

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Held on

Wednesday, 13th November, 2013

At

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
CIVIC HALL,
LEEDS

In the Chair:

THE LORD MAYOR
(COUNCILLOR T MURRAY)

VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

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VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL
MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 13th NOVEMBER 2013

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon, everybody. Let us begin. We will begin on November's Council meeting.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE LORD MAYOR: I would like to start with a number of announcements. The first one is on your paper, just to remind you about your telephones being switched off, please. The second thing to mention is I think a number of members might be using their iPads this afternoon instead of using the papers, a few people are nodding, so that will be happening.

Perhaps I need to remind you that the four things perched in the Chamber are not owls, they do happen to be cameras and if you do stand up and make a contribution, make your point, then the people around you will also be in camera and in view. I thought I would like to mention that.

If I just look round, let me mention that Councillor Harper was taken into hospital I think on Monday, was in hospital on Tuesday and I think is now hopefully out and on the road to recovery. We do wish him well. That means that I think we have Councillor Nash sitting next to Councillor Gruen; Councillor Nash is Councillor Harper today and Councillor Hardy happens to be Councillor Nash today! Where is Councillor Hardy?

COUNCILLOR HARDY: Far better looking, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: It is nice to see Councillor Latty – I understand Councillor Latty is not a hundred per cent well but it is nice to see that he has made a big effort to get here – nice to see you this afternoon.

The other thing I would like to mention really is, it is great being the Lord Mayor of Leeds, this marvellous city of ours and mine and you are all of us are totally biased, but it is nice when the reports come in and say, as it said in the Yorkshire Evening Post a week ago, about this city being named as one of the best places in the United Kingdom to live. (*Applause*) Let me mention it is better than London, it is better than Birmingham, it is better than Glasgow and, of course, it is better than Manchester!

We all know the second report that followed it actually rated Leeds as being in the region rated as one of the world's top attractions, so I think we have a lot.

One of the reasons why I mention that, really, is that I was in York at the finals or the awards of Yorkshire in Bloom and in front of me I have got two sides of A4 of the success this city has had in Yorkshire in Bloom, and if you need a copy we will get you one. Let me just highlight one thing; in the Large City Category Leeds got gold and, of course, we were the category winner and the City of Leeds received the Yorkshire in Bloom Chairman's award for services to the In Bloom initiative. It is one of the reasons, I think, why some of those reports were saying we are as good as we are.

Can I just add a little bit that people might like to know about that story. A fellow who used to work for us called John Tinker, who used to be the Director of Leisure, he got an RHS award for a Community Challenge Award for his services to Yorkshire and Britain in Bloom for the work he has done for nearly 16 years getting those flowers in place and getting us those awards over that period of time. *(Applause)* Well done to John; he is alive and kicking in Barwick.

Back to the announcements, I need to inform Council that we have agreed the inclusion of a late item in respect of the Combined Authority, details of which were not received until after the agenda was dispatched. I propose to deal with this following Item 6 on the agenda.

ITEM 1 – MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS (x2) HELD 11th SEPTEMBER 2013

THE LORD MAYOR: Let us start with Item 1, which is the Minutes of the meetings held on 11th September this year. Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, I move both sets of Minutes.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

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

ITEM 2 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 2, Declarations of Interest. Does any Member want to declare any disposable pecuniary interest?

COUNCILLOR KHAN: Lord Mayor, I would like to declare pecuniary interest that I work for Royal Mail.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Any more?

COUNCILLOR LYONS: About the only one that does! *(laughter)*

THE LORD MAYOR: We will take note of that. Thank you, Councillor Khan.

ITEM 3 – COMMUNICATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Communications. Chief Exec.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: No Communications, Lord Mayor.

ITEM 4 – DEPUTATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Deputations.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: There are four Deputations today. The first one is 20's Plenty Campaign regarding speed limits on roads in Leeds; the second is

Friends of Leeds Kirkgate Market; the third is MENCAP regarding a learning disability event at Leeds Civic Hall; and fourth is the role of Post Offices within the community.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, I move that the Deputations be heard.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

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

DEPUTATION ONE – 20's PLENTY CAMPAIGN

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

MR SINGH: Mindi Singh.

MS A SEMLYEN My name is Anna Semlyen and I am National Campaign Manager for 20's Plenty for us, and I am representing 20s Plenty for Leeds. I am also a City of York Councillor, where the Total 20mph is policy for residential roads. Thank you very much for this opportunity to speak to you today.

I want a contiguous Total 20mph to be Leeds policy as well for residential roads. 20mph is enforceable, mandatory, signed, default 20mph limits for the majority of roads with exceptions set by the Traffic Authority. Signs, not humps, unless absolutely necessary. This makes it both cheaper and more popular than humped zones.

In York 95% of streets will go to 20mph. Major arterials are being exempted. Limiting speeds will cost effectively improve safety and the quality of life for Leeds residents. Doing 20mph consistently with signs and on a wide area basis is better than the school catchment approach currently implemented. Creating as wide a 20mph extent as possible has the biggest impact for compliance, is an easier message to sell to drivers and is most cost effective. Cost effectiveness is a balance between maximising driver compliance whilst minimising cost.

In some areas, school catchment 20mph limits will only create a patchwork where limits change many times along a journey. This will not make sense to drivers. What helps drivers comply is to understand the limits because they are consistent across a whole community. Compliance is best when many agencies collaborate at promotion and they are enforced by the police.

As to popularity, 73% of drivers support residential 20mph speed limits, according to the British Social Attitudes Survey, so Total 20 is a transport policy that hits many buttons – safety, health, environment, community, prevention, reduces obesity, reduces pollution, improves cycling, walking, reduces asthma and improves lung health, improves people with heart problems, mental health problems and reduces noise, whilst also saving society money. Marketing is key to it.

Wide 20mph limits are proven to be effective – fewer casualties is a clear gain, yet the wider health benefits of increased active travel are worth much more.

Total 20 is affordable, at about £3 per head, with exceptional rates of return from improved quality of life. 20mph limits reduce danger, fear, pollution and noise.

Many experts acknowledge that limits are the single biggest impact affordable intervention to radically improve Britain today.

Over 12 million people now live in places like Manchester, Birmingham, Bristol, Cambridge, Oxford, Newcastle, Middlesbrough and 25% of the London Boroughs have all agreed this policy of residential 20mph limits everywhere.

Maximising a 20mph limit's cost effectiveness is best achieved by investing in education to raise the long-term compliance. Other Authorities have found that raising compliance through public health education is worth the cost to achieve lasting behaviour change towards slower speeds and raising active travel.

We you know, Leeds will host the Grand Depart of the Tour de France next year. All cycling groups are asking for wider 20mph limits to protect cyclists and promote increased cycling. It is one of the Get Britain Cycling Campaign aims.

As part of the Tour legacy Leeds could announce wide 20mph limits and see cycling rates increase over 20% as they did in Bristol, with a rate of return of over £7 per £1 spent.

The New Leeds/Bradford Cycling Super Highway includes 20mph limits along neighbouring streets. If you accept that they are needed there to protect cyclists to and from the Super Highway, then you can surely see that cyclists would benefit from 20mph across Leeds lit residential roads.

The benefits include Environment: when 30k per hour or 15mph zones were introduced in Germany, car drivers changed gear 12% less, they braked 14% less and required 12% less fuel – that is 18p per litre as a tax cut. It saves time – 20mph makes traffic smoother, gaps between the cars decrease, it is easier to merge, meaning more efficient flow of traffic in urban areas. Congestion reduces.

20mph limits cost 50 times less than zones with humps. It is no longer mandatory to impose humps. Portsmouth's 20mph limit cost just £330 per street. Local Authority costs are about £3 per head of population – not much for these huge benefits.

It is self-enforcing. Strong support from communities and an increasing police focus on community policing supports 20mph speed limits which can be enforced with a "light touch" occasional policing. The economic impact is improved traffic flow, shopping on foot is more pleasant, house values rise 2% and shop rentals increase where 20mph is included.

The health improvements are massive, that you have falling emissions, improved air quality, and a shift of some drivers towards more active travel modes like walking or cycling.

Do you want Leeds to have a better quality of life and reduced inequalities? Slower speeds reduce noise. Those currently suffering the greatest inequalities tend to live nearer busy roads and therefore benefit most. 20mph reduces health inequalities by extending the life expectancy of disadvantaged people, particularly poor boys.

Please agree a 20mph wide area policy for Leeds and resource this. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Anna. Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, I move that this matter be referred to the Executive Board for consideration.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

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

Thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Thank you and good afternoon.

DEPUTATION TWO – FRIENDS OF LEEDS KIRKGATE MARKET

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

SPEAKER: We are the Friends of Leeds Kirkgate Market. In March, after a public consultation, we were promised a regeneration of the Market.

The Council promised that £12.3m would be borrowed against future market income to fund the refurbishment, that a new management structure would be put in place and that in excess of £1.6m would be spent this financial year on maintaining and upgrading the property. The people of Leeds were promised that the process would be open and transparent.

Instead, two thirds through the financial year the only sign of improvements are the electrical works, which some traders are being asked to pay for themselves (some are not) but nothing else – no wonder there is confusion.

At this critical time, management support is reduced. There is little if any trader involvement in any management decisions and no forum or democratic process to enable that. Unlike many other market and trading areas, there is no organised and regular communication with traders, only demands for money or new rules to follow.

As the traders leave footfall is reducing, and with it the Council's income from the market which is needed to borrow the £12.3m, but the Council is publicly accountable for what is happening in the market and each one of you here today is sanctioning these changes.

The market means more to Leeds than any number of big box shops. It caters for all cultures and incomes and is a lifeline for affordable and healthy fruit and veg, fresh meat and fish and with universal credits round the corner and rise in the number of food banks the market will be more, not less, important for the foreseeable future.

Additionally it is a source of reasonably priced clothes and household goods. Some Councillors claim that necessities can be obtained from Lidl, Primark and Poundland, but the best these shops can offer workers is the minimum wage while profits go to tax havens, whereas the market is a cradle of enterprise where businesses can flourish and the money stays in Leeds.

Leeds market is a bedrock of retail enterprise – the birth place of Marks and Spencers. This particular aspect was celebrated at the opening of the new shop by a number of Councillors, so it seems Leeds City Council boast the market's merits on the one hand whilst behind the scenes the market is slowly being dismantled.

Among the proposals put to the public consultation was for a “Heart of the Market” as a centre for special events, but all that has happened to date is that the traders are having the heart ripped out of them and the market is losing its soul.

So what on earth is going on? Who is sanctioning this in Leeds City Council. Who will be accountable and who can stand up now and defend the indefensible? We have some specific questions to Councillors:

1. We are now eight months into this financial year – how much of the £1.6m has been already spent?
2. On what will the remainder of the expenditure be spent?
3. If this is the first phase of the total £12.3m, how can anyone be sure any of this will be delivered as announced? We also understand the £750,000 agreed for maintenance has been stopped.
4. Why are some traders being asked to pay for electrical works even in units, including Butchers Row, which are meant to be demolished under current redevelopment proposals?
5. Why is there no clear consistent policy for all traders?
6. When will the proposals for this project be brought back to Executive Board for approval?
7. The area behind the George Street shops is a major loading area for traders. What suitable arrangements for market requirements will be made for alternative loading facilities when this is gone?
8. When and how will detailed proposals for the market changes be shared with the public and traders?
9. How are traders themselves being involved in the design of this alternative management structure agreed at the Executive Board to include Councillors, traders and independent representatives, and when will these management proposals be taken to the Executive Board for approval?
10. Can you please explain the reasons for the restructuring of the market management and the apparent reduction in expertise and resources and identify who is now acting as Market Manager and why are they not visible to traders?

We leave you by a quick poem actually designed by one of the traders:

The market is ailing and in a sorry state,
The traders are abandoning this once magnificent place.
So many notices handed in to leave in the New Year
Will surely bring it tumbling down, like a deck of cards, as all the businesses disappear.

