

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Held on

Wednesday, 16th November 2011

At

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
CIVIC HALL,
LEEDS

In the Chair:

THE LORD MAYOR
(COUNCILLOR REV A TAYLOR)

VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

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VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 16th NOVEMBER 2011

THE LORD MAYOR: I have two announcements to make. First of all I am sure that everybody will be aware of the recent death of Sir Jimmy Savile. He died on 29th October and I think, as everybody know, he was, in fact, a generous supporter of the Leeds Hospitals Charities and that is a connection that can be traced back as far as the 1960s. Councillor Wakefield, as Leader of the Council, and Tom, as the Chief Executive, and representatives of all political groups and I attended the funeral on Wednesday, 9th November. After a lifetime of giving, Sir Jimmy proved as generous in his death by providing a substantial donation which will be his lasting legacy in Yorkshire and that donation will be used to create the Savile Institute at Leeds Teaching Hospitals and will be devoted to improve outcomes for heart patients across Yorkshire.

It is also sad to report the death of Geraldine Connor, who died at Harewood last month. She made a huge contribution to promoting good race relations within the city and perhaps her most outstanding legacy will be in Carnival Messiah which really put Leeds not only on the national map in that sense, but also on the international map as well. Once again, Councillor Wakefield, Tom and myself were present at the funeral.

I would now ask you to join with me in silent tribute to them both.

(Silent tribute)

TIMESCALES FOR THE ORDINARY MEETING

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. We now move to page 3 of the Order Paper and I call upon Councillor James Lewis, please.

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

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I call for a vote, please, on that item, which technically means the winding up for the Minutes will be at quarter-to five and the revised time is now 5.15 and we will conclude at 5.30 with tea. After tea we will reconvene and we will be starting the White Papers at ten-to six and we should finish the whole of our meeting after the winding up at 7.30 around, maybe, ten-to eight. Can I call for a vote on that, please? *(A vote was taken)* CARRIED.

ITEM 1 - MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD 14th SEPTEMBER 2011

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 1, Councillor James Lewis, please.

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

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: Second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: All in favour that the Minutes be approved? CARRIED.

ITEM 2 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we go to Item 2, please, Declarations of Interest. The list of written Declarations has been submitted by Members and it is on display in the ante-room and on deposit in public galleries. That has been circulated. Are there any further individual declarations or corrections? Councillor Illingworth.

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I believe my interest in solar panels is prejudicial interest, Lord Mayor, because I am half way through signing the contract.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: I have a personal interest in Item 9

COUNCILLOR MAQSOOD: *(inaudible)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Maqsood. Can't hear. Councillor Harris.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Lord Mayor, the White Paper on Feed In Tariffs, it has got a different number on the Declaration List to the order paper but I am declaring a personal and prejudicial because of my business interests.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Several, Lord Mayor. Item 8, a member of the Leeds Initiative Housing and Regeneration Board; a member of East (North East) Homes Board and a member of the Aire Valley Regeneration Board.

Item 9, as a member of the Management Committee of Richmond Hill Elderly Action.

Item 10, as a member of the Leeds Initiative Climate Change Committee and as a member of the Aire Valley Regeneration Board and as a member of East (North East) Homes Board.

Item 11, member of the Leeds Initiative Climate Change Partnership.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can Members please show that they have read the list? If I could just have a show of hands on that one, please. *(Show of hands)* Thank you.

ITEM 3 – COMMUNICATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we move on to Item 3 on Communications, and the Chief Executive has something to report.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you, Lord Mayor; two items. Since the last meeting I have received one response from Government to Council resolutions. That was from the Home Office, Keith Robinson in the Direct Communications Unit, in respect of the Community Policing White Paper agreed at the Council meeting in September.

Secondly, I have been asked to inform Members of full Council of my reasons for stepping down last month from the Board of the Leeds, York and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce.

The Chamber has recently become involved in the commercial promotion of geographically specific development proposals that could result in the submission of planning and related applications for development consent. Whilst this is understandable on the part of the Chamber, I became concerned at the potential for a perceived conflict of interest and, following the receipt of advice, took the decision to step down from the Board.

I will continue actively to support the activities of the Chamber – for example their positive work on apprenticeships and jobs for young people - but feel I can best do so without the potential complication of Board Membership.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you.

ITEM 4 - DEPUTATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we now move on to Item 4 and for the Deputations. Tom.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you, Lord Mayor, to report that there are four Deputations: the National Federation of Blind regarding Shire View Resource Centre for blind and partially sighted people; secondly, the Scott Hall Tenants and Residents Association regarding the need for proper crossing facilities on Scott Hall Road; third the Access Committee for Leeds regarding celebrating the volunteers of Leeds; and fourth, the Leeds Cycle Action Group regarding cycling provision in Leeds achieving health and carbon reduction goals.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Lord Mayor, I move that the deputations be received.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I second, my Lord Mayor.

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

DEPUTATION ONE

NATIONAL FEDERATION OF BLIND

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

MR A OLDROYD: My Lord Mayor, the members of our Deputation is in the first sentence, so if I could do it that way, that would be fine. Do I have your permission to do that?

THE LORD MAYOR: Fine.

MR A OLDROYD: Thank you. My Lord Mayor and Council Members, may I first of all take this opportunity to express our fears and concerns for the deaf-blind, blind and partially sighted people of this city. My fellow delegates are myself, Alan Oldroyd, a totally blind person, Winifred Ellis, who is registered blind with a small amount of sight, Alison Fry who, as you can see, is in a wheelchair, Anarjit Singh is registered blind with a small amount of sight and Mr Martin Bingley, who is a deaf-blind person.

We are not here to complain of the services – indeed, we work with them and will continue to do so in order to provide the best possible service for all our people.

We wish to bring to your attention, Councillors and my Lord Mayor, the fact that certain aspects of the service have been excluded. In our opinion, we wish to point out that by doing so the health and wellbeing of blind people. We consider that you, our Councillors, are not aware of the true picture. Initial services for newly blind people are in place but the follow-up care has been omitted, not affording the ability for people to interact with blind people, to be in a relaxed environment and to motivated by their peers.

Being a wonderful free resource, the ability for groups are now dispersed around the city in temporary accommodation, meaning blind people are having to learn new routes and new venues which has created a lot of anxiety.

This downgrading of blind people has caused a great deal of fear, loneliness and isolation. Present accommodation for the deaf-blind we feel is totally inadequate, whereas before they had the ability to move around freely in a large building, like Shire View. This gave them the independence and also the opportunity to exercise, which they do not now receive. We consider this to be totally inadequate. We wish to leave a legacy to our friends across the city for present and future generations.

Shire View Resource Centre opened in 1998, following the ten years of discussion with the Council and the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association and a substantial amount of money was put into it by both parties for the refurbishment. This amounted to £600,000, the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association. The building now stands empty – a place that once was a hive of activity with blind people re-learning old and new skills, overseen by volunteers, leaving families, carers and loved ones at home while they are in safe hands and in a caring environment. Because such groups are now run by volunteers, they are extremely cheap to organise. Therefore, we appeal to you, my Lord Mayor and Councillors, to grant us the wish for returning to Shire View, so enabling us to retain the services that do not now exist.

Thank you, my Lord Mayor and Councillors. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor James Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, I move that the matter be referred to Executive Board for further consideration.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I second, my Lord Mayor.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Alan, thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Good afternoon to yourself and to your delegation and a safe journey home. Thank you. *(Applause)*

DEPUTATION TWO – SCOTT HALL TENANTS AND RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Could you please make your speech to Council, which should not be longer than five minutes, and could you please begin by introducing yourself and the people in your Deputation.

MS R ELLIS: Good afternoon, my Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors. My name is Rosemary Ellis and I am supported by Barbara Charles and Christine Tiffany.

We are from Scott Hall & Sholebroke Tenants & Residents Association

We are here to petition you on behalf of our community for a proper light-controlled pedestrian crossing of the A61 Scott Hall Road at Scott Hall Grove.

There is currently a pedestrian refuge at this point, in the middle of the dual carriageway, but no safe way of accessing it from the bus stops on either side.

A large number of children from the east side of the Scott Hall estate use this dangerous crossing to access Mill Field Primary School, which is on the west side of the road. They are often accompanied by parents with prams and buggies who find it very difficult to negotiate the traffic. Since the withdrawal of the lollipop warden at this crossing, the situation has become even more difficult.

The Year 6 pupils at Millfield Primary School created a series of leaflets about the need for a crossing, one of which is before you but they are actually outside on a table and I have various others here. They drafted these leaflets after interviewing local residents, including Ms Killeen, who has been struggling to cross the road for 62 years. As Ms Killeen says, she isn't getting any faster but the traffic isn't getting any slower.

So seriously, the whole community, young and old alike, respectfully request that you provide us with a very safe way to cross the road at this point.

Thank you for listening to our petition. Good afternoon. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis, please.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, I move that the matter be referred to Executive Board for further consideration.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I second, my Lord Mayor.

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

Rosemary, thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Good afternoon to yourself and thank you again. (*Applause*)

DEPUTATION THREE – LEEDS CYCLE ACTION GROUP

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Could you please make your speech to Council, which should not be longer than five minutes, and could you please begin by introducing yourself and then the people in your Deputation.

MS E REATHER: Thank you. My Lord Mayor and fellow Council Members, my name is Lizzie Reather and with me are Chris Boulton, Dave Holt, Kevin Cooney and Martin Bennett. We represent Leeds' cyclists and are here to bring the Councillors' attention to the contribution cycling can make to the Council's objectives on health and wellbeing, climate change and economic growth and to the current poor consideration of cycling within the Council's programmes.

Although in recent years cycling has become a pleasant, popular and convenient way of getting around many cities, in Leeds take-up is still extremely low. Leeds's strategy documents are positive about walking and cycling but these modes of transport are treated as afterthoughts in policy implementation.

The benefits of a large shift away from private motor vehicles to cycling include

1. better health and wellbeing through increased physical activity;
2. environmental benefits, improved air quality and reductions in carbon emissions; and
3. reduced traffic congestion.

Sixty per cent of all journeys are less than five miles, a distance that can easily be cycled by most adults. Many European cities have levels of cycling far greater than the UK and even within the UK Leeds compares unfavourably with many other cities. We are failing to give Leeds people choice in transport, especially those who are financially stretched or do not have access to a car. Instead of aspiring to put more cars on Leeds's roads, vulnerable and disadvantaged groups could be enabled to travel easily and cheaply by bicycle.

Why do so few people cycle in Leeds? A recent survey concluded that the biggest barrier is the perceived danger from traffic, especially for those new to cycling. At present motor vehicles are prioritised, but cyclists are – and need to be seen to be – legitimate users of the roads. While off-road routes are helpful, especially for new cyclists, they cannot be used after dark or in bad weather.

If the road environment were to be made as welcoming as possible, Leeds could move to a virtuous circle where many people engage in cycling and walking as normal and sensible transport choices.

Five obvious actions are

- 1 Allocate a fair and proper proportion of road space in all improvement schemes. Excellent guidance is available from the Department for Transport, but this is mostly ignored by Leeds; planners, who aim to

maximise capacity and speed, effectively pushing vulnerable users off the road;

2. Implement all the planned Core Cycling Network routes, maintain them properly and ensure they can easily be accessed by cyclists on all types of bike;

3. Limit speeds to 20 mph in all residential areas. This has local benefits far beyond cycling and walking.

4. Use the planning system to ensure employers and businesses provide cycle parking for customers and changing facilities for their staff;

5. Use existing Council communications to publicise the benefits of cycling and the new routes and facilities that are already available.

Leeds lags woefully behind other Authorities in making good use of cycling as a sensible transport choice. Cycling can make a vital contribution to your targets on climate change, health and wellbeing and economic growth.

Please, seize the opportunity to put active travel at the heart of your policy developments. It is time for action rather than warm words. If you challenge the present dismissive attitude towards cycling, the people of Leeds will get on their bikes. Thank you for your attention. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, I move that the matter be referred to Executive Board for further consideration.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I second, my Lord Mayor.

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

Lizzie, thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Thank you and good afternoon. *(Applause)*

DEPUTATION FOUR – ACCESS COMMITTEE FOR LEEDS

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Could you please make your speech to Council, which should not be longer than five minutes, and could you please begin by introducing yourself and then the members of your Deputation.

MR T McSHARRY: Thank you, Lord Mayor, and elected Members, and good afternoon. My name is Tim McSharry and supporting this Deputation is Mary Naylor MBE, Linda Watson, Phil Gleeson, David Cuthbert.

This Deputation is dedicated to the memory of our Big Dave Littlewood and the title is Celebrating Volunteers of Leeds.

Could I begin with a really difficult challenge for everyone in this Chamber today, by asking you to imagine, just for a moment, what our great city of Leeds

would be without its volunteers? Who would notice? What would be missing? What would be lost? What would stop? Who would suffer? Who would pay the price?

The simple truth is, we all would pay and the cost would have an enormous impact at every level across the whole city. Every aspect of the Vision for Leeds, our future success, inclusion, equality, our communities, neighbourhoods and social cohesion would suffer, changing all Council priorities, strategies, partnerships and services. I think we had better stop there – it is quite a scary thought.

Happily and very thankfully we are blessed in our great city of Leeds with more than our fair share of dedicated, caring, expert and highly professional volunteers from across all communities, who share their time, energy, skills and understanding 24 hours a day, seven days a week, often not seen or recognised or really valued, which is incredible when you consider that volunteers' and carers' time is valued at around £137b a year to the UK economy. It also highlights the hidden savings that we all benefit from and possibly take a little for granted, although it does beg one question. As a Local Authority can Leeds truly say that we have done everything possible to underpin and support all that volunteers and carers contribute to the health, wellbeing, equality and success of our city, or could we do more to recognise and develop such an important and precious community resource?

I hope you have guessed the answer.

Against the backdrop of devastating Government cuts to our Local Authority Funding and the dismantling of welfare support and public services, the need to engage and utilise the Third Sector of Leeds has never been needed more and in support, this Council and its officers can take great pride in developing a close partnership with the Third Sector in an effort to negate the worst of the Government cuts hitting those individuals, families and communities in greatest need.

However, there is still more that can be done. In this European Year of Volunteering, as a city there is an opportunity to leave a meaningful legacy that will positively boost local volunteer capacity and innovation and promote Leeds as a beacon of best practice through development of a procurement and tendering framework that truly values and embraces the often hidden benefits and advantages of volunteer-led bids as exemplified in a recent bid that was led by Leeds Involving People which, sadly, was unsuccessful because the tendering process could not comprehend or value the additional benefits which have been offered through expert volunteers, partnership and the critical application of local knowledge.

In a climate where well resourced national organisations are ready to seize any opportunity for funding, as a city it is essential we do everything possible to support our own Third Sector and enable their incredible energy, diversity and exemplar knowledge to be expressed and valued in any procurement process.

May I finish by saying, do not ever question the importance of volunteers. Noah's Ark was built by volunteers; the Titanic was built by professionals. Thank you. *((Applause))*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, I move that the matter be referred to Executive Board for consideration.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I second, my Lord Mayor.

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

Tim, thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Thank you very much indeed. *(Applause)*

ITEM 5 – REPORT

(a)

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we now move on to Item 5? Councillor Keith Wakefield.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis?

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Second, Lord Mayor.

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

(b)

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now moving on to page 6 and at the top of page 6, Councillor Lewis.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lobley.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: Second, my Lord Mayor.

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

ITEM 6 – QUESTIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now moving to Item 6. Councillor Lobley.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I move in terms of the Notice on the Paper, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Latty.

COUNCILLOR LATTY: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: *(A vote was taken)* CARRIED. Thank you.

We now come to the first question, which is question 10, Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Thank you for that courtesy. Will the Leader of Council explain his reasons for resigning his position as a Director of Leeds, York and North Yorkshire Chamber of Commerce?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Yes, thank you, Lord Mayor. Yes, as soon as I became aware on 21 September that the Chamber were actually forming a company with significant interests in the east parts of Leeds, I thought it was only appropriate and right that I should resign from the Chamber, and I do that because perception is a very important thing in politics and I want to make it absolutely clear that, as the Leader of the Council, I wanted no confusion or no doubt about maintaining the integrity of the Council as a Planning Authority and as a significant land owner.

I have to say that I still want to, like many of us, work with the Chamber because they are significant partners in the city. If you look at the history, they have been important in lobbying on transport, on flooding, on economic issues, so I hope to carry on maintaining the close relationship with the Chamber.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Carter, is there a supplementary?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Lord Mayor, I thank the Leader of Council for his straightforward answer and I would ask him to give me a straightforward answer to the two parts of my supplementary.

Did it not enter into his consideration when deciding to resign that the production of a report by the East Leeds Regeneration Board was equally compromising of the Council as a Planning Authority; and (b), did he not tell the Executive Board Member for Housing and Regeneration that that paper should be withdrawn?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I was not in the city at the time but as soon as I became aware of the report I had discussions with colleagues and the Chief Executive and withdrew the paper and the arrangements immediately.

It was obvious by the wording on the paper and the arrangement suggested that it was not acceptable to this administration in the way that it was proposed, given that there were significant land interests. Again, as we will probably debate later, those reports have been totally rejected, no word of that report, no suggestion in that report has been implemented. We have now moved to a new set of relationships.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR : We are on page 7 and question number 2, Councillor Pryke.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Does the Leader of Council still believe that a referendum should be held on the incinerator and, if so, when will it take place?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I think somebody is answering for me! No.

THE LORD MAYOR: Is there a supplementary?

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: There is. I thank the Leader of Council for his short answer. It might have been helpful if he had answered all of it, but never mind. Given that a number of his colleagues were elected on a promise to stop the incinerator and that that was your intention when you proposed a referendum, that you have voted repeatedly to oppose it on any site and that your websites still say that it is your policy to seek alternative solutions, can Councillor Wakefield tell Council exactly when you performed your U-turn?

COUNCILLOR LYONS: When did you perform yours?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Do you know, I shall miss Councillor Pryke after next May. *(interruption)* I will be sad because if anybody embodies and reflects the contradictions and hypocrisy of the Lib Dems, it is Councillor Pryke.

Let me go back to when we proposed the referendum, which was in the budget of February 2008. I looked and you could have done something with that referendum, because the technology was not decided till the July of that year.

Now, I looked for Councillor Pryke's position when we moved the amendment to the budget that we should. Guess what? Not a word of support – in fact he voted against it. I looked further to see if there was any comments about the referendum and, surprise, surprise - or no surprise to this side – not a comment. He spoke about potholes, he spoke about parking but not a word on the referendum when you should have done, you could have done and you could have give us our support.

The answer is very simple, because we are going to get into a debate later so I will not go into detail, but one of the reasons we are not having a referendum is that it would be totally irresponsible and totally misleading the people of East Leeds. As we know, there is significant finance at stake for the future of this city and the future of these services.

You can stop trying to peddle. We have got to take a responsible position and I appreciate all those that realise that your administration, your portfolios, put us into the technology and put us into the site. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Jarosz, please.

COUNCILLOR: Give him a dustbin lid for a medal! *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR JAROSZ: Would the Executive Board Member responsible for health update Council on the future of children's cardiac services in Leeds?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mulherin.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am not the Executive Board Member but I have been asked to respond on Councillor Blake's behalf to the question.

Can I thank you, Josie, for giving me the opportunity to speak on this issue, which is of great importance not only to the people of Leeds but to the people of the Yorkshire and Humber region.

Since the last meeting of full Council the Joint Health and Overview Scrutiny Committee for Yorkshire and the Humber has reported, produced a significant Scrutiny Enquiry report which I would recommend as good reading to all Members. We have twelve copies still remaining and I am sure we could get some more produced for anybody who has not had a chance to read it as yet.

The importance of it, really, is quite remarkable. I cannot emphasise enough how powerful a message this Scrutiny reports sends with cross-party representation from the 15 top tier Local Authorities across our large and diverse region who have united around the need to retain the Leeds unit for children's and adults' congenital heart surgery in Leeds. From the leafy shires to the inner city, from the fishing ports and villages to our city suburbs, we are of one voice and one view that any future configuration of these services which does not include the centre in Leeds will be to the detriment of the five-and-a-half million people we represent across the Yorkshire and Humber region.

We did not come to this view lightly. Clearly there is an incentive for any area to defend its own local services, but we firmly believe that in this case there are real and compelling arguments for the retention of the Leeds unit to serve the population in our region and beyond.

Firstly, bearing in mind that the origins of this review are to be found in the Bristol Inquiry, we cannot understand why co-location in our view – that is the provision of all relevant services on one site which was considered the gold standard for future provision in the Bristol Inquiry – has been so loosely interpreted in this review. Of the ten centres being consulted on only Leeds and Southampton have all relevant services, including maternity, neonatal, paediatric intensive care, children's heart surgery and other specialisms for children with comorbidities, under one roof.

We believe that collocation has not been properly interpreted, weighted or considered in this review with the result that Leeds and Southampton have each been left under threat of closure.

The review has also failed to weight the existence of the very strong network – that is the review's own words, not ours, that it is a very strong network in our region – which already operates in Yorkshire and the Humber, enabling children and their families to access follow-up treatment closer to home in District Hospitals that benefit from close working relationships with the expert teams at Leeds General Infirmary.

Options A to C which went out to public consultation in the Safe and Sustainable Review would fracture and fragment the existing very strong network and set back patients' care as new networks would take time to be developed and established.

On travel and access it was perfectly clear to us from the outset that the assumptions made in the review would not operate as the review envisaged in the real world. We received evidence from Embrace, the UK's first combined infants and children's ambulance service, which serves 23 hospitals across the Yorkshire and Humber region. Embrace advised us that the impact on transfer and retrieval times, distance travelled, would be exponential with an 80% increase in the number of such

journeys, over 100,000 miles per annum more to travel and over 2,000 additional working hours, not to mention the additional costs to the taxpayer.

We felt particularly strongly that the impact of substantially increased journey times to Newcastle, Liverpool, Leicester or Birmingham for families in our region had not been given due consideration. We received compelling evidence from parents and grandparents of patients and former patients of the impact on family life when children are in hospital and, in some cases, for many months, even when that hospital is in the same region.

The additional strain of being at the bedside so much further from home which would prevent siblings from visiting after school, the other parent who is trying to keep the home going and working, grandparents, friends and family providing respite, cannot be under-estimated. The financial strain too on families who are already in an incredibly stressful situation does not seem to have been given due consideration in terms of petrol costs, public transport fees, accommodation costs, living expenses or additional childcare for other siblings at home.

