved, a much better start in life for the young people involved but, at the same time, have significant financial savings for the Local Authority, so I have a lot of sympathy with that but not just on a whim to take the money to fund it out of reserves. I do not think it is necessary, to start with. I think we can put a plan together that actually succeeds in achieving precisely what we want.

Very briefly on capital, there is one amendment which is to put £1m each year across the three years that we have got this £15m into Area Committees. Again, money spent by Area Committees is usually very wisely spent and I will not even discuss the gates at Crossgates, (*laughter*) particularly when they are painted in the colours of Manchester United, but there we go!

It is usually very wisely spent and it generates local activity in communities. On the capital side it creates jobs and work in the public and private sector and it has to be a better way of doing it.

I welcome Councillor Wakefield's comments that he is going to put more money into the Town and District Centre Scheme. In fact I am delighted full stop with all the areas of regeneration and economic investment that he mentioned, because all of them were started by the previous Conservative-Liberal Democrat administration, so always welcome, always happy to take praise from whatever source it comes.

My Lord Mayor, we do face a difficult few years, the country faces a difficult few years. I have profound disagreements ideologically with Councillor Wakefield about why that has come about. I also have disagreements with people in their party and my party about some of the ways that have been dreamt up for tackling it. Nevertheless, we are where we are and I do not think it does any good to be part of the Armageddon theory. I once christened Councillor Wakefield the Victor Meldrew of local politics – with some of the stargazing he has done with the one-off spending I think he has managed to morph into Mystic Meg without ever going through any nasty operation. Keith, I do not think we should be talking our city down. We should be realistic about the charges we face but this city, in my view, is still the best city in the UK to locate a business, to bring in staff and to invest and we should be making sure we say that loud and clear and we should all be doing that together. I hope you will agree that since we have moved back in Opposition I have always stuck to that line, undoubtedly, and I think we have a lot going for us and we do not do the people who live in this city any good by hyping up the difficulties that we face.

Keith, sometimes you get precious close to this blood in the streets rubbish and we need to be very careful because we do not want to be putting people off who can invest in this city when actually it is just a bit of political rhetoric that they sent out on a mailshot from Labour headquarters. It is far more serious than that.

Our amendment, members of Council, is very, very, very miniscule in terms of the totality of the budget. Very clearly I have spelled out why – one, because I do not believe you can denude reserves any further, we should be putting more reserves in because of the fact we have got so much one-off spending in Councillor Wakefield's budget and, secondly, I have outlined a series of places where we can help even in a small way young people who are not in employment, young families with nursery charges, elderly people living at home who rely on caring to link them to the outside world and also by putting money into the Area Committees which I absolutely believe is the place where we can start to generate significant economic activity of our own.

I move the amendment, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. For the benefit of people in the gallery we are on page 18 and I am calling upon Councillor Procter.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Before I ask Councillor Golton to move his amendment, is Council ready to agree to the changing of the words in Item 8? General agreement? Thank you. Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. First of all I would like to say the usual thanks to Alan Gay and his Finance team for all their help that they have given the Liberal Democrat Group in forming their amendment. I have to say for once I am actually going to read a scripted speech because it is the only way I can ensure that I do not miss anything out because invariably I do, usually, when I ad lib, and the first line of it, I have to say, says, "Lord Mayor, I would like to begin by paying tribute to the Leader of Council, Councillor Wakefield." That was before I heard his speech (*laughter*) so there is a slight caveat to it.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Oh dear, Stewart.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Apologies for those listening as well; that is the only joke there is.

It seems a lot of the debate we have had this afternoon has concentrated primarily on those areas where we feel safest to make a good rhetorical impact and that is the national scene and debating endlessly about why we are in the position that we are in and who is most to blame. I do not really think that serves us too much. We have some fun listening to it but you will be glad to know that I am not going to join in with it, especially when I am third on the list and people are starting to get uncomfortable in their vinyl leatherette seats. I am going to concentrate on reading my script and letting you know what the Liberal Democrats are wishing to amend in this budget.

Once again, Lord Mayor, I would like to begin by paying tribute to the Leader of Council, Councillor Wakefield, primarily because, following the precedent set last year, he has ensured that Opposition parties have been involved from the very beginning in honest discussion about the economic challenges facing each department of the Council. His publishing of a draft budget months ahead of when it is formally presented has provided clarity for those with an interest in the outcome laid within it.

We are a Group in Opposition but we recognise the need for common purpose when our city faces perhaps its greatest challenge in recent decades. Our role as decision makers in this Chamber – that is all of us – is to find the best possible solutions to tackle the biggest problems our citizens face using the means that we have available. When our means are as restricted as they are now, we should be open to fresh thinking and perhaps think less about where an idea comes from and perhaps consider more would it be good for our constituents.

It is in this spirit that my party proposes its amendments. We approach this debate in the spirit of support. Many of the decisions being made by the ruling administration in their budget are borne out of necessity rather than enthusiasm and we have to recognise that we would be making those same decisions were it us that were filling the Front Bench opposite. We will also praise continued commitment in difficult circumstances to such areas as social care and PCSO funding.

However, one of the advantages of Opposition is that our diaries are no longer filled by directors keen to line up a whole series of officers to justify why there is no alternative to a particular difficult decision being made. We have time to consider alternatives and suggest improvements. Councillor Wakefield has a huge responsibility as our Council Leader and is ultimately accountable for all the decisions taken in this place; nevertheless, he relies on his Front Bench to oversee the detail and the implementation of policy and where he is let down it is up to Opposition colleagues to point this out and offer a solution.

Lord Mayor, the amendments that the Liberal Democrat Group are presenting today are modest in cost, representing but a small percentage of the Council's overall budget, but we believe that they can make real impact in important areas of the Council's remit. They seek to complement rather than replace measures that are already being pursued and they seek to invest in areas that should not be ignored because belts are being tightened.

Lord Mayor, our first proposal is for a £5m fund which will be complemented by the £3m already available in the Council and Metro budgets, together forming £8m, to kick-start the construction of a series of park and ride schemes across the city. We all share the frustration with the lack of commitment from successive Governments to commit to releasing their share of the funding for first Supertram and now NGT. This state of limbo has held back our ambitions to tackle congestion and reduce our carbon emissions by offering a real alternative to commuters. We have fallen behind other cities in taking advantage of park and ride schemes as a result.

I still very much hope that the investment we deserve from Government will come but it should not stop us creating our own destiny and investing in park and ride across the city, especially in those areas suffering congestion that are not presently on the route for NGT.

The ruling Group has accepted this principle and we welcome the proposals for the Elland Road scheme. Our investment fund would simply be the next step in taking our ambition city-wide.

Lord Mayor, the further £5m through prudential borrowing would be funded by a reduction in the mileage rate paid by the Council to employees with higher emission-producing vehicles. We believe that reducing these rates to bring the Council into line with national recommended rates is equitable if invested in transport infrastructure that ultimately benefits them as well as Council Tax payers, and it does go to show, Lord Mayor, that there are examples where even in difficult times the environment can be addressed in a budget.

Lord Mayor, our next proposal seeks to remedy an opportunity missed by the ruling Group at the last budget meeting. The people of Leeds are ambitious about recycling and the impact we can all make on our environment by sending less of our waste to landfill. The residents of Rothwell, Woodlesford and Oulton, thanks to having a food waste collection, recycled 20% more than the rest of the city. Last year we proposed a further waste route and it was rejected. To his credit Councillor Dobson has since proposed a limited extension of the Rothwell collection to other nearby communities yet to be identified. However, he also proposed reducing black bin collections elsewhere without the benefit of weekly food collection. Lord Mayor, in the spirit of fairness to our Council Tax payers, we should not be taking away one service without offering the other.

Furthermore, in that same spirit of fairness I would suggest to the Leader of Council that it does not look equitable that the benefits of food waste should be enjoyed solely by the residents of the wards represented by him, Councillor Dobson and me in the south-east corner of the city. We would therefore implement an additional food waste round north of the river at the modest cost of £180,000, funded from reserves. In the light of the fact that the Council spent three times this amount on unanticipated landfill tax this year, we consider this an investment to save.

Our third proposal calls for £240,000 to be taken from reserves and invested in a Business Engagement Programme in the three wedges that cover the city run by the Third Sector. This was also proposed last year in our budget amendment and rejected by the ruling Group. Once again, we offer the chance to reconsider and grasp the opportunity this offers to make current Council schemes work even better, particularly for our young people.

It is very easy when sat at the top table with partners to see a series of heads nodding and assume that everyone is engaged and on the same page. However, out of 26,775 businesses in this city, only 1,621 have an active apprentice this year – that is 6.1%. That is lower than Sheffield, Liverpool and Newcastle, who all have far less businesses. This is a lost opportunity.

I have no doubt Councillor Wakefield has real ambition in tackling youth unemployment but even when you have written the strategy and signed off the press release, we will fail if we do not reach the people we need to make it happen.

The Business Engagement Programme we propose will proactively seek out the small and medium sized businesses we have in every part of the city to encourage and facilitate their participation in work opportunities for local youth and encourage them to get more involved in their local community. This is precisely the civic enterprise Councillor

Wakefield is seeking to promote through the Commission for Local Government. I hope that he will agree that this is an investment to save worth considering.

That brings us to our proposal of a paid internship work experience programme for the Council. The challenge of getting the current generation of young people into meaningful employment, education or training in the midst of an economy in crisis is one that needs to be addressed at all levels of Government. The latest substantial investment from Central Government in work opportunities was announced over this week by Nick Clegg. £126m will be spent to give teenagers opportunities to train, work and get their lives on track. I am sure that we will all welcome the news that over £5m of that fund is coming to the Leeds City region for us to decide on how it is used.