No plans to change a single thing or clean and spruce it up,
The millions promised never spent, just bailiffs to hang us up
Like a hungry vultures preying on those who dared to try and run a business in this place, now bled until they die

Finally, just for your awareness, 13 traders have since handed in their notices to quit from January 2014. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, I refer this matter to the Executive Board for consideration.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

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

Thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the considerations which your comments will receive. Good afternoon. *(Applause)*

DEPUTATION THREE – MENCAP

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

SUSAN: Thank you for letting us speak to you today. We are here to tell you about a fantastic event that happened in this Chamber.

JOHNATHAN: We are asking you to help us. We have a great idea.

MAGGIE: On 26th July, we welcomed the Speaker of the House of Commons, the Right Honourable John Bercow MP. Over 100 people with a learning disability, support staff and organisations came from Leeds and all across the North of England to this prestigious event.

ANNE-LOUISE: Some of you took part.

MAGGIE: Thank you, Councillor Wakefield, for supporting the event and for your welcome speech on the day. Also, many thanks to Councillor Ogilvie for helping us organise the event and for speaking on the day. We would also like to thank Councillors Urry, Yeadon, Sue and Jonathan Bentley, and Councillor Graham and any others who came to our event and a big thank you to Tom Riordan, Ian Kirk and Andrea Holgate and the Civic Hall catering team, for all their help.

SUSAN: Mr Speaker came to tell us about Parliament and to find out how people with a learning disability can be more involved with their MPs. I was his co-chair, I was Mrs Speaker for the day. *(Applause)*

JOHNATHAN: And we wanted to find out more about the Council.

ANNE-LOUISE: Lots of people came from Leeds. It was very good.

JOHNATHAN: I asked Mr Speaker how much longer David Cameron will be in power and how long it will be before Ed Miliband gets in! *(Applause)*

THOMAS: I am here to help another person who spoke at the Council Takeover event with Mr Speaker. She speaks on behalf of people with more severe or complex disabilities. We have agreed beforehand what it is you want to say, because obviously it takes a bit of time, haven't we? Are you all right for me to say what you want to say? Yes.

[ANNABEL:] I care about Leeds. MPs and Councillors need to talk to us. You need to listen to us and include everybody. (*Applause*)

ANNE-LOUISE: We have done three big meetings here, one every year and we went to London to meet our MPs.

MAGGIE: The Council Chamber Takeover events set new standards in the engagement of people with a learning disability in local and national democracy. We hope Mr Speaker will follow our lead at Westminster.

SUSAN: We found out about the Sheffield People's Parliament, which is for people with a learning disability to have their say in their Council. There is also one in Durham.

JOHNATHAN: Will you help us set up a People's Parliament in Leeds for people with a learning disability?

COUNCILLORS: Yes, we will. (*Applause*)

SUSAN: Our next Takeover in the Council Chamber is on 18th June. It would be great to make it into a People's Parliament.

THOMAS: Annabel would just like to finish this Deputation by saying thank you very much to everyone for listening and also thank you to Michael, the Warden, and this very kind gentleman behind me for helping us adjust the room so it is easier for people who use wheelchairs to come in and talk to you all today.

Thank you all very much. (*standing ovation*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, I move that this matter be referred to the Executive Board for their further consideration.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

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

Thank you for attending and for what you have said. You care about Leeds; we care about Leeds. You will be kept informed of the considerations which your comments will receive. Good afternoon. Have a good day. Thank you.

DEPUTATION FOUR – ROLE OF POST OFFICES

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

MR M SINGH: This is Peter Exley, my name is Mindi Singh. I am the Secretary of the National Federation of Sub-Postmasters Centre Yorkshire Branch. I represent the Sub-Postmasters in this area. My Deputation is on the future of the Post Offices with the privatisation of the Royal Mail.

Sale of Royal Mail took place on 15 October. This valued the organisation at around £3.3b. Shares rocketed shortly after trading was allowed, suggesting the actual value of the Royal Mail is worth £5b.

Sub-postmasters are reliant on Royal Mail for much of their income – on average one third the postmasters' income is derived from transacting services on behalf of Royal Mail, such as selling stamps and accepting parcels. The amount sub-postmasters receive for individual transactions has reduced even under the nationalised Royal Mail. Private companies, especially large private companies, can exercise their economic powers over contractors in order to decrease their costs, which benefits their shareholders but may be detrimental of their contractors.

Sub-postmasters are worried that their income will fall further, making life much more difficult for them to continue in operation. Sub-postmasters are already experiencing falling incomes, with an average drop in pay of 36% over the last six years. As a result, many feel they are currently operating on the very edge of viability. If correct, the ability of Post Offices to provide employment and local services may be significantly reduced.

The Chief Executive of Royal Mail has stated it “unthinkable” there would not be a strong commercial relationship between the companies. However, this does not make clear whether this relationship would continue to be the same, including whether the Post Office will remain a central and single hub for many Royal Mail products.

Many sub-postmasters feel that, whilst no plans may currently exist, the Royal Mail now has the freedom to reduce the number of services offered solely through the Post Offices. This would take away further income away from sub-postmasters. Post Offices are the centre of their communities. The economic impact of a Post Office closing, even temporarily, on the other nearby businesses can be immense. People come to high streets to visit their Post Office and then whole town centre benefits from having a Post Office to draw people in.

The loss of a Post Office has a very big impact both on rural communities and on deprived urban communities. People can be cut off from a way of communicating with the outside world, as well as losing a trusted, local means to access cash and interact with the state.

Sub-postmasters feel that they are not after money for nothing. They state they want to receive fair pay for the hard work they do. In November 2012 the Post Office was awarded a contract in the region of the £450m to provide local access to DVLA services, yet a 50% reduction was imposed on the pay sub-postmasters receive for transacting these services.

Similar contracts will allow the Post Offices to be a key place for people to access government services. Digital by default may be the government's priority but ministers have also stated that they want the Post Office to become the ‘front office for government’. Many vulnerable people, including the elderly, will still need help to access the benefits and receive the payments. Sub-postmasters feel that the existing Post Office structure is perfectly placed to continue helping people in this situation.

People are caught by payday lenders in all locations, not just in the inner city. Post Offices could provide a link between people and suitable financial services, such as credit unions. This can allow people to be more financially independent whilst having high quality and customer focused services nearby.

Sub-postmasters may raise issues with Members, including:

- What ways the Council can work with Post Offices.

- Whether there are further Council services that could be offered through the existing network.
- Whether the Council can support sub-postmasters in making clear the long term impact of Royal Mail privatisation on people and communities in Leeds.
- Whether the money the Government may have lost through potentially undervaluing the Royal Mail could have been invested in delivering a high quality Post Office for future generations within Leeds

Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, I move that this matter be referred to the Executive Board for consideration.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

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

Thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the considerations which your comments will receive. Good afternoon, have a good day. Thank you. *(Applause)*

ITEM 5 – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – LATE NIGHT LEVY

THE LORD MAYOR: I am now moving on to Item 5, Recommendations of the General Purposes Committee. Councillor Wakefield.

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

COUNCILLOR NASH: I second, my Lord Mayor.

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

ITEM 6 – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW OF PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item number 6, Recommendations of the General Purposes Committee. Councillor Wakefield.

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

COUNCILLOR NASH: I second, my Lord Mayor.

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

LATE ITEM – COMBINED AUTHORITY

THE LORD MAYOR: A late item, Combined Authority. Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am very aware that the name of Combined Authority hardly resonates at all outside of this Chamber, or even within this Chamber. If I said that it represents the biggest shift of power from the centre to Local Authorities, I think – I hope – that we would get total support for the Combined Authority. Next April the five West Yorkshire Authorities plus York take on powers, Statutory powers, for transport, investment and skills. I do not think anyone here should underestimate some of the challenges we have.

We have lost 60,000 jobs in Yorkshire since 2008. Our economic recovery is struggling and even the latest quarter only indicates a 0.3% growth. I think we are all aware that the region has the poorest export record in the country.

I think we all want this to succeed, not only because it demonstrates Local Authorities can do better than Whitehall, but also that actually it rebalances the economy. One of the interesting things by many pieces of research is that if a country relies on a capital, what you do is you not only get economic inefficiency, you get greater inequalities and that is exactly what we got in this country with the over-dependence on London and the south-east to drive our economy. Many of our regions are just not performing anywhere near their capability.

I think if you also look at some of the work done in Europe, the nearest I can get in terms of research to looking at the role of the capital and the second cities is Germany, where 14 second cities perform better than the capital. I know it is a Federal structure, I know it is different, but I think that is an important lesson for all of us.

We start the journey next year with an ambitious plan to get a billion pounds in transport to start better connectivity within the region, we have got £400m again from Whitehall to invest in our economy and, of course, most of you here will have heard before, we have now got devolution of skills and apprenticeships. That is the start of the journey that we will have to make.

I am optimistic that Local Authority will prove to be more effective. I am hoping that by the time the Combined Authority is up and running, people will see the purpose, the strength and the effectiveness of having Local Government because we must start the journey of taking power and resources from London and bringing it up to Yorkshire so that local members, Local Authorities, can actually determine their own future in terms of the economy and for their own prosperity for the people of this region.

I move the Combined Authority paper, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, I second.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. This is a quantum leap for Local Government and I have to endorse what the Leader of Council has said. The Government is placing in Local Authorities a massive amount of trust to deliver an agenda that has not been given to Local Authorities to present in our Local Government lifetime. £1.5b of money is being devolved from Whitehall to this area,

as Keith rightly referred, the Combined Authority, a most unfortunate name, we will have to get away from that and think of something a lot better.

It is going to give us the chance to actually show that Local Government can work across political boundaries for the greater good of the people who live in the real world and not in the somewhat artificial world of political boundaries. It astonishes me that some people cannot grasp the importance of this agenda and actually believe that we should go on trying to make decisions that actually affect a much wider area than just Leeds in isolation. It has not worked. We cannot on the one hand say that Government does not give us enough power to take decisions, enough power to actually drive investment forward in our area, and on the other turn around and say we do not want this Combined Authority. This Combined Authority is representative of all major political parties, it has private enterprise on the Board, membership of the LEP, and it is going to have responsibility for key important agendas that we have always gone on about in this Council Chamber over the years – investment in transport, investment in skills, driving the local economy forward, but it can only be a first step because it still does not properly recognise the way in which the economy of this part of the country operates. It operates on the City Region boundaries which incorporate more Local Authorities than just the ones mentioned. I hope that over the next few years we will see the Government having more and more confidence in our ability to deliver this new agenda and widening the number of Authorities that are involved in this to cover the whole of the economic footprint and the City Region.

I have pleasure in supporting. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Yes, Lord Mayor, I will not be long in summing up because I think we have got consensus here.

It is worth pointing out that although we have a huge challenge, the LEP in this area, what we call the Local Enterprise Partner, is regarded as being one of the best in the country. If you look at the role of this area under the Combined Authority, it has two-and-a-half million, 95% of them live in the area and it generates 52b GVA or GDP a year for the area. That is a very powerful start.

We do have, in terms of Leeds, a core city that actually generated half of that. I think the real truth of it may be in many years' time we will be able to say that we assisted one of the biggest shifts of power in the British, certainly in the constitution, by devolving powers from Whitehall.

When we did the City Deal in Parliament, we actually gave a presentation in front of ten Ministers which I think speaks volumes for the micro-management of Local Authority. I think all of us in this Chamber want to see Local Authority being treated as we were promised with more freedom, more localism and more powers.

I think the trick for us is (a) to bring the Local Enterprise Partnership back into a democratic partnership with the Local Authority, which it is now because it sits on the Combined Authority; and (b), for us who sit on the Combined Authority to keep this Chamber briefed on the progress we make because people will only support the Combined Authority and the work that we do if we start producing results. One of the earlier wins we could make is on transport. Connectivity, as was said many times, is the biggest single factor that will general economic prosperity and I think what I would plead for anybody who is talking to Government, anybody who supports our case, to allow us the freedom to raise the £1b that will transform the transport links in this

region and do not stifle us as being threatened with a referendum or, indeed, a block on what we can raise.