The transition to adulthood for children---

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mulherin, could you please address the question?

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: I am giving an update.

THE LORD MAYOR: It seems as if your answer is extraordinarily long so could you please try to get to the point?

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Let me say this, the report I am sure you will read in full, does speak for itself.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: You have read it to us.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: The importance for our region should not be under-estimated.

THE LORD MAYOR: We are aware, as you have already said.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: I would like also to add, in addition to the report, since the report was published, we have had some additional work done that was commissioned by the Joint Committee of Primary Care Trusts, who will be the decision-makers in this review in the first stage. I am sure it will subsequently go to the Secretary of State but the Price Waterhouse Cooper's work, which was done to test the assumptions in the review on travel and access and network configuration, all backs up what we have said as a Joint Committee, cross-party, united around the need to retain the Leeds unit.

A final point to say in terms of the work that has taken place since we reported at the start of October is that there has been a judicial review brought to court by the Brompton, which is one of the three London hospitals currently providing children's cardiac surgery services. That review was upheld by the Judge and, contrary to the opinion expressed in the Yorkshire Evening Post and Yorkshire Post last week by Sir Neil McKay, who is the Chair of that Committee when he said that in October the Joint Committee had started to consider the views that people in

Yorkshire and the Humber had shared with us during consultation, including those on the importance of co-location, patients' travel patterns and new options.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mulherin, it seems some times you are adopting something that clergymen fall into – when they say “Finally” they carry on for another ten minutes, so could you please draw this reply to a close. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: OK. In short (*laughter*) the suggestion in Neil Mackay's letter that the JCPCT cannot, in light of the court's ruling, consider the very substantial arguments to retain the Leeds unit that we have made in our report is, quite frankly, ludicrous and needs to be made clear by Local Authorities across the region that the arguments need to be heard and considered now not, basically, in the Spring when they are now considering... (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor, Jarosz, I hope there is not a supplementary.

COUNCILLOR JAROSZ: A very full answer, my Lord Mayor. No supplementary. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Question 4, Councillor David Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I thought we were going to run out of time there! Would the Executive Member for Environmental Services like to comment on the Government's recent announcements on Feed-In Tariffs and its potential effect on the proposed Council solar panel PV scheme?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dobson.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. This scheme, as we are aware, was well progressed for the City Council with a view to providing up to 5,000 by March 2012 solar PV panels on Council properties of a south-facing nature. The fits as they were standing were 43p and we had an assumption that they would have continued through to March 2012. Unfortunately, the review that is now in process would reduce them to 21p but for aggregated schemes, such as ours, would take them down to 16.8p.

In effect that would mean, if the decision is granted from 1 April but backdated to 12 December 2011 as is the plan, that the scheme that we have been working up would be no longer financial viable for the Authority.

It does have several knock-on effects, not least to a company called N-Power that have been working in collaboration with us. When the announcement was made that there would be a review back in October, we were five days off signing the contract and it has effectively stalled that work.

What it would have meant for the Council was 5% of the gross fits at 43p for roof rent and that would be the gross figure. Also on top of that we would have a 50/50 split with N-Power, our 50% of the net costs of the fits over 25 years equates to about £13.5m which we intended to put into home insulations schemes and the like, so the knock-on effects are quite significant.

Obviously our challenging CO₂ targets of 4% per annum are now still achievable but this certainly does not help. The Green Energy agenda has taken a knock as far as Leeds and our ambitions are concerned. The £120 per household on

average with a 5% riser in that figure by which tenants in fuel poverty would have benefited will also disappear and, of course, what it does do is, it really has a bad effect on a very modern, new, green industry and the sort of industry we are wanting to promote, and certainly in terms of what the Government are telling us around the Green Agenda, green jobs, green skills, it certainly flies in the face of that.

I think the Treasury has actually got it wrong. The £220m that they say it would cost to progress it on the 43p figure is fine but what I do not think it is taking into account is something the CBI has alluded to that on top of that what you could say is, in terms of job creation, the economics of the thing, in terms of VAT, all the things that would have come into Government coffers, taking income generation out of the equation, they average that would have worked out at about £240m, so perhaps it is a bit of an own goal.

Of course, what we cannot get away from is the Energy Department and it is exceptionally disappointing that the Liberals, who endlessly bang on about the Green Agenda, have been responsible in Government for cutting this and I think that the blame firmly lies at the doors of Chris Hulme. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: No supplementary. Councillor Arif Hussain, please.

COUNCILLOR HUSSAIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Does the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods, Housing and Regeneration support the Government's plans to boost Right to Buy sales?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Can I thank Councillor Hussain for a very perceptive question? The answer is no, I do not support it and the reason I do not support it is because every Member of Council will be aware of the waiting list for Council housing. Every Member of Council has case work coming out of their ears about the shortage of Council housing. Every Member is aware of the fact that there is more homelessness in the city. Every Member is aware that we need more Council property and not less and to come up with a gimmick such as this at this particular time, it could take away the best of Council stock and leave us with less Council stock and leave us with less money to even repair Council stock. It is, frankly, a disgrace and this administration will not support it. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Is there a supplementary? No. We are now moving to--

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: I am sorry to interrupt, Lord Mayor. Could I request that we suspend Procedure Rules to allow questions for a further ten minutes, please, given we have had a lot of filibustering here going on today?

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: May I second that, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: It has been proposed, it has been seconded. I will put it to the vote. (*A vote was taken*) LOST.

Can I now call upon Councillor Carter, and it is, on the Order Paper, it happens to be question number 1, for the benefit of those people in the gallery.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Would the Executive Board Member for City Development give me a categoric assurance that

should Bradford Metropolitan Council move ahead with their proposals to construct 2,700 houses in the Green Belt as part of their Holme Wood and Tong Neighbourhood Development Plan, that Leeds City Council will be a statutory objector?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Yes.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Carter?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I congratulate Councillor Lewis on having more commonsense than some of his colleagues. Lord Mayor, by way of supplementary – and I will be as brief as possible – Bradford has also produced their SHLAA and are currently ahead of us with producing their LDF. In both there are a number of developments proposed that would have significantly detrimental effects on Wards in the Leeds Metropolitan District. I will not name them all but Members are nodding their heads and they stretch from Farnley and Wortley through to Otley and taking in other Wards joining in between.

Could I ask that Councillor Lewis convenes a meeting with Members of those Wards with himself and Planning Officers to discuss the implications of what Bradford are proposing so we can put forward a plan of action to try and stop some of it.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think I am always concerned that we listen to what Ward Members feel about planning applications across boundaries. I am more than happy to meet Members and have that discussion. I think we both know from our informal discussions with Bradford that no matter what you say to them they hear what they want to hear, and I think we just do have to have a united approach on this. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: For the benefit of people again in the public galleries, we are now moving on to page 8 and question 7, Councillor Townsley.

COUNCILLOR TOWNSLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Does the Executive Board Member for Development and the Economy believe that land designated for employment usage in the vicinity of Leeds Bradford Airport is in a viable location?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Lord Mayor, I would have thought so, Chris.

COUNCILLOR TOWNSLEY: Can he therefore explain the view of his officers that land at the Clariant site in my ward is not viable as employment land, particular in view of its much closer location to a major road system?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. All the officers in the Planning Department were looking at this question thinking where on earth is this on about, and I thought Clariant and I think talking about Clariant as near the airport – I suppose your definition of “near” is probably different to mine.

I have offered to your colleague to come in and talk about Clariant. He has not taken me up on that offer. Clearly you have been involved in the appeal over the past few days but I still have that offer on the table for you to come and discuss things with me and any concerns you would have about what officers are saying.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Question 8, Councillor Eileen Taylor.

COUNCILLOR E TAYLOR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Executive Member for Children's Service care to comment on the recent report by the Institute for Fiscal Studies describing the largest Government cut in education spending since the 1950s?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Councillor Taylor. Yes, this was a report published by the Institute for Fiscal Studies on 25th October and the contents of it are very concerning to all of us with our responsibilities for the future prospects of children and young people through education funding in this city.

The prediction is that the spend on education will fall by 13% over the next four years and this research into this shows that this is the biggest fall in education spending over a four year period since the 1950s, as you quite rightly say.

This, of course, is at a time of rising demand in the number of kids being born and coming into the system in Leeds and it is particularly of concern as the recent unemployment figures have been announced today which show the highest level for 15 years across the piece. For 16 to 24 year olds, 1.02m young people are unemployed, an increase of 67,000. This is a record level, the highest it has ever been in the 19 years that the figures have been collated.

The deepest cuts that are highlighted in the report are 50% capital, higher education 40%, but also we are looking forward to 20% cuts to early years and youth services and 20% cuts to those aged 16 to 19.

The effect of the Pupil Premium, whilst we welcome additional funding going into our areas of highest deprivation, means that the majority of schools are looking at a real terms cut in 2011/12. Again, if we factor in the additional numbers of children in the system, the birth rate and the fact that the leaving age at school is rising up to the age of 18, you can see the pressure.

I just want to alert all Members of Council to the fact that there are massive changes coming forward in Sixth Form funding. It does not matter whether we are talking about maintained schools, trust schools or academies. The funding for those above 16 is being brought into line with the existing funding for FE. This is going to present a significant cut to schools' budgets, particularly to those schools with a large Sixth Form. I urge you all to raise this in your Governing Bodies to make sure that schools are all prepared.

We have seen 49% of colleges reporting a significant drop in the numbers of young people attending as a result of the removal of EMA for a lot of children in the system.

With regard to the schools' estimates going forward, despite the funding staying fairly stable, the inflation and the numbers, once they are taken into account,

the report highlights that two-thirds of primary schools and over 80% of secondary schools are looking at real term cuts to their budgets. This report is deeply concerning. It hits and impacts on all of our priorities for children and young people going from the early years right through to secondary. I will, of course, bring you further updates and the detail of the funding agreements as we get to know about them. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: No supplementary. Councillor Iqbal, please.

COUNCILLOR IQBAL: Would the Executive Board Member for Leisure care to comment on the route that the Olympic Torch will take through the city when it visits next June?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ogilvie.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: Happy to answer that question, Lord Mayor. Leeds is the only city in the UK other than London which is to be visited by the torch relay on three days. I am sure all Members will agree this is great news for the city and a chance for us to showcase all that we have got going on in the city.

On 19th June the torch will pass through Boston Spa, Wetherby and Harewood. It then returns for one of its longest runs on 24th and 25th June. It will arrive late afternoon and travel through Headingley, Chapel Allerton, Harehills and Richmond Hill.

COUNCILLOR: Not Armley?

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: I have not finished yet. On 25th June it will start in the city centre and travel through City and Hunslet to the John Charles Centre for Sport and then through Beeston and Morley.

We will not know the exact route until a few weeks beforehand due to security. Can I just say, the route was actually decided by LOCOG, not by us – by the London Organising Committee. However, we want this to be the best part of the whole relay and we will be working with Area Committees and local communities to make sure that those who want to get involved in this once in a lifetime opportunity have the chance to do so.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Supplementaries? Councillor Lobley, please, on what was question number 6.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Will the Executive Board Member for Environmental Services tell me if Council staff are still being paid by the airport to patrol the approach roads of the airport.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dobson.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. No, that is not currently the case.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lobley, is there a supplementary?

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: That is fine, thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Question number 11, Councillor Matthews.

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I was conveniently at my feet there already. Can the Executive Board Member for Development and the Economy inform Council whether he supports the Inner North West Area Committee's cross party recommendation that the former Royal Park School site should be transferred to the Royal Park Community Consortium?

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: You are not still on that.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor, I did not think we would get to this one! *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: Despite the best efforts of your colleagues.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: At least I did not get caught outside the Chamber! On 5th January 2011 Executive Board agreed to our RPCC's request that they be given a nine month period to raise the three-quarters of a million pounds necessary to complete the first phase of their refurbishment programme for the property. Unfortunately RPCC have been unable to raise any capital funding within this period.

To support RPCC we funded assistances through Leeds Ahead, who identified four senior professionals from the finance and property sectors in Leeds to advise them. As a result they have identified a range of possible options for the future. We will consider these and discuss them with RPCC before making any decision about the future of the building.

I would hope that we can come up with a solution that deals with the building's condition and meets community needs.

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary?

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: Yes, thank you, Lord Mayor. I understand the history of the building, I understand the past and, given the hard work that volunteers locally put in I think there is certainly some scope for handing it over for a period of time. Sadly in the past I know you have refused to meet with Martin and myself, but we will not go over that.

My supplementary, Lord Mayor, is what is your preferred solution for the site?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I have not said I would not meet people but you are not Ward Members.

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: You did not reply.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: You are not Ward Members and I have had plenty to do with the Ward Members. I have to say your solution, handing a building over – you could have done that six years ago. You were the administration, you could easily have done that but you did not. You wait until the building has deteriorated significantly and then say, "What is the solution" when the Consortium---

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: We have a solution.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Shush, shush now, come on. The Consortium has actually been engaging with us very productively over a considerable time both when you were the administration and after we took over about a sensible future for the building. What you have come up with is a nonsense solution. It does not help anybody to give a group that has really struggled to just hand over a building to them, because all you are doing is actually handing over liabilities. What might be good sitting tapping away on your PC coming up with for a press release is not proper politics. You are not actually doing anything for the community. What you are actually doing is saying to people, "There is no solution here, we will abdicate our responsibility as a Council to say right, here you are, here are the keys, we will walk away and whatever happens after that we will not take the blame for." I do not think that is sensible, practical politics for any of us in this Council Chamber. I was always told that the Headingley Councillors, the Lib Dem Councillors in Headingley, were very bright characters. I am not sure about that any more. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: We now come to the end of the questions and those that have not had the opportunity to ask them will receive a written reply.

Before we turn to page 13 and to Item 7, can I express, I am sure every Member would want to congratulate Gerry and Laura on the birth of *(Applause)* Rowan Andrew and I gather that all is well.

ITEM 7 MINUTES

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 7, Councillor Keith Wakefield.

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

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

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

(a) Executive Board Environmental Services

THE LORD MAYOR: We move on to 7(a), Councillor Blackburn, please, David Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking to move a reference back on Minute 123 page 56 with regard to the waste solution for Leeds, the residual waste treatment PFI project which probably, I have got to say, is the most important decision that will be have been made by this Authority in many, many years.

My belief is that to go ahead with an incinerator to burn our waste is the worst decision that we have made over the 13 years I have been on Council.

I have got to say, I would say most members would have no surprise that I would find that because I have consistently said that.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Bit dramatic is that.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: What has not been appreciated all along is that we are doing something that is going to affect this city for the next quarter of a century.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Of course we are.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Most of the people who are making this decision will not be with us any more or will be clients of some old people's home or day centres in this brave new world where we may not have any of these by then, but they certainly will be of an age, while future generations will be left with this environmental and economic problem because we have not thought it out properly.

At times over the last few years I and my party have been criticised by various people for our position on this. We have been criticised by the Liberal Democrats for being anti-incinerator, we have been criticised by Labour because in trying to get...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Never.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: ...the administration to change their mind they were saying we are pro incinerator – we are not, we are anti-incinerator and we have tried to persuade, cajole, anything we could do to get this decision changed.

We are now in a situation though, I think, where, if you like, allegiances may be about to change in regards to this issue but we are still consistent that we think to have an incinerator, heat from waste solution, is the wrong one. By the way, I have got to say, I am still being criticised, Keith. I saw Kirkstall Labour website today, I am still being criticised so it is still going on.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: You keep them in and then you moan about them.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: The one consistent feature of my party's views when I was in Cabinet was – and when I resigned and when the solution has been discussed at all time – that we are not for burning waste and, furthermore, it is something that would be disastrous to us in the long term. In fact, the truth is and always has been this scheme still and always has been part of an obsession from former Councillor Smith and some of the Liberal Democrats.

Opinions may have changed and some colleagues who would have been supporting me on this motion to refer the item back two years ago may well not be supporting me now, and some who would have been opposing me two years ago might be supporting me this afternoon. The facts are that decisions taken some two years ago have really affected what the outcome is.

We are now at the final stage of this debate and I call upon Council to refer this matter back to the Executive Board for further deliberations, bearing in mind the changes in the levels of waste stream that we have already achieved and the likely changes that are happening over the next 25 years. I would also ask that the Executive Board look at the issues raised by groups such as Friends of the Earth with regard to the way the decision has been taken and as to the appropriateness of the successful bidder.

At this point I would like to bring up an issue that illustrates the changing landscape regarding incineration. It is my understanding that the Conservative controlled Norfolk County Council are fully committed to a waste incineration scheme but the Conservative Secretary of State, Caroline Spelman, has now stopped the PFI money because it is not popular with the people of Norfolk.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: She is a bounder.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Perhaps Norfolk are not as far down the road as we are but, bearing in mind the various retrospective changes this government has already brought in, are we even certain that the money will be there when we need it?

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: No.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: The fact is, nobody is ever going to convince me that burning waste is the right way forward, but what the Executive Board and the Council have done has to be entirely sure that what they are proposing is not going to have a disastrous effect on our environment and our economy in this city.

Since 2004 we have had five Executive Members on this portfolio – five. Other issues to do with waste have almost certainly cost one Leader his job and one Cabinet Member – myself – resigned over incineration. What is now the Environment Services portfolio has got political bodies scattered all over it and it is time that we started making the right decisions and I ask the Leader of Council, Keith Wakefield, and the Exec Member, Mark Dobson, please, do not make the same mistakes.

Let us stop playing politics and let us get on with the job and do the thing right. I move the reference back, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ann Blackburn, please.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Yes, thank you, Lord Mayor. I look round and see, I do not know how many people are in, there certainly are not all 99 Councillors here.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Well I am in, don't worry.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: It seems some people turn off when they talk about this issue.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: It is not the issue.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: The fact is we are here talking about incineration again and, of course, our Party's view is still the same as it was when we talked about it last time in this Chamber. We still do not think it is the right decision; we will never think it is the right decision. As David has stated we and the majority of us here will not be here in 25 years, so it will be other people that will look back and, I suppose, judge us and I wonder if they will look through these Council minutes and see, in fact, what people's views were and who said what and whether we will be right.

I think we are right. Our views are that incineration is wrong. Here we have or will have, as David has alluded to, provided the PFI credits, or should I say the Waste Infrastructure Credits which I think it is called now, if they come through. We do not know that they will but assuming that they will, we are going to be landed with what I call a large beast – a beast that will burn or has the capacity to burn 164 tonnes of waste and I am not saying we will provide all that but, of course, if we do

not – meaning we, the Council – then, of course, the company that own or are providing the facility will.

The Council stated that it will provide 120 tonnes, that is of the other day. As I say, the rest will be made up by the provider.

Twenty-five years – whether our waste and hopefully it will continue to go down, because it is going down now.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Yes, you are right. You are right.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: So if it continues for 25 years, we have still got this beast. This beast is still going to have to feed whether we, the Council, feed it or the provider feeds it, so we are lumbered. We are lumbered with it for 25 years – no way of getting out of it – and, of course, the people that live in the area are definitely lumbered with it. I do not envy them at all.

Stating all that, it is interesting that I notice I think we might have a colleague in one sense with Councillor Bill Hyde, who stated in the YEP recently that he does not think the incinerator should be in his ward. Yes, I totally agree with Councillor Hyde, I do not think it should be in your ward but I do not think it should be in anybody's ward, I do not think anybody should have to put up with it.

I would say to you, look in your hearts here. I know that if we look at it, maybe a lot of us in our wards would not have the room or would not be able to take such a large facility anyway, but let us pretend that we could. Let us pretend that this facility could be in any one of our wards and let us pretend that, would we then be saying, like Councillor Hyde, we do not want it in our ward? Can you honestly say that you want it in your ward? If you can, fair enough, I would be interested – I would be very interested – to see what your views are on that one. As I have said, we have stated quite clearly we do not want it in anybody's ward, so there we are.

I second the reference back and I would like a recorded vote, please. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Pryke.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think most Members of Council will recognise that it is perfectly OK to have an in-principled opposition to anything, including incinerators, but at the same time they should recognise that a number of Members of this Council, on all sides, have taken a position on the issue that they will decide whether they are in favour or against the final proposal, and we seem to now have a final proposal. I remember in particular talking to the Executive Board Member, Mark Dobson, when we were both Scrutiny Chairs, on this very issue and he agreed with me that most people would not make up their mind until the final details were available.

I wish too support the reference back for a number of reasons. The Exec Board papers show there has been no serious consideration of sending domestic waste to the much larger Biffa Incinerator that is closer to being built in the Aire Valley than your still too large incinerator to be built nearer people's homes. People deserve to be told why you are dumping all the large incinerators on their area.

Second, the papers also assume escalating landfill tax in perpetuity when there is no such assumption at European levels. An incineration tax is entirely

possible. DEFRA and the UK Treasury believe that the tax obligations could change radically during the 40 year life of this project and, given the current state of the EU, that might be sooner rather than later.

Third, there are numerous questions as to why expensive PFI borrowing is going directly to Veolia, who are funding the project themselves. It is still unclear exactly how much Leeds will have to pay for this, although the implication is that it will be more than £460.9m. You are proposing to sign a contract without knowing the actual cost. The claimed £200m extra cost of stopping this incinerator now could only happen if Leeds did absolutely nothing else for the next 25 years. That is inconceivable and a ridiculous exaggeration.

Fourth, by contracting with Veolia, who are complicit in repression of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, you will destroy Leeds's previous good reputation on human rights. Have you forgotten the principles of our anti-apartheid tradition? Do you care about Veolia profiting from the theft of Palestinian land?

Fifth, as David said, recently several incinerator PFI deals were cancelled by the Government. That could still happen in Leeds but you have no Plan B.

Sixth, increasingly, domestic waste sites here and abroad are being mined to recover raw materials, particularly plastics. You know that the demand in Leeds for more and better recycling exists - thousands of residents still have no recycling provision at all – but your existing plans are unadventurous, to say the least, in contrast to your demands when you were in Opposition, which brings me to the Labour Party's inconsistencies.

You know that the waste solution was forced on Leeds by the Labour Government and that DEFRA, run for almost all that time by local MP Hilary Benn, who is in favour of incineration, loaded the system in favour of large scale technologies which could be delivered by only a handful of companies, most of them Labour Party donors. We know you know that because Mr Benn's senior civil servants told our MPs that that had explicitly been explained to the Leeds Labour Party.