We also welcome the apprenticeship training agency that the administration is setting up with Leeds City College to make it easier for local firms to take on apprenticeships. We have already explained how we would hope to get even more businesses involved. However, it is in this very building and others where the Council carries out its business that we have fallen short of our potential and our duty to offer a taste of work for our young citizens.

When we talked about creating 250 apprenticeships a year on the Council several years ago, it was about opportunities for school leavers, but when Councillor Gruen trumpets the amount of apprenticeships achieved by the Council this year, he fails to mention that only a fraction were achieved by young people. We were told that looked after children would have priority to these apprenticeships but when we asked how many had gone through the programme we were told that no-one knew, as none had been put forward by the department and no-one monitored it.

We do recognise that it is hard to provide new jobs as the Council faces the task of letting so many go. Nevertheless, the situation has been allowed to drift over the past two years and our proposal offers an opportunity to provide real work opportunities for three month periods for up to 400 people with priority for care leavers. This would be provided through paid internships similar to a model developed by Leeds University, funded through £1m from the contingency fund.

Our commitment to our looked-after children as a Council brings us to the final proposal of the Liberal Democrat amendment. All parties have supported Children's Services' need for financial investment to ensure that our children are safe from harm after we were shown to be responding inadequately during my tenure as Lead Member. It gave a different but more pertinent meaning to the term "investment to save." As more children have been taken into our care we would expect the cost to rise, and we have met it as it is a price worth paying. However, this commitment does not mean that we should spend unquestioningly and when the cost is set to increase by over £5m when the number of children in our care is set to go down, we need to question where our money is going.

I have already mentioned how we can sometimes sit at the top table with partners and miss those on the front line. I can remember foster carers warning me as Lead Member that their allowances were too low and they were thinking of leaving for the private sector. I was persuaded by officers that we were paying the going rate of other Local Authorities and we could always recruit some more. No doubt Councillor Blake was given the same assurances.

Lord Mayor, the recruitment has not happened and this year the Council bill for private fostering agencies will rise from £5.3m last year to £12.4m this year, as we have doubled the number of children in their care and this is only set to rise.

Lord Mayor, we have heard real concern from the party opposite about the Health Reform Bill and the danger of privatisation of the Health Service. It would be highly ironic if it was Labour administration that allowed the steady privatisation of Children's Social Care in this city.

Lord Mayor, foster carers do not join private agencies for personal gain. They do so because they pay a fair allowance that makes it easier for foster parents to better look after the children in their charge. Our proposal to increase the allowances we pay as a Council to fostering network recommended minimum allowances will match that of the private sector and persuade carers to return to the Council.

As the weekly average cost of looking after a child in the private sector costs £300 more than with the Council – that is every week – if only a quarter of the children placed in the private sector return to Council foster parents, the saving covers the amount taken out of reserves to pay for it and will place less pressure on the budget for future years.

Lord Mayor, as I pointed out at the beginning of my speech, our proposals are there to complement and to support the administration's motion. They are mostly funded from reserves but they can be seen as investments in either the short or long term. Councillor Wakefield has already shown his willingness to take on some of our ideas by using the schools PFI reserves this year. Just to remind you, this was rejected when we proposed it last year. Indeed, last year Councillor Wakefield said, "Councillor Golton's is a ridiculous amendment. What he is doing is borrowing from school reserves and he has no strategy of how he will pay them back. Which cuts is he going to make in order to pay them back? He is robbing schools who have already been knocked back from this Government."

Obviously, he appreciates that sometimes we need to invest in hard times and if you could consider accepting only one proposal, I would wholeheartedly ask that a fair deal for foster carers be it. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. On page 20 Councillor Downes, please.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ann Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. First of all can I say what we normally say in these circumstances, to thank Mr Gay and their help given with our amendment.

Looking at this budget there is a lot of stuff there obviously, but I will just touch on two or three things that I think are good in this budget. First of all, as has been mentioned, the Council Tax frozen for the second year and that the Government tax freeze grant has offset this. Of course, as has been mentioned, next year, from what we are told at the moment anyway, this will not be so, so if we are going to keep Council Tax down the Council will have to bear the brunt of that in next year's budget, so we will see what happens there. Hopefully the Government will decide to come up with the money, but we will see.

We are pleased that Council rents are not going to be increased by the 8.94% as per the Government policy and that in the budget it is proposed to implement an average rent increase of 6.82%. This, we think, is certainly enough to put up rent increases at this time and, of course, again, it will mean that the Council will have to bear the difference.

I will just move out of the budget for a minute, if you will just bear with me, because when I was having meetings with the different Directors, I was told that money that is

currently being spent in parks on temporary seasonal workers is now going to be spent in taking on apprenticeships, so I am really pleased about that. As I say, this is not in the budget but the fact that Directorateships are thinking about where they can use the money differently to take on apprenticeships is really to be welcomed and what they should be doing.

Also, I see naturally that I think we all agree that we have to do something about jobs because of all the people that are unemployed and particularly the youngsters, some of them have not even had chance to get a job and, as has been touched on, if youngsters are at home, then they go after jobs, go after jobs and at the end of the day if they do not get any or they do three months or whatever and there is no job at the end of it, which there is not in a lot of these things, there is not a job at the end of it, then they do get depressed and we have to do what we can to try and get people back into work or give them some reason to get up on a morning – that is what we have to do.

Acknowledging this, I welcome the £1.75m to support economic initiatives and I hope that this will benefit particularly many of the young people that have been mentioned before that are not in either employment, education or training at the moment.

Now I am going to go on to our amendment and our amendment, we only have one and we feel that in these hard economic times, Councillors should be willing to forego some of their allowances. I wait for you all to go “Boo” at this time but we do genuinely feel that – it is nothing new with us, we many a time have said this before, we do feel it quite sincerely. As has been said previously in this Chamber, this is something David and I already do.

Our amendment proposes that the basic allowance for Members is reduced by 8.5% and special responsibility allowances for relevant Members is reduced by 27.73%.

The moneys from this, together with the £1m – I am not laughing, I am being quite serious here. Bear with me – you might not agree with me but at least listen – the moneys from this together with the £1m from the Contingency Fund will give us £1.355m to use on Street Scene services, to be divided between each ward and managed by the Area Committees. This will allow each Area Committee to use this money on whatever priorities they have in Street Scene. We know through the complaints we receive as Councillors from the public that many relate to matters that come under Street Scene services, such as cleansing, cutting back vegetation in ginnels, general litter picking etc, etc.

We feel that this extra money will enhance the service we receive and therefore enable us to provide a better service to the public. I ask you to support our amendment. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor David Blackburn.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. On commenting briefly on the budget we would like to put clearly on record our thanks to all staff who work for Leeds City Council who have helped deliver quality services during an exceptionally difficult year and we would like that recorded. We would also like specifically to thank the Finance staff who, through their efforts in all sorts of ways, whether it is getting rebates back out of the Inland Revenue or whatever, have made sure that the budget process is a little less painful through their efforts and through their actions. I think we do need to appreciate that.



As ever with these particular occasions there is a lot of consensus on where we are in terms of the budget that is in front of us and the difficult challenges that we face in very difficult financial circumstances. We think that this is a reasonable budget under these particular circumstances and it is interesting to note that all the other parties who are offering amendments have also suggested that in general terms there is a wide amount of consensus on this particular budget and that fact that particular areas are being protected.

We do fully support the fact that Adult Social Care and Children's Services are being protected and they are going to get a bigger slice of the budget. We think that is fair, we think that is reasonable. We do note that political parties of all persuasions have avoided discussing and debating the thorny issue of Adult Social Care and the fact of the matter is that sooner or later more money needs to go into Adult Social Care in one way or another and hopefully Dilnot might give us some indication of how that might actually be achieved.

Some of the proposals we particularly are very enthusiastically supporting, we are keen to find out and to support the fact that the numbers of PCSOs who are walking our streets will be maintained. We do hope that that means the numbers will not be shuffled about and that those wards who are particularly supported at this point will find the same level of support. We do think that that is important and that is vital.

We do agree entirely in terms of the need to support district centres, a lot of whom are having very difficult times at this particular point. Certainly in the outer areas everybody who represents an outer area will know that their own town centres and district centres are finding tough times and we do need to provide that help and support. That is where a lot of the regeneration comes from; that is where a lot of the new local jobs will come from.

We put on record at this particular point, we opened Liberty View not so long ago and without the previous administration's support and Councillor Carter's support for that particular project, we are absolutely sure that it would not have gone ahead. I think it is important to recognise that that continued investment, whether it is with the previous administration or the new administration, really does pay dividends and does mean that local town centres get those regeneration opportunities that they often do not.

We do think it is important to support employment opportunities for young people and we welcome that provision in the budget. Certainly as a party we have been keen on making sure that developments opportunities via Section 106 agreements are particularly focused at local people and particularly focused at the young people. Certainly we support what is happening and what initiatives there are to make sure that we do something about the blight of unemployment and how that is hitting young people.

We would want to comment on some of the amendments, some of which we think are very good ideas and will be supporting; others of which we think are barking and we will not be supporting.

We do think that it is important that we look at the opportunities, certainly at Area Committee level, of helping and supporting employment options, helping and supporting regeneration initiatives, so we are inclined to support those particular amendments to make sure that the localism that we are all looking for is a genuine reality.

The final things that we would say is just to comment really, as a small party representing a particular town in the area, we do look at the national scene with a certain amount of interest and certainly we are puzzled and perplexed why central Government's of all persuasions seem to hate Local Authorities and local Councils. I think there is a failure at Central Government level, whether it is with the Labour Party or the Conservatives or the

Liberal Democrats to appreciate the fact that this is where the genuine regeneration comes from, this is where a lot of the real opportunities to get people back into employment come from and whatever Central Government you have got is always piling pressure on to Local Government trying to make sure that they set their agendas on local Councils and trying, as ever, to try and tighten up the finances that are available to undertake that, and we think that is a great mistake, we think that is a great disappointment and that at central level something needs to fundamentally change and they need to see that we are part of the answer, not part of the problem.