Lord Mayor, I wait to bring back more reports on the progress of the Combined Authority. Thank you. *(Applause)*

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

ITEM 7 – REPORT ON APPOINTMENTS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 78 is the Report on Appointments. It is Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, I move in terms of the Order Paper that the Appointments agreed in the report of the City Solicitor be approved.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

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

ITEM 8 – REPORT ON NEW GENERATION TRANSPORT

THE LORD MAYOR: Item number 8, Report on New Generation Transport. Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. We are here yet again with a procedural motion on NGT, but that is always an opportunity just to say a few things for all of us.

It is very appropriate that we should just have been talking about the Combined Authority and now we are talking about NGT, because there is an interlinking between the two. Both are about looking beyond the boundaries of just this city, about benefiting the wider economic region and are about significant changes that actually can impact for many, many years to come.

NGT is clearly a game changer that I think goes beyond the ones that we have had in this city over the past year. We can look at the decision on John Lewis, which is incredibly positive for the city, we can look at the opening of the Trinity, we can look at the opening of the Arena; all big, major decisions and events that will have an impact for years to come. NGT, I believe, will have an impact way beyond those for the whole of Leeds, for Leeds's citizens and for the citizens of West Yorkshire.

It is not a solution in itself to the transport problems of the city; it is just part of a mix of measures that will make the city fit for the rest of the 21st Century, that will change the agenda so that we are not just thinking about a city that is dependent on car transport, private transport, to move people around.

If we look at measures like whether it is Quality Bus Contracts or Quality Bus Partnerships, that will be decided elsewhere but that is about a relationship where we start to take charge of our destiny in terms of public transport. We have Park and Ride, we have the Transport Fund itself, a billion pound ambitious Transport Fund that will benefit the city and will grow our economy in a huge way. We will have road

and rail investment. We will even have, as comments have been made earlier, our cycling investment which will really start to make a difference to the city.

NGT will be a very important component of that overall package because we need to think not just about where the current routes are going, not just about this is an issue that affects Belle Isle, Hunslet, the city centre and out to the north. It is about where routes go in the future. I do not know where they will go; perhaps it will be to the Enterprise Zone, perhaps it will be the Leeds-Bradford corridor. I do not know, there are big decisions to be made there, but it does go beyond the confines of Leeds City Council and beyond our boundaries.

The economic benefits are the main ones that we need to think about and again it is always, as Bill Clinton said, "It's the economy, stupid." We talked about figures of 4,000 new jobs. I believe that is easily deliverable – a thousand jobs in the construction. Anybody who thinks that NGT does not affect transport, does not affect business, I suggest you just go up Headingley Lane midweek at a quiet time and look at how transport moves through that corridor, because all that delay is about how we stop our businesses moving and the problems that we need to tackle.

There are local benefits. For South Leeds there is that huge prize of repopulating the South Bank with families, with people making their homes there and actually changing that area. For North Leeds it is tackling those historic problems of traffic congestion which have been a major bane in people's lives for decades. We really should get beyond thinking in a NIMBY way about this and thinking just about today. We need to think about the future and what is going to happen in decades because if we do not take the opportunity that we have with NGT now we are putting ourselves back for at least a decade so that discussions will take place in ten years' time and no progress will be made.

We need to think about the positives, about the pluses and the opportunities that this offers to the whole city going forward in the next decade and more and so I happily say that I am pleased to put the recommendation to Council. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, I second.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Leadley.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, as we speak today officials at the Department of Transport in London will be working towards the end of what seems likely to be about 1,800 to 2,000 objections to the Leeds NGT trolleybus scheme. With so much opposition almost certainly there will have to be a public enquiry.

We will be voting to short-circuit that process by opposing confirmation of the City Council's 1st July 2013 resolution promoting, along with the West Yorkshire Passenger Transport Executive, the Transport and Works Order which would authorise construction of a trolleybus route from Stourton to Holt Park and Lawnswood.

We are not against investment but where there is investment it must be sound and be capable of showing a proven beneficial return. NGT clearly follows Supertram, is just as likely to be poor value for money and should be rejected.

When I made my first formal objection to Supertram in 1992, one of my grounds of objection was that it would drag on and on for years and years without

getting anywhere. How right I was. Prophecy in the wilderness can be a lonely occupation so in July I was pleased to see 19 Members voting against NGT and a further five abstaining. It is suspected that those numbers might have been larger if all Members had been allowed a free vote. Today everyone should have a free vote.

Public opposition looks well organised and we wish it every success. It must concentrate on questioning the business case for NGT at the cost benefit analysis, to use the jargon, and NGT's effect on townscape and quality of life. Bats, newts, restrictive covenants and ancient rights of way, whether public or private, are not likely to have much effect.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I know of many modernised public transport systems in many cities and I do not know one that has not had a strong public reaction and debate and discussion. That is right and proper in a democracy.

I think the colleagues of Councillors James and Richard Lewis have done an incredible job going out over 30 times with officers now listening to views. In my honest view I think it is actually improving as a result of listening and changing accordingly.

The public inquiry, Councillor Leadley, this is a vote about a public inquiry and I am pretty sure that we will all call for that, we will vote for a public inquiry because it allows the discussion and debate to carry on. That is what should happen on a scheme like this.

I will tell you what, when I revisit those towns, whether it is Manchester, whether it was Sunderland last week, or whether it is another city like Bristol, nobody says "Get rid of this transport system." Everyone accepts it and argues not only for improvement, for an extension, and I think this will be the case in this city.

I do get puzzled after 21 years of having fairly, except for yourself and sometimes an odd colleague like John who has stood up about it, we have been fairly rock solid on this as a Council, and rightly so. For 21 years, Les, we have all been going down to Parliament with the business lobby saying "We are the only city in Europe without a modernised public transport system – give us the money." We are the only ones who have been campaigning across the city and the businesses are still there. I am puzzled why people are breaking away from that view.

I never hear, with the best will in the world, anybody telling me how they are going to address the slowness of the traffic through Headingley, the 1.6 which takes you 40 [minutes], I never hear anybody that is going to stop traffic jams, I never hear anybody talking about increased jobs, I never hear anybody say how it is going to increase the cycling. I will tell you what, if we are not careful we will lose the credibility of this city when we want to extend that NGT into other areas for economic benefits. I think we really need to take this opportunity. We have got £160m. We have waited 21 years.

My problem with this is that there is not enough NGT to make it what we want to reflect the economic reality that we have just been discussing and to make sure those links into employment areas are made for modern public transport systems.

Lord Mayor, I think we really have to, on behalf of the people of Leeds – not now, there will be difficulties but I do not know any business or houses that have not gained value as a result of a modern transport system. Appley Bridge in Bradford, houses are £50,000. Let us have a proper full debate on this and let us take the opportunity for the future generations to get a modern, clean, safe transport system for this city. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I cannot help but reflect on the speeches that were made earlier about the Combined Authority and the need for us to have devolved and delegated powers to get on with transport and the comments that Councillor Leadley and others made. I do not know what happened in 1992, I was still running round school in short trousers (*laughter*) but I think it shows why the difficulty is in delivering modern transport systems when we have to go through so many funding hoops and restrictions from Central Government funding and so many restrictions from Central Government that force us to put this project through test after test after test simply to get the funding in place rather than just getting on and doing the proper job of consultation and working with communities and delivering a scheme that does best for communities.

I wanted to reflect, following on from the Leader and Councillor Lewis, about the consultation process because I think it is worth dwelling on that and certainly Councillor Leadley has mentioned it and it gets lots of comments. Yes, it is true that there have been or likely to be up to about 2,000 objections to NGT. People reflect on the Nottingham tram system which had considerably more objections to that and the Cambridge Guided Bus where they had considerably more objections than that. There is always a point in a scheme where people want to have their views put over and want to have that comment and again, I reflect on the timescale it has taken to develop NGT. With years of delay of Government funding it means a scheme that was first being talked about in the Transport Authority in 2005 and first agreed by this Council we moved forward in 2007/2008. It has still taken us five more years just to get to a formal consultation phase. Clearly it is a wider debate about how we move forward with projects.

Looking forward on this project we are, as Councillor Wakefield said, in voting for a Transport and Works Act Order Submission to the Government, we are voting today for all those objections to be heard in front of a public inquiry, for all those objections to have a full and reasoned response from the NGT team and for the opportunity for businesses and people that are concerned to get involved in developing the scheme. The scheme is far from complete, we need to make sure we get it right, we need to make sure we have that public involvement. We know we are having a public inquiry next year into the scheme, we know we are involving people's views on it and we have to bear that in mind.

It is absolutely clear what this Council is voting for today. We need to get it right, we need to involve people. It needs that independent examination. We have always had two days of Plans Panel Members sitting down and looking at the scheme in some detail. That scrutiny has been there, that is absolutely right but let us get on and deliver and let us get on and work to get the right 21st Century solution for this city. Let us get on and do that and let us get on and work with the Government to make sure that we have got the ability to get the money in place and the flexibility to deliver a scheme that is right. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cleasby.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I have sat and listened patiently, Lord Mayor, Council. Keith said we should have a full and proper debate. I think you will find that the Outer North West Members would certainly have agreed with you over that for the last twelve months. You also talked about connectivity. Richard Lewis talked about boundaries of the city. Wouldn't it be lovely if the trolleybus went from one boundary of the city to another boundary of the city? It does not. The planned route is to go from nowhere to nowhere and you are going to have to use some other form of transport to connect to it. That is not, to me, a sensible modern connectivity.

Councillor Lewis, James Lewis, you in the past – and I believe you agree now that the Harrogate line should be electrified - a wonderful objective if the people who would then use that new system had somewhere to park their cars once they had accessed it. Horsforth is chaotic at the moment and next week Ward Members will be meeting with Highways to discuss how we can get more yellow lines around our corners, how we can simply move the on-street parking to somewhere less obstructive than it is at the moment.

This trolleybus idea is a mess. It is not going to help Headingley, it is simply going to put a bigger, longer vehicle on the road. It will use separate bus stops so that is less roadside parking in Headingley as a consequence because there will be trolleybus stops and bus stops. That to me seems to be a nonsense. This is all because, Councillor James Lewis and others, you simply failed to get Metro working. Since the privatisation of our public transport systems it has not worked and those involved – and those people sitting in front of me know who I am meaning – who have never got it working should have got it working. Simply putting in an expensive trolleybus system is an absolute and utter nonsense.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: The Chair is in front of you there.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Thank you, Mick. At least somebody in the Chamber understood what I meant.

Lord Mayor, can I point to something that is happening in Horsforth that is wonderful? A company called Phoenix is building a new Head Office. It will be going from a staff of 125 to 500. The wonderful thing about it is it has a transport plan that will only allow them to employ people who will guarantee they will live within a half an hour of their place of work and that is because the nature, 24/7, they may well need to be there. That, to me, is a wonderful thing. That will mean the hillside on both sides of that mill – when it is built it will be a mill – they will be able to walk to work, to cycle to work. That, to me, is proper connectivity. If they need to get to the city centre there is a bus will pass the door. All we need to do is make sure those buses work to satisfy us and our residents, not to satisfy the shareholders of those companies.

I am not in favour of this tram system at the moment and if you will give me just a moment longer, Lord Mayor – and I will finish – these organisers never gave a thought to how it could be used to enhanced connectivity with Headingley, and Headingley is two stadia, not one. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Blackburn – I think he must have missed the bus! We are moving on. Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I have to say to Councillor Wakefield and to Councillor Richard Lewis and to Councillor James Lewis, if you think that the consultation so far is resulting in more people being convinced

that this scheme is right, then you are wrong. You are losing the consultation war and you are losing it very badly indeed and something has got to be done.