From 2005 until just before this month, Labour said it was totally opposed to incineration, although you spent millions of pounds of taxpayers' money pursuing this from May 2010 onwards. In 2006 you demanded twice as much funding be spent on finding a waste solution that year and forever thereafter. That was Councillor Lowe. In 2007 your Budget amendment proposed spending nothing at all on the waste project. In October 2007 you described incinerators as "filthy unwanted disasters destroying valuable resources, reducing incentives to recycle, re-use and reduce our waste stream" – that was Councillor Lyons. I do not think he is here today; that is a surprise.

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: He was.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: No, he has gone out.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: You said it was an attack on a poor inner city area, yet you are now attacking the poorest, most deprived ward in the city, having closed the libraries, the leisure centre and the day centres.

In 2008 you said this decision was so important people should have a choice in a referendum. You are now refusing it.

In 2009 and 2010 you said there were financially viable and environmentally sound alternatives, but you have never detailed them and you have not asked officers to research them. You have scared residents in various wards about lorry movements, health risks and demolition of thousands of homes – all untrue.

THE LORD MAYOR: There is a red light, Councillor Pryke.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Could you finish your final sentence?

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Right, I will conclude. This is the opportunity for Labour Councillors who say they are opposed to incineration and to the Cross Green Market site itself, to join us to refer this decision back to the Exec Board for reconsideration. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I could never compete with Councillor Pryke's breadth of research, so I am going to stick to ---

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Hypocrisy.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: That's an old-fashioned tie, isn't it, that's square at the bottom? Very old-fashioned.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Why is there a need to have a reference back? Lord Mayor, when the Labour Party came into administration with the help of the Greens, they were committed, as their policy, to oppose any incineration proposals in the city and also committed to a referendum on the issue should any proposals come forward. This was, of course, confirmed by the Kirkstall website, which has been mentioned before where that commitment is made.

We were also assured, Lord Mayor, when we asked about Labour's plans now that they were in charge, that there would be a review taking place. That review has never reported and six months after they lost their Green fig leaf because they had an overall majority, it was announced that their alternative to an incinerator is – an incinerator.

Lord Mayor, the scale of this U-turn can only be appreciated by reminding ourselves of the depth of opposition expressed by the Labour Group. Lord Mayor, Councillor Blake:

"I would like to express my dismay that we are on the brink of committing this city of ours to a waste strategy that still has mass incineration at its heart. Despite all our protestations, the case you are putting forward still favours energy from waste, a technology that destroys valuable resources and at a time when energy will reach its premium your solution will develop a technology that uses energy, reduces flexibility and, above all, will massively reduce the incentive to recycle, re-use and reduce our waste stream."

Lord Mayor, Councillor Wakefield followed that one up in 2007 with:

"I will give you notice now that we will not be gagged in our opposition to the incinerator. We will not stop pointing out the absurdity of the prospect of industrial, commercial and domestic waste, along with biomass, being transported into our city and communities for the next 30 years to keep this monstrous insatiable machine going."

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: You were not talking about your colleague Councillor Gruen, were you, by any chance?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Lord Mayor, that is very, very emotive language. Of course, Lord Mayor, many hundreds of people voted for the Labour Party candidates precisely because they vowed to stop the environmental carnage that they themselves were describing.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: They did not, actually.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: It could be argued, Lord Mayor, that this scale of reversal of policy means that the Labour Party has no mandate to take forward the proposal that they are doing.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: The Liberals telling us that! What about the student fees?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: This is particularly so as the Labour Group has offered no explanation for their change of heart.

Lord Mayor, there are hundreds of their voters that associate an incinerator with what they got through they door.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: What did they get?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Here is a selection. *(Councillor Golton held up copies of Labour Rose newspaper)*

Councillor Bruce who, I notice, actually, is still within the Chamber, unlike some of her other colleagues from Burmantofts, and it shows that she actually has more *cojones* than her colleagues – and I will spell that for the stenographer a bit later.

Lord Mayor, there were some quotes coming through. For instance:

"The impact on the local environment is going to be immense. There are other alternatives open to the Liberal Democrats, like increasing recycling"

- which we did with food waste, I have to say –

"340,000 tonnes of rubbish may be burned every year – a lot of lorry loads."

Of course, you confirmed how many lorry loads that was going to be when she pointed out that it was going to be 250 lorry loads going through the communities

of Rothwell, even though we only actually own 60 refuse wagons in the entire city.
(laughter)

COUNCILLOR: That is not a strong point.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON:

“Besides that, of course, we also have the prospect of huge lorries carrying domestic, industrial and hazardous waste through the towns and villages to feed the giant furnace.

Don Wilson and our other two Liberal Democrat Councillors have voted 13 times for the incinerator to be built on our doorsteps – 13 chances to say no; 13 times they have said yes.”

Here is your chance to say no, Karen. I hope you are staying in the Chamber to exercise that right.

Lord Mayor, these voters who have had this stuff put through their door could be left thinking that...

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: You want to incinerate it.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: ... they have been subject to the biggest political confidence trick ever attempted in this city.

Lord Mayor, this reference back is an opportunity to do the right thing and provide a space for real engagement with the communities that you alarmed. If you yourselves are convinced of the safety and the necessity of this proposal, have the bravery to explain your change of heart and trust the public to be persuaded and give them the peace of mind that your own publicity manipulated.

For the record, Lord Mayor, this Party never said it was against incineration as technology and it still does not say it is against incineration as a policy. What we are questioning is the need for ---

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton, there is a red light.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: ...given new environment. Thank you. (Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I had a feeling that this debate would generate more heat than light and it certainly has done so far.

If you will pardon me continuing in similar vein, David Blackburn, in fairness to him, has maintained the same line all along. I thought he was almost on the verge of paraphrasing the Iron Lady for a moment – “You burn if you want to – the gentleman’s not for burning.” (laughter)

In some respects David Blackburn is right. He and his wife and their former colleagues have consistently made the same argument over the past six years and that has to be respected.

I regret to say, however, colleagues over here, I need to remind them that we spent six years in office, hours and hours and hours of debating. Nobody wants incineration particularly. We went through a process – let me tell you that the portfolio holders – for the benefit of people in the balcony – were all Liberal Democrat portfolio holders. We went through from thread to needle. The first proposals that came forward were wholly unacceptable as far as many of my group were concerned, because it seemed to us that what was being suggested is we ran a business from incineration, not how little incineration can we actually do to get rid of the residual waste. We reached the stage where the amount of incineration proposed has dropped dramatically, and everyone has to admit that. It is now literally disposing of what is left of the residual waste.

I must remind Members that this is a debate which should be much more seriously conducted. It is about massive cost to the people of this city. No Government will reduce landfill charges. They went up and up and up under your lot and they are going up and up and up under the Coalition, and it will continue under any Government of any political persuasion.

I understand the temptation from the Liberal Democrats to say what they have said and to wave the newsletters about, because quite frankly you lot behave like a bunch of fools. Throughout the time that this was being debated seriously, all you could think about was could you pick a seat up in Burmantofts or a seat up in Temple Newsam while the rest of us were thinking about how we saved millions and millions of pounds that could fall in costs upon the people of Leeds. Actually, there is a bit of rough justice in this that actually now you are faced with having to make precisely the same decisions based on precisely the same information that we were faced with.

I have no sympathy for you at all and I understand entirely the temptation that the people opposite have been under but I think they are wrong. I do not think two wrongs ever did make a right and I do not think standing on your head on an issue that you have consistently said the reverse of for six years makes you look anything other than a bunch of political opportunists. *(Applause)*

I am afraid that is how you have looked today and I actually take a very dim view of having wasted a hell of a lot of my life arguing and debating how we have a sensible waste disposal system and having an agreed position with a number of people opposite which they now seem to have completely forgotten about on the basis of party political point scoring, but don't you lot cheer because for six years you talked literal rubbish and to go round promising referenda on issues like that, Keith, I am sorry, the situation has not changed. The situation has not changed. What has changed is that you are having to make the decisions now and having to be grown up about it for a change.

My Lord Mayor, I think I have made our point very clearly. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Bill Hyde, please.

COUNCILLOR W HYDE: Lord Mayor, surprising, some folk might think, I rise to support Councillor Blackburn's proposal to refer this matter back, but not for the reasons that Councillor Blackburn has spoken of – in fact probably to some extent to the opposite.

Given the Central Government penalties facing all Local Authorities which continue to use landfill as a waste disposal solution, as just explained by Councillor

Carter, there really cannot be any doubt that this Council must provide an alternative to landfill. I am sure that we would all agree with and accept that.

The benefits to the people of Leeds in recommending the Veolia bid seem to me to be equally clear. The proposed process encompasses the latest development in recycling and energy recovery and no doubt will provide the city with a first class facility. It promises a maximum amount of alternative treatment of waste and the minimum amount of incineration so, given all that, that really is not the problem. The problem that we should be addressing is the problem of the proposed location.

When the previous administration identified the former wholesale market site as the Council's reference site, I think it was widely believed that this was a mere formality, that this was something in order to conform with a Government directive over both Governments, the last one and this one, Government directives that a Council-owned site must be included in the tender process. At this point none of us really expected that it would become, as it appears now to be very nearly becoming, the preferred site.

The former wholesale market site is far too close to housing both at Holton Moor and at East End Park. For this reason and this reason alone, I urge the Executive Board to re-examine the suggested location because I do not think it is too late to do that. I think you can do that if you have a will to do it with a view to providing an alternative site at least a mile away from residential properties. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Interesting debate, isn't it, and I do not really want to get into the bones of any of this debate, actually. However, I do think it is rather ironic that there are four members from the Labour Group who have absented themselves from the Chamber and for the record – for the record – that is why I rise today, Lord Mayor, because it is important that it is minuted and it is shown and that the full impact is realised. If all the Members of the Conservative Group had been here today, if all of the Members of the Lib Dem Group had been here today, all the Members of the Morley Borough Independents and all of the Greens had been here today and had all voted to support Councillor Blackburn, the supposed administration in this city would lose the vote – would lose the vote. What sort of leadership is that? What sort of leadership, what sort of an in-principled decision is that?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: We would not. You cannot count, John.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: I can, actually. I can count and I can do the maths and actually if your Chief Whip had have done it he might have realised it as well. The fact is that you are relying on the good nature of us and maybe some others... *(interruption)*

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I do not think there is anything to rely on.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, that is the real sad fact. That is the real sad fact of this situation, that you are relying on other people to see sense, as you would no doubt argue, and the potential cost that would face the citizens of Leeds and vote accordingly, but that should not be our responsibility. You are the people who are supposedly leading this city; you are the people who are supposedly in administration and you should be whipping your Members to oppose this particular

proposal, but you are not doing any of that and so many of you seem to think it is a big joke that four of your Members have gone.

Just for the record, Councillor Michael Lyons, Councillor Katherine Mitchell – who also have we lost? Councillor Ron Grahame and Councillor Khan as well, all of whom have gone out and you all think that is a really clever manoeuvre, do you? They have gone out for political purposes only so they will no doubt try and say, “We did not vote for an incinerator.” You think that is really clever, do you?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: That is what Mick Lyons said last time.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: It is rather pathetic, frankly. It shows no spine, no backbone, no courage of conviction whatsoever. You gesture over here to the Lib Dems and talk about political opportunism; that is what your administration is guilty of, political opportunism hoping you will pick up the votes of other parties to prop up your useless administration. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dobson.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Well, where to start. I think Councillor Carter hit the nail squarely on the head that the Greens’ position has been pretty unmoveable over the last few years on this issue and I have an enormous amount of respect for their position.

What I would take them to task on is the idea that somehow we would be responsible for some environmental disaster if this takes place.

I was a sceptic back in 2006 and 2007 before I entered the Council, a genuine sceptic. I was not convinced about the size of the facility, I was not convinced about the traffic movement, I was not convinced around the emissions. I was not convinced about any of those things but what I have done over the years is actually stopped, sat back and listened and I have listened to what officers have told me, I have listened to the detailed technical arguments that have been put before me and I have actually taken the time to change my mind. I have done that based on facts. I have also done it based on another simple equation that we cannot as a Council get away from.

Irrespective of what Councillor Pryke may or may not say about turn back, there is time, this that and the other, there simply is not. We are now locked into a process and if we do not deliver an energy from waste facility on the timescales that have been mapped out, we will be putting this Council in financial jeopardy and I am simply not prepared to do that.

The £16m per annum on landfill charges as they will be standing at 2013 – and rising, Councillor Carter hit the nail squarely on the head, they are not going to go down. I think we have to be responsible as an Authority and say, look, from the perspective of the city and the city’s finances, is this the best way forward in terms of our waste management strategy? I believe the answer to be “Yes.”

I have also taken the time and effort to actually listen to people like Friends of the Earth and, whilst we will fundamentally always disagree about the rights and wrongs of incineration, what I have done, I have accepted a challenge from them I alluded to in the Executive Board. They turned round and said, “If you are that confident that incineration will not impact on your recycling rates, up them. Challenge yourselves, be more challenging.” I think that is a perfectly reasonable

aspiration. The 40 per cent figure that we bandied about in 2006 looks well out of date now because we are hitting that regularly month on month. The 50 per cent by 2020 also looks a bit lame. I think there is an opportunity for us to do something really special in this city and be, as a core city, a prime mover in terms of our recycling rates. I am confident we can do that – I am so confident we are bringing a paper to the Executive Board in December.

I am going to do something that perhaps would not sit comfortably with everyone. I am going to actually pay a compliment to the Conservative Group on this matter who have, in the Executive Board, taken a decision that they believe is in the best interests of Leeds.

This is where we differ between the Conservatives and the Liberals because I firmly believe that when Councillor Carter came into the Executive Board and supported this paper, he did so because I do not believe for one moment he would jeopardise this city's finances. I simply do not believe that. You lot, you would sell your own grannies for anything. *(laughter)* Wave it about all you want, Jamie – wave it about all you want because let us get right down to the facts of the matter. Jamie, you can wave them about all you want because you are looking sillier than usual and that takes some doing. *(laughter)*

Back in 2008 we offered up a referendum. I believe, unlike Councillor Carter on this one, the time to do that was right and proper because we had not entered into the process. Once we were locked into that process and, Bill, you are wrong on this one, it was not a token gesture adding up a site. We had to add up a tangible site that could potentially have been used in this process and that is what we did and it was the market site.

What actually came to pass is there were two bids that went forward to the final stages and the Veolia bid won. They won fair and square. I think the bit that we find a little bit unpalatable is the fact that it is on the market site and for a lot of us that is problematic but let me be absolutely clear, the process was right, the technology is right. I am not prepared to keep shoving things in the ground for ever more and paying for the privilege of doing it. I am not prepared to jeopardise the city's finances to the scale of £200m over the next 25 years. You might be. You might be. I am not.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: What about Councillor Lyons? Is he prepared to jeopardise the future of the city?

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: It is my job as Executive Board Member to progress this argument, John, and that is exactly what I am doing.

I will say one final thing to conclude. I think at the time we were making the arguments there was a genuine belief that there was an alternative, there was a time line to do it. That time line has now gone and it has gone for one simple reason, because Councillor Smith, because Councillor Monaghan who had my job during that era – I would ask them but, of course, I cannot – and, of course, Councillor Brett, who was the Leader of the Council who pushed this through. To abdicate responsibility at this moment in time is frankly disgraceful. It will be seen by the people of Leeds for what it is. It is a last ditch attempt to get out of---

THE LORD MAYOR: There is a red light, Councillor Dobson.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: I think the case is made and I thank you for the support of the Conservatives. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Before we call for a vote on the amendment, I am going to ask the City Solicitor to clarify exactly on what we are voting.

THE CITY SOLICITOR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It has been raised with me, Councillor Lobley raised it with me and I think it is an important issue that it is worth bringing to the attention of Council, and that is, obviously this debate is to do with Executive Board decision on the waste PFI scheme, including the preferred site. There is a separate and distinct process and a separate decision that will probably need to be taken by the Council on the site and it is likely that there will be a planning application, depending on what happens with this motion, clearly. A separate planning decision will need to be taken by the Council and therefore there is a good prospect that the members of Plans East Panel will be required to make a decision on this particular matter. Again, that is a separate and distinct decision.

Again, members of Plans East will be aware of this general guidance but Members need to be aware of the rules concerning predetermination and bias and Members should not approach this matter with a closed mind and, whilst Members are entitled to have a predisposition in favour of a particular view, they should not take part in the decision, in any decision, if they have pre-determined the matter, whether for or against this issue.

Just to remind Members, particularly members of the Plans East Panel, of that guidance.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: My Lord Mayor, may I request a recorded vote on this item, please?

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: I have already requested.

THE LORD MAYOR: I will now---

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Can I just also raise, the way we work on Planning is that we substitute for each other's Plans, so anyone who is on West or East or Central can sub for the others, so I am on West, for example, I sub on Central. I do my best not to sub on East because their meetings are very long, but theoretically...

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: We don't want you either.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: My point is theoretically anyone who is on Plans East, West or Central could be affected by the same issue, so is the advice that everyone on all three Panels should abstain on the actual location vote?

THE LORD MAYOR: I will seek guidance on that.

THE CITY SOLICITOR: No, I am not saying that, Lord Mayor. What I am saying is that Members need to consider their position and whether they think that they have pre-determined the decision. Members are entitled to have a pre-disposition in favour of a particular view but they are not entitled to have pre-determined and approach the matter with closed minds, so it does not mean that you are disbarred from taking part in the decision making process; you just need to ask yourself that question.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Campbell, and then I want to move on to the vote, please.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: With great respect, Lord Mayor, I understand that the Localism Bill passed into law at the beginning of this week. That will materially affect, I think, the advice you have just given.

THE CITY SOLICITOR: I can comment on that, Lord Mayor, if you want.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: I think that would be helpful.

THE CITY SOLICITOR: The Localism Bill has become an Act. What the Localism Bill does and what the Localism Act does is actually confirms that position, the legal position. Basically, it confirms that just merely because you have expressed a view on a particular matter does not mean that you are precluded from taking part in the decision making process. What it effectively does is confirms the common law position, which is the position I have articulated earlier on, it just does it in Statutory form.

THE LORD MAYOR: So with that in mind I am now calling for a vote on the amendment, which is the reference back. Did I hear that someone wanted a recorded vote? Is that seconded?

(A recorded vote was taken on the reference back)

THE LORD MAYOR: There are 86 members present; 55 have voted "No"; 18 have voted "Yes"; and 13 have abstained. That is LOST.

(i) Adult Health and Social Care

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we now move to page 14, Councillor Campbell

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I will just let Councillor Dobson get out and tell his Members they can come back in.

My Lord Mayor, I rise to address the issue of, as it says on the Minutes, about the proposals to charge for a blue badge. Actually, Lord Mayor, I will not be addressing that directly. In fact, I will probably leave the irony of charging---

COUNCILLOR: He's back.

(Councillors Grahame, Mitchell and Khan returned to the Chamber)
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Can you carry on, please, Councillor Campbell, when they settle down.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Normally, Lord Mayor, I do not get applause when I start!

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Here he is!

(Councillor Lyons returned to the Chamber) (Applause)

COUNCILLOR LYONS: I do not speak with forked tongue like some people.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: You should have stayed and spoken.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Can we put the clock back to the beginning, please, Lord Mayor? Lord Mayor, I do not intend to comment on the irony of the principle of charging for some of the most vulnerable members of our community for what is, in effect, a parking pass, while asking Council Tax payers to fund residents' parking permits for the able bodied. What I actually want to raise is the logistics of what we are asking individuals to do to get one of these passes.

It came about from a phone call I received at the beginning of the week from an elderly gentleman who lives in Otley who currently has a blue badge which is due for renewal. He had received a letter telling him that he needed to go for an assessment and that assessment was to take place in Middleton.

I think he understood the principle that assessments have to take place. There was not a discussion about that. What he said to me was, "Why do I have to go to all the way to Middleton?" In fact, to be perfectly honest, he said never in his life had he ever been to Middleton and, to be honest, was not a hundred per cent certain how to get there.

He did say that possibly he could have driven, but this is a man in his late 70s who still drives, I must admit, but effectively just drives down the town to do a bit of shopping. He did say the prospect of crossing Leeds in his car, attempting to find the Assessment Centre in Middleton, filled him with some dread and, in fact, he did not feel he was able to do that, so he had asked for a suggestion about an alternative. The suggested alternative that he was given was that he should take public transport.

I will ask you to visualise, this is a gentleman who is in his late 70s who, for a number of reasons, has serious health issues, has certainly undergone a couple of operations in the last year and is severely disabled. He was asked, effectively, to get the bus from outside his house into Otley, get the bus from Otley into the centre of Leeds, get the bus from the centre of Leeds into Middleton and to walk from the bus stop in Middleton to the Assessment Centre.

He felt that that was beyond his capacity to do and he really was genuinely concerned about what would happen, so I obviously, on his behalf, contacted our officers to ask that particular question. I was told, somewhat cynically – and I do not hold it against the officer because I think he told me this tongue in cheek – that, quite frankly, if an individual could use three buses and walk from the bus stop to the centre, they would automatically be deemed as not needing a pass. That is a Catch 22 we cannot allow.

Subsequently, and I got the email this afternoon, Lord Mayor, I have been told that the case was looked into but they can offer no---

THE LORD MAYOR: In view of your being interrupted earlier on I am happy for you to continue.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. As I said, Lord Mayor, I think we need to be able to give individuals like this gentleman who do not live within easy distance of the Assessment Centre or, in fact, have friends and relations who can take them, the opportunity to be assessed in a more local situation. That applies

to all of us. It will apply to people who live in Wetherby, it will apply to people who live in Otley, apply to Guiseley – it will apply to all the areas certainly north of the city centre where individuals are being called for assessment and have to travel some distance to get to Middleton.

I would, therefore, ask Councillor Yeadon in her capacity as spokesman for Adult Services, if she could make arrangements, or can we make arrangements for individuals who cannot get to Middleton to be assessed locally? It is fair to them and it is not reasonable for this Council to be insisting that they cross the entire length of Leeds simply for the convenience of being assessed. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Castle, please.

COUNCILLOR CASTLE: Lord Mayor, Councillor Campbell and I should have got together before this debate because I was going to have said almost exactly the same on behalf of a resident of Linton, so all I will say is, I second Councillor Campbell. (Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Yeadon.