The very final comment we would comment upon is about having an elected Mayor. We think that that is an absolutely barking idea. We do think it is about centralising power and it particularly contradicts certainly our ethos of suggesting that we need to make decision making at the local level possible. Certainly we will be recommending that people vote against having an elected Mayor.

Outside that, Lord Mayor, we do think that this is a reasonable budget in difficult times but we do think some of the amendments have merit and we will be supporting them selectively. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to start by thanking all the officers for the work that has gone in over the past year into transforming services to children and particularly to thank my team and all those Members of Council across the Chamber who contribute to such a vital area of work. I would have liked to have welcomed Rebecca and Catherine here this afternoon to say that now we are responsible for 180,002 children in the city.

As we know we faced a year of unprecedented cuts last year. As well as inheriting a service rated as "inadequate" and subject to an improvement notice, I have to tell you that already in 2009/10, even before the cuts of last year, the department was facing significant budget pressures and these budget pressures are being made worse by the increasing levels of need in the city, by the reductions in Government funding of around £18m, but the one thing we have not touched on is the increasing problem we have by the number of schools who are becoming academies. We have already seen an additional £4m coming out of our central budget, which adds up to devastating loss of over £21m to a service already facing enormous challenge. This includes implementing the actions from the Ofsted action plan making the service fit for purpose.

These have been closely scrutinised, as you know, and through the Improvement process I am delighted that as a result the notice was lifted last December.

At the same time the department has worked to get a firm grip on its finances, introducing much tighter management across the whole of the Children's Services budget. 111 staff have gone through ELI and we have renegotiated our fees for independent foster carers and residential placements, which has already produced a saving of £1m, and there is much more work going on in this area.

As we have heard, the number of referrals has continued to soar - over 25,000 referrals for care or attention since last April. Other Local Authorities have seen the numbers of their looked after children continuing to soar as well. In Leeds, however, because of our work with families and our partners, despite the higher number of referrals, we have kept the number of our looked after children stable. This is a good start but we know we have much more to do. We now have a clear picture on a weekly basis of the numbers, pressures and placement plans.

Just let us be clear, if we had kept the same practice that we had inherited, there would have been an additional 100 children coming into care over the last year. We have saved nearly £6m by keeping that number stable. Next year will be even tougher.

We will continue to put the safety of our children and young people first, always taking them into care when it is the right thing to do, but strengthening early intervention, prevention through our clusters and improving outcomes for children that we can help stay to live with members of their family. This is why we have committed £10.2m to this key area of work. We need better outcomes for children, not just an increase in those who will care for them. This will deliver the fundamental shift in resource as well as reducing the need for care.

Lord Mayor, I have listened to the amendments carefully and all I can comment is that it is a real luxury to be in Opposition in this case. The high risk of taking money in this area out of resources is going to put our most vulnerable families at risk. The pressures remain enormous. Councillor Wakefield has talked about young people. We know employment for women is at its highest and the pressure that this will put on families is amazing.

We will continue to work with our partners through the Trust Board delivering our work. We are investing in our foster carers, we are spending money on promoting and attracting more and we are, as Councillor Golton knows, going through a review looking at foster carer allowances, and we will continue to invest in our schools. The Government's agenda, let us be honest, is to break the link between schools and Authorities, causing disruption and dismay to so many of our schools. I would welcome a conversation in here...

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blake, we are on a red light so could you finish, please? Your final sentence.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: ... to take that forward. I would like to support the budget in the name of Councillor Wakefield and to support our vulnerable families, children and young people in this city. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I now call upon those Members who have indicated their right to speak. Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The challenges the Authority has faced over the past year has been unprecedented. We have met them head on. We can be proud of what we have achieved in the last twelve months. Even as our resources have been drastically reduced, we have found ways of continuing to provide services for the people of Leeds, to protect the vulnerable and to empower communities at the same time as coming very close to delivering a balanced budget for the city.

We will retain our total commitment to protecting the vulnerable and empowering our communities in the year ahead.

Nowhere in this budget is our commitment to people on lower incomes clearer than in the rent increase for ALMO tenants. If we had followed the Government guidance we would be imposing a whopping 8.94% rent increase on our tenants. This would be a colossal imposition on some of the most hard-pressed residents in our city at a time when incomes have been squeezed and many people are struggling to find work.

We could not in all conscience impose a 9% increase. Instead we have limited the increase to the same level as last year, 6.82%. This is still a significant rise and I am acutely aware that this will be difficult for some tenants.

The £850m invested by the previous Labour Government has brought 97% of Council homes in Leeds up to decent home standard. It is now our duty to maintain and improve that base. The move to self-financing in the housing revenue account is potentially a game changing moment that could provide us with the resources to make real and sustained improvement in Council homes and so I am pleased to announce a really healthy capital programme on the HRA next year. This will give us an opportunity to make a positive difference to the lives of Council tenants, even as our overall resources across the Council are massively reduced.

Our commitment to empowerment extends not just to communities but to individuals. We are determined to help people, particularly the elderly, to maintain their independence and remain in their homes. In the coming year Environmental Neighbourhoods will work very closely in collaboration with Adult Social Care to deliver our joint ambition to provide our older people with independence and choice in all aspects of their lives. We will be looking to prioritise new housing for older people that will meet their needs in old age offering them security and support at the same time as ensuring they can maintain their independence.

Lord Mayor, partnership working is essential to all areas of the Council as we strive to maintain services in the face of severe budget cuts. It is evident in all areas of our work, including in my own portfolio where our work jointly in Safer Leeds is starting to make encouraging progress in tackling one of Leeds's longest running problems, excessively high burglary rates.

There has been sustained improvement over the last six months and we are investing a further £479,000 next year as we look to continue this trend and get burglary down to its lowest ever recorded level in Leeds.

We have used the strength of our partnerships to prioritise community safety within our neighbourhoods, as Councillor Wakefield said. We worked together to ensure last year that the city retained the same number of PCSOs, who provide a vital and reassuring service to residents. I am delighted to say that we have managed to maintain that commitment for the coming year.

We have also made significant progress with our battle to bring down levels of antisocial behaviour and the CCTV service is also going from strength to strength.

On jobs and skills there is no drift – i.e. it has drifted out of the Council Chamber. Partnership working is helping us to make real progress. By working with the private sector we have achieved a 93% increase in the number of apprenticeships last year. This is great progress but we know we need to do even more to provide opportunities for those who desperately need them as the economy flat lines. The establishment of the ATA will be a fantastic achievement.

In terms of Area Committee, I have to say I think Andrew Carter is the Carlos Tevez of the Leeds City Council - he goes missing, we do not know where he is, sometimes he come back in and he tells porkies. I have not commissioned a single report on Area Committees. I do not know what he is talking about. I have not asked for one, I do not think I am getting one. If I get one, I will tell him.

At the same time, Lord Mayor, this coming year, I feel, will be one of key challenges. With this budget we are prioritising our limited funding while protecting those ...

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen, you have a red light, thank you. *(Applause)*

Councillor Procter? Councillor Downes.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Just before I start I wanted to pay my condolences to Graham Wilson and his family. In my first year as a Councillor I was Lead Member for Enforcement and worked very closely with him and found him to be an excellent officer, one who was always very helpful and taught me an awful lot in that department, so it is a great tragedy. I think that the Council has lost a good worker and somebody at such a young age, so my condolences there.

When Councillor Wakefield opened up his budget, he said about his party gambling on how long his speech would be and as somebody who does not approve of gambling, I hope that not too much money was spent, but there we go. As to the speech itself, there was not much gambling in it and I felt it lacked imagination. I think that some of the amendments that have come out show imagination. We are in challenging times, there is no doubt about it and it has been said many times before that we are here because of the actions of the economy that we found ourselves with when this Government took over.

I think if you recall last meeting I mentioned about fiscal responsibility. The previous Government were quite happy to spend to try and get votes and they were spend, spend, spend, but without a result at the end that would mean better value for money. I think that some of the amendments we have seen from all parties today have shown that, that if you invest money in the first instance you will get a benefit at the end, a far greater financial benefit, and we are in times when we should be looking at schemes like that and not ignoring them. For example, when we look at the food collection, that is something which will actually help save us money through investment. If that requires spending from reserves, I think that is a very valid thing to do. I know that Councillor Carter mentioned that his party would not be spending from reserves, but I notice his amendment actually took money from the Contingency Budget which, in my view, is the same as reserves, but there we go. I think that reserves are there for a rainy day and it is pouring, so if we can use it to invest, that is what we should be doing.

One thing I would welcome in the budget is the commitment to PCSOs that were introduced by the last administration to the levels that they are at and echoing the comments, I think the Morleys made that I would hope that they continue to be in every ward at the same level rather than being transferred to Labour's favoured areas, as one or two of their Councillors have mentioned in the past that they would like to do. I think it is important to be on record to say that, that we must see them everywhere.

I think that the other thing that Councillor Wakefield complained about was that the Council Tax freeze that has been put on by the Government. On the one hand I understand and I do not agree with the Council Tax freeze in so much as it reduces our base level for when we put it up and I fully understand that, Keith. However, the point with it is, if you are not happy with it, you could always have not accepted it and done what other Councils have done.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Do you recommend that?

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: No, but what I am saying is, do not complain about it.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Are you happy with it?

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: That is what I am saying – you criticise but you accept so at the end of the day we are better off for it, we must be for you to have accepted it. That is what I am saying.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Sit on the fence.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: No, very clear answer there.