I looked at the briefing note that was sent to us yesterday. Some of the stuff in there seems to me to be simply untrue. For all the benefits it lists for the south of the city, which I accept, it has a reverse effect on the businesses in the north-west. You have made out case worse than it was by the now popular belief that Councillor Richard Lewis in particular is wholly opposed to the private motorist. There is nobody in this city believes that this scheme will speed up the flow of traffic overall, nobody.

The experts say it will but unfortunately people see what is happening in the city for themselves. They see the little steps you take all the time that are anti the private motorist and then they look at this scheme and think, "I do not believe this is going to speed it up at all. It is just another one of the Leeds City Council's anti private motorcar schemes."

I am talking as a supporter of NGT. I think it is woeful. There are more and more Members of this Council who previously supported Supertram changing their minds. If you go to a public inquiry on that basis, never mind Combined Authority and working together, it will be the first litmus test of a Local Authority wholly failing to convince people that the scheme is right and what worries me is, one part of the briefing I do believe is correct is that we would lose £173m. You have got to get your acts together because the businesses in particular on the north-west route believe their businesses will be jeopardised if not shut down by what is so far proposed, and I have seen nothing – nothing – in an attempt to convince those people that they are wrong and that actually if the scheme is in place they will do better.

Get your act together before this goes completely pear shaped. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Anderson.

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: Lord Mayor, I too 100% believe in a modernised public transport system – but not this one. I want to address specific concerns, and Councillor Carter has already touched on them because I was intending to talk about the Federation of Small Businesses - the engine room of this city, the people who will create the jobs that will make this city back again leading in everything that they do.

In the north-west your proposals are going to destroy their businesses. You have not consulted properly with them, you have not engaged with them. Councillor James Lewis, as far as I am concerned, is exempt from this because he has tried to speak to me and we have discussed – we might not have agreed as to the way forward but he did take the time to listen to the concerns I had.

I have never asked specifically to talk to Councillor Richard Lewis so I am not blaming him either but the officers in Metro and who are connected with NGT have made no attempt to try and find a way forward to sort the problems out in the north of the city.

There is also concern, you say it will reduce congestion. The highways improvements that you are planning to do in the north of the city are going to cause congestion. The closure of Weetwood Lane, that is one that is going to cause problems. Because you are going to be putting traffic lights all over the place and because of the housing development the NGT officers say they have not yet taken into consideration, if - and I hope it never comes to fruition but if it comes to fruition, we could have traffic lights just outside of Otley, traffic lights outside of Bramhope,

four sets of traffic lights in Adel, traffic lights at Lawnswood roundabout - all we are going to do is be slowing traffic up as we go along, all the way. We are not thinking through as to what you are planning to do here.

What about the issue that the Federation of Small Businesses wants, non-stop shuttle buses? I think a lot of people would probably welcome that in the north of the city. Have you looked at the alternatives? No. Have you even set out the alternatives and given answers back to those of us who have alternatives? No; you will not do anything about it.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Same old thing.

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: There are alternatives. Same old, same old – no. 100% wrong. This party believe in moving this city forward. You believe in being anti car in every single thing you do, every utterance that comes out of you it is “Let us kick the motorist first, let us kick him second, third, fourth, fifth” and everything that you do and everything that you are trying to do. *(Applause)*

Having said that, what I am now going to do is to try to appeal to some of the Labour Members...

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Don't bother.

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: ...who I know are privately concerned about this and the damage it will be doing to various areas. Whether or not they are going to be able to vote against this today I do not honestly know but I would plead to them that there are people all round the Council here who are for it and there are those who are against it. Please send a message out that we do not think this is the correct option but we do want the alternatives forward. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: We do, Barry, we do.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Fox.

COUNCILLOR FOX: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Like many other members – I am sure all Members – of the Council, I was in receipt of what I will call a Dear Clive letter or a Dear Les letter or whatever telling us what are the great advantages of NGT with a glossy blue thing and, of course, telling us how important it was, we should all support it.

In the glossy I noticed that amongst the benefits of NGT it says “Bust congestion”. That is one of the advantages, “Bust congestion.” As commuters switch to public transport there is a cut in carbon emissions, etc, etc.

It is interesting that in the note that we received in the last day or so when it comes to congestion it says “Concern was raised about the original scheme and refinements have been made etc. Overall other traffic around the route will either be very marginally affected or better off.” That is a strange form of busting congestion.

I noticed too, and it has to be significant, that in the thing that came out in the last couple of days there is no mention now of 4,000 new jobs being created, not a single mention. Maybe that has been dropped but I do notice that Councillor Lewis was saying it is the economic benefit, 4,000 jobs, and Councillor Wakefield parroted similarly on the business of increased jobs and congestion.

The 4,000 jobs is a myth. Where is it in, there? The 4,000 jobs is a complete myth. What they said was that according to an economic model which has yet to be

proven, it could lead to 4,000 extra jobs by 2030. It is a complete nonsense to keep parroting on about 4,000 jobs. It will not create a single extra job now and the economic model is based on somewhat spurious statistics, like so many of them, that it could free up transport in 13 years', 17 years' time and what have you.

Every statistic that comes out on this really is essential spurious. "NGT is designed to carry over 11 million passengers." It may be designed to carry them but where is the evidence that it will? It says, "Of these, two to three million will be new journeys to public transport." What is the evidence? Where is it? How many of those who are about to vote in favour of this have even bothered to look at the CD that was sent out? Tell me, how many have even looked at it? Anybody going to tell us? One (that is not bad), two, three, four – maybe half a dozen of you have even looked at it and you are about to vote blind on it.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Shall we have a recorded vote on that one?

COUNCILLOR FOX: My Lord Mayor, this is a ridiculous scheme, it is not going to show any benefit to the city, certainly as I see it. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis to sum up.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Evidence. One of the big bits of evidence is the success of the Kirkstall Bus Corridor. In a year patronage has increased by 16%. Quality Bus Corridor.

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: That is bus. We are in favour of that with the bus, I accept that.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Barry, Barry, Barry, what we have gone is a highways measure on a road – could you all keep quiet, please, for a moment, we have all been very well behaved for you. 16% because of a measure taken by the Council and Metro to speed up public transport, OK.

That is a scheme without any park and ride that just uses buses, so you can do that with just conventional buses, not electric buses, what can you do if you have something as well thought out and well considered as NGT actually is, even though you do not like to believe it.

Fascinating comments from some of our colleagues. I would expect the MBIs to be ultra NIMBY because they always are. They do not want anything, they do not want any change.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you. Horse and cart – horse and cart, that's it.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: They want buses to be dominated in this city by First Bus for ever more because First Bus have done such a wonderful job for us, haven't they? A bus monopoly has crucified the people of this city. It has not provided us with a good service, as all of us know. Absolutely everybody in this Chamber knows that we do not get a good bus service in this city and we need public transport that is run by us, not by people in Aberdeen or anywhere else.

COUNCILLOR: Nationalise public transport now.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Of course, you do not understand what deregulation has actually done and that was a comment that somebody made. It

was, Brian. Metro has not done anything, we have not run the buses since 1986. Understand it, Brian.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: 1886.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Yes, probably 1886. Let us have a look at how schemes actually work. Cambridge has a scheme for guided bus. Nobody is keen on guided bus but that guided bus scheme has been a huge success, had the same level of kind of comments, negative comments before it happened, during the public inquiry, but has actually delivered.

I am amazed at Brian.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: I am not.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: You are talking about it goes nowhere to nowhere. Have you no bloody vision for yourself?

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Mind your tongue.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Have you no vision for Horsforth? *(interruption)* Because you have a route that actually goes very near to your ward. Think about phase 2, phase 3 when we will be able to go beyond Holt Park, go beyond Belle Isle, when we can deliver something new. You need to think about could you take it to Horsforth but no, you do not want anything, you do not want anything to change so leave things as they are.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: We want a consultation but you are not doing it.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: I am just amazed at the general view of people in there that they just do not want change because what you are doing is condemning the city to further congestion because when the economy starts to take up – do not start shaking your head, you know you are – in ten years' time when we have the same level of traffic as we had ten years ago we will have gridlock in this city and you will have done nothing to solve it, absolutely nothing. That is because you are backward looking, you are NIMBYs and you really need to get a grip of some strategic issues for a change. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Lewis. I am now going to call for the vote and it is Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16.4, I call for a recorded vote on this matter.

COUNCILLOR HARDY: I second, Lord Mayor.

(A recorded vote was held)

THE LORD MAYOR: The result is 89 Members present, those who voted "Yes" were 65; those who abstained were three; those who said "No" 20, so Richard Lewis's motion is CARRIED

COUNCILLOR: It's getting bigger!

ITEM 9 – QUESTIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item number 9 in Questions and we are now going to spend a period of 30 minutes, Members of Council can ask questions of the Executive.

First question, Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Yes, my Lord Mayor. Will the Exec Member for City Development tell me how much was spent on the consultation of the now defunct proposal to charge for residents' parking permits?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The cost of the consultation process, which involved mailing 2,500 households resulting in 4,030 responses, was £12,095. This included preparation, postage, analysis of the results and the cost of the Focus Groups used to shape the survey, which was £510.

I am sure that all Members will agree with the importance placed on full and meaningful consultation. In this instance the thorough approach undertaken helped Members of the Executive Board to make an informed decision on this important issue that recognised the public's views.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Carter, supplementary?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Does Councillor Lewis accept that where Members of Council are in touch with their electorate they were already well informed as to what the reaction would be to people who are having a problem parking their own vehicles, largely because of problems caused by the ludicrous policies of Leeds City Council in not allowing sufficient car parking on site for various commercial enterprises, about which we have rehearsed the argument over and over again, and does he not agree that they did not need to go through the exercise because we all knew full well what the answer would be before we started? (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: I probably do not agree, Andrew. Andrew knows better than most people in this Chamber the financial position of this Council and he knows perfectly well where we will be in a couple of years' time when things will be even worse. We are in the position of having to make incredibly difficult decisions when we cannot raise money elsewhere and we have to look to whatever means we can to bring in income. This was one measure which had actually been through all the focus groups which had been fairly positive, and it was one which we went out to consult on.

I have no problem, Les, with us consulting with people. I have no problem with the fact that we have a huge response to that. If we had not consulted what would you have said? I think we did absolutely the right thing, we consulted people, people came back and said they were not happy with the idea but if we had not done it this year we would have been doing it next year or the year after, because that is the way our financial position is going to drive us. It is going to be towards more and more difficult decisions that do not have any easy answers and I am so glad that so many people did get back to us because that enabled us to show that we do actually listen to what people say.

THE LORD MAYOR: Question 2 is from Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Could the Executive Board Members for Health and Wellbeing tell Council what was the total amount saved by re-negotiating terms in public health contracts renewed by Leeds City Council during the current financial year?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mulherin.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. In response, no savings have been made in the seven months since Public Health transferred from the NHS to Leeds City Council.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton, did you get that? Can you repeat that?

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: In response to the question, no savings have been made in this way in the seven months since Public Health transferred from the NHS to Leeds City Council.

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary then, Councillor Golton?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: By way of supplementary, Lord Mayor, when does the Executive Member for Health feel that it would be appropriate for the Public Health Department of the Council to actually procure in the same way as every other department of this Council is expected to do so, along with their responsibility to fulfil requirements to stay within a budget and to make sure that all departments get an equal share of the pain?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mulherin.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you. Renegotiating contract terms was not a priority for this financial year. The focus this year has been to make sure that there was a safe transition to the Council and a safe continuation of services for the new financial responsibilities and consequences now faced by the Council from the transition of those Public Health services to the Council.

On 1st April Public Health transferred over. This included the transfer of around 70 contracts worth around £30m, which include contracts with our partners across the road at the Teaching Hospitals Trust, Leeds Community Healthcare Trust, Leeds and York Partnership Foundation Trust, the Third Sector, GPs and Pharmacists.