COUNCILLOR YEADON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I will start by saying I do know from personal experience how important the blue badge system is to enable people with disabilities to live fulfilling lives, having been a beneficiary of a blue badge and also my father as well.

It was very difficult taking this paper to Executive Board to recommend the charge of £10 as a result of the Government changes to how blue badges are administered. I absolutely take your point, Colin, on the issue of how we assess for the blue badge.

The difficulty is that the responsibility for assessing for blue badge was transferred from the PCT, as the GPs used to assess for blue badges, to the Local Authority, which took place at the beginning of this financial year. Although some funding was available, it did not meet the cost of actually how much the assessments cost, so we have now six OTs who are now assessing for blue badges at Middleton to cover the entire city and we are subsidising that ourselves within the Local Authority. I take the point that does not necessarily meet the needs of everybody in the city.

We are currently looking at setting up a specialist hub in the centre of the city which could take on this responsibility and we are investigating that, but I will certainly take it back to officers and say what can we do for those further afield, as this is obviously causing some problems.

What I will say is that it was the decision of the Government to change the way that blue badges are assessed and also administered and we are having to respond to that very quickly. The new system that will be producing blue badges is due to come into effect at 1st January. As far as we are aware at this present time, no pilot for that system has taken place and there have been very few trial runs. We are extremely concerned that by 1st January this system may work and may not work and it will be the Local Authority who will have to pick up the fall-out as it has been for this issue of assessment.

It is a very difficult situation but I absolutely take on board your points and we will go away and see if there is a better system that we can put in place to respond to this transfer of responsibilities. *(Applause)*

xx(ii) Resources and Corporate Functions

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on page 37, Minute 92 on Welfare Reform and an update that we had at Executive Board.

I have been a keen observer of the welfare system for many years and declare an interest, having worked in that particular area for over 25 years now, so I have seen welfare reforms come and welfare reforms go and it has been quite interesting to examine what separate and different Governments have attempted to try and do and look at the ways that they have attempted to try and address the thorny issue of welfare reform.

There is no doubt at all that the welfare reform system presently does not work. It did not work under the previous Government, it did not work on the previous Tory Government, and it needs some significant reform. I think if you speak to most people they have a view that the basic principles that set up the Welfare State that created the benefit system was initially set up for the right reasons but it has become corrupted, has become something that has corroded the state of many communities and has not successfully achieved, perhaps, what the planners who introduced the Welfare State wanted it to achieve at that particular point.

It is not particularly a party political point. Certainly the previous Conservative Government tried welfare reform, the Labour Government were looking through similar welfare reforms, certainly the problem that we have with the present Employment Support Allowance system is directly as a result of Labour's engineering and we all know from our own constituents what a significant impact that has actually had.

In terms of what is trying to be achieved, I think we do need to look very carefully at certain aspects of it to see whether it is faulty or whether it is going to create significant opportunities for a lot of people within our community.

One of the first things that we do have to reflect upon is the fact that Housing Benefit changes, they are suggesting that you raise the rate in terms of people who are getting the single room rate goes from the age of 25 to the age of 35. That is a significant concern that we have.

At this particular point, if you are 25 or under you are in a position where your Housing Benefit is restricted primarily to a single room in an attempt, I suspect, to try and make sure that people share accommodation. That has been move up to 35. That has a significant impact certainly on perhaps fathers who are in a situation where they want to have a closer relationship with children that they are absent from. If you are in a situation where your Housing Benefit is restricted so the only opportunities that you have got are to share a home with other probably males, I think that is detrimental in terms of trying to build up a very positive relationship with your children. I think there are going to be many parents with care who are going to be reluctant to offer their ex-partners the opportunity to have children under those particular circumstances over the weekends and at holidays. I think that is something that needs to be re-looked at and reflected upon.

In terms of the suggestion that we get rid of Council Tax Benefit and that Local Authorities design their own scheme, that is fundamentally flawed. Within there is a suggestion that you make savings and what that will ultimately mean is some of the poorest in our communities who are entitled to Council Tax Benefit will have to pay more Council Tax to subsidise those who are even poorer than they are. That fundamentally cannot be right. You cannot have systems that are different across different Local Authorities. You cannot have systems where the poor subsidise the even poorer. Again, that needs to be looked at and that needs to be reflected upon.

Certainly there are certain positives in terms of the Universal Credit and the fact that that will be a simplified system and people are clearer about where they stand.

The big issue for years and years and years have been the disincentives for people to work because if they work, the claw-back on their benefits do create a massive disincentive. Certainly people may well be aware at this particular point, if you are claiming a rent rebate and Council Tax Benefit, for every pound you earn you get 85p of that pound clawed back in terms of loss of benefit. That is a massive disincentive for people. That was the same under the previous Labour Government, it was the same under the previous Tory Government. Fundamentally that has to change and you have to look at ways of making sure that work does actually pay. Universal Credit achieves some of that.

The problem with Universal Credit is the fact that some of the Housing Benefit element goes directly through to the people themselves.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan, you have reached the red light.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: It is not a good idea. Think it again. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Renshaw.

COUNCILLOR RENSHAW: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on Minute 92, page 37, regarding Discretionary Rate Relief for Social Enterprises.

I would like to welcome the decision made by the Executive Board to offer discretionary rate relief to social enterprises. It is hugely important that the Council has recognised and is actively supporting social enterprises. The economic situation at the moment means that this rate relief is needed more than ever.

One of the Council and city's priorities is working with partners to promote key sectors of the local economy and support businesses in Leeds. That is exactly what this scheme does.

To those who are not familiar with social enterprises, they are companies that are for more than profit. A social enterprise reinvests its profits back into the business to provide a wider social benefit. This could include helping the elderly, young or vulnerable. They deliver social benefits but as they are not recognised charities until now, they did not receive rate relief, despite the fantastic work they do for the community.

Now this is no longer the case, as social enterprises can apply to have a rate relief. Each social enterprise will be assessed before they receive this to check they

are providing a genuine benefit to the community. This is a clear example of how Leeds City Council values the social impact that social enterprises have in their local communities.

The level of relief each social enterprise receives will range from 10% to 80%, depending on the type and level of social benefit they deliver. We hope this will get more people to start social enterprises which will in turn benefit our local communities.

A practical example of the type of organisation this scheme could support is CREATE. This is a social enterprise which works in catering and gives people who are homeless, marginalised or vulnerable training, opportunities, work experience and jobs, so as well as providing great cuisine they also give people a chance to improve their lives. CREATE now has a restaurant on King Street in Leeds and this scheme gives them a chance to apply for rate relief. This will support the work they do.

It is estimated that there are around 150 social enterprises within the Leeds area who are not registered charities. It is these organisations which may benefit from this change. The less money they have to pay out on their rates, the more money they are spending helping the community.

Politics is about making a difference and this scheme offers social enterprise across this city to make a real difference and this Council is already receiving applications. While the Government talks about the big society, it is here in Leeds with schemes like this that a Labour Council is supporting community activity. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, may I also speak on Welfare Reform. It is interesting to see how empty the Opposition benches are when you speak about Welfare Reform. At least some of the Liberals have stopped tweeting and are beginning to listen.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Probably because they knew you were speaking, Peter.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I have warned before about Welfare Reform and my pessimism and my concern grows the nearer we come to implementing some of these so-called reforms.

Today I want to concentrate, and really Robert started to do this, on some of the Housing Benefit issues. We all know, I think that there is a cap now, £250 for a one-bedroom property, £290 for two-bedroom, £340 for three, £400 for four-bedroom. Anyone above four bedrooms – and there are plenty of people with large families – will be capped at four-bedroom rate from January.

On top of that, tenants living in properties cheaper than the cap will lose their £25 a week Excess Benefit. This is supposed to give an incentive to go and find cheaper property in other parts of the city.

The Local Housing Allowance will be capped at the 30th percentile of local rents as opposed to 50th. It does not sound a great deal, does it, but actually, when

you apply the formula, it makes a huge difference in terms of money. Less than a third of properties will be available to benefit claimants as a result.

The Government hopes that landlords will lower their rents to make properties more affordable. What that means is for thousands of people they are depending that landlords will actually charge less, and how likely do we think that will be?

Young people too will lose automatically under these reforms. From January, as Robert said, the Shared Accommodation Rate will apply not to people up to the age of 25 but 35 – that is a massive difference. It means around 1300 young tenants in Leeds will be on average £40 a week worse off. Thank you, Coalition Government.

They will not be the only ones going to lose out. In total around 9,500 people in Leeds will be worse off as a result of these so-called reforms. Approximately 60 families will no longer be able to afford their five-bedroom properties. They will lose £86 a week and the worst in that category will lose £162 per week. That is a family, £650 a month worse off.

Smaller families too will lose Housing Benefit when those cuts come into force in January. 295 families will lose £23 a week; over 1,000 will lose £12 a week; over 3,000 will lose £12(*sic*) per week. This is not people, this is families, so double or treble the numbers. 5,000 people who are claiming for either one-bedroom or shared accommodation will lose up to £10 per week.

Can I just turn now to the homeless and the housing options? I think I have already reported elsewhere that we are beginning to see the impact and compared to two years ago, there is now an increase of 40% - I repeat that, 40% - reaching 17,000 people this year who are presenting themselves to the Housing Option Team.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: That is nonsense. That is not true. It is not true, Peter.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: You look into the facts. You look into the facts. I want to congratulate the fantastic amount of work being done by the Housing Options Team to try and prevent early doors some of those worst effects of homelessness. This is what the Government calls Welfare Reform. It is cutting the most vulnerable, the most needy people in society. It is something we do not support, cannot support and I hope all of Council will not support. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Maqsood.

COUNCILLOR MAQSOOD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I will also be commenting on page 37 Minute 92 of the Welfare Report Update. The Welfare Reforms published by the Coalition Government are far reaching and will affect nearly everyone but I want to talk about the disproportionate impact on families.

As Councillor Gruen has already highlighted, the Housing Benefit changes will have a huge impact on families but what will be the true cost of these changes? What will be the impact of changing the age range of Shared Accommodation Rate to single people up to the age of 35? How is a separated parent supposed to have their children come and stay at weekends if they can only afford to live in shared accommodation?

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has already pointed out that large families are one of the groups most likely to face poverty. Children in families with four or more children account for 19% of all children in poverty. Shelter has warned that the proposed cuts to Housing Benefit could see nearly 54,000 children suffering deeper poverty and would lead the Government to miss its target of ending child poverty by 2020. The Chief Executive of Shelter, Campbell Robb, has warned that the Housing Benefit cuts will have a particularly negative impact on children's education and social development, forcing families to move and take children out of their school, away from friends and families. As families find it more and more difficult to afford their rent, they will be forced to move into lower quality accommodation, often living in damp, overcrowded and inappropriate conditions that can lead to increases in childhood asthma and other respiratory infections.

The report entitled "The Social Impact of Poor Housing" provides an analysis of numerous research projects and studies into the impact of low quality housing. It finds strong links between poor housing and health problems, low educational attainment and an association with crime and re-offending. Children living in poorer areas under-performed at all key stages of school compared to their classmates from wealthier areas. Only 25% of young people in the most deprived areas achieve five or more GCSE at A*- C including English and Maths compared to 68.4% in the least deprived. Children living in temporary housing are likely to miss school on a frequent basis, taking 55 school days off on average.

It is not just Housing Benefit changes that families are having to cope with. All Child Benefit was frozen for three years from 2011 and will be removed from families with one higher rate tax payer from January 2013. When this was announced, families across the country were outraged at the unfairness of a single earner household where that person just hits the higher tax rate, having their benefit stopped, when a dual earner household where they earn just below the threshold keep theirs. This effectively means that a family with a household income of £45,000 lose their benefit, but a family with a household income of £84,000 keep theirs. There is an argument that for the sake of fairness the cut-off should be based on total household income but when has this Government ever been concerned about being fair? (*hear, hear*)

Much has been made of the new Universal Credit and how good it will be for everyone. However, what is not widely publicised is the fact that by the time the Universal Credit is introduced, £18b will have already been taken out of benefits and, once again, children will be the biggest losers.

All this change gives the impression that the Tory-led Government has unfairly targeted women in their welfare reforms and are using them to reinstate the male breadwinner/dependent female carer model. Is it a coincidence that the cumulative effect of welfare reform and Government cuts all serve to undermine the financial independence of women in families?

We have seen time and time again the total disregard this Government has had for hard working families.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Maqsood, we have a red light. I am sorry, thank you.

COUNCILLOR MAQSOOD: I will just finish.

THE LORD MAYOR: I am sorry, thank you. (*Applause*) Councillor Atha.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Lord Mayor ---

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Red light, Bernard!

COUNCILLOR ATHA: The red light means one thing to me and a different thing to you, mate! (*laughter*) I will not say which is which!

I am going to start late so you will give me that.

THE LORD MAYOR: I noticed; five seconds.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Seven. I am going to talk about this same Minute but take it rather more seriously than my first comments might suggest because I see this, and I am sure others do here round the Chamber, this is a cultural Blitzkrieg on the poorest people in this country that we have ever experienced.

I have lived a very long time and remember the harsh times of yesteryear. Others, not quite so long, will know how bad it has been but the effects of these cuts, these reforms, so-called, are going to be so drastic they are going to be the worst that this country has seen at least for two generations.

I rely, in case I am being accused of being party political, entirely on what I say by using independent sources. This first source, this little cutting, is from the Manchester Evening News. I will give you the date if anyone doubts its accuracy. It goes on with the kind of force that a good local paper should exercise. It says:

“Thousands of Manchester’s most vulnerable people will be hit by the worst cuts to social care in a general. Shared Accommodation, Meals on Wheels, Support for Battered Women and other services which provide a lifeline to society’s most needed will be hit. The Council has been forced to make such sacrifices because of an appalling grant from Central Government. We have repeatedly stated these cuts are utterly unfair. Manchester is losing 21% of its Local Authority Grant – one of the worst in England – about the same as Leeds, actually. The average is 15.2% elsewhere. This is a city with high levels of deprivation and a higher than average number of people in need of support. The cuts to the Council do not reflect these complex and deep-rooted problems. The Government mantra ‘We are all in this together’ has never sounded so hollow. To add insult to injury, the rural, affluent areas in the south have fared much better. That is a gross injustice.”

That was the Manchester Evening News coming out with a force that we should see every local paper in the country coming out with.

I will give you another headline, from the Observer: “Cold will kill up to 200 older people a day, warns Age UK.” That is not fiction, it is not made up. Age UK is an organisation we can all respect. They do not play a game of hyperbole. It is a horrifying statistic, put as bluntly as that.

The benefits threat could force tenants to put blockages in the window. This is because of the thing that has been referred to earlier, the way that Housing Benefit will be reduced if, in fact, you are determined to have one bedroom extra, and the definition of a bedroom is a room with a window, so some people are actually considering blocking up the window so they will not have to move. It is quite a

scandal. The idea is to move them into other accommodation. Where is it, where in Leeds you have got 30,000-odd people on a waiting list, it is quite abominable that any Government should be doing this to the poor and the vulnerable.

Incapacity Benefit. The changes there mean by 2014 there will be one million fewer on Incapacity Benefit. It is quite monstrous. The people who require our help should get it. Those who are malingerers should suffer. The people who benefit from these big moneys paid out in Housing Benefits, the landlords, should be brought to book. There should be the control over rent that there used to be so that it will be fair. It is ridiculous that we carry on putting money into avaricious landlords' pockets when, in fact, the people are suffering at this level. It is quite scandalous. It is an overall Blitzkrieg and it is not a question of party politics. There is much humanity in you as individuals over there and the Lib Dems (who are outside, possibly doing something else) as us here. We should all join together to say to the Government this is just not good enough.

The Institute of Fiscal Studies, the last quote I shall give you says that absolute poverty and relative poverty are forecast to rise to 23% and 24% and that is after the Universal Benefit comes in. Most of us would say the Universal Benefit is a very sound idea but if the effect is to make 23% higher absolutely in poverty and 24% in the relative poverty, it is not a good system. We should collectively say as human beings, we cannot allow the poorest in our community, the most vulnerable in our community, to suffer in this way and if we all put our thoughts in but talk to the Government and say, "You cannot do this, you have got to change", then that kind of change could be affected.

THE LORD MAYOR: There is a red light. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Councillor Lamb.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Thank you, Lord Mayor. This is a really difficult and it is very tempting, as is the usual form, to get involved in some knock-about but it is too important. We are talking about some of the poorest and vulnerable people in society. I actually think the most sensible contribution so far was Robert's at the beginning and the point that he made that the welfare system as it stands does not work, it is not fit for purpose and it needs some change.

It is the fault of all other previous Governments that we are where we are, of all colours. In a period of unprecedented growth under the last Labour Government there were never less than five million people on some form of out of work benefits. That is before the recession started. Throughout that time there was a million people that did not work for a single day that could have done, and there is something wrong. We have to understand the reasons why there are so many poor people in the country in the first place and the welfare system is part of the problem rather than part of the solution.

We spent – and I am not attempting to pin all the blame on the last Labour Government; the problem was exacerbated but it started long before that. We have grown a culture where we pay people to be poor in this country and we trap them into positions that they cannot get out of. We have absurd situations where couples with children look at their financial situation where they face difficulties and they decide that, actually, they are better off if they live apart from each other. That is a terrible thing. Something has gone terribly wrong when we find ourselves in this position.

You have touched on some important issues but the simple fact is the system is broken and there has to be some change. I agree with what Bernard said, this is something that needs to be above party politics. We remember how politicians of all parties, of all Governments, have shied away from this. Tony Blair asked Frank Field in 1997 to think the unthinkable and he did and they did not like it, and they carried on in the same vein and that is why those five million people and all the families – you look at how many children have grown up with generation after generation of their role models that have never worked in their lives and something is wrong – something has gone terribly wrong.

I can tell you as well, Judith talked about youth unemployment in one of her answers to a question earlier on and the scourge – she is not listening, I do not think any of them are – of youth unemployment. It has got worse but in 1997 youth unemployment was 14% and falling; in May 2010 it was 20% and rising, so you are in no position to lecture people on a wasted generation of young people and you should not stand there and lecture us. This is the problem for every single one of us to try and address in a serious way and to put forward some proposals. All you come up with is, “Don’t do anything, don’t change anything, keep it as it is”. What we are doing is condemning more and more and more people to be poor for the rest of their lives and that is not good enough.

We have to take this on, we have to be brave and what it needs is each one of us to come up with some proper solutions to this situation and to stop just saying, “Yes, it is difficult.” We can find whatever is proposed, you can find, any of us, an example of a family and how they will be affected and how terribly unfair it is on that particular family, but the problem with the benefit system and the welfare system, it does not distinguish between those who are, to coin a phrase, the deserving poor and the undeserving poor, or those people who genuinely cannot take responsibility for themselves and need support and those who could work and do not want to.

There are jobs out there. There are not enough jobs for everybody that is unemployed at the moment but I have a couple of jobs at the minute and I have had two applicants for one that is a decent job with good hours and rates of pay and it is difficult for employers to find people to work despite the fact there are so many people unemployed.

In conclusion, Lord Mayor, it is not right just to simply attack the welfare reports. Iain Duncan-Smith is probably one of the Conservative politicians I am most proud of because I know he believes in what he is doing and in terms of (*interruption*) I am sorry but none of you could match his commitment to trying to tackle the issues of poverty in this country and the inspiration he has shown in trying to do that. He may not get absolutely everything right, and there clearly needs to be some changes to what has been proposed, but what you should do is stop complaining about everything and we need to start working together and put forward some serious proposals to try and make our benefit system work for the benefits of those who are genuinely the most needy in our society and they are the ones who are suffering most at the hands of the current welfare system. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wilkinson

COUNCILLOR WILKINSON: First of all, congratulations to Alan. I think he made the best speech that has been made here this afternoon. It is a pity that Labour Members did not listen to him.

I wish to speak, Lord Mayor, on Minute 92 page 37, but this is a different tack. There are many strands of this Bill but I wish to comment on one concern that I have, which is supported by the East North East Homes Board, and that is the proposal to pay Housing Benefit direct to the tenant rather than, as current, to the Housing Rent Account.

The Board took the view that the impact of this particular proposal would pose a major risk to the ALMO's business plan. On behalf of the Board I was tasked to write to our Member of Parliament to ask him to take this matter up with the Minister. As yet I have not had a response back from him.

What are the potential issues and risks? Although tenants who are pensioners or those described as "vulnerable" will continue to have their benefit paid to the Housing Rent Account. Those who will receive Housing Benefit direct to themselves may choose to pay more pressing bills rather than their rent. For instance, when children need new school uniforms, will they choose this option rather than pay their rent, or when it comes to Christmas will they choose to pay for the extras rather than pay their rent, or when the loan shark knocks on the door, will paying him be seen as a priority?

Of course, in my view, the majority will see paying their rent as their first priority, but if only a couple of per cent choose not to pay, this would see a few hundred more tenants in arrears with the serious risk of being evicted with the increased cost to the ALMOs of rent collection and, in the case of threatened eviction, legal costs. There are currently 17,800 households on full Housing Benefit, with a further 4,500 on partial benefit and with rent write-offs due to non-payment of rent amounting to a staggering £1.178m so far this financial year – and we are not half way through it yet – this, more likely than not, will show a marked increase, putting the ALMOs at serious risk.

What is the solution? In my view, we should continue as at present and pay the Housing Benefit to the Housing Rent Account. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Before I call on Councillor Khan, can I remind Members that this is his maiden speech, so I hope that we will be able to listen intently. Councillor Khan.

COUNCILLOR KHAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor, fellow Councillors. I would like to speak in relation to Minute 93 on page 38. The Financial Health Monitoring Report sets out just how big our budget challenge is this year. We are the first administration in Leeds to attempt to make a saving on this scale. We have to find £90m this year; next year we will have to find at least £50m. The next few years are going to be very difficult for Leeds.

However, the Council is not alone in facing huge financial challenges. Government cuts are placing massive pressure on our third sector partners. Charities and voluntary groups are being squeezed from all directions. That includes seeing cuts to Local Authority funding.

This Government is sending out very mixed messages. Ministers tell us they want to see charities and community groups taking over public services but at the same time those same groups face deep cuts. National evidence shows that the groups most at risk are those helping vulnerable children, elderly and disabled. Valuable knowledge is being lost as the groups shed staff to cope with cuts and the

third sector is very heavily controlled; shedding staff all too often also means shedding services.