We look at the mileage allowance. At the moment the mileage allowance for gas guzzling cars for employees of the Council is at 65p per mile, and that really should be looked at. It is in excess of what the Government give, 45p, absolutely, but the point is that by reducing that we can see savings which at the moment we are looking for cuts, we are looking for ways of justifiable cuts and we would use that in a very green way in bringing about park and ride schemes. We need them.

The point is that I notice there is an increase in junior swimming and meals on wheels and I just wonder which is more important – junior swimming, meals on wheels, or gas guzzling cars. You can think what you like about that.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: What are you driving?

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Gas guzzlers.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: What are you driving, Ryk?

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: What else was I going to say? Red light, come on! I never get to the red light. I will sit down – I might get bigger applause! (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor David Blackburn? Thank you. Councillor Wakefield, please, to sum up.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor, and firstly I would like to associate Councillor Carter's comments with this group, you will get our full support with your view about elected Mayors. It is a shame that only Alan Lamb and Councillor Marjoram sat on their hands, because actually you made a very powerful point about democracy and I think we have to revisit this.

I really want to get on to some of the amendments in detail.

There is a clairvoyant on at Pudsey Civic Hall Centre and I thought that Councillor Carter might go on as a dodgy magician telling dodgy jokes, because you know that moving from contingency to reserves – what is the difference between contingency and reserves?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: A lot.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Nothing, so it is only a sleight of hand. The other thing, I think many of us in this Chamber, many in this country, are getting fed up with this Government's alibis. First of all they blamed a Labour Government for where they are; then they blamed Europe; then they blamed people on benefits and I heard the funniest one the other day from David Cameron in Iceland. He said one of the reasons why we have got economic failure is there are not enough women in the Boardroom. We are now running out of excuses. Isn't it time that we heard about bankers' bonuses? Isn't it time we heard about bankers' bonuses and your handling of this economy? Not one word today mentioned. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Without the efforts of Brown.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Let me get on to the reserves. We have had long lectures – I will not read them all out – about reserves. I have got Pickles, Pickles, Neill, Neill, Shapps. Let me just quote you one. “The Government have made it abundantly clear that significant sums are held by local authorities in reserves, much of which is not allocated. Sensible use of those funds at a time of financial crisis would enable Councils to protect their front line services.” That is exactly what we have done.

Councillor Carter is going against his own Government’s preaching to every Council in this Authority.

Let me just say the Lib Dems in their manifesto in 2011 ---

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: All lies.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: No, this time I agree with them. *(laughter)* Reserves are for a rainy day. That day has come; it is pouring down.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Quite right.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: We believe we should be investing that money not in the bank but in the future of Leeds. The first time I have agreed with you. That is the exact case that we made now – not in 2009, not in 2010 but in 2012 when we are facing the biggest cuts we have ever experienced in this city.

I want to go on and I find it very sad that Councillor Carter did not speak to Councillor Gruen about this, because our apprenticeship scheme - which he is not supporting, neither is Councillor Golton – is actually one of the most imaginative schemes in the country. Who said so? Their Government. They are prepared to put forward money to the City Region to back our support and partnership with the college to develop an apprenticeship and a retail academy. What is more, that is supported by the big developers in the city, by the big retailers in the city so all those jobs that have been created in the city will actually go towards our people in our own communities. What is wrong with that? What a shame he could not support that scheme.

I have to say, the Area Management has £16.1m over the next four years to spend. I would like more, I would like more powers and that is what we are working on, but isn’t the case of apprenticeships a far more powerful one than the one about Area Committees having more money to spend? I think it is and I hope that the rest of the people do.

I want also to come on – and this one is very sad, this case, it is about the moratorium on furniture. The moratorium on furniture sounds a very attractive leaflet and I could argue that actually by stopping people spending on furniture you are actually stopping the transformation of our Council buildings. We are getting out of more of the big buildings into smaller and if you stop that you stop that process and are going to save millions.

I could argue that stopping furniture also stops many of our people, disabled people and children in need, from getting the furniture it needs, but I will not because I think the important argument is this. In July last year Councillor Hamilton and Councillor Latty actually agreed with the price increases in Social Services. They did so because what we had been trying to do is work on an all-party basis around big issues in Social Services. Councillor Blackburn agrees. I appreciate that. I think Councillor Latty and Councillor Hamilton and other groups, Councillors Blackburn and Finnigan, have really tried to play a straight bat. We do not want party politics around big changes to Adult Social Services.

I would say this into Councillor Carter, with genuine respect...

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: Like you did not have with Peter Harrand.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Do you remember that?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: With genuine respect, Andrew, there is an all-party meeting in two weeks to review the prices. I would ask you to withdraw the amendment and allow that all-party basis to carry on and make those decisions. I really would, because I think once we split on this then we get silly party politics over people's lives and future and they do affect our elderly and vulnerable.

I also want to come to Councillor Golton's idea. If that is imagination, well, I am glad you have got it, Ryk, because park and ride schemes, we have debated this, but what Councillor Golton and what Councillor Downes did not say is that you would have to break everybody's employment contracts to cap their mileage allowance. I have no doubt, given that staff have had freezes for two to three years, they would resent it. It would take six months of negotiating before then you would have to sack every employee to impose that contract.

Isn't it incredible, Councillor Golton has had his opportunity, he wants to cap staff but he does not want to cap bankers' bonuses. How good is that? How rich is that?  
(*interruption*)

Let me move on to the one that I think is about, another one, Councillor Golton on training. He knows that we have already done and committed to giving apprenticeships in this Council. In fact we have got 700 – 160 last year from areas of high unemployment.

COUNCILLOR: Fantastic.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: He also knows that actually giving people training jobs here is not giving people a genuine future, because it is his Government that are cutting jobs here. Is it not better to give young people apprenticeships in the areas where there is growth, in the areas of retail, construction, advanced technology...

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Absolutely.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: ...advanced manufacturing and I am sorry but the scheme that we have, Andrew, here, backed by the Government and supported financially, is the one that says work in partnerships with the real companies, with the college and provide real jobs for those people rather than just training schemes that actually, frankly, would not lead to jobs.

I am disappointed in Councillor Golton's imagination, along with his sidekick's imagination, because so far we have heard sack staff and give people endless training without jobs. (*Applause*)

I want to come one to one other issue, and again Councillor Golton did not mention this but all of the parties are raiding the contingency funds. That contingency fund is actually for low paid staff. I am glad Councillor Carter said this and we are not going to touch that contingency fund, because whatever the national negotiations are, we should be determined to make sure that our low paid staff actually get the reward they deserve and not back away from it. (*Applause*) I really feel quite strongly. They have had freezes for three years. What is wrong in recognising, drawing a line and giving those low paid staff some recognition for the dedication, loyalty and commitment they have shown to this Council over many years?



I say to all of us in here, if you want to address young people, jobs and hope, if you want to show care for the people we look after if you want to give real recognition to our low paid staff, reject those amendments and support our budget motion. I move, Lord Mayor, thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now moving to the vote.

First of all on the first amendment in the name of Councillor Carter on page 16. *(A vote was taken)* That amendment has been LOST.

On amendment 2 on page 17, also in the name of Councillor Andrew Carter. *(A vote was taken)* That is also LOST.

On amendment 3 on page 17 in the name of Councillor Andrew Carter. *(A vote was taken)* That is LOST.

Amendment 4 on page 17 in the name of Councillor Andrew Carter. *(A vote was taken)* That is also LOST.

On amendment 5, covering pages 17 and 18, also in the name of Councillor Carter. *(A vote was taken)* That is also LOST.

On amendment 6, also in the name of Councillor Andrew Carter, on page 18. *(A vote was taken)* That is also LOST.

On amendment 7, in the name of Councillor Golton, on pages 18 and 19. *(A vote was taken)* That is also LOST.

On amendment 8, in the name of Councillor Golton, on page 19. *(A vote was taken)* That is also LOST.

On amendment 9, in the name of Councillor Golton, that is on page 19. *(A vote was taken)* That is also LOST.

On amendment 10, in the name of Councillor Golton, on pages 19 and 20. *(A vote was taken)* That is also LOST.

The final amendment, amendment 11, in the name of Councillor Ann Blackburn, on page 20. *(A vote was taken)* Did you want a recorded vote? *(laughter)* I think that is also LOST.

We now move to the motion in the name of Councillor Wakefield. *(A vote was taken)* That motion is CARRIED.

#### ITEM 5 – REPORT

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we now move back to page 2, to item 5, Councillor James Lewis.

(a)

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lobley.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I second, my Lord Mayor.

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

(b)

THE LORD MAYOR: 5(B), Councillor James Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Move in terms of the Notice, Lord Mayor. Councillor Lobley.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: All in favour? *(A vote was taken)* CARRIED. Thank you.

#### ITEM 6 - MINUTES

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we move on to item 6, Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I move in terms of the Minutes *(sic)*, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor James Lewis.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: Second, reserving the right to speak, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I now invite comments on the Minutes. Councillor Leadley.

#### (a) Executive Board Development and the Economy

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, I wish to move an amendment to ask Executive Board to reconsider its decision in relation to the Leeds Local Development Framework Core Strategy document for public consultation as described in Minute 197 on page 10 of the Executive Board Minutes of 10 February.

I would hope that Executive Board would in turn refer the matter for formal consideration by Development Plan Panel. This is because there has been a failure of process which threatens to waste a great deal of time and money, make the City Council look extremely foolish or, at worst, threatens the future of Leeds as a living and working city.

For the benefit of Members who do not specialise in such matters, I will outline what has happened. Gradually the Leeds Local Development Framework is replacing the Leeds Unitary Development Plan in stages covering separate areas of policy. Officers write a report on a policy area, this is formally considered by Development Plan Panel which may amend it and then send it to Executive Board, which usually accepts the amended version. An amended version is put out to public consultation, any public comments are considered by officers who send another report to Development Plan Panel which, at a formal meeting, may accept or recommend more changes.