Members are aware of the complexity of the reorganisation of the NHS which has not entirely shaken through as yet. With our new responsibilities we are looking to recommission services in the future to better improve outcomes and be more cost effective. We believe we will have opportunities to do this from 2014/15 and beyond.

To give some specific examples that Councillor Golton will be aware of, drugs and alcohol treatments, we are looking at integrated services to be in place from April 2015. A report will be going to the Executive Board in January where there will be more details on the potential savings to be made from that recommissioning process. Sexual Health Services – in September the Executive Board endorsed a proposal to tender for an integrated Sexual Health Service. The current budget is £6.6m. Sexual Health is a mandatory function for the Council now following that transfer from the NHS. We intend to reinvest services from that into enhancing Sexual Health Services for the city, given the impact on members of the public in this city.

In addition we have around 60 contracts worth £6m with GPs, pharmacists and the Third Sector. These, following strong advice from the Public Private Procurement Unit, Partnership Unit and Procurement in the Council, have had a twelve month extension. This will facilitate a comprehensive review of all Public Health contracts and enable a phased approach to recommissioning with the possible realisation of savings as a result.

We have recognised that the recommissioning of all of these services before April 2014 is unrealistic and, importantly, would severely limit the opportunity for a thorough service review, particularly with respect to opportunity for joint commissioning with other Council directorates.

In summary, this financial year is all about stability of provision and from next year we are looking at financial savings as requested from our recommissioned services.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Selby.

COUNCILLOR SELBY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Executive Member for Adult Social Care please share his view on commissioned homecare?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ogilvie.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I thank Councillor Selby for his question? There has been much attention in the media over recent months about homecare, both about the quality of provision but also the conditions of those employed to do the caring. This is at a time when most older people's homecare is now commissioned from the independent sector. Nationally it delivers around 89%; in Leeds the figure is around 86%.

The main reasons, of course, for this in Leeds are financial. We know about the cuts that the Council is having to face and Adult Social Care is clearly not immune to that so this has inevitably led us to having to make difficult decisions.

With this shift it becomes important that Adult Social Care uses its position as the main commissioner to improve the quality of care provided by the independent sector and we think that we can make a difference to the care provided by the independent sector if we engage with them and work together to address the issues they face – issues like what can we do to help them recruit, retain and, importantly, reward good quality staff? Caring for our older citizens is one of the most important jobs there is and should be recognised as such. What can we do about the lengths of care visits? Obviously there has been a lot about 15 minutes and we need to look at issues around that.

To try and address issues around this we are going to develop a better model for homecare provision in the city. We want to set up a cross-party Advisory Group with representatives from all the political parties in the Chamber, as well as with providers and other stakeholders. This approach worked well when we developed the Quality Framework for residential care and so we hope it will work well with homecare too.

We recognise it is not straightforward, we have got to work within tight financial constraints but we really are determined that we need to do something about this and I hope Opposition parties will help us with that.

Finally, the new Chief Inspector of Adult Social Care, Andrea Sutcliffe at the Care Quality Commission who recently visited us, has a maxim about provision of all

care. Her maxim is simple: "Is it good enough for my mum?" I think all Members would agree that is a maxim that we all should be following.

THE LORD MAYOR: Do you have a supplementary? No. Let us move on to Councillor Harland then.

COUNCILLOR HARLAND: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would Councillor Illingworth confirm the current position in relation to children's heart surgery services in Leeds?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Illingworth.

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Yes, we have had a good year so far, Lord Mayor, but we are not out of the woods yet.

The Judicial Review which was instituted by Save Our Surgery concluded that the original process had been fundamentally unfair. That is pretty harsh words from a judge but very accurate words, however, because it was a very, very unfair process.

We also survived an attempted closure at the end of March/beginning of April this year and the subsequent investigation, although it is taking a lot longer than we expected, is coming out OK for Leeds. The unit has been exonerated and it has been reported that it is providing a good service to the public. There are still some things to run on patient complaint which has taken, as I say, months longer than originally anticipated.

Finally, the Independent Review Panel reported to the Secretary of State and that resulted in the end of the previous Safe and Sustainable Review in the summer and that was a most welcome piece of news because the previous review had been one of the most unsatisfactory reviews that I have experienced in nearly 40 years' service as a Local Councillor. A truly awful review – secretive, predetermined, and old boys' club, it ignore the evidence and there was a singular lack of representation for Yorkshire and the Humber. The Leader and Opposition Leader have spoken about this before but there is a lesson to be learned here. When you tot up the number of voices from our region that were involved in the Safe and Sustainable Review it is about three, whereas the rest of the country had about 200. It really is extraordinary how badly represented we were.

A huge battle over 2011/2012, ably led by Councillor Mulherin, trying to extract from them what was going on, trying to find out what they were up to – a wall of secrecy and the efforts of our Scrutiny Board cross-party to break through that. Still going on. I am going before the Information Tribunal on 2nd December to try and argue for more release of some of the old papers because I think they are still relevant to the current review, and that is a still ongoing struggle.

The new review is an improvement. The decision will be taken by the full NHS Board, which is welcome, but it still has overtones of what went before – the little secretive cabals, the decisions behind closed doors. There is a Task and Finish Group which advises the NHS Board which meets in secret. I went down there last week to try and attend it, I thought I would show up in person and see what happened. I went on my bicycle and peddled round London, the wrong destination once but I got there. I was excluded. They still are really meeting in secret. Even if you turn up and ask to be admitted they will not let you in and that is a problem, they do not learn from these things.

There is also a Programme Board chaired by Bill McCarthy and I just totted them up, six Clinical Advisory Panel, Patient and Public Group, Provider Group, Clinician Group, Clinical Reference Group (several of those), Clinical Implementation Advisory Group, so a whole mass of advisory committees working away, a lot of them in secret, a lot of them without Minutes, towards a solution to this problem.

I am more hopeful. It is to be a standards-based reorganisation which is welcome. We have got some documents we can relate to. The first task is to draw up new standards and they are on with that at the moment, so that process is ongoing.

The problem is, as I have said before, it is still very secretive, it is still meeting behind closed doors a lot of the time, there is still a lack of representation for Yorkshire and the Humber. We just need to work at this. There is a serious under-representation for our region where decisions are being taken, not just on the decision making bodies but also on the Advisory Groups, the Patient Representative Groups and so forth. Everywhere you look, no Yorkshire and Humber representation. We need to say to get a grip on this.

We need proper research. There is something called the PRAiS - it stands for Partial Risk Adjustment in Cardiac Surgery. When you look at surgical outcomes, some procedures have a 25% death rate, others are straightforward, so depending on what case mix you get, a unit can appear brilliant or awful depending on what patients come before it.

That risk adjustment is being done, we welcome that and it takes account of some of the difficulty. What it does not take account of at the moment is ethnicity, socio-economic status, travelling distance and size of unit and the last two (size of unit and travelling distance) are absolutely key for a region like ours where people have a long way to go to the nearest unit.

I have argued over that. I have suggested to them that they ought to put more into it. They have accepted ethnicity, they have accepted socio-economic status but are holding out, they will not look at size of unit, which is crucial, and they will not look at the travelling distance that patients have to go, which I also think is crucial.

It is still to play for. It is better than it was. It certainly is not won yet and I look forward to a continuation of the very effective cross-party co-operation we have had on this over the previous years and look forward to that continuing in the future, Lord Mayor. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harland.

COUNCILLOR HARLAND: No thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Question 5, Councillor Latty.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Does the Executive Member for Adult Social Care believe that the Adult Social Care Service has adequately responded to the challenge of older people feeling isolated and lonely in their homes?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ogilvie.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Thank you, Councillor Latty, for your question. There is no doubt that social isolation is very topical at the

moment and quite rightly so. The Joseph Rowntree Foundation recently did a piece of work in Yorkshire looking at this issue and showed the depth and breadth of the problem. There was also a recent study by the University College of London suggesting that being socially isolated may have a greater effect on the risk of early death, especially amongst elderly people, which is why here in Leeds we are proud of the work of our Neighbourhood Networks that are working in all our communities to try and address issues of social isolation.

I had the pleasure of visiting three of our Neighbourhood Networks last week – Bramley Elderly Action, Age Gipton and Garforth NET – three different organisations doing work in different ways but I think they represent the work of all the Neighbourhood Networks in the city, as I say doing pretty amazing work, which is why we increased the funding to Neighbourhood Networks by £300,000 recurring and I think that is a really important thing to do.

Our most recent figures show 21,966 older people currently receiving support from our Neighbourhood Networks. I think it is worth saying the Council provides funding for another 73 luncheon clubs run out of community settings all over the city. £182,000-worth of funding helps over 2,000 older people get a regular hot meal. Most of the lunch club customers said the main reason for attending was for friendship, company or to get out of the house.

As it is National Community Meals Week this week, it is worth highlighting the work of the Council's Community Meals Team, a partnership between officers in Councillor's Gruen's portfolio and Adult Social Care who supply 124,000 meals to more than 500 local residents every year. I went out on a visit to a delivery of a meal in my Ward on Monday to a customer and she told me that it is much more than a meal; the guy who delivered that meal, John, was in effect a friend and looking out for her and providing all kinds of additional information.

We are providing a lot of support across the city but we recognise there is always more to do.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Latty, supplementary.

COUNCILLOR LATTY: The Executive Member actually has answered a slightly different question from what I was hoping he might answer, which gives him an opportunity for another five minutes.

Does the Executive Member agree that 15 minute care visits on their own could never be fully adequate in the sense that that could be the only visit that a person receives in a week, it might be the only one in the day, but whatever, 15 minutes of somebody's time in your home (*interruption*). I have asked whether Adam agreed with me; this makes it a question.

His own Director has been publicly reported as saying that a 15 minute visit is fully justified and fully adequate. In view of what I have said, does he agree with that?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ogilvie.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The issue around 15 minutes of care, as I said in my previous answer, is certainly very topical. In Leeds we commission whole hours of care and so this is an issue that we will be looking at through the piece of work around home care.

In relation to what Sandie Keene has said as President of ADASS, I think the point she made was that in some situations, for example for the giving of medication, it might only require 15 minutes but I do not think she has ever said that 15 minutes of care is right in every situation. The most important thing is that whatever is agreed has got to be agreed between the individual and their carer and the service but, as I said before, all of these issues need to be considered very carefully as part of the piece of work that we are going to be doing looking at homecare.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Jonathan Bentley.

COUNCILLOR J BENTLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Is the Executive Member for the Environment satisfied the service he is responsible for is geared up to expand the alternate weekly refuse collection service in mid November?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dobson.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Satisfied? Well, it is the Refuse Service. I can say I am confident and comfortable we can achieve it based on the smooth way that the roll-out across the south of the city went with the 56,000 households that we rolled out in the summer. There were some quite good headlines on that one. In the first twelve weeks we saw a 23% decrease in waste sent to landfill and that went up to 25% in the first 20 weeks. More interestingly than that, we had a 42% increase in recyclables collected, which shows the real appetite amongst the people that we rolled it out to to engage with that.

As I say, it is Refuse and you simply cannot take your eye off the ball. The new roll-out, Councillor Bentley, will certainly come with some significant challenges, not least the fact it has more than doubled in size and scope – 113,000 properties this time.

Some of the challenges that I have been raising with officers that I think will become increasingly significant is around the number of Waste Doctors, have we got enough. Last time round we used eight. What we did learn from the first exercise is that the pockets of areas where we tended to find problems will probably be replicated again, so we are going to run with eight Waste Doctors and see where it takes us, but we have already got contingency plans in place to increase that number if needs be.

I think one of the other challenges for me will be around the obvious issue of when we do it. November in itself will bring challenges. We could have bad weather. The one thing you do pray for in this service is that it does not snow, but it inevitably does. I think what we have to remember is, this is going to be an all year round alternate weekly collection service and we have to legislate for that and we have to get cracking. If in Britain we wait for the weather we could literally wait for ever.