We have a great voluntary sector in Leeds. There are over 3,000 voluntary groups in our city. They employ around 20,000 staff and around 50,000 volunteers. As local Councillors you will all know just what a difference these to make to people living in our Wards.

Sadly, huge reductions to our grant settlement meant that this Council, like Councils across the country, had to reduce funding for voluntary groups. In 2011/12 many organisations have seen cuts of around 10% to 15%. I am proud to say that this Council has done everything in its power to protect voluntary groups as much as possible. An incredible amount of time, effort, consultation has gone into trying to get these tough decisions right. We have also established a £140,000 transition fund to help give voluntary groups some breathing space as they try to change the way they work. So far 14 groups have been recommended for support. This will help ensure services can continue in neighbourhoods across the city.

Despite all this, I remain very worried about the voluntary sector in Leeds and I am especially worried about the small organisations in the city. Today, I am asking Councillors on the other side of the Chamber to give your colleagues in Government a reality check. Your vision for the Big Society cannot become reality if voluntary groups can no longer afford to continue. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Armitage.

COUNCILLOR ARMITAGE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, I am commenting on page 38, Minute 93, Financial health Monitoring.

Of course, the report contains budget positions for each department and I can see that progress has been made against the planned saving in what is undoubtedly difficult times. It is because of this difficult climate and the cuts that I am particularly pleased that approval has been given for four play schemes across the city, including one in my Ward on Naburn Close. The Naburn Close has been drawn up with close consultation with local residents and includes a range of play equipment, a ball wall, and a kick-about area with soft landscaping.

These play areas, originally put forward by and funded under the last Labour Government Playbuilder Scheme, before falling foul of the Government's cuts. The scheme saw £1.1m allocated to Leeds in order to provide facilities for children in areas where provision was poor or, in some cases, non-existent. As you should all be aware from your detailed knowledge in the Children's and Young People's Plan, Leeds is working towards being a child friendly city and this means recognising the importance of play in every child's life.

However, shortly after coming into power, the Coalition Government effectively pulled the plug on the Playbuilder, leaving many communities across the country devastated by the loss of their promised play areas. Leeds was no exception and months of uncertainty followed as we waited to hear what, if any, funding we would receive and, of course, not surprisingly, when notification came through we would receive a much reduced allocation in funding.

However, as I said, the Children and Young People's Play Plan has an outcome, Have Fun Growing Up and, as such, to the relief of local residents, a way forward has been found for the children in Windmill Road, Seacroft Gardens, Grove

Road, Naburn Close and their surrounding areas to have a play area to look forward to.

If we are to achieve our aims to be a child friendly city and all that goes with it, we need to be serious about our commitment to children and young people and to extend ensuring that they have decent play areas. How do we expect young people to entertain themselves and not engage in antisocial behaviour or just hang around street corners that infuriates so many people, if we do not provide an alternative for them.

I am not saying that play areas are the solution to every antisocial behaviour problem, of course – they are not – but they are a vital part of every child's growing up and I believe that every child is entitled to the experience of running free, playing on swings, roundabouts and all other things that are associated with that. We did it as children.

I am proud of the fact that, even though this Government seems determined to unfairly aim their continuing cuts on children, families and young people, we have taken a decision to invest in their future.

We recognise the importance of a happy, fulfilled childhood. We recognise the importance of children being allowed to be children. We recognise the importance of investing in our children and young people, be it through play areas or early years or apprenticeships. We are not abandoning them to unfulfilled, empty lives as seems the policy of this Government. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Walshaw.

COUNCILLOR WALSHAW: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak on Minute 93, page 38, the Council's Financial Health Monitoring Report for 2011/12.

Lord Mayor, I am sure I do not have to inform Members in this Chamber about the severe financial challenges this Council currently faces and I would like to echo Councillor Khan's concerns about the voluntary sector in Leeds as well.

The massive cuts made to the Council's budget by the Tory-Lib Dem Coalition in London has put enormous strain on all the Council's budgets. This has meant that some very difficult and, indeed, painful decisions have had to be made, but I am certainly very proud that this administration has done everything possible to protect key frontline services, especially for the elderly and the vulnerable. Indeed, I think that latter point goes to the core of what being a Labour Councillor is all about.

The key question which continues to be asked in all Directorates is what services should we continue to support and that they match the priorities of the people of Leeds, and what services can we simply no longer afford because the resources are no longer available?

One such service that as an Authority we have continued to support is the Noise Nuisance Team and I would like to explain a little bit about why. My Lord Mayor, faced with the unprecedented cuts made by the Government, it would have been all too easy for us as an administration to decide that this service which, for the most part, was historically funded from an external grant, should be cut. Indeed, I was a practising Regeneration Planner when the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund was cut in 2009 and that, indeed, was a bad decision. Then I was a budding Council

candidate when Local Government funding was further decimated in the autumn of 2010. The former hurt; the latter has been particularly hard on the people of Leeds.

Turning specifically to noise, it is no understatement to say that in Headingley, the Ward I represent, some residents have been traumatised by excessive noise from thoughtless neighbours. As a Council we understand what an important service the Noise Nuisance is to people across all Wards in our city and the blight that excessive noise can have on communities. This is why we have made sure that as a Council this service continues to exist. Let us be clear, it is not a “nice to have”, it is an absolute necessity.

Is this service perfect? Certainly not but we are working extremely hard to introduce a range of improvements. These will address the weaknesses in the service we inherited and these improvements are long overdue and very much needed.

Recently I spent a night shift with the Noise Nuisance Team and would recommend it to any Member who may be interested to do the same. They like biscuits and caffeinated drinks! What I found was an extremely hard working team working in extremely difficult circumstances who are doing a sterling job. They really do deserve all our praise.

We are doing our full part as an administration to support staff by putting in lasting, positive changes to the service. These are long overdue. Indeed, colleagues may have seen the story in the YEP regarding the new partnership working arrangements between Environmental Services and the PCSOs. These will help address environmental nuisance. These are the first of a series of improvements we hope to see and an example of innovative partnership working introduced by the Labour Council.

I really hope that Members of the team will now be able to count on the backing of all Councillors in this Chamber. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Groves.

COUNCILLOR GROVES: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, fellow Councillors, I wish to comment on Minute 93 page 38, the Financial Health Monitoring Report.

As it has been said so many times in this Chamber, we are currently negotiating our way through the biggest cuts to funding in living memory. This document demonstrates how the plans we put in place are enabling us to meet our targets on reducing expenditure. However, the Council still has a role to play in supporting our citizens to live healthy and fulfilling lives.

Therefore, I am delighted that we have been able to use a number of pots of money to improve facilities at the Leisure Centre. The aim is to turn the Leisure Centre into a focal point for sport which hopefully will encourage more people to take part. I have no doubt that once the Centre opens the array of activities on offer will mean there is something for everyone.

While the work is taking place the Centre will have to close for around five months. In order to make this transition as smooth as possible, Councillors Blake, Driver and myself are working with officers to make sure people are aware of alternative provision and to relocate those people who use the Centre regularly.

As well as the wonderful improvements to the sports facilities, the bar is to be changed into a community room that can be used by people with learning disabilities for activities and events. This too is great news and an excellent example of two departments working together to benefit the city and its residents and building on the work already under way at the John Charles Centre for Sport.

The Middleton Centre also provides a great deal of activities for young people in the area. The room which is currently used for things like the Friday Night Project will remain and be supplemented by a couple of outdoor youth shelters, multi-use games area and an artificial or 3G five-a-side pitch.

As I stated earlier, all these improvements have been paid for by using Council funds. However, we have also been creative and looked elsewhere. We have bid for over £100,000 of money from Sport England to pay for a new entrance and reception, refurbishment of the studio and new fitness equipment. Together these works will breathe new life into the Centre and create a space that has something for everyone. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lowe.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I wish to speak on page 38 Minute 94, on the Capital Receipts Incentive Scheme, which is a new Leeds initiative designed to encourage local areas to identify, release and then dispose of assets that would otherwise be vacant and surplus to that community's requirements. A proportion of any moneys raised from these sales would then be reinvested back into local areas to secure their priorities and meet their specific needs.

The Ward based initiative process will be the vehicle through which this scheme is to be administered and this will save costs when the scheme starts from April 2012.

The Capital Receipts Initiative is a win-win scheme by anyone's standards. It will rid communities of empty, often vandalised and unwanted buildings and, in doing so, more money will be released for our city-wide capital programme and local priorities will be delivered.

Whilst the Government centrally is doing little to promote economic growth – for example the Regional Growth Fund (or the Regional Stunt Fund, as we should be calling it) has only paid out two grants in the entire country during the last 16 months and only one of Leeds's five bids was successful in the last round, despite the fact that we are the third largest city in the country.

It is good to know, then, that in Leeds Local Government is demonstrating the innovation and leadership needed to deliver growth and regeneration so necessary to this city. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, here is the good news. I am speaking on the same Minute – because I am speaking it is good – Minute 94 on page 38. Within this Minute, my Lord Mayor, is the city's intention to create a city centre park.

When I first became a Councillor for the city centre many, many years ago, there were only a handful of people living in it, mainly caretakers, pub landlords and there were two or three blocks down the Calls of housing association, small blocks. Now there are over 10,000 residents in the city centre and one may ask, if you want to live near a park, why have you come to live in the city centre?

A few years ago I booked a week's holiday in Venice, arguably the most beautiful city in the world. After three days I found it was a big mistake. One missed the trees, one missed the grass; there was nowhere to sit down and relax.

All the great cities, certainly in Europe – Vienna has its Stadtpark, Paris the Tuileries, New York the magnificent and extensive Central Park and, nearer home, of course, London with its famous parks – Hyde Park, St James's, Green Park, Battersea Gardens – all in the city centre, enjoyed---

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: What about Dublin?

COUNCILLOR NASH: I have never been to Dublin. All enjoyed not only by residents who live in these city centres but by visitors and people who work in them.

Very recently I had the pleasure of visiting the old town of Hull where, in the 1930s the biggest dock in Europe was closed and filled in and created a city centre park. There are flower beds, fountains, a small lake, mature trees – it was absolutely marvellous to sit down in a park in the centre of a city and just simply relax.

Our neighbours in Bradford had the right idea but they went the wrong way about it. In Leeds, our Planning Statement is intended to create a high quality mixed development in which a city centre park is at its heart. My Lord Mayor, I commend this to you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Bentley.

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on Minute 132, page 60, Financial Health Monitoring Report. First of all I would like to congratulate everyone involved in Children's Services in their department on the latest Ofsted report and I know that you will continue the hard work and improve our services even further. However, I am concerned about the projected overspend in Children's Services and especially in relation to the increasing number of independent foster carers that the service is using and the fact that there is a projected saving of £600,000 in the quote from the report, the in-house fostering allowances and fees budget.

How can this be? We are supposed to be reducing the number of independent foster carers as they are more expensive than our own in-house foster carers. As far as I can see there are only two ways to do that. Firstly, to reduce the number of looked-after children drastically and, secondly, to increase the number of in-house foster carers by recruiting, training and retaining them.

Neither of these things are going to happen overnight because it takes time to achieve both of these aims so, as I see it, there is a conflict of the aims in making savings in an area where we should actually be spending that money to increase our own in-house foster carers' base, which would save money by reducing the number of independent foster carers.

Isn't that the whole point of turning the curve? I am asking the Executive Board Member for Children's Services, is she content with this particular failing in the budget?

I am also concerned about the number of children in care, because a lot of money has been spent on putting many initiatives on early intervention and prevention, such as the work in our 59 Children's Centres, the common assessment framework, the introduction of advanced practitioners, family group conferencing, the increased number of social workers as well as the reduction in the number of their caseloads and, more recently, in actually putting money into turning the curve.

Despite these initiatives, there has been little effect, if any, on the actual numbers of children entering our care system, the number of external placements or the number of independent foster carer placements.

I am sure that everyone present wants all our children in Leeds to be safe, happy, healthy, achieve well and contribute to the community. However, we do need some reassurance that there will be a reduction in the number of looked-after children, which is one of the city's obsessions, a reduction in the external residential placements, a reduction in the independent foster carers and an increase in our own foster carers. I would like to know how and when these targets are likely to be achieved, because this work has been going on for several years now. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mitchell, please.

COUNCILLOR MITCHELL: Lord Mayor, I am commenting on page 61 Minute 133. Specifically, I would like to welcome the continued work of Corpus Christi School under the now abolished Building Schools for the Future Programme. The BSF programme saw and is continuing to see 15 secondary schools in Leeds either refurbished or rebuilt. Building Schools for the Future was described as the biggest single Government investment improving school buildings for over 50 years but, as we know, the scheme has been scrapped shortly after the Tory Government came to power.

It is not just BSF that has felt the full force of the Coalition's war on education. The Institute of Fiscal Studies report recently published gives a damning insight into the effect of these cuts. The report states after the largest increase in education spending since the 1970s under the previous Labour Government, the next four years will see the largest reductions in State spending on education. Luke Sibbets, co-author of the report, said having seen rises by historically large amounts during the early 2000s, the UK's education budget is now set for an historically large fall over the next few years. What an appalling legacy to leave our children and young people.

He goes on to ask what he describes as the key question. What will the impact of these cuts be on young people's exam results or their earning potential? Is the Government condemning a whole generation to poor educational outcomes, lower aspirations or poor career prospects?

A recent survey by the Association of Colleges has identified that nearly 50% of the colleges who responded to the survey had suffered a drop in student numbers, giving the reason in particular difficulties with transport costs which they can no longer cover because EMA has been cut too. Fiona McMillan, President of the Association, has said it is the poorest students who are not enrolling as even the cost

of bus fares to and from college is enough of a financial barrier for them to be unable to attend. Those students, who would have received roughly £1,000 a year from EMA now only get £152 a year; simply not enough for young people from the most disadvantaged backgrounds to attend further education.

How sad that in a little over a year the Coalition has already succeeded in making education a right for the privileged and an unobtainable dream for the disadvantaged.

The IFS Report reveals that Early Years and Youth Services can expect to see the biggest cuts, in the range of 20% with 16-19 funding being cut by a similar amount. The Early Intervention Grant, which includes many aspects of Sure Start, will be cut by 22% by 2014/15. I fail to see how this drop in funding supports David Cameron's comment at Tory Party Conference in 2009 that "Sure Start will stay and we will make it better." Michael Gove has been quick to leap to the Government's defence over education spending and said, "One of the things we are doing is to put more money into ensuring that parents of children have at least 15 hours of pre-school learning." I am delighted this is the case but before you on the opposing benches get too carried away, let me remind you that this is a Labour Government initiative and the only claim the Tories have on it is that it is one of the few things that they have not abolished since they came into power.

What is the future looking like for older students? Fairly bleak. At the same time as funding is being cut, the school leaving age is gradually being increased from 16 to 18. This means we will see a bigger school population with less money and consequently an even greater reduction in spend per head thus increasing the pressures on individual schools and colleges. It seems that this Government does not believe in investing in our young people. What a stark contrast to the last Labour Government which saw massive investment in capital school spending, Early Years, further education as well as a 12% increase in the number of teachers and the tripling of the number of teaching assistants.

Children and young people seem to be bearing the overwhelming majority of the Government cuts which will have a massive impact on their lives not only now but for many, many years to come. An entire generation is being left by the wayside by a Government that seems to lack even the most basic understanding of the difficulties that are being faced by ordinary people in this country. All I can say is what a tragic and unforgivable waste of lives, hopes and opportunities. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Martin Hamilton, please.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: It has been doom and gloom, has it not, for the last few speeches, so I want to lighten things up a bit. I want to talk about something positive. Before I do that, just referring to EMA, I think there is just one very interesting fact about EMA. You mentioned about the school leaving age gradually increasing to 18 and I think it was Alan Johnson who said to a Select Committee that when the school leaving age reached 18 there would no longer be any need for EMA. He actually said that, so I think we need to have the facts on these particular issues.

Lord Mayor, the issue I would like to talk about under this particular Minute, which is about the capital programme, is probably the most significant capital investment this city has made in the last few years, that is the investment in the Arena. Lord Mayor, it was a privilege to have chaired the City Centre Plans Panel. I know Brian Selby probably feels the same in terms of moving this particular scheme

forward and it is really great now to see that there is actually some structures on the ground.

I think when the previous administration decided that we should finally crack on and build an Arena for Leeds – something that had been sorely lacking for many years – perhaps even we did not think that we had the foresight to imagine that a few years later when the building work was actually going on that we would be in a recession and that this would be an absolute goldmine as far as creating jobs for local residents, let alone the jobs that will be created when the Arena is completed.

I think just in terms of the investment it has brought to the city it is something that we should hugely welcome and particularly at this moment in time when, of course, we are facing great difficulties in terms of unemployment and people looking for jobs.

Lord Mayor, I think one interesting thing about the Arena, of course, is that it was an ambition, I think, of certainly our Party, certainly the Conservative Group and there were various aborted schemes that never really got off the drawing board with the Labour Group but certainly it was an aspiration that we had for many years.

The issue really was about how do we actually find the money, how do we find the cash to put this particular scheme together. Of course, Yorkshire Forward were able to come forward with some money which I think was very welcomed. There were some particular issues around whether or not Sheffield wanted us to have the money; thankfully that was sorted out. That was one part of the jigsaw.

Lord Mayor, another part of the jigsaw, as I recall, was also using other capital receipts the Council had at its disposal, including the airport.

Lord Mayor, it is interesting when you look back at the history of these things and where money was drawn, there are various issues now, of course, with the airport, but the fact remains that we decided that one of the areas we should invest in was in an Arena and use this capital receipt to assist with that. I seem to recall that when the Labour Party were discussing the capital receipt for the airport they had other ideas and actually they would not have spent the money on that particular scheme.

I think we had great foresight in investing some of that money in the Arena because what we have now is a building that is gradually taking shape, jobs that have been created, a great future for that particular part of Leeds in terms of the interactions with Little London and that particular area and I think it is something, Lord Mayor, that we should be incredibly proud of. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield, please.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Firstly on a positive, if we are keeping positive things, I would just like to remind Council that the annual Ofsted assessment, as Councillor Bentley said, has been a very positive experience and that we have now moved out of “Inadequate” to “Adequate” and I would like to thank all those people who have joined in on one of the most important issues this Council faced and that is making sure that our children are protected and are actually performing well, so I would like to thank all the officers and Members who have led that transformation.

I think I have got to comment on one of the key debates of this afternoon and that is on the incinerator because...

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: Mick, you will have to leave now.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: ...I think many of us are glad it is out in the open now. We know the technology, we know the location and I think we can start to act in a responsible way in order to save money. For years we had a pretending group over there constantly saying "We don't know, we are not committed" and all the rest, leading Members here, frankly, a fraudulent line. The last person who told the truth over there was Steve Smith who, in 2006, said, "Our preferred technology is actually energy from waste" and then from 2008 – and I will not name those who are not here because it is not fair on them, there are enough here – we had people like Councillor Matthews saying, "There are no plans for an incinerator." In fact, he said it twice in July 2008 at this Council. We had Councillor Pryke who was actually in the same Ward as their Leader saying he did not know what it was or where it was. Did he speak to his Leader, or did his Leader not speak to him?

Then we had Councillor Golton, who was also peddling the same lie. The only thing I will say about Councillor Golton is that he said something to Councillor Lyons. He said, "You do not win elections by peddling lies." Here you are, they have been peddling lies for a long time and they are living proof of that.

In fact, what he has not done, Councillor Golton has not done, he has not apologised to Councillor Lyons for actually calling you a person who stirs things up, distorts facts and tells untruths, because I read it. As if they could say that about Councillor Lyons. Totally untrue. Fancy that! (*interruption*)

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: He can't keep a straight face!

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: What a disgrace, calling Councillor Lyons a stirrer, a mischief-maker - totally out of order.

Actually, in all seriousness, we now know the technology and, frankly, I will perfectly honest with you, in our Group we were divided whether we went for MBT or incinerator – that was a serious debate we had with the Greens, we had in our Group, so it was not gung-ho on one technology.

I will tell you one thing for sure, this administration does not support that location and never has and you are the one that put that in. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Change it.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: You put it in that place. You submitted the bid and you put the location.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: You can change it.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: No you cannot, get your facts right.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: You can change it.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: You know nothing, Ralph, honestly. Go to Procurement, talk about the liabilities, talk about risking the £180m PFIs and put this Council into further financial trouble, Ralph, because that is where you are going.

Let us talk about what we think we have done. I actually applaud Councillor Murray and Councillor Dobson on moving that tonnage from 300 to 160,000. We are in a lot better place, as Councillor Carter has said, that when we started off on this. I actually applaud Councillor Dobson and his team on actually getting the recycling rates up to 40%. That is a real achievement but I know, and we all know, that that in itself is not enough for that community. There is more work to do to make sure, if it is going there, that the community get the maximum benefits out of any project like that.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: We will hold you to that.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: You will not be here.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Let me just put that. You will not be here. You will be on your holidays. Let me put it like this because I do think it is a really serious issue. Absolutely right about taking £200m as a serious issue for this Council's finance, because one of the things that we discussed today about benefits was not only the risk to individuals but the risk to this Council. We are already facing financial hardship, we know, with the cuts. I will just say this, I actually did welcome Councillor Wilkinson and Councillor Lamb's contributions. I thought they were really serious, and Councillor Finnigan's. I did not welcome when that lot went out on one of the most serious issues facing this city about cuts to people's benefits. You all went for a walk and actually I do not think that is fair, so I do welcome your comments. You went for a walk instead of actually taking part in it.

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: So did you. Where were you?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: We are actually talking about one of the most serious issues facing this Council and facing people and I am proud of our side and others who stayed in for what was an extremely serious debate when we are talking about the finances of this city in the future.

When people talked about the Housing Benefit hitting individuals, absolutely right. Let me go back to Robert's point about Universal Credit. Most of us welcome Universal Credit as one way of rationalising the benefits. What some of us are worried about is that when that gets paid – and Joe touched upon it – a month in arrears, families are going to be placed in a very difficult position. You are absolutely right. Do they buy food for their family or do they pay their rent? (*hear, hear*) That is a really serious point and the people who will miss out are the ALMOs, social landlords and Councils if, as I suspect people will, they look after the family first. I think that is a very serious issue facing us down the line and we ought to stand together on this. We ought to stop blaming each other and say that is a serious issue.