Then Executive Board will agree to the document going for examination by a Planning Inspector, who may suggest more adjustments but whose main purpose is to find

out if the document is sound which more or less means that it has to be realistic, coherent and in line with regional and national policy.

Generally this works well and attracts little attention beyond the Planning and Development community – perhaps it is too complicated and it is probably too boring. There was a consultation on affordable housing which attracted only 28 public representations, for instance.

If we go to the Leeds Local Development Core Strategy, that is a document that is currently under discussion. It is to do with strategic policy and strategic land requirements from 2008 until 2026, including land needed for employment and the number of hectares needed for new housing, and this has been dealt with in an unusual way.

Two Development Plan Panel meetings were scheduled for January, on the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup>, with papers in advance for each. These were described as workshops, so were not formal Panel meetings and had no published agenda. Press and public were not invited.

At the second meeting a third paper, mostly to do with strategic land need, was tabled. There was not enough time to discuss all of the two sets of papers which had been pre-circulated or to discuss the tabled set of third papers at all, so an emergency third meeting was agreed at less than 24 hours' notice for 17<sup>th</sup> January. This could be done because the workshops were not formal Panel meetings, so they could be held without public notice. In the end, even with the third meeting, we did not have time to discuss the third set of papers at all.

Although less than ideal, this did not seem to be catastrophic. There were no formal minutes but individual officers seemed to take note of what had been said about their own topics and were expected to incorporate necessary changes into a revised combined report which would go to Executive Board. Even the third tabled set of papers could have been covered by DPP Members reading them at home and forwarding comments to their respective Executive Board representatives.

Councillor Finnigan realised that this was likely to become complicated – if you do not believe that it is complicated, well, I think it has been complicated so far, hasn't it? Councillor Finnigan realised that this was likely to become complicated so he asked me to brief him on the Exec Board version of the LDF Core Strategy Report which was to be discussed on 10<sup>th</sup> February. That is really where it started to go wrong.

Some of the changes agreed at the workshops, including some vitally important ones, had not been built into the Executive Board Report. I briefed Councillor Finnigan on these and on further changes needed in the undiscussed third set of papers, so that he would be ready to raise any concerns at Executive Board, to ask for changes to the report and for further work on it.

When the report came up for discussion at Executive Board, neither Councillors Richard Lewis, Andrew Carter or Stewart Golton said very much, as if they did not realise that there were serious problems. When Councillor Finnigan began to speak more critically, Councillor Wakefield cut him short and went straight to the vote and the report was agreed for publication without change.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: That is not true.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: What we have now is a Core Strategy consultation document which is about to be published and is fundamentally unsound. It is not just about how many thousand houses might or might not be built in Morley or elsewhere. Planning

consultants, solicitors and the like will tear the report to shreds within 24 hours of it hitting the streets or web pages and the Council will have to start again, after being made to look foolish.

This is the purpose of the reference back. Executive Board should look at the report again, acknowledge that it has flaws and then send it back to DPP for full consideration. After full and proper discussion, DPP should then return the more sound and coherent version to Executive Board with which people might or might not agree but which would at least be fit for public consultation rather than public humiliation.

Just to quote a couple of examples. One matter which the DPP looked at was Policy H3, which sets minimum housing densities in terms of number of dwellings to the hectare for various types of communities. As the Government abolished minimum housing densities soon after being elected in May 2010 this might be said to be incompatible with national policy. Even so, setting that aside, policy H3 as it stands now would be totally unworkable. For example, it sets a minimum density for other urban areas, such as Morley, of 20 dwellings to the hectare. Much recent and proposed development across Leeds is made up of family estates of three or four bedroom houses, some detached, some semis, some two bedroom starter homes perhaps in short terraces. That type of estate, of which there are many throughout Leeds, simply will not work and is not liveable at densities of much more than 30 to the hectare. The townscape becomes claustrophobic, back gardens become too small to meet minimum standards, there is not enough off-street parking and there is not space to add extensions or conservatories.

When I pointed this out Mr Crabtree intervened to suggest that the 40 to a hectare really was meant to be an average density spread over all types of housing, not a minimum. I agreed that that might be achieved if higher density town centre infill, mill conversions and the like, were balanced against family estates at around 30 to the hectare. If that were so, Policy H3 would have had to be completely redrafted to make it become sound.

As it turned out, Policy H3 was presented to and accepted by Executive Board completely unchanged. It set out minimum densities, not averages, including the unachievable minimum of 40 dwellings to the hectare in other urban areas.

This is crucial because it means that one of the most important bases for calculating land need in Leeds is badly flawed. It could be held to understate the land need by up to a third. No doubt some in the private sector development community will have realised this already.

During discussion of affordable housing a proposal was put forward by Councillor Campbell which was that the smallest new housing developments, even those of just one house, should make a cash contribution to an affordable housing fund. There would not be the automatic exemption for schemes with fewer than 15 houses that we have now. Despite being agreed by all, that was not built into the Executive Board report.

There is another matter around which there was quite a lot of discussion and that was the way in which the Development Department tracks changes in the numbers of people in Leeds. At least partly it refers to the number of people registering at GP surgeries. This is unsound and unnecessary when Children's Services keep careful track of the numbers of 0 to 5s, then the 15 to 16s who are of statutory school age, and that Electoral Services maintains a compulsory electoral register of everyone from 17 upwards.

Some of the old Medical Officer of Health function is being returned to Local Authorities. At Outer South Area Committee recently we received a report that said of Central Morley, "GP recorded data is suppressed, as over 25% of the population are

registered with a non-Leeds GP or audit of the GP data has not been possible.” It might be added that quite a lot of people might not be registered with a GP at all.

By whatever method the Development Department uses to calculate the number of people in Leeds, the Draft Core Strategy presented to Executive Board estimated that the total for the Leeds Metropolitan District in 2010 was 755,136. A handbook produced in 1973 by Leeds Planning and Property Department on the eve of the creation of the new Authority, gave its population as 746,000, only 9,000 fewer than that quoted by its successor department in 2010.

Claims that the population of Leeds will rise to 860,000 by 2008(*sic*) or one million in time for the 2031 census do need more scrutiny. This is crucial in calculation of housing need.

My Lord Mayor, I could give other examples but I see that even I am running out of time on this one.

In conclusion, I would say that the LDF Core Strategy Report approved by Executive Board on 10<sup>th</sup> February was an unsound document which does not match what was agreed by DPP Members and it will be in great difficulty within hours of publication. It must be looked at again, I move the reference back. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. If you wanted an example of an area of debate where this Council would be well advised to try and keep every party on the same sheet, this is it. At the Executive Board when Councillor Finnigan said pretty much what Councillor Leadley said today, I do not remember him being cut short, I have to say. I think there was a very full debate.

I said - and Councillor Finnigan made it very clear he was merely repeating what Councillor Leadley had said, it was Councillor Leadley's advice - Councillor Leadley may well be right. That is not the issue. This document has come out for consultation. Surely it is now the time for the arguments that Councillor Leadley has put forward to be evidenced properly, for the Development Plan Panel to make further comment – I would love to see that made – for Area Committees to be consulted, let us have Area Committee input. It comes back to Executive Board when Executive Board will take on board or not the evidence that has been given by a whole myriad of people, but the point will be this, that the process of a Local Development Plan will be under way and that is the crucial part. We are going to have to start going to appeal.

The big national housebuilders are hanging like predators over this city. I have said before, the majority of them are not part of the solution, they are part of the problem. They will not talk properly to the Council. I am hoping that our Chief Executive will try and knock some sense into them. They do not seem to realise that communities under the new spirit of localism are actually prepared to have some input and talk about where things need to go. What you are doing by delaying the process of consultation is merely playing into their hands. You can just see an appeal in six weeks' time where some smart barrister gets up for Wimpeys or whoever and says, "Well, Inspector, the Council has not even begun their Local Development Plan process. They have just sent it back; they are all over the place with it."

We are going to be in a position after this Council meeting where we can say the process has begun, warts and all. I do not disagree with it, I think the population projections, some of them are going to be wildly off the mark, but now is the time to feed that information into the process so when we actually adopt – when we actually agree our Local Development Plan to go to the Inspector, we have taken these things on board, but do not stop the process of public consultation because by doing that you play into the hands of the very people who are part of the problem and not part of the solution.

Lord Mayor, it is ludicrous to have a reference back on this today. There is no need for it. It is hugely important, in my view, that all political groups stick together as far as possible. There will undoubtedly be a stage further down the line and maybe at the Executive Board where the Executive Board decides which of the presentations from members of the public, from different groups, are taken on board and which are not. That will be the time when there will be a parting of the ways, undoubtedly, but it is not now and to do so now is to play into the hands of the people who are not interested in sustainable development for the city. They are only interested in one thing – the easy option for development, the easy option to get on site quick and build, whether or not it is sustainable.

That is the battle we are all fighting, for sustainable developments, yes, in all our communities, but “sustainable” being the word and without we start this process, we are on one foot when it comes to appeal, absolutely on one foot, and we need to have this bit of evidence that can say the Council is moving forward with the Local Development Plan, it is taking on board now through a vast public consultation people’s views and that is the place for you to evidence base what you have been saying in this Chamber. If you can evidence base it – and I have some sympathy with you – then I for one will support you, but not to defer the process of consultation. That is suicide. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Councillor Leadley made the comment that the projected population growth in the city needs scrutinising. Well, it has been and from that one phrase I guess that Councillor Leadley and Councillor Finnigan have not read the extensive Scrutiny Report that was produced that some have said - some have said – is the best Scrutiny Report ever produced by this Council (*laughter*) (*hear, hear*). I think that was Councillor Wakefield who made that comment!

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Had I been in the sun?