I think one of the other things that you will find, inevitably there will be a spike in activity around enquiries to the Council, so we have legislated for that by extra resources into the Call Centre.

I think really the biggest challenge that faces us as a Council, and certainly as Ward Members, is around the perception of the Refuse Service. We are going to roll out 80% of alternate weekly collection by 2015 and that is incredibly ambitious, and I think we can do it. One of my biggest challenges is the other 20 and I think while we do have significant areas in the city – I can name Headingley, I can name parts of City Ward – where services are still not like what I expect and where I want them to be, that can inevitably become the story. What we have to do is get those right too because the public are not going to differentiate between alternate weekly collection

and non-alternate weekly collection; they are going to see a Refuse Service. I have to focus on getting the 100% right and I can give Council those assurances that I am very, very focused on doing just that. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Bentley, a supplementary?

COUNCILLOR J BENTLEY: Yes, thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to thank Councillor Dobson for that reply and assure him of the support he has from this side of the Chamber for the introduction of alternate weekly collections, and congratulate him and his team for what they did in Phase 1 and wish him every luck for Phase 2.

I just wonder, though, whether he thinks he has the full support from the bin collection crews or if he agrees with one of the Labour Councillors in Headingley who says that the bin collection crews are letting him down and undermining the service, and whether he has any fears that his good intentions are going to be sabotaged.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dobson.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: I think that is a very valid question because, as I say, it is very much a tale of two services at present and there are certain areas of the city (Headingley being one and City being another one) where the level of service delivery has fallen below what I deem acceptable. When I have Councillors coming to me who are constantly on my tail saying, "We have put improvements into our area, we have gone out and sold these to the public and sometimes it is a hard sell around big, standing receptacles in streets and demolishing bin yards and the like, we have gone out, we have done that work and not only have we done that work, we have paid for it through various initiatives and we want to see that service being delivered in a proper fashion." I think there are certain cases where we have failed to do that to an acceptable level.

I am not going to comment entirely at length on the case in point because it is the matter of an investigation actually placed outside the service for a pair of independent eyes, but one of the early findings back from that piece of work is that in that particular case there was no justifiable reason for those fails - no justifiable reason. On the one hand, while I am always happy to stand here and promote and praise the crews for the work they do and have done many, many times over, I am not prepared to accept bad practice, because actually we are all totally responsible in this Chamber to the people of Leeds. They rely on a service, they do not want to hear excuses from me, they certainly do not want Members pulling their punches with me. They want a robust system where Members are satisfied I am doing my job and I can say that not only the 80% of alternate weekly collection is going to work, the other 20% works too.

At the moment, as I say, I am more than happy to have those matters thoroughly and vigorously investigated. I will get to the bottom of what went wrong and I will give this Council assurances where I find bad practice I will put it right. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Akhtar.

COUNCILLOR AKHTAR: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Member for Leisure and Skills comment on the importance of Leeds retaining a vibrant cultural offer, please?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Yeadon.

COUNCILLOR YEADON: Thank you very much, Lord Mayor. Thank you, Councillor Akhtar.

I was really pleased that the Lord Mayor started the meeting by reminding us that we live in one of the most vibrant places in the UK and the third best place in the world. I personally think we live in the best place in the world but we, I am sure, will be proving that as time goes on.

The cultural offer in Leeds is incredible and it is something that I do not think as a city we promote enough. We have not been shouting and telling the people of Leeds about the fantastic things we have in the city loud enough or strong enough.

We have more dance companies than any other city outside of London. We are the only city outside of the capital to have both a ballet and opera company. We have things to be proud of. In a few weeks we have the new art gallery at Tetley opening – again, a fantastic showstopper. As Billboard magazine rated Leeds Arena as one of the top on its list of international venues to watch, I think we all know what benefits that has brought to the city.

It is easy for us to think that culture is just a kind of friendly, fuzzy, happy thing for us to think about. It is actually a major economic driver for the city. 5,343 people are employed in the cultural sector in Leeds. £23m of external funding is attracted to the cultural sector in Leeds because of the investment that Leeds City Council put in, and Leeds citizens spend an average of £190.47 a year on cultural activities in the city.

It does not have to cost the earth for us to be actually gaining a huge economic driver for culture in the city. Light Night, which was relatively modestly funded by the city, attracted 35,000 visitors to this city in one night in October. 81% of them said they came specifically for Light Night and the average spend per head was £21.19. That is an extra £741,000 for the city that evening because of the investment that Leeds City Council put into culture.

What we also must remember is the benefits that culture has on an individual level. The young person finding their voice and new confidence for the first time, or the shared craft activities allowing older people to develop new social networks in their communities. Culture is a hugely important aspect of our lives. It gives a city its vibrancy but it also gives the city its soul so I am hoping in ten years' time Leeds will be top of that vibrancy list and it will be top of the best places to go in the world. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Akhtar.

COUNCILLOR AKHTAR: Just to thank the Exec Member for her commitment to the culture of the city but also just to remind the Exec Member that Hyde Park Unity Day plays a major role in the city as well and I hope that the Exec Member will support us on the future years. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, yes. Councillor Maqsood.

COUNCILLOR MAQSOOD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Executive Member for Health and Wellbeing comment on the financial challenges facing the delivery of healthcare in the city?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mulherin.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to thank Councillor Maqsood for her timely question. NHS England and the LGA presents the pressures across health and social care across the country as an unprecedented opportunity for Local Authorities and our health partners in the NHS and Third Sector. It would be more accurate to say that Leeds, like other cities, faces an unprecedented challenge both financial and in terms of service pressures across health and social care.

Members are aware that, as a result of the funding reductions announced in the Comprehensive Spending Review and ongoing demographic pressures, the city is facing an immense challenge to make the health and social care economy in Leeds sustainable for the future. This position does not take into account the proposed changes to the NHS Funding Allocations Formula that are currently under review. If implemented, the formula would cut the budgets of the three Leeds Clinical Commissioning Groups by a further £84m, shifting the targeting of resources away from tackling health inequalities, taking money from areas where people are dying earlier because of those health inequalities and shifting it to areas where people already live longer.

The latest Government proposals for an Integrated Transformation Fund, which is supposed to pull funding for health and social care and transfer this budget to Local Authorities, should be worth around £50m for Leeds. NHS England has now acknowledged what finance officers in our Adult Social Care departments and the CCGs had already calculated, that there is no new money in this fund. Not only is there no new money, there are also considerable additional financial pressures to come from this system. The additional requirements of the Integrated Transformation Fund include arrangements for seven days a week working and respite breaks for carers.

These increasing financial pressures across the system are unsustainable and are creating severe additional pressure which may lead to a negative impact on the quality of care for patients and service users.

Despite the pressures we are facing in Leeds there is a commitment across the system to implement the ambitions of the Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy, to drive forward the integration of services and to reduce health inequalities in the city. We have a strong track record of partnership working in this city and this was recently recognised when Leeds was announced to be one of the 14 National Integration Pioneers, the only core city to achieve this status, which is a fantastic endorsement of the great work being done by all partners, from the Commissioners to front line staff.

In short, we have an immense uphill challenge that will require an even greater collective effort to continue to deliver better health outcomes for people in Leeds. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. We are allowing a supplementary under the rules – there is no supplementary.

ITEM 10 – MINUTES

THE LORD MAYOR: We move on to page 7, Item 10 and we are moving on to the item to receive the Minutes of the Executive Board and other committees. Councillor Wakefield.

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

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, I second and apparently I am reserving the right to speak.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lamb.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Lord Mayor, I move that under the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 22.1, Council Procedure Rule 3.3 be suspended to allow consideration of the Executive Board Minutes for an additional ten minutes until 4.20pm. Comments on the other Minutes will then follow until 4.40pm, with the Leader of Council commencing his summing up at 4.40 for a period of up to ten minutes.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Campbell.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. As Members will be aware, because there was one less Community Concern this time we felt it appropriate that more time was given to Executive Board Minutes, so I should like to second that.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. I will call for a vote. *(A vote was taken)* CARRIED. We will do that, then. We will add ten minutes on to the Executive Board Minutes.

(a) Executive Board

(i) Environment

THE LORD MAYOR: Consideration of the Executive Board Minutes, the Environment. Councillor Nagle.

COUNCILLOR NAGLE: Thank you very much, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak to Minute 90, page 57.

First, I think it is important to recognise the excellent work that has been done for some time at the Council to make sure we can boost the recycling rates in this city. The improvements that we have seen over the past few years are remarkable. In 2006 an Exec Board report was published which set a target to recycle and compost a minimum of 40% of household waste by 2020. In June of this year, as a stand-alone month, an incredible 52% of all waste in the city was recycled. Even the most optimistic projections of what could be achieved in this relatively short amount of time surely could not have expected a success on this scale.

Councillor Dobson has revised the Council targets as a result of the successes achieved to date and I commend him for ensuring we do not rest on our laurels but seek further improvements which, judging by our record so far, are certainly achievable.

I am pleased that as a Group we remain committed to extending the roll-out of the future food waste collections, particularly in light of the success of the scheme on a moderate scale in areas such as my ward in Rothwell. So far this year the Council has collected 225 tonnes more food waste than last year thanks to the extended roll-out of the service. This increase in collection has overall saved £11.7m as well as seeing the environmental benefits that come with less waste being sent to landfill.

We all know that we are currently operating with unprecedented financial pressures which make taking action on food waste now incredibly difficult. There are huge economic and environmental benefits that could be secured via an expansion of the food waste collection service. However, with the current restraints in place a high quality city-wide service is unlikely to be possible. Nevertheless, I am delighted that we remain committed to keeping this issue a priority.

Food waste collections should form an important part of our tool kit in diverting rubbish from landfill as focusing on more usual forms will not see us continue to achieve radical results. When we are in a position to move forward I have no doubt that each Ward will have its own challenges but look forward to the food waste service being available to many more across the city. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dunn.

COUNCILLOR DUNN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I also wish to speak on Minute 90, page 57, alternate weekly collections.

As my colleague Councillor Dobson has outlined, there will be pitfalls in this process, no doubt – that is moving forward, that is with any process – but the first phase, Phase 1, has really shown that the general public are on board with the Council about recycling.

In the first twelve weeks of the scheme we have seen 23% decrease in the amount of waste sent to landfill. In the first twelve weeks there has been an increase of 42% in the recycled waste collection. In the first 20 weeks of the alternate weekly collection scheme the waste collection from the kerbside has been 25% increase compared to the same period last year. The estimated landfill disposal saving is over £300,000. This includes landfill tax and gate fees payable to the land site operators.

Based on this data there is increased confidence that the full roll-out of the alternate weekly collections of 80% will generate savings of £2.5m per annum.

Lord Mayor, the continued success of our recycling policy is a credit to our residents who have co-operated with the Council every step of the way, which includes alternate weekly collections. Also, our dedicated staff who, from the word go, have consulted with Ward Members and households to make this possible, not forgetting the staff at the sharp end who are on the collection routes who have got their biggest challenge to come in the winter. I hope Council will join me in thanking them for their efforts. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Downes.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Thank you, Lord Mayor. First of all I am speaking again on Minute 90 page 57, alternate weekly collections. I have to say I do welcome the alternate weekly collections. We have been consulting with people in our Ward for some time to get a flavour of their feeling towards this and on the whole they are very supportive. People in Otley and Yeadon are very good at recycling and I think they are some of the best in the city and they always want to do more.

My one concern, though, is that the database might not always seem to be right. In the centre of Otley we were saddened to discover that a large area is to be excluded from this scheme which means that there is a bizarre situation where some people on one side of the road will be getting the alternate weekly collection and on the other side they will not. One of those particular residents wrote to me this week

to say that their collection was missed last week and they have been told it will be three weeks till their next collection, yet the people over the road will be getting a fortnightly collection. That is one of the concern that I have got; we want to recycle more, we welcome this initiative but we would like to have more within the ward.