The other issue which Robert did not get time to talk about but I know he knows as much as anybody in this room about is the abolition of Council Tax Benefits, replaced with a grant that has got a ten per cent cut, which is £5m. This means simply this, that there will be protected people (pensioners), there will be some disabled protected, there will be some single parents but there will be hundreds and thousands of people who are already struggling with their income who face a 15%, 20% cut and I think that is a very serious issue for people who are struggling day to day.

Let me just tell you, if there is an upsurge in demand in Council Tax Benefits, then the Government suggests that we go to the Police and go to the Fire and ask

them to build contingencies up in order to look after the upsurge in demand. Is that the right way to run emergency services, asking them to bail out Councils and poor people when you are trying to actually look after people's welfare and safety? I think that is something else we should stand up and actually say it is not right.

Finally let me say this about the future of our income. There has been a spin about how great Local Business Tax will be for Leeds. If it was genuinely localism it would be, but the tariffs and limits they are putting on this will actually not benefit this Council at all.

I say to people like Eric Pickles, if they want to give us localism and the autonomy, instead of bribing or undermining local democracy by £250m to change their bins, instead of freezing our Council tax and then not offering us more money in the future, give us £1b amongst Local Authorities and we can do what everybody in this Chamber wants to do, I hope, and that is look after our elderly and look after our young people who are facing unemployment in this city on the scale that they are. *(Applause)* That is what I believe localism should be about. Instead, what localism is turning out to be is actually the Local Authority doing the dirty work of this Government in cutting people's benefits and people who are struggling in this city.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: I now call for the vote on the motion to receive the Minutes. *(A vote was taken)* That is CARRIED.

Before we move off to tea, can I invite Members in the gallery to join us, please? You will find your way down the stairs and follow everybody else. Can we return, please, at quarter-to six. Thank you.

(Short adjournment)

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now on page 17 of the Order Paper and can I call upon Councillor Andrew Carter, please.

ITEM 8 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – EAST LEEDS REGENERATION

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now on page 17 of the Order Paper and can I call upon Councillor Andrew Carter, please.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I will start by apologising to Members of Council because this White Paper by its very nature is complicated and it involves quite a lot of detail and what I believe to have been a very near miss for this Local Authority that we did not find ourselves in the position where we had undermined our own position as a Planning Authority and maybe opened ourselves up to accusations of all sorts of things because when you look at East Leeds and the regeneration potential that, let me stress, we all want to see realised, the housing development that will undoubtedly take place, the need to regenerate Inner East Leeds, the Aire Valley, not to mention Thorpe Park, you will see that we are talking about an area of the city where there is huge potential. A lot of things would have happened already had it not been for the recession and the collapse of the property market.

I have always believed that it was essential when Councils enter into what I can only call strategic arrangements for regeneration that they are wholly transparent, that they are always all-party and that the utmost care is taken not to

suborn the planning process and to leave the Planning Authority and Planning members in an untenable position.

If you think that is exaggeration, I just refer you back to earlier today when the Council's Chief Executive and the Leader of Council both explained to Members the reasons behind their resignations from the Board of Leeds Chamber of Commerce – in my view absolutely rightly and absolutely correctly.

We are talking about two particular issues here. One is a company limited by guarantee set up by the Chamber called New East Leeds, and the separate but clearly linked proposals to set up the East Leeds Housing and Regeneration Board.

I am aware and, indeed, Members ought to be aware that there is a wish within the Council – it has gone through the Leeds Initiative – that we have Housing and Regeneration Boards for three parts of the city – East, South and West. That is not an idea that I have any problem with providing it is set up properly, providing it does not fall into the pitfalls that I have just mentioned, but nowhere in the reports that I have seen at Council is there any further move forward with those Boards other than in the East of the city.

The Chamber set up on 21st September a Board called New East Leeds, limited by guarantee, run by the Chamber which is, to a large extent, a private organisation. It was not until 27th September that officers – and I have to say I believe the Leader and the Chief Executive – discovered this had been set up when it was announced in public at a dinner.

The press release that went out from the Chamber is extremely revealing and either displays an unbelievable level of naivety or incompetence, because they must have known that what they were saying would cut across the planning process and would actually begin to make a lot of people look very silly.

Chamber News dated 4th October, New East Leeds – and I am going to send copies of all of this documentation to all Members of the Council so that you can see for yourself. It goes on to crow about this New East Leeds Board they have set up. It names a couple of the partners with the scheme – GMI Group and the Scarborough Group – encloses a map of the area concerned and goes on to pull in the Aire Valley. The Aire Valley Regeneration Board, which I formerly chaired, which Councillor J L Carter subsequently chaired, has not met for months and months and months. It is within the portfolio of the Exec Board Member for City Development. I am told – and again I believe it – that he was wholly unaware that this was going on.

Do you seriously believe that the Chamber of Commerce, either through naivety or stupidity, would have issued a press release the like of this encompassing all these areas of land unless somebody in this Council had told them they could do it? The Leader did not; the Chief Exec did not; Councillor Lewis, the Exec Board Member with responsibility for City Development did not – so who did? An email in my file states quite clearly officers knew nothing about it, so who did? It is time we had an answer. If we do not get an answer today we will go on and on and on until we do get an answer because we cannot have things going on like this and we cannot have Local Government in this city returning to the 1980s. The damage that it will do cannot be overestimated - reputational damage, damage in terms of relationships with partners and damage in relationships certainly between political groups and, I would suggest, the Government as well.

It moves a stage further because then we come to this separate body, the East Leeds Housing and Regeneration Board. Papers were prepared for a meeting to take place, I think it was 3rd or else 4th October and this paper, prepared by the Chamber, no-one has yet said who wrote this paper and the Chamber has still not replied – I wrote to them a month ago listing a series of questions I wanted answers to and I have not had the courtesy of reply, not even an acknowledgement. All I have had is a phone call from the Chairman of the Board, which I did not return, and I have informed them that until I get answers in writing to the questions that I have raised, I do not want chats over phones or face to face meetings; I want answers to straightforward questions.

Within this paper there is a membership of this Strategic Board. One Ward Member from each of the Council Wards concerned – well, that is not true because one of the Council Wards concerned is conspicuously missing. Councillor Hyde (Graham, that is), Councillor Gruen, Councillor Hussain, Councillor Lyons and Councillor Grahame. Two Members of Parliament – never been known before – George Mudie, who will act as Chair for this Board, Alec Shelbrooke MP who, with due respect, as I said in the Board meeting, knows to my knowledge not a particularly great amount about regeneration. Keiran Preston OBE, Metro; Gary Williamson and Nigel Foster, both from the Board of the Chamber; Naz Parker from the Homes and Community Agency; and Paul Forbes of Leeds, York and North Yorkshire Chamber. Try as we might on the website we cannot exactly find out what role Paul Forbes plays at the Chamber.

In this paper the Board will oversee all developments in East Leeds – not this Council, by the way, this Board – including the co-ordination of the Council's input into the Aire Valley which falls firmly in the portfolio of Councillor Richard Lewis. It will give due consideration to any inward investment proposals for this area linking them closely to the soon to be developed Thorpe Park area of New East Leeds.

Let me remind you that this was on 4th October. A paper did not come to the Executive Board of this Authority outlining a new arrangement at Thorpe Park until a month later, and yet already this was being talked about. To make matters worse, I am told, the Member of Parliament for East Leeds actually spoke at a very public meeting where he referred to a supermarket development that was going to take place at Thorpe Park, which is completely contrary to the Council's UDP. Is there any wonder we are concerned?

My Lord Mayor, one of my colleagues will be talking shortly about further problems here but quite clearly someone in this Local Authority – I do not believe the Chamber would have published a paper like this unless someone agreed it. I asked the Leader a little earlier whether it was him who stopped it being circulated. He did not give me the direct answer I asked him for in my first question but I believe it was him and, if it was, he did exactly the right thing. I think we need to know but we first of all need to know who authorised its circulation because this paper is highly political. If I was a Government Minister and saw this, I would very much wonder about partnership working with the City of Leeds. It also makes a number of assertions which are wholly inaccurate and it was going to form the basis of the forming of this East Leeds Housing and Regeneration Board.

THE LORD MAYOR: There is a red light, Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: It is a very bad start for regeneration in that part of the city. As I said, our Party will happily take part in any proper discussions but this has put in jeopardy very firmly cross party working, it has made the Exec Board

Member for City Development look foolish, it has made the Leader and the Chief Executive look very foolish. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Les Carter, please.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, I second and reserve the right to speak.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. In moving the amendment I very much welcome the start of Councillor Carter's speech and, indeed, the end because I thought we are sometimes in danger of running internal debates forgetting what people are expecting us to do in this very difficult economic time.

It does not matter whether you are in Europe and you are looking for leadership or in the country, people also expect it from us. Ahead of us we have got one of the most challenging periods that we have ever experienced, certainly to mention somebody earlier two generations. I hope we never lose the focus on why this is an important debate.

Let me be absolutely clear, because that is what I have tried to be all the way along and that is what people would expect of me. When that paper that you have just quoted came to our attention, it was immediately rejected straightaway and, in fact, as far as I know, it is of no longer relevance to us. Neither are the arrangements. None of that was acceptable and, as I said earlier, what I want and what we want to give the credibility to the Council, and I would hope this would be across all parties, is to keep and maintain the integrity of the Council on these big issues, because the future will have to be about big development. We want to attract investment into the city to tackle those problems.

I think we now have a set of arrangements and the challenge will go back to you, Andrew, that we can see is transparent with the Council and the Executive Board and the heart of this. I think we have settled some of the concerns you have raised.

I know that Councillor Gruen has said it in various places, this could have been handled a lot better and I think Councillor Gruen has acknowledged that, but we have to move on. The reason why we have to move on is a very compelling case, and you have alluded to it in your opening comments. When you look at Inner East Leeds and you see that 52% of children live in households with benefits, when you see that 42% are on benefit, when you see 30% NEETS, when you see that actually the house prices down there – I will not mention the area but in part of that Inner East – have lost £40,000 from £128,000 to £88,000 and when you know that elderly people are trapped and when you know there are people waiting for houses who have been waiting for years, families, and you know they are being priced out of the property, you have to say something and you have to do something. You have to say now there is no more Regeneration money, now there is public expenditure cuts, the only way forward is to actually work closer with the private sector, but you are absolutely right about making sure that when we do it we do it with transparency and accountability because the ultimate body for us, if it is our land and our assets, is this Chamber, Executive Board and our respective Groups. That is what we will maintain and I promise we will do everything we can so we do not get it deflected.

What I would really want to see is, I want to see Regeneration Boards and you welcome that and I am delighted to hear that comment, because we just do not want a talking shop. We have to talk – they are the only one with money and ambition. We all know we have got a housing shortage, we have got a job shortage, we have got an apprentice shortage, etc, so the only people who can deliver that in the next five to ten years will be the private sector.

What I would like to see is, I would like to see these Boards and, frankly, I would like to see all of us supporting those Boards, obviously Councillors but if the MPs for that area can play a role, so they should. Sometimes I do not think our MPs have done enough with us on those big issues. If you go to Manchester you will see previous Leaders and Leaders sitting alongside MPs on big Regeneration Boards. I think that is great, as long as it is transparent and accountable. Some of them have got great experience and knowledge about regeneration, they have led a Council.

I think in the future I want to see that whatever we set up – and I think the past is history – that it is clear and transparent and accountable and is supported by people in this Chamber and outside as well.

I have had this discussion with the Chamber and the Chamber as a body recognises that that is the only way forward. They are perfectly happy now, they have seen new papers, new arrangements and they want to work with us because, again, I do not want to marginalise the Chamber. I have said it before, earlier. They have a significant role to play in this City talking to businesses, attracting businesses, working with us to get that extra investment.

I do not think any more there is a smoking gun. I do not think there are any weapons of mass destruction. What I think there is is about setting up a new relationship between us and the private sector and hopefully we will reflect on what has been said today, and I hope it has been a serious debate that is taking the interests of people outside of here seriously, trying to address those issues I have identified of unemployment, skills and houses and so on, and actually trying to move Local Government out to lead enterprise as it is done.

I will say this thing, I am chairing something about Local Government in the future and it is about how you move Local Government from a historical welfare role to actually moving it to a more entrepreneurial role. I think we have got the opportunities in that city to do it and I would like us all to share that journey because otherwise people will look at us in 20 years' time when it is called out for crisis and support and help and leadership and vision, we will be found wanting and I do not think anybody in this room wants that.

I want to move the terms of debate, of this debate, on to how we move forward in partnership, cross parties, so that we can do our best for the people in Leeds. I move, Lord Mayor, the amendment. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second and also reserve my right to speak.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Pryke.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Lord Mayor, it is a brief comment on this White Paper. I welcome Councillor Wakefield's commitment to openness and transparency in the – I am not quite sure whether it is going to be New East Leeds or what yet.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: It is across the city.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: The Regeneration Board or body that will be formed. When I saw the documents concerned for this and heard about discussions at the Scrutiny meeting and I attended the Exec Board where Councillor Carter raised the matter, I was set to worrying very much about the future of existing Regeneration projects in the area, in particular the Aire Valley Board, as has been said, has not met for some time and with the current possibility of money becoming available from an Enterprise Zone, I very much think that we should be concentrating strongly on that at the moment because that will present a good return for the city.

Councillor Wakefield had a load of statistics about relative deprivation and they have been confirmed by the new Indices of Multiple Deprivation published only yesterday. Burmantofts and Richmond Hill, my Ward, has scored particularly badly in that and the hope for major housing regeneration which we had was EASEL and EASEL seems to have sunk below the horizon in terms of our expectations now.

Almost everyone who lives in the parts of Gipton and Seacroft which have had new housing from the EASEL project welcome it and want more of it. I have no doubt that the residents in parts of Burmantofts, Richmond Hill and in Temple Newsam Ward, in Holton Moor and Osmanthorpe, would also welcome similar work in their areas. There are still lots of pieces of land owned by the Council where we have demolished Council housing in the past because it was unfit for human habitation. We obviously have offered that as our contribution to EASEL in the past and it has worked in Gipton and it has worked in Seacroft and it could work elsewhere. The need for affordable housing in East Leeds is enormous and EASEL is a good vehicle for delivering that. I wish that we could put renewed effort into EASEL and into Aire Valley so we can take advantage of what is currently available and not lose those opportunities by drifting away and worrying more about whizzy new plans on the edge of East Leeds – things like the East Leeds extension where we know from Plans East meetings and the Scrutiny enquiries that have gone on under Councillor Procter's chairmanship, that the developers are clearly only interested in building unaffordable housing, or relatively unaffordable housing, on their terms. They do not want to build affordable housing, they do not want a mixture of housing, they certainly do not want to build bungalows for old people and they do not want to build smaller dwellings for single people.

We have an interest in a mix of housing that is affordable in as many communities as possible and that includes East Leeds and I would urge the administration to stick to clear objectives in providing for the real needs of people. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. There are two different, distinct parts of what I am going to say in this particular debate. The first is to agree in large measure with what the Leader of Council has said and, indeed, those problems that are in Inner East Leeds is something that we are all familiar with and many of us for a number of years have been trying to do what we can in serving on Boards and the like to try and alleviate those problems.

What I cannot understand, though, is how all of that work that has been going on for a number of years in terms of EASEL, in terms of the Aire Valley Regeneration Project, being an Enterprise Zone as well, the stated policies of this Council where

Boards are set up and, indeed, Councillor Lewis chairs Aire Valley now, all of that was put to one side, forgotten about in favour of a move by the Chamber of Commerce in association with developers who are tax exiles, multi-millionaires – people who are able to fight their own corner. I cannot for the life of me understand why valuable time of officers has been spent trying to assist those people – those tax exiles, those multi-millionaires, those people who have got the wherewithal to fight their own corner, to push their own development plans forward, to actually get to where they want to be and yet the resources of this Council have been diverted to assist them in their enterprises and not to help the very people that Councillor Wakefield talks about. That is the fact of the matter and for those, as Councillor Carter said at the beginning, it is a complex issue, many papers to wade through – anyone can look at the files I have got on this matter – and it is all there.

It was only actually because of some innocent enquiries in terms of a Plans East Panel that a special meeting was convened whereby most of this was revealed. What this is really all about is officers of the Council and New East Leeds Ltd getting involved in a ransom situation in terms of land. It is, in my view, truly appalling – truly appalling – that the Council should play any part in matters when such big business is involved and they can clearly deal with their own affairs, Lord Mayor.

I hope we will have a clear statement later when Councillor Gruen speaks, that actually all of those issues that we are all passionate about in terms of the Enterprise Zone, which I want to hear a lot more about the Enterprise Zone, you would think it had gone dead, frankly, because no-one speaks of that, it is all on these other issues. That is what I want to hear an awful lot more about, Lord Mayor.

Just turning to the Scrutiny Board which I chair, none of this would have come to light if it had not been for an independent member who sits on that Scrutiny Board asking the innocent question at the end of a meeting, “Does anybody know anything about New East Leeds Ltd and the announcement that was made at the Chamber?” My response was, “No, I do not know anything about it.” I turned to the Scrutiny Officer and said, “Can we have something about it next time?” and it was only at that point did all of this unravel and all of this become apparent. But for that I question whether anything would have happened in terms of this issue until the first meeting had been held of this particular grouping.

The issues still remain. At Scrutiny we asked some pertinent questions, we wanted to know collectively who wrote the papers, what authority they were acting on and we got none of those answers, frankly. The Chamber said it is all officers’ fault and it is all Councillor Gruen’s fault and they did everything and it is nothing to do with us, we were only acting as mail man. I then heard different versions of events that actually the Chamber commissioned the papers and all of the rest of it.

None of that actually matters to me personally. What does matter, though, is that we can only do business as a Council with partners who are open, transparent, accountable. The Chamber have been invited back to our next Scrutiny Board. They have not replied to the Scrutiny Board, they have not done that. I know for a fact that they have been in touch with the Chief Executive and the Chief Executive’s office has been in touch with Scrutiny to say “Why do you want the Chamber back?” which, again to me, is wholly inappropriate. If we are asking people to come before us, people who want to partner us, they should answer the questions, they should be open and transparent so we all know the facts and the information, Lord Mayor.

That is how we should operate in this Council and I sincerely hope that we will return to operate in that way. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Les Carter. Councillor Gruen? Who is going first.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Lord Mayor, the debate so far as been low key and I do not intend now to raise it to a higher key than what it has been. However, I do not think it is right, Keith, just to simply say the past is the past, we cannot change it. I think we need to learn lessons from the past. We need to know what has taken place and the honesty is not there yet, Keith.

When the Executive Board Member is asked "Who wrote this report?" he did not say "I do not know", he just clamped up and would not say. He did not say "I do not know, I do not know who wrote the report." He just shut up and would not say any more.

I had that portfolio for six years. The great shame about EASEL was it was getting into fruition at a time of recession which is a great shame, but I still think it is there and can be pushed forward. There is a lot that can be done. I do not know what has happened to these things. It seems as though the Executive Board Member has sat back and said, "I do not like this."

Also, let us talk about the East Leeds MP for a second. I had dealings with the East Leeds MP for six years and then he stopped talking to me when we went into Opposition. I know how that East Leeds MP works. That East Leeds MP will have had a huge map on a table of East Leeds, felt tip pen – "We will do that, we will change that, we will move that, we will do this" and he will be putting, "That should be developed", even though it was land that was not developed, "This should be this, that should be that." I have seen it. Neil is nearly laughing over there because he saw it when he was an officer and everybody else has seen it.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: I saw it.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I believe George's fingerprints are all over this at the present time – all over it. I cannot believe they are not but the interesting thing is, when he tries putting people on board he does not pull Richard on board. He does not pull Richard Lewis on board, does he, and say, "Richard, this is great, we should be doing this, we should be doing that" even though it is his portfolio. He pulls Peter on board. The reason he will not pull Richard on board is because Richard would not have fallen for it. He would not have had anything to do with it. He just would not. Indeed, the word went out, "Keep it secret from Richard". Richard knew nothing about this but it is his portfolio so I do not think we can ignore what happened in the past. One of your colleagues knew about it and I find that awful that your colleague did not tell you what is going on in your own portfolio. I think that is appalling and it should not happen.

We have nearly entered into, if this had gone through, into something which could have left this Council wide open on all sorts of abuse. No wonder the Chamber is interested. I bet their eyeballs are switching sockets at this kind of thing; cutting out all the bureaucracy, we have got this little group, they can do our planning, it will all go through. It is the new El Dorado. There would have been a new El Dorado in Leeds. Unbelievable what could have happened.

We are fortunate, and I am delighted what the Leader has said, that it has stopped, that it has been pulled. It has been pulled so that it will not happen now but, you know, Peter has got a lot to answer from all over the place. It has been dealt

with in secret, it is as simple as that. No ifs and no buts. To find out in the way that it was found out, the way it came out, is disgraceful – it is a disgrace to every member of this Council.

Peter has got to say why he operates in secret and he likes that. The new ALMO Committees that are put together, one member on it, Peter chairing it. He does not like other Members being involved in it and that always says to me that the Member cannot stand up and argue his corner.

Peter, this rests very heavily on your shoulder. I think the MP for East Leeds has pulled you along and you have gone along with it not realising at times what you are going along with, not realising how to handle him.

I was fortunate how I handled him. Actually I like George, I like him very much, I think he is a great guy but what you found out if you know George very well, is that three months after he has suggested something, he does not like that three months later, so you only have to go three months and whatever he has said, you do not have to argue with him, it will go out the window! *(laughter)* That is on all his projects, it is not just this; it goes back to when he was Leader. That happened all the time.

Peter, you have got to give the open and fair – these are fair questions being asked of you. You have got to stand up and say who wrote that report, when did you become aware of it, how much did the East Leeds MP have to do with it, are there maps with marks all over them with somebody proposing to change things?

I am delighted what the Leader has said because that has gone by the board but we must know the history of this. If we do not, we will never know how to stop it in the future. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, there are a number of statements I want to make in reply to what has been said so far.

The first is that the description from Councillor Carter about the New East Leeds Company is entirely an issue for the Chamber. I did not know about the press release, I did not know about the announcement, I was not party to the announcement, I was not there when the announcement was made, I knew nothing about the announcement.

The second statement, about Thorpe Park. I have not been to any meetings about Thorpe Park, I have not been involved in Thorpe Park.

I made those statements to the Scrutiny Board. My approach to this is that if you have made a mistake you hold up your hand and you own up to it. I went to the Scrutiny Board – I was not invited, I could have hidden away, I was not on the speakers' list. I listened to everybody else and then when beguiling Councillor Procter smiled at me and said, "Councillor Gruen, would you like to come forward and answer a few questions?"