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Seriously, we spent a huge amount of time, a disproportionate amount of time, it has to be said, in our Scrutiny Board on this matter and we did so at the wish of the Executive Board. It was the Executive Board, actually who challenged us to do a thorough and comprehensive piece of work to add to the debate on the Core Strategy in taking it forward. The very issue you raised in terms of population growth was one that we spent some considerable time on. Indeed, we had before us Grimleys, who had been commissioned by the Council, and their expert, a Professor from the University of Leeds, who came before us, so they could explain away their methodology in terms of how they had come to this adjusted figures.

That is the important point, because the Office of National Statistics, if you believe their figure, would be having to allocate way more land than we are proposing to do. The piece of work that Grimleys did was to try and bring that figure down and the problem that the Council faces and, indeed, the officers face in the department, is to say there is the ONS figures, then there is the independent report that is done – are we to abandon both of those

numbers and come up with a completely fresh set of numbers again? That is how we would be torn apart at public enquiry.

Again, I can agree with some of what Councillor Leadley says. Next year, of course, we will have the actual numbers, we will know what the population is because the census will be released. I am hoping that that will come in time so that we do not need to allocate as much land as we currently think we are going to have to do in this city, but that is the time for that debate, certainly not now.

The other important thing that we did in Scrutiny was that we took a delegation down to DCLG to take evidence from the Chief Planner, Steve Quartermain. He was not able to come to see us within the timeframe we had so we went to London to see him. He was clear, absolutely crystal clear, "Where is your Core Strategy? Why have you not got one yet?" That was the simple, clear message. No ifs, no buts – "Where is it?" That is what we need.

He again was very clear, "You leave yourself open to developers while ever you have not got one" and the people in this Chamber who know me well know the last thing I want is rampant development on green field because it will be in one or two wards – the predominant bit will be in my ward.

This Core Strategy – and I honestly did not think I would be saying this, Lord Mayor – offers one of the best ways to, dare I say it, limit development in all of our wards while still allowing the city to grow and whilst there will be a lot of feedback that comes from communities that I represent and there will be people who do not like the overall housing numbers – indeed, I do not like them, I do not like the notion of having to build 5,000 houses in the north-east area – whether we like it or not that is where we are at and we can either ignore it or we can get on with it and some of us in our communities will be engaging with those people whom we represent to say where that development should be going because, frankly, that is the only game in town. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Anderson? Councillor James McKenna.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I rise to speak against the amendment and, Tom, even at this late stage I think there is a possibility of you withdrawing it. I could not actually agree more with – it does not affect you, Robert, you do not live in Leeds. You do not live in Morley. It does not affect you, does it? (*interruption*) It does affect us.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank God you are raising the level of debate, Jim, as you always do. Quality input.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: It is a truism, though, is it not? It is a truism. When I speak a lie you can interrupt me and correct it, OK?

Lord Mayor, we all know the importance of planning policy. It is to protect our community and to protect our valuable green space that we all hold very dear, every community, even Armley, the limited amount we have got. It helps us to fund necessary infrastructure, it helps us to identify where jobs for the future may well be.

The LDC Core Strategy is the bedrock of our planning policy for this city and delaying its implementation is highly irresponsible – highly irresponsible.

Each month that goes without a Core Strategy being in place is another month where we as an Authority lack adequate protection to reject inappropriate developments. We have

already spent in excess of £1m on planning appeals and you know what, Tom, we lost every one. We need to get a Core Strategy as soon as possible if we are to have any chance of stopping harmful development taking place.

The MBI like to style themselves as heroic defenders of local interest, but in reality are betraying the people they represent by attempting to delay implementation of the Core Strategy. Without a Core Strategy, though not perfect, we all admit that, Morley, along with the rest of Leeds, will be more vulnerable to development, not less.

Even worse, the recklessness of the MBI could have serious financial consequences for the Council. Any delay in the implementation of the Core Strategy will mean yet more money being wasted on planning appeals. At a time when the Council is suffering its largest ever budget cuts, this could endanger the financial stability of the Authority. Again, it is the height of irresponsibility.

Nobody would claim the proposed Core Strategy is perfect and many people will want to comment on it. That is why it has now gone out to full public consultation for people to send in their views. Instead of trying to block the consultation from going ahead, the MBI should submit their concerns they have to the process so we can help to improve the Core Strategy.

When the Council is dealing with such big challenges, we need to work together across the political groups in the best interests of the city. We need constructive engagement as we consider the best way to balance the competing priorities of the city, and we have heard much of that today. Thankfully the next major party is fully signed up to that.

It is unlikely that any Core Strategy will completely satisfy everyone because of both the competing priorities in any planning policy and the guidance issued by Government which constrain our actions, but refusing to adopt one will simply mean we forfeit any control over local planning.

I ask the MBIs to think again of this amendment, perhaps come and help us to improve it. I think being out on a limb as a small group like this does not do well for the city. You always say you welcome being part and at the heart of Leeds. This is now your chance to prove that. Tom, it is not about re-writing the Strategy and when you were on your feet I thought you were re-writing the whole policy. Sometimes you have got to come on side and work with everybody in this Chamber for the betterment of the city. Councillor Carter has already said in his budget speech it is the best city in the country and I think everybody clapped and agreed on that, so can we have Morley now joining Leeds and working as one big city for the future prosperity and employment of our young people. To do this you will get development. If we were to leave it alone you will get development where you do not want that development, believe me Tom. Withdraw it, it is the sensible thing to do. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Campbell, please.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I have to say that whoever wrote Councillor McKenna's speech for him did a very good job. Unfortunately it was referring to something that is not actually got the point that Councillor Leadley is trying to raise. I think if Councillor McKenna had actually been to the meeting we were talking about, he would know that we are actually trying to raise the issue, or he is trying to raise the issue, about what this Council has asked a group of people to do.

Let us be clear, the LDF Panel was instructed by this Council to go away and look at issues to do with the LDF so that they could and so that we could have a robust LDF which



we could use to defend against inappropriate development. The LDF Panel meets under various people's Chair and I am thinking Liz Nash actually chaired one of these, and we have met on a number of occasions to discuss this Core Strategy and, quite frankly, Members have set aside their diary to ensure that the Council does have a Core Strategy at extra meetings.

The point is that if you give the power to a group of Councillors to hold a meeting to discuss the Core Strategy, then I would assume that you would expect that they would hold that meeting, come to a detailed decision, produce a document and then that would be the basis of the discussions, that would be the basis of what we had for discussion.

What we are saying here – and I agree with Tom and I pay credit to him because quite frankly he is the only person I know who would read through it twice and I know that a lot of other people have never even been anywhere near it – the point is that the Panel met on several occasions, they looked at the draft that was provided by officers, they made a number – a significant number because it took three meetings – of changes to that particular document on the assumption that those changes would be included in the draft.

If they were not, there was little point in the LDF Panel sitting there and going through the entire document because what you are actually saying to us is, if you do what you said, Jim, actually there was no point the LDF Panel meeting at all because actually we are going to use as the basis of our discussion the document the officers gave us anyway.

If you think it is OK for the officers to make those decisions and it not the important role of the LDF Panel to do that, then why don't we just get rid of the LDF Panel, because actually what you are saying to us is that is what we should do.

There is no reason for a big delay. I know Andrew has a point and I fully agree with him because I have said on more than one occasion we need to get this thing through the system because it is protecting us, but I do not believe that there is a huge gap between the possibility of taking that back and dealing with it, because I think that actually the details of what the LDF Panel decided they wanted you to do are there – they simply were not put into the document.

That document must be available; either that or the officers who took those notes actually have deliberately not put them in. You can draw your own conclusions from that. It is very easy to get that document to the Executive Board and if those changes that the LDF Panel on your behalf agreed are in that document, there is not a problem.

I think actually Tom's reference back is valid. It is not to do with housing numbers and it is not to do with how many houses they are going to get in Morley. It is to do with saying to Members, "You have the right to make a decision. You made a decision about the basis of this document and that is the decision that should hold for the Council." Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Taggart, please.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I, for my sins, Chair the Panel that everybody is talking about and a lot of work has gone on and a lot of Members from all political parties have made major contributions to the discussion that has gone on.

It is true there was a need for an additional meeting in January – whether you call it a meeting or a gathering is different in law but there were three occasions – and at the last one a lot of important points were being put forward by Members. My memory tells me that all of

the amendments that were put forward, I think, Tom, were agreed by everybody. I cannot recall anything that was disagreed by the Tories or by the Labour.

I did make the point from the Chair and I restate it now, the difficulty was we had got an Executive Board meeting looming and we had to be careful that we did not miss the boat in terms of what went on that agenda.

By the way, I would like to particularly pay tribute to Councillor Leadley because he reads everything. The way some people skim read, and that includes me sometimes, Tom never does that, he reads everything in great detail and whatever people might think about the Morley Boroughs, Tom has got particular characteristics on this Panel that I can only pay tribute to as an honest politician – or someone who tries to be an honest politician, anyway. There we are.

I think it was just the cock-up theory that happened on this occasion. Officers took copious notes, some of the information was transmitted to the Executive Board version, it seemed that some of it was not and if it is my fault I can only apologise, although I do not actually think it was my fault because it was the officers who were taking all the notes down.

The essence of the document is still what the Executive Board approved. I suspect Tom is not going to withdraw his reference back. My advice to Members of Council is to vote the reference back down because the effect of that is to stop the whole timetable and it is very important that we get cracking on this. We are behind many other Planning Authorities around the country. Leeds is a big city, we need to keep to the timetable.

I will say this to Tom, I personally will make sure that we go through line by line all those fine changes that we made with all-party agreement to make sure they are not lost, because this goes on deposit for public comment and I will make sure by hook or by crook the comments that we agreed to in the Panel somehow come back in the wash. Do you understand? It will be a bit like us making representations about our own report, that is how some people will see it, but all the points made were valid, I agreed to them, so did everybody else. I do not think there is anyone being incompetent, it is just an issue to do with timescales.