Another small point, but again the database. I have had a resident in Yeadon contact me to say that she has received a letter about alternate weekly collections, which is great and she fully supports it. The problem is she lives in a sheltered complex with skips so she does not have a wheelie bin that can be collected and she said all 37 of her neighbours received these letters, which is a waste of money, they are useless, they are going to go in the skip and she said that they are not the only sheltered complex in Yeadon; how many other people have received these letters in error?

It is just a couple of teething problems. I do support it, I am very pleased with it but just one or two things that need to be looked at.

Slightly related with the collection service, a resident of mine in East Carlton is desperate to have a brown bin. They raised it with the Council, were promised one and then were told, "Oh sorry, East cannot have them, it is West Carlton that have them" and when I took it up with an officer he said "Send me the details", so I did. I heard nothing, I sent it again to the officer saying "Can I have an update?" I have heard nothing and so I am a little bit frustrated that I am not hearing anything on this particular case because it is a rural area where there is plenty of recycling that could be done from brown waste.

A couple of little problems but generally supportive. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cohen.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Not to buck the trend I too will be speaking on Minute 90 page 57. If I may though, Lord Mayor, just say it is good to see Councillor Taggart back in the Chamber after his recent bout of illness and I do wish him continued good health. *(Applause)* Thank you.

I have had quite a number of calls and emails in relation to alternate weekly collections with some very specific worries and concerns from local residents. The Executive Member will know that within Leeds Alwoodley is in fact one of the top Wards for recycling and it is something that as a Ward we are very proud of and it is something that as a Ward we continue to support and push, but I have had concerns from residents, for example, in flats who are fastidious recyclers but that they have small skip-type bins that are filled to overflowing, the black bins, at the end of the week. There is no more room for bins and they are really, really worried about what is going to happen.

I have had concerns from residents with young families who have quite a significant volume of non-recyclable waste that has a particular special fragrance that they are keen to get rid of, quite understandably. Indeed, there is concern from residents in terraced housing and more built up housing about the smell of non-recyclable waste, particularly over the warmer summer months.

Really what we say is can we get some comfort, can the Executive Member give those residents an assurance, a comfort, that their genuine worries, their genuine concerns will be addressed; that where necessary we will be able to provide extra bins; that we will look at making more space available in the non-recyclable bins by trying to find and trying to use new technologies to recycle some of those plastics that we currently cannot recycle, which I am sure is a frustration and I know

is a frustration for residents; that we will look more seriously and more deeply at food waste collection that, again, would give more space in the non-recyclable bin?
Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wadsworth.

COUNCILLOR WADSWORTH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am also speaking on Minute 90 page 57.

Councillor Dobson, recycling – as you know, I am a keen recycler and this alternate weekly collection does promote recycling and I am in favour of that. I think where it falls down is the food collection and Councillor Nagle spoke about food collection and I think his figures were a one-off month that he quoted. I think our recycling figures without food collection will be nearer 40.3%, which are figures I have received, and that compares with Bradford at 51% and Calderdale at 60.6%. They include a food waste collection and it just shows what can be done if we include a food waste collection. I think that we have not really explored the food waste before we brought in the alternate weekly collections and I think we should have done that much more closely before trying to bring in the alternate weekly collections.

I think the other thing that is important, and Councillor Dobson alluded to that in his questions, is the timing. I think November is a particular bad time to bring this in and I know that it is probably the last possible day we could have brought it in without deferring it to the Spring because we have got Christmas where we all have more waste than normal and I think that will be a challenge for the operatives on a fortnightly collection to actually deliver that collection. Then in January we are likely to get winter weather which is going to be significant to us. I think all that builds for problems throughout the winter both for the operatives and for local residents to how they deal with that. Our past performance has not been good with recovery plans. We have not been recovering black bins very well and we have not been recovering brown bins over the summer very well that we have missed, so that could lead to the fact that black bins are left a month because if they are left a fortnight anyway and then we do not recover them after the first collection, they will be left a month and that will lead to food waste and nappies being in bins for a whole month, which I think is particularly disappointing for residents who pay Council Tax and I think that is going to cause problems in our mail bags for all of us across all parties.

The other thing that is also disappointing is we are in this programme of development and talking a lot about development but as far as the Refuse Service is concerned we are not issuing brown bins to any new properties, I believe, and I think that that is disappointing when we want to encourage recycling. People move into a new house, probably it is the first time they have got a garden, they want a brown bin and the service says “No, we are not issuing any” and I think we really need to look at that and see if we can deliver that service to new properties. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hussain.

COUNCILLOR HUSSAIN: Thank you. My Lord Mayor, I would like to comment on item 91, page 57. I would like to welcome the second phase of the plans to refurbish Tropical World following the successful implementation of the first phase earlier in the year. The second phase of the refurbishment will include improvements to the aquarium and nocturnal enclosures, an extension to the café and new toilets and changing facilities. This adds to the earlier work of a new entrance space and shop, a bespoke education zone and a new crocodile enclosure that was finished in April.

As local Councillors for Roundhay, myself and my Ward colleagues Councillor McNiven, Councillor Bill Urry, are extremely proud to have such a fantastic tourist attraction in the area that is loved not just by residents of the city but many visitors from across Yorkshire, the UK and, indeed, further afield. Tropical World is in fact one of the top ten most popular visitor attractions in Yorkshire, attracting 340(sic) visits a year.

Tropical World is not only simply a great place to visit, it also plays a significant role in inspiring and educating children about nature and the natural world. The new purpose built education zone certainly contributes to this approach and adds to the great insight, knowledge and experience of the staff there.

Up until the first phase of work was completed in April this year, Tropical World had not benefited from any significant investment since it opened to the public in 1984. Improvement programmes like this are really a vital part of maintaining, modernising and improving this treasured facility so that it remains an important local attraction for future generations to enjoy.

These latest developments are another exciting chapter for Tropical World and I cannot wait to visit again once all the work is completely, which will hopefully be Easter 2015. The Council must again pay a special tribute to the Ziff family whose continued patronage of Tropical World and, indeed, culture across the city is a fantastic benefit to Leeds residents and visitors alike and we hope will remain so for many years to come. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Congreve.

COUNCILLOR CONGREVE: My Lord Mayor, I would like to speak on Minute 114, page 4 of the additional papers, regarding affordable warmth in Leeds.

Delivering affordable warmth in Leeds has never been more important. As Members are no doubt aware, recent weeks have seen staggering rises in the costs of energy. Four of the big six energy companies have increased their prices by nearly 10%, putting up to £140 on household bills, while the profits made from each household have more than doubled over the past year. We cannot leave residents with the unacceptable choice between heating and eating this winter.

Leeds has led the way when it comes to tackling fuel poverty, increasing energy efficiency, and we will continue to do so in the future. Leeds City Council has already helped over 11,000 people through our Winter Warmth programmes over the last two years. We have seen the fantastic take-up of Wrap Up Leeds and Wrap Up Leeds Plus, through which we have insulated over 10,000 lofts and cavities. In my own Ward of Beeston alone 255 installations have been made as a result of Wrap Up Leeds.

The list of excuses given by energy companies for their massive price hikes are not good enough for the elderly and vulnerable residents struggling to heat their homes this winter. Nearly a quarter of what are disturbingly termed excess winter deaths is directly attributable to conditions in the coldest homes. In 2011, 250,000 households were in fuel poverty in Yorkshire and Humberside. I heard the news today, in fact households face a further 17 years of above inflation rises for utilities. It is a scandal.

The Council is absolutely right to be ambitious in plans to deliver energy efficiency improvements through the Green Deal and Energy Company Obligations. Leeds will continue to work with its partners to attract funding that will not only help keep Leeds warm but to provide major training and local employment opportunities

for our city's young people. For those outside the reach of these schemes the Council will provide a £500,000 fund to help those in need of vital improvements.

Some in Westminster would have people think that they just need to switch energy providers and it would be the end of their problems but in the real world when paying of the energy bill to any provider can push families into poverty or below the poverty line, and where the energy companies raise their prices in tandem with one another, it is the practical action of Councils like Leeds that can really make a difference to vulnerable residents struggling with their energy bills.

I welcome the Affordable Warmth in Leeds Report as a means of restating our firm commitment to making sure that all residents in Leeds can afford to stay warm this winter. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Urry.

COUNCILLOR URRY: I too speak to Minute 114 on page 4 of the extra pack on affordable warmth.

In 2011, 11.3% of households in Yorkshire were in fuel poverty, reflecting old inefficient homes, falling incomes and rising fuel prices, but Leeds has been proactive. Wrap Up Leeds and Wrap Up Leeds Plus secured around £10m in external funding. In my own Ward of Roundhay alone 362 energy efficiency installations were completed under Wrap Up Leeds.

As the successful bid for the Green Deal demonstrated to run between January and October of this year aimed to insulate 302 homes and though the Government botched the launch of the Green Deal scheme, the Council achieved far more than planned. Last year we secured around £5m of ECO funding and £500,000 of householder investment to add to the million secured from DECC. Nearly a thousand significant energy efficiency improvements were made to Leeds properties, including external wall insulation to 194 difficult to insulate system-build homes against a target of just 50.

There are real challenges. The Government's replacement of other schemes with the Energy Company Obligation, ECO, means less money overall for low income and vulnerable households and ECO is market based and may fluctuate, creating uncertainty and making it harder for the most vulnerable to get the help they so urgently need.

Looking forward, despite the lower funding, the Council has ambitious plans to exploit ECO. The Council can target specific areas of need, promote benefits and help the energy companies to best exploit marketing and delivery capability, reducing the cost of contractors and energy companies while drawing maximum funding into the city. We have a target to complete 5,000 improvements, drawing £20m of ECO and Green Deal funding into Leeds and, despite the reduced funding, we know that energy companies are struggling to use their budgets for more difficult and expensive solid wall insulation. Leeds has thousands of suitable houses and the Council is working cross-departmentally to identify the right areas, remove planning barriers and improve energy efficiency within existing regeneration priorities.

We are looking to ensure that vulnerable households do not miss out by creating that £500,000 discretionary fuel poverty fund to top up where ECO cannot fully fund a vital measure.

We know all too well that big energy companies have been raising prices, making life harder for all consumers and especially vulnerable people. That is why

Labour's planned price freeze is just so important, but we also know that we must reduce carbon emissions. Using energy efficiently will keep costs down for our residents and save on emissions and every one of us in this Chamber as Councillors can help by identifying constituents who can benefit from these schemes. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mulherin, please.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am also going to speak on Minute 114 page 4 of the extra pack on affordable warmth.

The Leeds Winter Warmth Scheme for 2012/13 was independently evaluated by Leeds Metropolitan University earlier this year. Their report concluded that the initiative impacted positively on physical health but even more so on mental health through, for example, reducing anxiety, stress and isolation in vulnerable people. There was a consensus that vulnerable Leeds people needed a scheme to help them to keep warm throughout the cold winter months.

Their study supports what we already know about the strong links between fuel poverty and health. A significant number of people living in fuel poverty live in areas of deprivation concentrated in inner city areas where there is poor quality housing stock and poor health outcomes. The majority of people who are fuel poor are vulnerable older people or very young children, disabled or the long-term ill. Fuel poverty also has a greater impact on people suffering from a range of health conditions like respiratory disease, heart disease, strokes and mental illness.

To give an indication, 40% of excess winter deaths are due to cardiovascular disease and 33% due to respiratory disease. In addition, children living in cold homes are twice as likely to suffer from respiratory problems with their educational attainment and emotional wellbeing also being adversely affected. Minor illness, such as colds and flu, are also more prominent in cold homes.

There are around 345 estimated excess winter deaths in Leeds per year. Our aim should be to reduce that number. Last year Leeds received a grant of £169,000 from the Department of Health to offer help and support to vulnerable people in their homes. This additional winter funding has effectively been cut this year with the Department of Health insisting that any Winter Warmth measures should be funded through core public health budgets.