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: I did say I did not want to put you on the spot.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: You did but you were very happy for the next half an hour to do so.

Other colleagues who were there at the Scrutiny Board will know that the very first statement I made after officers had been cross-examined was “This is my responsibility. Do not lay this at the door of officers. I take responsibility. I made some mistakes and I own up to those and I have apologised for those.” I said exactly the same at the Executive Board.

What I will not be tried for and hung for is things I have not done. I have nothing to do with the company, I have nothing to do with Thorpe Park. I have everything to do with trying to set up the East Leeds Housing Regeneration Board.

As Councillor Carter acknowledged, at the City-wide Board it was trailed in the papers that we were minded to set up three local Regeneration Boards – East, South and West. East is the first because the prize for East Leeds is up to £1b-worth of investment. As both Councillor Carter and Councillor Wakefield said, in today’s times unless we do open and genuine and, I agree, transparent business with developers, we are not going to regenerate anything.

I also stated at that meeting that I would have liked the private sector to be more involved in terms of sharing responsibility for writing some of the papers for the Board and giving us their view, rather than what has happened, and anybody who went to the parent board – Councillor Anderson and Councillor Pryke and others will tell you – there is a stand-off at present. There is a stand off of what developers think we are like as an Authority and what we think they are like as developers. Unless you talk to each other and find a way of talking to each other, you are not going to make progress.

The mistakes I made were to become – and I have been very frank about this – totally frustrated by the lack of progress, in my view, that we are making in actually taking the issue forward. Councillor Carter will tell you this is typical Councillor Gruen. After 20 years of not talking to me and saying anything nice about me, this is manna from Heaven. He will say, “This is typical Councillor Gruen, he has cut corners” and I have not paid sufficient attention to some of the process and I have said that.

I will have engraved on my gravestone, “He did not go to the Member Management Committee” because I did not and I am sorry that I did not go to Member Management Committee to get approval for the Members on the Board. I did not nominate the private sector developers. Officers told Councillor Procter’s Scrutiny Committee, we asked for nominations and the Chamber nominated. I apologise to the Conservative Group for daring to put on Alec Shelbrooke – their MP. I know that is anathema to me, to you, and I really have to apologise that he is actually on there but I think he can play a valuable part alongside George Mudie.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Be very careful.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I hope other MPs in South and West Leeds will play their part because, Councillor Carter, you have slagged them off in the past for not doing enough; when we try, as Councillor Wakefield says, to get them to do more and help more, that cannot be the wrong way forward.

Frankly, I have come absolutely clean. I have told you what I have done, what I have not done.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Who wrote the report?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I have told you that the process has not been as good as it should have been and I have acknowledged that.

The one question I did not answer in the Scrutiny Board is who wrote the report. I did not hide away from it and they did not say it was my fault, by the way, and I did not keep it secret. I said it is not for me to say.

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: You said you knew but you would not say.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I did not write the report and I said it was not for me to say and you then said, "We will write back to the Chamber", which is what you have done, and there the matter rests. I have done all I can to put the matter right.

THE LORD MAYOR: Peter, there is a red light, thank you.

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: Rubbish.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Andrew Carter

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Lord Mayor, before he speaks, my name was brought up by Councillor Carter saying that I was on that, that I was on the Regeneration Board by what I am saying is that I did not know anything about it, nobody asked me.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lyons, I do not think that at this stage you are allowed to say anything.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: It does not surprise me at all, Mick.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: I want to make it perfectly clear.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Carter, can you carry on?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: My Lord Mayor, I absolutely accept Councillor Lyons assurances. I would be surprised if any of the Ward Members mentioned knew they were on. I am sure, however, George Mudie knew he was on and I am sure Peter Gruen knew he was on, but that just goes to the root of it, does it not, really?

I knew there would be an attempt to try and divert this debate on to something about whether you want Regeneration driving forward or you do not. Nobody – nobody – can accuse me of not wanting to drive regeneration forward. We spent year in, year out trying to get regeneration in all parts of the city, with some notable success. EASEL was not a notable success but that was not the fault of the Exec Board Member. It was because a certain Government landed the national economy right in the mire and the property market collapsed, otherwise we would have seen some development in that part of East Leeds.

Throughout all that, and Members across on that side know this, they were kept informed, they were involved on the Aire Valley Board, Councillor Driver made representation about having another place on the Board for a Labour Member – that was immediately agreed to when I was the Chair of that Board. Do not lecture us. I know we need to work in partnership with the private sector. When I became Leader

of the Council the relationship with partnership with the private sector was hardly existent and we built it and built it and built it.

Let me tell you this, you have to realise where the responsibilities of the elected Members take over from the private sector and from the partners who are not elected and that is where this has all gone wrong.

I have had a lot of assurances given both in private and publicly which I accept. The Leader of the Council, I am sure, will make sure that this does not happen again. Let me tell you, when a small number of people stand to make a great deal of money out of development, if we cannot stand back and say "This is what we did, these are the reasons, it was transparent", that is when we get into trouble. That is when we go back to the 1980s and those of you who think, perhaps, that officers have too much power in Local Authorities – and in many ways I would not disagree with that – it all came about because of the excesses of politicians in Local Government in the 1980s, of which George Mudie, of course, was a Leader and the result of that was Conservative Governments and then followed by Labour Governments treating Local Authorities with greater and greater care and giving us less and less power. That is why it happened. We must not, we cannot, we will not, if I have anything to do with it, go back to those days.

There has to be transparency. Yesterday I met gladly with the Leader with the Cities Minister, Greg Clark. Alan Gay has done more to promote tax incremental funding, of which we hope the Aire Valley will be the beneficiary, than any other officer in any other Local Authority in the country. When I was Council Leader I spoke to Minister after Minister, Shadow Minister after Shadow Minister under your Government, I spoke at Conferences, trying to make people understand that TIF was the way forward in difficult economic times because it got regeneration moving.

I think we are within an ace of us getting somewhere in the lower Aire Valley and I will say no more than that and I will have been glad to play my part but this sort of thing is just the sort of thing that would make a Government Minister think, "What the hell are that lot up to?" It is the worst sort of publicity to give to a Government thinking of giving additional powers, this sort of skulduggery, behind the scenes operations – and we still have not got to the bottom of it.

We discussed elected Lord Mayors. I will say to you quite frankly, Keith, if this is the level of transparency your administration is going to allow to happen, we may as well – and I say with sadness – have an elected Mayor, because at least we would know who the hell was responsible for doing all this.

I am taking you at your word. We want this sorted. It must never happen again. We want to work in partnership with the private sector, the public sector partners, all partners, but we cannot be put in this position where our roles as Local Authority Members are undermined. I am sorry, Peter, I accept some of your apologies but you still have not answered all the questions. This is not – not – a good day for you and what has gone on here is not acceptable. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I now call for the vote on the amendment in the name of Councillor Wakefield. *(A vote was taken)* It is CARRIED.

We now move to the substantive motion. It now becomes the substantive motion. *(A vote was taken)* It is CARRIED.

ITEM 9 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE BILL

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Yeadon, please.

COUNCILLOR YEADON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I wish to move the paper on behalf of the Labour Group regarding extensive NHS reforms outlined in the Government's Health and Social Care Bill.

This White Paper is not intended to create a political football out of the Health Service. There is, instead, an attempt to raise genuine concerns about scale, pace and consequence of such wholesale reforms. Therefore, I was slightly disappointed to see the unconstructive tone of the amendment by the Conservative Group.

There are some aspects of the Health and Social Care Bill that we can sympathise with. The need for health and social care providers to integrate and have closer working relationships is not only something that we agree with but we already do here in Leeds, without the need for this Bill. Transferring responsibilities for public health to the Local Authority makes sense, but only if it is properly resourced. The bringing together of vital stakeholders through the Health and Wellbeing Board has merits and we have made positive inroads into establishing this in Leeds. However, it is our view that the fundamental ideology behind the Health and Social Care Bill will not only create a fragmented service but will dismantle and undermine the core principles of the NHS as we know it today.

The impact of the sheer scale and pace of these changes can already be seen within the NHS, even before the bill is passed. This must concern all of us. David Cameron promised to protect the NHS all the way up to the General Election. The Coalition Agreement even stated, "We will stop the top down reorganisation of the NHS that has got in the way of patient care." However, what we are now faced with is the largest reorganisation of the NHS since its formation in 1948.

Don't just take my word for it. David Nicholson, the Chief Executive Officer of the NHS, said of the reforms, "The NHS reorganisation is so large you can see it from outer space." This, without any mention of it in either the Conservative or Liberal Democrat manifestos, no debate of the reforms during the 2010 General Election and, therefore, in my mind, no mandate.

There are a number of key factors within the Bill which is the cause for our concern. We are deeply troubled about the instability and anxiety that these changes are having on NHS staff, peoples and stakeholders. Morale within these organisations is at an all time low and the city is at risk of losing talented and well-trained professionals from the health sector for ever. The lack of clarity, guidance and ever moving goalposts from the Department of Health has created an environment which means planning for the future is increasingly difficult.

We are also concerned about the absence of national standards which, if we are not careful, could create a postcode lottery service. We must avoid a situation where levels of service differ in different areas. It is my view that we enforce the universality of healthcare as a principle through the Health and Wellbeing Board.

The watering down of waiting time guarantees could also mean that hospitals will be able to treat private patients first, leaving NHS patients at the back of the queue, creating a two-tier service and increasing waiting times. Again, this directly contradicts the principle of access to healthcare free at the point of need as a right and not a privilege.

What is increasingly worrying is that these reforms will create a market-based and competition driven NHS more than ever before. Nearly 100 clauses in the Health and Social Care Bill are devoted to creating a market for healthcare delivery. The clause relating to any qualified provider means that there are no restrictions on the use of private providers and the abolition of the Private Patient Income Cap will mean that there will no longer be a limit on the number of private patients a hospital can treat.

Although we have had for many years an internal market within the NHS, this is taking healthcare in a whole new direction. It is a different ballgame from what has gone on before. We must avoid, in Leeds, a market that prioritises shareholders' profits rather than patient health. Again, I believe that it is the Local Authority which must carry that message loud and clear.

We are also concerned that these proposals could reduce democratic accountability if the Secretary of State no longer has a duty to provide a comprehensive Health Service. The Government cannot absolve itself of the responsibility of the health of this nation and we cannot let that happen.

Fundamentally, we must ensure that the need to tackle health inequalities remains at the top of the national and local agenda. Any suggestion that the weighting of health inequalities is reduced in the NHS funding formula is extremely worrying and I appeal to all Members from both sides of the Chamber to use what influence they can against this proposals.

Aside from these concerns, it is not just that it is the wrong Bill at the worst time. Despite Cameron's promises, the NHS is nationally having to make efficiency savings of £20b by 2015. Currently in Leeds LTHT is implementing a £60m cost-cutting plan and waiting lists are already increasing. In August 2010 four people waited longer than six weeks for a CT scan in Leeds. Fast forward twelve months to August 2011 and those waiting longer than six weeks had increased to 58. Combine these cuts with wholesale reorganisation and the results could be devastating.

What is baffling is that the cost of this reorganisation is £20b. One billion of this is for funding redundancy payments for PCT staff, many of whom will be re-employed as consultants in the future.

However, despite our deeply held and genuine concerns, we are committed to getting the best for people in Leeds in this new world of health, particularly through the vehicle of the Health and Wellbeing Board. We will ensure it has strong leadership from across the sectors. It will have democratic accountability, including cross-party representation and, I agree, it should be open and transparent, engaging with local communities and stakeholders. It is vital that we use the Board to address the health inequalities through the commissioning services, but we must remember that this has all been done against a backdrop of cuts and increasing demand.

Although we can make the best of a bad situation if this Bill becomes law, there are certain fundamental NHS principles that are at risk. We as a Council must defend these and ensure that in Leeds there will always be a comprehensive NHS free at the point of need and equal access to healthcare no matter where you live or how much money you have. No matter what side of the political fence you are sitting on, I am sure these are principles that we can all agree on. Lord Mayor, I move.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mulherin, please.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Martin Hamilton.

COUNCILLOR M HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, I am not sure that we are in the happiest of positions as far as this particular piece of legislation is concerned and, speaking from a personal point of view, I am not sure that it would have been on my list of priorities to introduce a Bill to reform the NHS so early in the Parliament.

However, I really do not think we should be taking lectures from the Labour Party when it comes to reorganisations and changes. After all, in the 13 years that Labour were in Government there were 15 separate reorganisations of the NHS, 15 separate bills, so they were doing this more than once a year, there was some tinkering going on.

You could understand a new Government coming in wanting to make some changes and wanting to set their own agenda, that is perfectly legitimate. What I think is not legitimate is to constantly change and alter what is already there. I think we just do need to consider that.

Lucinda, I was a bit disappointed when you started off your speech in a very generous way by saying we do not want this to be a political football but then you really went on to talk about the Tories and the Lib Dems and what we were doing, what was in our manifestos and everything, thereby turning it into a political football. You cannot have it both ways, I am afraid.

It would have been nice, I think, because we all have concerns about the Bill that is going through Parliament, if you could have come up with a motion that everyone could have supported which reflected the fact that there are some concerns about the Bill, there have been some improvements but further improvements are needed.

I think if we all could have said that as one Council that would have been far better but, as usual, it is the old Gruen technique of sticking the knife in and twisting it rather than trying to get a consensus and I think that is a real pity on this particular issue, because I think common ground could have been found, actually, so I do regret that.

Lord Mayor, I think the first thing I wanted to just point out in terms of the NHS, and I actually give credit to the Conservatives on this particular point that their manifesto committed to protecting the budget of the NHS come what may and that made its way into the manifesto and that is now the case, so there is actually more money going into the NHS over the next four years than would otherwise have been the case. I have to say, that particular commitment was not in the Labour manifesto.

It is interesting, earlier on in the afternoon we had various Councillors standing up and talking about how terrible it was that the Government was cutting this and the Government was cutting that. Labour acknowledge in general terms that, had they won the election, they would have had to have made some cuts as well, but then they talk about every single portfolio and how terrible it is that cuts are being made. You do wonder where they would have made the cuts, because actually

from what they are saying, every cut is terrible. The fact is, you would have had to make difficult choices as well but on the NHS, the Government has actually chosen to put more money in, so I think that is something that we should welcome.

My Lord Mayor, in terms of the specific legislation, as I have said, I think personally it was probably misguided to come up with something so soon but we are where we are and I do think during the course of the legislative timetable a number of improvements have been made, and I think Councillor Chapman will outline some of those alterations, those amendments that have taken place in Parliament.

I have given some credit to the Conservatives; I will now give some credit to the Lib Dems on this because I think we have led the way, particularly in the House of Lords, in improving this particular Bill. I think there is further to go but I think we have made some definite improvements and Judith will talk a little bit more about that.

Lord Mayor, this particular amendment really recognises that the legislation is going through. It recognises that improvements have been made but it also says that further improvements and further changes have to be made as well.

We also – and I think this is absolutely critical – are very clear that the NHS should remain free at the point of delivery. I think some of the debate that you hear about this, you would think that privatisation – or not privatisation but private involvement in the NHS – is something the Government is producing for the first time. In fact, of course, this is something that the Labour Government introduced and in fact I have quote here from Patricia Hewitt who said, “Patients needing elective treatment will be able to choose from any healthcare provider, NHS or independent sector.” That was in 2007.

In fact, this particular piece of legislation ensures that the prices for those treatments are the same whether it is private or NHS so, in fact, the private people cannot go ahead and cannot undercut the NHS rates. There will be a single rate that everyone will have to pay for.

In terms of the private side of things, I am afraid that is already there. The genie is out of the bottle as far as that is concerned. It seems to me that we need to manage that particular process better than the Labour Government did previously.

Lord Mayor, I think, in summary, what we are saying in our amendment is that, yes, some improvements have been made, we need to do better. We need to maintain the principle that the NHS is free at the point of delivery and, as far as I can see, that does happen in the Bill. We also welcome, I think, the opportunities for the city and Council to get more involved in the delivery of healthcare, be it from a monitoring perspective or through the new Public Health function. I think that is potentially a really strong new role for Local Government and that is something I would welcome.

In conclusion, Lord Mayor, I really think it is a shame, as I say, that we were not able to have a motion today that everyone could get behind. I feel that we have tried to do that in our motion. We have tried to support the Government where we can; we have also said that there are some problems with this legislation. I think that reflects the general view of the Chamber, actually, and so it is a shame that the

Labour Group was not able to put something similar. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Chapman, please.

COUNCILLOR CHAPMAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. As Lucinda knows, we never argue. We usually have similar thoughts and you will be very pleased to know – and you will have to wait – that my very last sentence agrees with one of your sentiments. Be careful, yes! You will have to wait for it.

Just to talk a little bit about the Lib Dem position on the Bill, when the Bill was initially published, Liberal Democrats outside Parliament had very strong concerns and the issues were debated at the Lib Dem Spring Conference earlier this year where opposition to much of the Bill led to an extremely critical motion being passed. In fact, the Bill as it stands is substantially different from the original one, so for that, small mercies, I suppose.

I think it shows that we recognise that there were certain areas that needed to be altered and there were others too, but we were not in a position to completely re-write the Bill – we would have liked to have done.

There are several changes that we did make for the better and I just want to mention a few of them. First of all, strengthening patients' interests and rules on competition. There is to be no favouritism to the private sector. Services offered to private providers will have tariffs that reflect their clinical complexity. There will be no cherry picking for more profitable cases, which is extremely important.

Councils will have greater Scrutiny functions over health than any other area. They will be able to appoint as many Councillors as they wish to the Local Health and Wellbeing Boards and NHS Services will be required to consult Councils on changes to services in their area. As you know, this is already starting to happen in Leeds and is beginning to work very successfully.

The role of Health and Wellbeing Boards has been strengthened throughout the process of healthcare. They will have a role in Scrutiny and the power to refer plans back for reconsideration. Commissioning Boards will be required to consult Health and Wellbeing Boards before establishing Clinical Commissioning Groups, thus ensuring a strong local voice in the NHS decision making.

Here is my final sentence, which I hope agrees with one of yours. The original role of the Health Secretary in the 1946 Act is renewed and it is strengthened with additional duties to secure continuous improvement and reduce health inequalities, which is surely an aim we all want. (Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Latty, please.

COUNCILLOR LATTY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, most of the time I find I get on very, very well with my colleagues across on the Labour Benches. I even think we think the same way sometimes – even Peter Gruen. (laughter) Also I think we all generally speak and want the same things – a better life for people in Leeds...

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: You don't know him as well as I do.

COUNCILLOR LATTY: ...better outcomes – my colleague Councillor Carter doubts that somewhat, I think, but anyway!

Then you throw a spanner in the works and you put a White Paper up like this. Lucinda, I have an awful lot of time for you. You have got a huge heart and I think you are in exactly the right job, but when we have Council you have got to come up with a White Paper and I think that is when the wheels come off the wagon.

This White Paper, it is closing its mind, I think. It is not seeing what has happened, what is happening now – it is not even looking at what is possible, what is coming. You are trying to make political capital, even though you said yourself, “I don’t want to create a political football.”

I think before you sound off at the Government and what they are doing and what they are trying to do, you might reflect on some of the things that have happened in the past.

If some of the things that the last Government did – the profligacy, the interference in this field – if these things had not happened we might not be having this White Paper today. Things might be in an awful lot better stated.

You highlight the health inequalities across the city and you say here that you stand to live twelve years longer if you live in the north-east than you do if you live in the south-west. It is a fact, we cannot get away from that and it is a fact not particularly created by Government. It is not a statistic either that has just popped up, it has been true for years. I did not really notice that your Government changed it particularly, or at all.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Got worse.

COUNCILLOR LATTY: Yes, in the right direction, should I say, yes. You say access should be free at the point of need. Well, of course it is. It is a right, not a privilege; of course it is. Have you heard the Conservative Government saying it is not a right? It is not a right? I just do not believe so. That sort of talk will put you in permanent Opposition, you would never get anywhere.

Then we learned that patients receive the best care when services are integrated and staff work efficiently together. A bit obvious, I would have said. Perhaps what you really mean is that the ranks of managers that Tony and Gordon introduced should take a step into the background and let the professionals get on with it.

I would like to talk about something local, actually, something a bit nearer to my heart – good old Otley Hospital. Otley Hospital – people are born there, they used to have operations there, if you broke something or cut it you could get it mended or stitched - you could do just about everything there – you could die there as well. There was only one thing really wrong with it – it was not in quite the right place. It should have been nearer into Leeds.

What happened when it is rebuilt? They build it just in the same place, in spite of a huge swell of opposition to that. It was built in Otley. It is a wonderful hospital that you have built but even before it is fully operational was starting to be surplus to requirements as a general hospital. Only the other day, last week, some members of my North West (Outer) Area Committee were taken round the hospital by the matron and shown a whole floor of closed wards – the whole top floor closed.

Nothing that we can do with it. It is a clinic, it is not a hospital any more. It has got some wonderful things happening there but if it was not there, an awful lot more could happen. People are not prepared, surgical teams are not as prepared to travel out there to do their stuff. We might have had a hospital at High Royds instead of an unfinished housing development and that would have been a lot more use to the people of Leeds, certainly north-west Leeds.

You get indignant about reform – that is human nature, we all get a bit upset, we all like things to stay the same, but if it stays the same it is going to go backwards and these Government proposals, they are aiming to move it forwards, out of the past into the future. If you think about the past, under your Government spending fell at the beginning, as a percentage of GDP, spending fell and then after that it went up year on year, but what did we get for the money that you were increasingly spending? I have mentioned the army of administrators but, of course, that is not just limited to the NHS, we have them all over the place. In fact I think we are standing in the middle of an awful lot of administrators at the moment, aren't we?

If you take Connecting for Health, the programme that would create the electronic record, that would have every patient's information confidentially shared right across the medical field between GPs, hospitals, etc. It was going to cost £2.3b over a three year period. Four years later the cost went up to £12.4b over ten years and final costs are quite likely to be in the order of about £20b.

There were plans for a dedicated Leeds Children's Hospital but over a three year period cost estimations tripled from £230m to £650m. It is Monopoly, money, isn't it? All these things that could have happened, did not happen.