That is the answer, not to vote for the reference back but to note the points made and to note the hard work that all the Panel Members made. I am someone who believes in the crucial importance of democratic involvement and it may have annoyed some of the officers on occasion that all these points were being made from all around the room, but they are important points. We are elected politicians, they are appointed officers and it is important that the voice of elected people is heard. The voice was heard. I make you a promise that the points will not be lost and we will somehow incorporate them at the end of the day so finally when we eventually adopt the LDF document, we will make sure all the points are incorporated. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I ask Councillor James Lewis whether he wants to exercise his right to speak on this Minute or on all of the Minutes?

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: No, Lord Mayor, thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Therefore, Councillor Finnigan, do you wish to exercise your right to speak?

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: As much as I wish to exercise that right, I think people – very, very briefly, Lord Mayor. I cannot resist the temptation.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Withdraw it.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: I think that is unlikely. The fact of the matter is, if we get this wrong at this particular point it goes in front of a Planning Inspector and the Planning Inspector basically thinks it is all flawed and I can understand why he might think that. At this particular point it reverts – it is later on but it is based on this particular framework, it is based on what you have got down at this particular stage. If that is the case you default back to the Government's 53 page document and the bottom line is you are taking a bit of a punt.

In terms of Council property, yes, Councillor Leadley did read all of it, probably twice, to be honest, at this particular point.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: Only because he told me to!

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: That is party discipline for you! At this particular stage we are unconvinced that enough work has been done on this particular document at this point. The worry that we fundamentally have is that whatever you have agreed at this stage with all of the assurances that you are going to consult and you are going to look at this and you are going to look at that, fundamentally what you are producing at this point is what you are going to produce for a Government Inspector, and if he has the same healthy scepticism – it is not going to fundamentally change that month – if he has a fundamental scepticism like we do about the figures that have been bandied around at that particular point, if he declares that unsound, the nightmare scenario at that point, no matter what we are suggesting, is that you go to a 53 page document that the Government has laid down that talks about sustainable development and at that particular point you will see development like you have never seen before.

That is why we are saying it is important at this point to reflect a little longer, to refer it back to the Panel for their views and for their concerns to be fully accommodated and then go down that particular process. It is not lengthy, it is not overwhelmingly involved at this particular point but it gives us an opportunity to make a better document from a document which I think we all accept at this point has some significant flaws.

That is what this is about, that is why we think it is important to have a pause, to have a bit of reflection, to send it back to the Panel and do a better and more thorough job. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I do not think I have ever got up in Council and said I agree with John Procter and Andrew Carter in the same debate - there must be a first – as well as Jim McKenna.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: I am not so sure about that last one.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: I think what both Andrew and John said was absolutely realistic and gave a true reflection of the position we are in. We desperately need a Core Strategy, we need it now.

If Tom had all these concerns about the meetings of the Development Plan Panel, those, I would have thought, should have been expressed to me before to at least have given us some kind of early warning...

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: We did try.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: ... or that Robert should have raised them in Executive Board, which he did not, and Keith did not cut him off.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: That is not my recollection of events.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: My recollection of that meeting was you were talking about other things, not about the process and your concerns about that. You had the opportunity then but you did not take it.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: That is not true.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Can I just remind you what the process is now? The document goes out to consultation, as Andrew said, warts and all. It is an opportunity for people to point out the things that we may have got wrong and so we come back with a better document that comes back to Executive Board which will then come back to full Council before it goes off to the Secretary of State. After it has gone to the Secretary of State, yes, you will have your Government Inspector looking at it but I think the Government Inspector scepticism about our figures will be to say that they are too low. The Government Inspectors will not be saying the population of Leeds is going to be static. They will be saying "Prove that the population of Leeds is only going to go up by as much as you think." I think that is the thing that we have to be most robust on, because if you look at the appeals that we have lost over the past couple of years, that is always been about housing supply and that has been about a numbers game.

Tom was coming up with some figures which I thought were extremely dubious and I will just quote the census figures for Leeds. 1981, just short of 700,000 people in Leeds. 1991 it drops to 680,000. 2001, up to 715,000. What you have actually seen was a drop that actually probably started in the 1940s which was disguised by the fact that we became a Metropolitan District in 1974, because what happened, people were actually leaving the old core city and moving out to places like Morley, Garforth and what have you, and that position has actually ended and changed.

What we are seeing, if you look at any figures like the number of kids coming into our schools, I think you will start thinking differently. If you just take on board one fact, that for every two people who die in this city, three are born, if you are telling me that the population here is static, I do not believe you. Leeds has gone through a period when it was relatively static, when other cities like Liverpool, like Hull, were declining massively. Those cities are now seeing an increase in their population, so what is bound to happen is that a successful city like Leeds, a booming city like Leeds is going to have a much greater increase in population. In some ways I hope that you are right that the population figures that we have based our projections on are too big because then we will not need that huge number of extra dwellings, but hoping for things is not enough. Wanting things to be true does not make them true and I think we all know that we are facing a city that is going to grow considerably, that is going to be considerably more wealthy in three, four decades' time, and we have got to take that on board. We have to come up with a Core Strategy that reflects the future.

My feeling about the Morley Independents raising this, I am perhaps little less charitable than some of my colleagues around this room, because I have seen the Morley Observer, I have started to get a dribble of letters from Morley residents telling me that Morley is going to have to take all the population growth for the city of Leeds, telling me to leave Morley alone. I have also seen Robert's conflation of plans by private developers in South Leeds and conflating those with plans of Leeds City Council, so, Robert, we know very well why you are doing this. It is all about the first Thursday in May, it is about trying to

get a message over to people there because it is your only selling point and it is sad that we have got a party that is so irresponsible that it is prepared to put the future of the city at risk in such a way as you are just for pure petty political gain. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I now call for the vote on the amendment in Councillor Leadley's name. Recorded vote – seconded.

*(A recorded vote was held on the reference back)*

THE LORD MAYOR: There are 94 Members present, 19 have said “Yes”, two have abstained, and the “No” vote is 73, therefore the amendment is LOST.

**(b) Children's Services**

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we move on to page 4 and call upon Councillor Dawson, please, and I think that this is your maiden speech. Are Members aware of that, please, this is a maiden speech.

COUNCILLOR DAWSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. First, can I say how proud I am to be elected as a Councillor in the city of Leeds. *(Applause)* it has been my home for all my life and is where my parents and grandparents also lived and worked.

I would also like to pay tribute to a Councillor I have known for 36 years whose family inspired me to be involved in politics, especially Labour politics in the first place. I am talking about Councillor Denise Atkinson who I know you are all aware is very poorly at the moment, and also her late father Eric, a former Lord Mayor of this city. Together they are partly responsible for why I am here today.

As I said, my family has worked in this city for generations and has been part of the fabric of its industrial heritage. My paternal grandfather worked at the famous Marshall's Mill in Holbeck for nearly 50 years, apart from his time in Northern France when he was fighting and getting gassed in the First World War. My other grandfather worked in the heavy engineering firms of Hunslet and my father worked at Crabtree Vickers in Holbeck with the usual time off to fight in foreign fields. He returned after the war and was in the City of Leeds Police for 25 years. You can see, I speak only the truth when I tell you my roots and my loyalties are firmly in the city of Leeds. I want only the best for this city that has been home to me and mine for so long.

I want to make Leeds prosperous and help it to become the leading city in the United Kingdom, but as well as prosperity it is important we have another objective, to reduce the inequalities that exist here, to reduce the inequalities in education, housing and health and, most importantly, in job opportunities for our young people in this city. *(hear, hear)* I believe it important that these two objectives go together.

My Lord Mayor, it is also a great privilege to be elected to represent Morley, where I have lived for the last 28 years. In a book by a former Mayor of Morley, a Labour Mayor, it is described as the centre of the universe. The people of the town accept this, though they find the author's understated approach a little disappointing. The point I am making is that Morley is a proud town with a lot to be proud about. Its industrial heritage, its vibrant sense of community and, dare I say it, its independence. *(laughter)*

Morley entrepreneurs have always had a good eye for business. At the outbreak of the American Civil War the woollen mills of Morley supplied uniforms for the Confederate Army. The cheapest dye to produce from Morley shoddy cloth was grey, therefore it was probably no surprise that the Confederate Army became clad in grey uniforms. The second

cheapest dye to produce was a dark blue, and so the Yankee Northern armies duly became clothed in dark blue. Whilst not condoning this all-encompassing approach to business and politics, it did help create the prosperity of the town.

Morley is also on the edge of the famous Rhubarb Triangle and still today 75% of the UK's rhubarb is grown there. There was a time when rhubarb trains regularly left stations in Morley to go to London. Indeed, I would like to offer a prize to any Councillor who can let me know in what year the last rhubarb train left Morley, including the Morley Borough Independents. I offer this prize regularly at the end of any quiz that I happen to have set.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: 1858.

COUNCILLOR DAWSON: Because Morley is a thriving community there is great pressure on school capacity and I am pleased that this Authority will be investing to redevelop the successful Morley Newlands School, to extend its capacity and to replace the out of date modular buildings that were built in the 1970s with a life expectancy of ten years and which are actually still in use.

Morley has benefited from a number of new schools and now has some of the best schools in this city. The educational achievements in Morley are now the best that they have ever been and reflect the growing success of the town. I welcome and support the proposed replacement of the school buildings at Morley Newlands. Many thanks. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ewens, please.

COUNCILLOR EWENS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I speak to Minute 192 and 193 on page 7 of the Executive Board Minutes and I would like, before I do so, to say to Councillor Wakefield how pleased I was to hear at a meeting round about this time last year saying we were all going to have to work together. I know it is very difficult to work together with people but I have spent quite a lot of time in my ward ringing officers from different departments, sitting round a table to meet and discuss face to face and they like it. I know it takes a bit more time but it gets a much better solid result, one of which I am still waiting for but I will see the officer about that later.

Meantime, I am pleased to report from the reports on schools on the report on the resurgence of City of Leeds High School. After eight years of attempts to close it down by Education Leeds and by Ed Balls. The school, since it has been given a future, as developed excellent relationships with the five primary schools with which it forms a cluster, it is developing relationships with the remainder of the educational community which exists in its immediate vicinity, both the universities, Notre Dame College and so on and so forth, and all this has evolved through the determined efforts and support of the staff, governors, students and Members of all parties from whom I actually had emails in support - I will not name him, he might be ashamed of it – and the local community.

Please note that all this has been evolved. It has not been imposed. I think evolution, if we can all work together, is a much better way of doing things. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ann Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Yes, thank you, Lord Mayor. I also wish to speak on Minute 192 page 7 and Minute 193 page 8.

I am concerned about the levels of education we are providing. I think we all know that we should be doing better. I say this because I look at the document for both primary and secondary schools and I see in the primary school section that at Key Stage One Leeds is three percentage points below the national average for maths and two percentage points below the national average for reading and writing. In 2001 in Key Stage Two the percentage receiving Level 4 or above remained static for English and fell two per cent points in maths.

I do not know why this is but clearly there does seem to be a problem emerging to do with maths and I think a lot of it is with boys with maths as well. Again, I am not a teacher, I do not know why this is but the figures are telling us that.

The percentage of girls achieving Level 4 or above increased by one per cent for English and for the combined English and maths indicator, and stayed the same for maths. Attainment for boys fell, particularly in maths.

I think we have to do something about this. We then go on to when these kids get to secondary school and, of course, I read about the teenagers that increase with the absenteeism when you come to primary schools, which I know is a general factor anyway, but in some of it I wonder if it is because if they are falling behind on the key subjects, then they could be having a problem there staying to the level that they need to do once they get to secondary school.

The gaps in attainment between boys and girls are now larger in Leeds than nationally, with girls achieving in line with girls nationally, but boys having lower attainment than boys nationally. That is in the junior schools, so we have got to do something about it, definitely.

We get to the high schools then and I see that there has been an increase in the proportion of pupils making the expected three levels of progress between Key Stage Two and Key Stage Four in English and maths, but since 2009 the percentage in English has risen by 7.6%, which you might say yes, that is good, it is going up, to 65.4 and by 8.2 in maths to 59.1. If you think about it, 59.1, is that really good?

Both these figures are below the national figures so the gap between Leeds and the national figures has narrowed, admittedly, in 2011.

What I am getting at, I know all this is talking education stuff with the Key Stage and whatever, but it comes down to this, that we have got to sort the matter out, we have got to see that kids when they get to high school are on a reasonable level with the things, the core subjects, the English, the maths and particularly reading and writing because we know what happens if they are not – this is what leads to a lot of them not being there or what you might say bunking off. We cannot have that.

We have talked a lot today about getting teenagers and young people into employment. It has even been touched on the fact that some people that have taken young people on have found that the maths and the reading and writing is not up to scratch, so that again is telling us that we have got to do something about it.

THE LORD MAYOR: Ann, we have a red light, please.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: That is all I want to say, can we do something.  
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now moving on the procedure for winding up the business on this item. Councillor Keith Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I think you have just wound Councillor Blackburn up, I do not know about procedures, Lord Mayor, or somebody has.

Firstly I would like to congratulate Neil Dawson for his maiden speech. He certainly proves he knows his rhubarb and his Morley and occasionally he talked upon Children's, just at the end. *(laughter)* Well worth listening to.

Actually in all honesty, I am also grateful for what Councillor Ewens said about working together and leadership making a difference and it certainly has in the example you quoted.

The comments that Councillor Blackburn was trying to make were really serious and important ones and I regret that it has taken 16 months to actually get the Children's agenda to be number one in this Council and it still has not done that yet.

What she raised are some very important points. One of the things, if you do go through the annual reports, you will see time and time and time again the difference between people who are on free school meals and education performance, 20 or 30%. It does not matter if you are on Level 1, 2, 3, 4, primary and secondary, the one iron law in this city and in this country is that if you are eligible for free school meals it is going to affect your education performance and that is something no Council has cracked here, no administration. I think it is something we should really try to do something about. Councillor Carter is right, education is a massive issue in this city and we have got to take more responsibility and understanding on it and I am sure that Councillor Blake will bring something forward, because for me free school meals is a proxy for wider deprivation.

I was reading through a report last week from the National Housing Federation that said children brought up in poor housing, of those people only 25% get A-C in GCSEs. I could go across health, I am sure, I have listened to Shelter's report that talked about the damage to cognitive development by children living in poor housing. You can go right across food, health, benefits, jobs and so on. I think it is time for a real debate in this Council of how we can join up all of us, as Penny was talking about, not just parties but organisations that can all contribute to children's education performance.

As I say, I regret that it has taken 16 months to even start that debate, but I think next time we will be able to have a fuller debate and I look forward to all of us contributing to that because one of the things that we have to recognise – and it partly goes to Andrew's comments in his budget – is that we have the responsibilities for children, statutory, especially for vulnerable children, but we do not have the power everywhere. Academies do not have to reveal their statistics on performance or exclusions, yet we still have that responsibility to look after vulnerable children. I think that is a huge debate about how we can all play a role, whether as a governor, a Councillor or whatever role, an officer, in making sure that everybody takes some responsibility for children's performance in this city.

It does cross ethnicities and genders but the one thing that stands out time and time again, year after year – free school meals. As I say, we have got to think of a way of breaking that vicious cycle.

I think one of the reasons we have probably not had this discussion is because of what we heard this afternoon about the LDF. I cannot help but be sympathetic to Richard's view. I respect everybody in the Morley Independents and, as Councillor Taggart helpfully tried to say, I have absolutely no doubt that Councillor Leadley is sincere in his concerns, but



what has already been said is absolutely true. What was asked, why were those concerns not raised with Councillor Lewis or officers? Why was it late last night at the Whips when we were placed in the very difficult position of whether to have Councillor Minutes or whether to raise this, because I genuinely worried about legal implications. I spoke to the Whip and I said, "Look, this might be serious for the future of the city. There are some very serious accusations being made" and frankly, what I have heard today, I am not convinced we needed that debate this afternoon in the way that we did. That is my honest view, because we did discuss at Executive Board some of the issues about population and we have discussed that in the past, by the way. We can tell in this city because we are rushing to build schools now, that we have never always had the population right and projections, but we are building.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Never had it right.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Never had it right, you are absolutely right, and that leaves us sometimes ten years up the road re-opening schools we thought were closed because we did not think the population demography is going that way.

When we did offer that debate at Executive Board - and there are three people who confirm what I will say now - Councillor Finnigan had a long say. He had a very long say about population growth and we talked about which source you need, whether you need the Office of National Statistics, whether you need the actual Strategic Housing Market Assessment and so on and so forth. Actually, Councillor Finnigan's contribution was saying it is all fiction and that he did not believe it.

I think you are entitled to be sceptical, like all of us, absolutely right, but one thing that I am pleased that Councillor Procter did, he was challenged by Executive Board because he was more sceptical of those figures than anybody in this room and the best thing, if somebody offers those real genuine grievances, is to say to them, as we did with Scrutiny. "Will you go and have a look at these figures and come back?" and he came back, and you were there, Robert, with some very robust presentations about those figures.

On that basis we should never have raised that again because Councillor Carter is right, we got an opportunity with the consultation process. We can all then put into that. Do not think any of in this room like what we are going to have to do in terms of the challenges. Again, Councillors Carter and Procter are absolutely right about all of us sticking together on this one because the only people who will actually gain from this are developers.

We have got a further opportunity when it comes back to Executive Board, when it has been through its consultation, and that is when the independent Inspector comes and again he will be here to listen, challenge, and hopefully confirm whether we are going in the right directions.

I do think some of what we have seen this afternoon has been, some of it, a little bit political in the way that it was manoeuvring and that is very dangerous because any delay in this - and it is already been said, makes us more vulnerable to developers, makes them absolutely delighted because, as we have said, we have lost appeals in the past. We need that Core Strategy. The only way this city, this Council will protect communities from developers invading our green belt and other places is by having a Core Strategy.

We have got a vision which we all have to share. I have been pleased genuinely - I know we say this - with the all-party approach because we will never, ever stand up to developers if we are divided. (*hear, hear*) We will never beat them. They would love to walk into this thinking great, they are all arguing amongst themselves about what's what. Let us try and stick together because we are a city that is very attractive. I do believe we are

going to grow – I cannot tell you now many but I know if it is going to grow we need to be able to influence where that development is taking place, where those jobs are, where those homes are, where those schools are and without that we are left to a chaotic market world where developers will do what they want, when they want, how they want and we will not get one thing that we don't want.

I say in summing up, Lord Mayor, I think we will come back to this, it is probably the most important challenge this city faces for the next 20 or 30 years and sticking together, turning down that reference back, is the best way forward to make progress to protect our people and our communities.

I move, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: I now call for a vote to receive the Minutes. (*A vote was taken*) CARRIED. Thank you.

Just before we close Council, I would like to end on a joyful note and that is to congratulate you, Catherine and Dan on the birth of Callum. Wonderful, well done, and all the best to both of you. (*Applause*)

Finally, to say to the journalism students from Trinity College at Horsforth, well done and I hope the proceedings have given you some food for thought and, bearing that in mind, you are welcome, along with other members in the public gallery, to join us in the Banqueting Hall for a cup of tea. Thank you all for turning up and a safe journey home.

*(The meeting closed at 5.00 pm)*