Then I do say here to myself, it is a delicate statistic this because nobody begrudges a fair wage to anybody doing a fair job and the people who hold our lives in their hands, they are the people I am talking about now, but when you are finalising new contract arrangements for nursing, surgical and clinical staff, you found that due to someone getting his or her sums wrong, the budget to meet the costs just was not there. It was short by £610m. When you think about the stuff that is in the press at the moment about the billions that Italy is in trouble for, we could have helped them out a bit with some of this money.

It is easy to criticise and, as I have been at pains to point out, I am sure everybody starts out with the very, very best of intentions – it is just that ideology is not always the best starting point and it does not follow that people who have never lived and worked in the real world are the best people to tell us how to run a health service, multi-billion pound operation.

The realities have proved this in the case of the NHS, so what are we going to do about it? This is where the Health and Social Care Bill comes in. It is aiming for an NHS built around the patient and we have talked a lot about this afternoon but the patient has not cropped up too much – we are all patients, we all want the best treatment. More fully integrated services, decision makers being held to account – that is a most important part – bureaucracy reduced, better value for money. Surely, these are things that we all want but, however, you dress it up, that is what we want. We want more for our money, more for our pennies and I think that those last two, reduction of bureaucracy and better value for money, are the most important nowadays, particularly nowadays where cost of care and demand for services is going up all the time.

Last but not least, we are going to have an element of control locally. Judith mentioned the Health and Wellbeing Board. Councillors have a part in the heart of that. I would like to think that we are going to run it but I suppose we are going to have to give a bit of credit to doctors in that. We are being tasked with improving provision of healthcare in Leeds, of making sure that what we get is what we need, where we need it, when we need it.

You said earlier on, Lucinda, the Government is taking health provision in a whole new direction. They are and it is a direction we need to go. I move my amendment, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lamb.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Healthcare was not really an area of interest for me until a few years ago when I found myself on Pauleen Grahame's Health Scrutiny Board and then subsequently on the same Board chaired by Councillor Dobson. I am perhaps one of the more – I find I quite enjoy Scrutiny and I really enjoyed the time both under Councillor Grahame and Councillor Dobson, because I actually felt we achieved some things in that time because politics was put to one side and we were all working together as one voice, particularly around dialysis treatment and dermatological treatments. We did an awful lot of good work and by working together we were an incredibly effective voice in the city and I am grateful for that time and I have a lot of respect for both of them and the other members of the Board during that time.

The point for me is, there is an opportunity here where we could have done something as one Council and it feels a little bit similar to the Welfare debate that we had earlier on. Whenever you talk about the NHS in this country, change is a four letter word and we are all passionate and proud about the principles behind the NHS and yet for every person you can talk about who has had a fantastic experience, you can equally find somebody who has had a dreadful experience and to pretend that everything is perfect in our healthcare system is a folly, to start with.

We have tripled spending in the last decade on healthcare and our outcomes have got worse. The inequalities that Lucinda referred to between the outcomes of the wealthiest and the poorest have got wider, despite the fact we spent three times as much money. You have to say there is something fundamentally wrong with a system where that can happen.

Throughout the debate earlier on we kept hearing about cuts, cuts, cuts, cuts, cuts and I fear that the Party opposite have not learned the lessons. It is not just about what you put in – the priority has to be what you get out of the service. Actually it is a fact from the manifestos, there will be more money in the Health Service under this Coalition Government than there would have been under the previous Labour Government's plans. That is a fact and there has been no move from Ed Miliband to reverse that.

I think the frustration with Lucinda's paper is, coming back to the point about working together, Lucinda again is someone I have got a lot of time and respect for and in this place there are some people who have really got the ability to rise above party politics and Lucinda is one of those people that really could lead every Party in to agreeing something – sorry, and Councillor Procter is pointing out ... *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: You are doing all right, Alan.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: I should point out it was he that brought that up, not me, so I will leave it to you to decide.

COUNCILLOR COULSON: You are going on to the Back Benches.
(laughter)

COUNCILLOR LAMB: It is a serious point. I think actually, Lucinda, you have dropped down a little bit and I think you can do a lot better.

COUNCILLOR: Patronising man. (interruption)

COUNCILLOR LAMB: I think there are a lot of us here actually who expect – you said at the start you did not want to make a political football out of this issue and actually I think that you have. I think there was an opportunity today to agree a position. My personal view is the Government has made a right old mess of these Health Service reforms and, as Graham has said, it is actually very important, the thrust of the intention of the reforms is crucial to close – I am not entirely sure it is down to the Liberals – I think the Lib Dems are one of the reasons why it got into such a mess, actually...

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: They are our friends anyway.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: ...but we still like them anyway! The point is I really do think, Lucinda, that there is an opportunity here for us to agree something together and coming back to my original point about the effects that we had on Scrutiny, there is a frustration that I am sure many Members feel about the process. The number of times we come to these full Council debates and you go away thinking, what was that all about? I like the knock-about stuff as much as anybody and perhaps more than some people, but sometimes there is a chance and you think what we are collectively doing just is not good enough. I feel and regret that this is one of those times, that actually we could have come to a position together as one Council and the voice we would have had would have been much more powerful and I think it is a shame that we did not do that and I am happy to support Councillor Latty's amendment. (Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think the reason why Councillor Yeadon has brought this White Paper to Council is because of the sheer scale of the public outcry against the Bill as it is going through, and let us be absolutely honest about that. I understand what you are saying, just listening to the rhetoric about investment in the Health Service, but you look at all of the evidence. Just in July in 2011, the Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses looking at what is actually happening has said that there has been a £750 cut already. You cannot just look at something, about the amount of money that you put in. You have to look at inflation, about greater need and the actual cost of the service.

What we have to say – this is even before the Bill is in operation – waiting times, 45 Trusts have already started to miss their 18-week targets. There has been a doubling of patients waiting longer than six weeks for diagnostic tests. This is why the public outcry is so strong and why, in the objection, there are so many clinicians who are just saying this is not going to work and it is going to fundamentally undermine the principles of our Health Service in free delivery at the point of need. That is what people are so concerned about.

Malcolm Grant, who is the new Chair of the NHS Commissioning Board, appointed by the Government, has described the Health Bill as completely unintelligible. Do you know, this guy, you might forgive him because he also admits that he never uses the National Health Service.

The Bliss Survey is predicting that one in three hospitals will be making cuts to their nursing workforce over the next twelve months. The whole statement “I will cut the deficit not the NHS” is beginning to sound very, very hollow indeed.

Back in the last days of the Labour Government there was an excellent report commissioned which reported in 2010, the Marmot Report, which was all about reducing health inequalities. Our concern - and that is why the White Paper is phrased in the way it is – is that the Bill is going to threaten our ability to tackle health inequalities.

I have a particular interest, obviously, in children. Of the six priority areas that Marmot listed, giving every child the best start in life was the first to tackling health inequalities. What he goes on to say is that there are many issues that contribute to health inequalities and they arise from inequities in power, money and resources. This is why we are so worried about the Health Bill.

We know that disadvantage starts before birth and continues throughout life. Action to reduce health inequalities must start before birth and be followed throughout the life of the child. Only then can we start to break the links between early disadvantage and poor outcomes throughout life. The thing that worries us the most is the lack of accountability which will lead to inconsistency of provision, the so-called postcode lottery. This is why we know that those who are most at risk are our most vulnerable families and the children who live in them.

The change in resource will undermine all of the public health measures that we are trying to bring into place around smoking, cardiovascular work, alcohol and one thing that has already happened, on-line access only. The current Bill will lead to the NHS being de-nationalised, a postcode lottery of services fuelled by a competitive market system, the unwilling provider and, as I say, we know that those who will bear the brunt of this will be our most vulnerable children and their families.

We are asking you to support this White paper to demand proper funding, protection of our vital NHS services helping us to tackle the inequalities that exist in our city today. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Illingworth.

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I rise to respond to some of the points made by Councillor Latty in his amendment about the difference in life expectancy in various areas of Leeds.

The geographic correlation between life expectancy and income is very close indeed. On average our richer citizens live ten to twelve years longer than our poorest citizens. All Members of Council agree that this outcome is an affront to civilised values and totally incompatible with our corporate objective. Although it is easy to describe, it is far from easy to remedy the situation. The solution has only a peripheral connection with the NHS.

Lord Mayor, similar differences in life expectancy have been observed throughout the world, in those countries that enjoy the benefits of socialist medicine

and those that do not. These differences in life expectancy do not reflect the variations in medical input but follow directly from the lifetime differences in income between rich and poor.

Lord Mayor, poor people cannot afford such good food as rich people. They are less able to afford fresh fruit and vegetables, more likely to consume diets high in salt and sugar and highly processed foods. Poor people tend to live in damper, smaller houses with more overcrowding, more stress, more chronic ill-health. Poor people cannot afford to exercise as often as rich people and often have less access to recreational open space. Their local sports centre, having a lower income, is less likely to offer good facilities and more likely to close. Playing fields and outdoor sports facilities are concentrated overwhelmingly in the more prosperous outer areas of Leeds. Poor people are exposed to more pollution than rich people and they are far more likely to smoke.

In essence, Lord Mayor, poor people have less choice than rich people and these persistent differences in life expectancy arise clearly and directly from this lack of choice.

If we want to close the health gap in life expectancy, Lord Mayor, then first and foremost we must narrow the wealth gap between rich and poor. Just to be clear, Councillor Latty, that involves the very richest members of society paying a lot more tax.

Lord Mayor, systematic tax avoidance and tax evasion by the richest members of society completely dwarfs the very much smaller sums that are lost within the benefits system. This advantage accumulates over an entire lifetime. It is absurd to expect instant results but we can do much more to help. Sure Start attempted to directly address childhood inequalities but is now being dismantled by the present Coalition Government. Education Maintenance Awards directly assisted those least likely to progress into further and higher education, but the present Government has taken them away.

Many policies of the present Government impact most heavily upon the poorest members of society. Blame should be apportioned fairly where it truly belongs. In the longer term, Lord Mayor, current Central Government policies are widening the wealth gap and will inevitably increase the unacceptable gap in life expectancy between rich and poor.

This Council is going to go do a great deal to help, Lord Mayor, but this Council will need additional resources if it is to reverse the damage that Central Government has done. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Marjoram.

COUNCILLOR MARJORAM: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Before I move on to the issue of the White Paper, I feel compelled to point out a simple fact – a couple of simple facts, in fact – to Councillor Illingworth about tax revenue and spending.

The top one per cent of all taxpayers in this country account for 25% of total revenue. The top ten per cent of all taxpayers account for half of all revenue. The idea that any of the things we care about will be eased in any way by making rich people poorer to make poor people richer is mathematically impossible. It is mathematically impossible.

I do not actually come from the Peter Mandelson school of “Let them be filthy rich” but I do think when people, as top rate taxpayers now do, pay 50% income tax and the majority of their income tax at 40% in addition to National Insurance and a good number of them also pay 20% VAT...

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Bit like Peter Gruen.

COUNCILLOR MARJORAM: ...yes, they are paying a substantial amount of their income in tax and it is those one per cent that account for 25% of all Government revenue and that top ten per cent that account for half of all Government revenue that by and large keep our public services afloat.

That is the fact of the matter so I am afraid, much as you might like to, John, soaking the rich is not going to work.

On the issue of the White Paper, I think the first thing really is that the NHS politically seems to have become the third rail of British political life, and for those of you unfamiliar, the London Underground has the third rail and if you touch it...

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Third and fourth, get it right.

COUNCILLOR MARJORAM: Third and fourth, you are right, but if you touch the third rail you will die and it seems to me that in politics the NHS has become the third rail. The minute you start to do anything about it, for good or ill, for better intentions or worse, it gets killed off in a storm of protest. I think that we really – and I hoped we would as a Council move beyond such instant demolition into a sensible argument about what the NHS should be doing for us.

By way of example, the NHS has allowed more than one thousand people in the last ten years to die of starvation or dehydration in their hospital bed. Does that sound like a success to anyone here? I do not think it does and that is something that I care about.

I would also point out to Judith, who has come up with this fanciful notion from the Labour Party that we must not measure things by how much we increase spending – try telling that to Gordon Brown because we had a decade of splurging money and in the NHS in particular this resulted in two things that need consideration. One is that actually while the budget was increasing, productivity was declining so for all the extra spending, in many cases we were getting less. That sounds to me, if I am having a sensible discussion with you, like an organisation in need of some reform.

The overall issue of the budget – and let us just be clear – at the moment total Government spending because of protected departments is actually still rising but your last budget before you lost an election was talking about cuts which amounted in total - not in the NHS, in total – to around 2.2% of total Government spending. On current budget forecasts the Coalition Government is looking at cuts of around 3%. We are dancing on the head of a financial pin and for you to turn round so simplistically, as you have done about the NHS tonight and do about every issue, might be pleasing on your ears in the Council Chamber; it will do you no good at the ballot box because the public will not take you seriously until you have a sensible debate with us about what you will do. I suspect many of you know that under the leadership of the utterly useless muppet Miliband.

Here is a point, moving on essentially to the nuggets of the NHS. All of us can talk about our personal experience. My father is a dialysis patient, not here, in Buckinghamshire. His treatment is excellent. My wife was nearly killed in Leeds by the bungling clowns at some of these hospitals. We can all talk about our personal experience. It is not the basis for a policy. What we ought to have is a sensible debate, including the very obvious fact that the private sector can often produce better outcomes more cheaply than the NHS and if people in this country and in this city have an NHS which is free at the point of use...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: You have just ruined the amendment.

COUNCILLOR MARJORAM: ...which gives them the care and the treatment which they need and prevents them from dying of such simple things as thirst or hunger in their own beds, then perhaps we will have an NHS to be proud of in this city and the country at large. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mulherin.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. In seconding the motion I would just like to say as Councillor Yeadon and other Members have already stated, the scale and pace of the reforms set out in the Government's Health and Social Care Bill is unprecedented and flies in the face of the Prime Minister's assurance to the Royal College of Nursing in the run-up to the General Election that there will be no more pointless reorganisations of the NHS.

The Coalition Agreement following the General Election went on to state that their new Government would stop the top-down reorganisations of the NHS that have got in the way of patient care. Perhaps the statement made last week by the Prime Minister in a speech on regulation in the economy is more revealing of the Government's true stance on the NHS when he said he wanted the NHS to be a fantastic business for Britain.

The scale and pace of the reforms being proposed will fundamentally change the health service that we cherish in this country – free at the point of need and accessible to all. Whilst I welcome the return of public health responsibilities to Local Authorities, where I believe we can make a real difference to the health and wellbeing of the communities we serve by taking a far more holistic approach to health, embedding it in everything we do and considering the health impacts of decisions we take as a Local Authority on everything from Children's Centre provision and arts funding to housing and planning decisions, I have some very real concerns about the other major changes proposed in the Bill, proposals that already enable NHS hospitals, district general hospitals, to be taken over by somebody like Circle Health.

The growing emphasis on competition, the freeing up for more privatisation within the Health Service where shareholder profits will be higher up the list of priorities for companies than providing services and meeting patients' needs and the damage that will be done to the doctor/patient relationship with GPs have to struggle with rationing, healthcare on the basis of budget pressures rather than patients' needs, will all undermine the fundamental principles upon which healthcare from the womb to the grave have been provided throughout the lifetime of our NHS.

The removal of the limit on the number of private patients a hospital can treat and the emphasis on promoting competition will also reduce access to care for patients who cannot afford to pay. Waiting times have already increased for some

services, as Councillor Yeadon outlined, over the last year, without this cap being lifted and, given that it will be the same specialists in the same hospitals operating on private fee-paying or NHS patients, it is simple commonsense to note that they will not be able to maintain waiting time targets for the NHS when more patients are paying to jump the queue.

I would question how this is in any way building the NHS around the patients as suggested in Councillor Latty's amendment. It may be building the NHS around some patients, those who can afford to pay to jump the queue and who have the wherewithal to press Clinical Commissioning Groups to get them access to the drugs, service or surgery that they need, but it will almost certainly entrench the health inequalities that are already evident between the best off and worst off in our city and our country.

There is already a twelve year gap between life expectancy in well to do suburbs like Alwoodley and Adel and areas of inner city, densely packed housing like Beeston Hill. As elected Members serving the people of Leeds we should be doing everything in our power to tackle those health inequalities, not supporting measures that will make them worse. The NHS is already suffering a real terms cut of 5% to 6% in its budgets with the growing costs of drugs, medical technology and an ageing population taken into account and that is on top of the £20b of efficiency savings to be found over the next four years.

The Bill creates new budget pressures, according to the Financial Times, of £2.5b with the closure of the Primary Care Trusts and redundancy payments to up to 20,000 staff factored in. An estimated 500 new Commissioning Bodies will be created to support the Clinical Commissioning Groups, potentially re-employing many of the knowledgeable staff previously laid off at taxpayers' expense. These increased costs do not seem to have been given sufficient consideration.

There is a distinct lack of clarity about the future role of Health Scrutiny in the Bill where up to now health bodies have been statutorily held to account by locally elected Members. As I indicated earlier when asked about the children's cardiac surgery review, the local knowledge of elected Members and their democratic accountability to local people should not be under-estimated. Scrutiny has a vitally important role in holding partners and, indeed, the new Health and Wellbeing Board itself to account and this should not be lost in the process.

Let me close by recalling NHS founder Nye Bevan's quote that "The NHS will last as long as there are folk left with the faith to fight for it." I hope that Members of all parties across this Chamber will reflect on the benefits the National Health Service has brought to them and their families and friends over the last 63 year and join me and colleagues on this side of the Chamber in keeping that faith. I urge you to support Councillor Yeadon's motion. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Yeadon.

COUNCILLOR YEADON: Thank you. I thought that was actually a very interesting debate and I actually believe there is more agreement than disagreement. I think we actually want the same thing, we want people in Leeds to be healthy and happy, but I do think we have fundamental differences of opinion of how we achieve that.

I did have another look at the White Paper to actually see what in it could be disagreed with really, and I think it is actually quite carefully worded. It does not

completely batter the Government, it does not talk about privatisation. It is very carefully worded and we did that for a specific reason, because we do not think that health should be this football thrown over to each side saying, "You did not manage to do it when you were in power and now you are making it worse." I just do not think it is helpful. It was carefully worded and reflecting on it and looking at it again, I still think it was quite a carefully worded White Paper so I stand by it.

I think a lot of the points that were made are valid. When we were in Government, when Labour was in Government, we did not get everything right but we did get many things right. There were reductions in waiting times, there was less variation in access to drugs and treatments, reductions in MRSA, sustained reductions in death due to cancer and cardiovascular disease and sustained reductions in the rates of smoking, so although we did not necessarily achieve all we wanted, there was great progress made so I think it would be unfair to say that Labour's health record is unfavourable.

I think what we just have to reflect on is the concerns that the Bill is having to people who live within our communities and people who work for the NHS. I do not think those can be argued against. We have real concerns that this Bill will fragment the Health Service and create differentials between communities within cities as well as within regions and I think we are responsible for ensuring that those concerns are aired and that we have a good honest debate about it in Council.

I will not go over the points that everybody has made but I do remain committed to ensuring that the Health and Wellbeing Board is the most effective vehicle to ensure that we have a joined-up service within Leeds and I welcome the involvement of the Opposition parties in doing that because I do think that that is vital for us to ensure that we do not have fragmentation and that everybody has equal access to healthcare in the city.

I welcome your responses and I thank you for them, and particularly the very kind words that some people have said about it and I am sorry if I have disappointed you, but I believe in the White Paper and I appeal for you to support it. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: We have now passed the allocated time for the White Papers but I will now call for a vote on the first amendment in the name of Councillor Hamilton. *(A vote was taken)* That seems to be LOST.

The second amendment in the name of Councillor Latty. *(A vote was taken)* That also seems to be LOST.

The motion in the name of Councillor Yeadon. *(A vote was taken)* That seems to have been not defeated. CARRIED.

ITEM 10 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – FEED IN TARIFFS

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we move on to the next White Paper, please.
David.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Can I formally move the White Paper in my name.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Formally second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Anderson.

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: Move in terms of the motion.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lamb.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Formally second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: All those in favour of the amendment in the name of Councillor Anderson? *(A vote was taken)* LOST.

We now come to what I think is the substantive motion. *(A vote was taken)* That seems to be CARRIED.

ITEM 11 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – WASTE SOLUTION REFERENDUM

THE LORD MAYOR: White Paper 11, Councillor Pryke.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Move in terms of the motion, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Campbell.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dobson.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Move the amendment, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Eileen Taylor

COUNCILLOR E TAYLOR: Second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I call for a vote on the amendment in the name of Councillor Dobson. *(A vote was taken)* CARRIED.

We now vote on the substantive motion in the name of Councillor Dobson *(sic)*. *(A vote was taken)* That seems to be CARRIED.

ITEM 12 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – Procedure Rule 3.1(d) – BBC CUTS

THE LORD MAYOR: White Paper 12, Councillor Wakefield.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ogilvie.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: Second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lobley.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: I move the amendment, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Robinson.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: We are voting on the amendment in the name of Councillor Lobley. (*A vote was taken*) That seems to be LOST.

We are voting on the motion in the name of Councillor Wakefield. (*A vote was taken*) That is CARRIED.

ITEM 13 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – Procedure Rule 3.1(d) – MILITARY
COMMUNITY COVENANT

THE LORD MAYOR: White Paper 13, Councillor Lyons.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Bill Hyde.

COUNCILLOR W HYDE: Astonishingly, I am delighted to second it, Lord Mayor. (*laughter*)

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: It will be on his leaflets!

THE LORD MAYOR: It is wonderful to have harmony! All those in favour? (*A vote was taken*) Thank you, that is CARRIED.

ITEM 14 - WHITE PAPER MOTION – Procedure Rule 3.1(d) – LEEDS RFLC

THE LORD MAYOR: White Paper 14, Councillor Parker.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Anderson.

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: I have great pleasure in seconding.

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

ITEM 15 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – Procedure Rule 3.1(d) – SIR JIMMY SAVILE,
OBE KCSG

THE LORD MAYOR: White Paper 15, Councillor Andrew Carter.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Atha.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I second, Lord Mayor.

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

Can I just remind people that the State of the City Debate is on 7th December. Can I also just say that this is Bob's last official meeting and he is returning to Planning. All good wishes. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: That is demotion, Bob!

THE LORD MAYOR: I will wait and see who is on my left-hand side when I come back! Safe journey home and thank you for your co-operation.

(The meeting closed at 7.40 pm)