This is extremely challenging given the pressures already being faced by the Health and Social Care system in Leeds, as stated in my earlier response to Councillor Maqsood's question. The disregard of the impact that these further cuts may have on vulnerable people and constrained Local Authority budgets should not go unnoticed. It is yet another example of the Government shifting responsibilities on to Local Authorities without the funding to provide these services.

You may have seen the story over the weekend over the Leeds Community Foundation's attempts to raise £50,000 to help care for older people over the winter months. In previous years this charity and others have been given direct grants for this purpose funding through the Department of Health's Winter Warmth funding via Public Health and the Primary Care Trusts. However, with that grant having been cut nationally, local charities are now having to find new and difficult ways to find the money to provide essential services including, in this case, Leeds Community Foundation calling for better off pensioners to donate some of their winter fuel payments.

Despite the difficulties, Public Health, along with our partners in Leeds North and South-East Clinical Commissioning Groups are currently looking at ways we can

continue to support vulnerable people to stay warm in their own homes over the winter within the constraints of our existing budgets through organisations like the Care and Repair Warm Home Service. The joined up work between us is essential to ensure the needs of vulnerable people are met. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Anderson.

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am talking on Minute 90 and Minute 114. Can I start by welcoming alternate weekly collections and I think it will be good for the city. Phase 1 was a great success and let us hope we can build on it but you did refer, Mark, in your answer to the question, I do have concerns about the number of Waste Doctors that you are putting in place. We had 50,000 homes covered by eight; we are now going to have 100,000 covered by eight plus some of the ones in the 50,000 will still need some help and support, which is quite right that they still need some help and support, so I do think you are going to be stretching your resources and that could lead to problems in terms of residents losing a bit of faith if problems occur.

As has already been said there is the winter launch but I do think one way of doing that is trying to work with other departments a lot better. Unfortunately Councillor Richard Lewis is not in the Chamber but if we could get some of the areas where we know that are the highest in the city, so in other words when it is nice and sunny and warm in the city centre, in some areas like Cookridge it is absolutely freezing out there and that then leads to a diminishing in the service and you have to quite rightly, for health and safety reasons, pull the vehicles because you do not want to put these people at risk. If these roads were gritted and looked after better, we might be able to sort some of these problem occurring.

The other thing I would say about brown bins is, a number of residents in my area are asking if they can have more than one brown bin now because of the size of the gardens that they have. Some people may be jealous of that – fine, but the fact is they have these size of gardens and they do need to move the garden waste onwards.

The other problem I have got is the consultation events that you held in terms of alternate weekly collections. There were none, zero, planned for Adel and Wharfedale Ward until I intervened and then I got one which was shared between Cookridge and Weetwood, otherwise there would not have been any. I was promised one in Adel – I am still waiting when this one is meant to be, bearing in mind you start on the 18th so I do not know how you are fitting it in.

Can I just briefly say on the fuel poverty side of things, well done to what you are doing, Leeds is now leading. We have now pulled back from Kirklees and we are now seen as the people who are most responsible but I do think we need to do a lot more work on the bulk fuel purchasing scheme, which was not one of the greatest successes that this Council has had. I think Councillor Hardy put a lot of effort into trying to get that going and it has not been a success; we need to look into why.

What I would also finally like to say, and you may say I might say this anyway, it shows the cross-party support we have had here. The previous administration started this greater concentration on reducing fuel poverty and energy efficiency and you have carried it on and you have moved it on and I accept you have moved it on, but I do think the previous administration do deserve some thanks for getting it going and pushing it further up the political scale in the first place. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Buckley.

COUNCILLOR BUCKLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. With your permission I would like also to speak to Minute 114 page 4.

We all agree that the energy companies have imposed some large increases in household bills. This is not in doubt. We all want the citizens of Leeds to be warm. No-one on this side supports high bills but energy costs rose massively under the last Labour Government and one of the main elements of these increased bills was the green levies imposed by the previous Government and the guilty man was Ed Miliband, whose lack of grasp of economics makes him completely unfit to be Leader of the Opposition never mind aspiring to be the Prime Minister. *(hear, hear)*

He needs to realise that this is the real world and not something out of a Marxist text book.

His green levies are set to reach £286 by 2020 and he has been shouting from the rooftops about wanting a price freeze on energy bills at some vague time in the future and when he does actually get round to this freeze it would only be for 20 months.

COUNCILLOR HARDY: When your lot get thrown out next time.

COUNCILLOR BUCKLEY: What would he do before the freeze when all the prices would go up in anticipation of it? What would he do after the freeze when the same thing would happen?

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: You will have to wait and see.

COUNCILLOR BUCKLEY: How he would seek to control the world gas prices is not immediately clear. I have to say to Members in this Chamber, he is completely incoherent on this matter.

The Conservative Government will this year reduce energy bills. This would not only be a freeze as proposed by the Leader of the Opposition; it would actually be a reduction in bills so we would reduce the bills of everybody by about £112...

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Get on and do it then. Why are you not doing it now?

COUNCILLOR BUCKLEY:... by working in conjunction with the energy companies, by moving costs on to general taxation which means that the poor will benefit the most since nobody earning over £10,000 will pay tax...

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Since when have you looked after that?

COUNCILLOR BUCKLEY: ... will pay any income tax, anybody earning up to that figure as they would, of course, with the Labour proposals which is the half-baked proposal only to have a ten pence rate of income tax, which proves once again that we are the party of the poor, not them. *(Applause) (interruption)*

THE LORD MAYOR: From bins to Marxism, Councillor Dobson – would you like to sum up? A bit of order, please. Let Councillor Dobson have a few words.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Happy to sum up, if I can hear above the din. I have just been explaining to colleagues that the lower range of my hearing is going and I did not catch a lot of that and I do not think I am particularly bothered actually, Neil!

Seriously, let us run through this as a bit of a whistle-stop. Councillor Nagle, thank you very much indeed for highlighting the fact that we have done incredibly well in specifically June, 52% in terms of recycling, a real achievement for the city. I thank all colleagues, actually, who have really engaged in this process and worked with us on Phase 1 and hopefully I will get the same amount of support in terms of Phase 2.

Jack, you make a very valid point. We have needed residents more than any officer, we have needed residents to get on board with this and help us with this recycling ambitions and I think the stats I said earlier clearly demonstrates we have got that level of support in the city and I think it demonstrates that with its many challenges in terms of alternate weekly collections, we are doing the right thing.

I am quite concerned to hear what Ryk is telling me, it is a shame he is not still in the Chamber. I have given some commitments to Councillor Campbell that in terms of Otley specifically and some of the areas where there does seem to be a discrepancy and anomalies around which areas it will be rolled out, I am happy to move forward with the Otley Members on that by the turn of this year.

His point about brown bins and where he has gone to officers and not had a reply. Everybody knows I take an extremely dim view of that when elected Members are not given due credence by officers and if he comes back to me, if one of his party can relay that message, I will make sure it is taken forward.

Also the issue of correspondence. It makes my blood literally run cold every time we do a correspondence exercise because we will always find one anomaly and something that has not worked quite well. It was actually Councillor Jeanette Walker who manages a brain injury unit in Scholes who pointed out to me "Why have we got a letter about alternate weekly collection when we pay for a commercial service?" and I have taken that already forward with officers, but a good point well made.

Dan, I think that we are going to have to work with the Waste Doctors. There will always be anomalies and problems with any new scheme. Again, if the Waste Doctors are not sufficient, as Barry has mentioned, to satisfy need we will look at that again for sure.

On extending plastics, part of this exercise at the moment is actually scoping how much extra capacity we get by alternate weekly collections and what exactly can we add into the mix and that is a piece of work that is actively ongoing.

Paul, I very much share your thoughts around food collection. We would have liked to have done more, we had quite an ambitious scheme into DCLG that did not find favour to roll out food collection right across the city. Two points I would make. We have an excellent compost bin scheme where we can offer residents a compost bin at cost at what we pay for them, and we are happy to pass that on to residents. I have become an avid composter over the last couple of years and it is actually quite a therapeutic process as well and I would highly recommend it. We are also looking at other methods by which we can improve food waste. Hybrid vehicles, vehicles that will take green waste and food waste, perhaps in two containers on the same vehicle; all work that is in its genesis stage but work we are taking very, very seriously.

The issue of new properties is one that concerns me a great deal because what we do not do, we are constantly reducing services and I have had to take crews out and make the service more lean at the same time as housing numbers will expand. How do we do that? Do we do it through planning consents that developers

take more ownership until developments are built and roads are adopted? I do not know, but what I do know is it is going to be an increasing problem for this Council going forward and one that we have to give serious consideration to.

Moving off alternate weekly collections, Ghulam, thank you for your kind words about Tropical World. I think it is fair to say my children went and they are grown up. It was starting to look a shade tired and it is due to the Ziff family, who I cannot praise enough, who have been constant supporters of this city for many years, that it is now still in the top ten but I think has got a much, much brighter future than previously.

Moving on to colleagues who spoke about affordable warmth. The statistic in the Affordable Warmth paper that really leapt out at me as being the most shocking – in 2013, 21.5% of excess winter deaths are actually due to people who live in the quarter of the housing that is the hardest and worst to heat. That simply cannot continue.

I think Wrap Up did a lot of good work. We have had praise for Members about the 10,000 procedures and some of the work we did. I think Councillor Andrew Carter in the Exec Board made a very good point, have we actually hit the target groups we want to hit? With the easier stuff – and it was easier to do, loft insulations and the double skimmed brick in Phase 1 – actually I am not entirely sure we hit those poverty indicators that I would want to hit. In Phase 2 we have got a golden opportunity to do that that we must not miss and therefore I am encouraging all Members to get on board and promote it in the communities and take that practical action that was spoken about, and I am sure you will.

The one cloud on the horizon for me is I am very worried indeed around rumours and rumblings within the industry around ECO funding that perhaps some sort of *quid pro quo* arrangement between Government and companies that come the Autumn statement we may find a reduction in ECO obligations. That would be a disaster for all of us because actually it will not be lobbying and putting pressure on the ECO companies to reduce their costs, although obviously our Party has got the freeze which I absolutely fully support. The real way we will address fuel poverty in this city is by making our housing stock warmer and easier and cheaper to heat. That has got to be the answer.

Again, I am very concerned when I hear what Councillor Mulherin is telling me about the goalposts effectively being changed. We cannot have, none of us can afford another situation like the Feed In Tariffs where we had 5,000 solar PV systems ready to rock and roll and we had to put the project on ice. We simply cannot afford to go there again and that is a matter for all of us. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Dobson.

(ii) Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services

THE LORD MAYOR: We are moving on to Minutes on Neighbourhoods, Planning and Support Services. Councillor McKenna.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I take this opportunity to confirm that Councillor Gerry Harper has been released from hospital last night and is at home now recovering and resting under the supervision of Mary, and I can assure you he has to do what he is told when Mary is about.

I mean to speak on Minute 102 page 66, the CIL Draft Charging Schedule. The Community Infrastructure Levy is a Central Government policy. In Leeds we would not have chosen to have both the CIL and the 106 running side by side. As pointed out by Councillor Keith Wakefield at the last Executive Board, it does create problems, Lord Mayor.

The Government has given Leeds and other Councils a very tight deadline to implement CIL and if there is a failure to implement CIL it could cost us up to £4m a year. If the Government do not change their mind then they should consider giving Councils an additional year to fully prepare for this.

The Council is making a competitive offer for its CIL based on the viability data it has collected. The Council has tried to balance the needs of communities against ability to bring suitable and beneficial development to our areas. For instance, the Council has to try to balance commercial viability against the need of local areas and the Government has stipulated that this is the only measure that can be used in deciding the CIL rates.

Responses to the preliminary rates include not only developers (well, you would expect that, wouldn't you?) but also community groups, Parish Councils, charities and the Hospital Trust.

The draft rate for Leeds is between zero, for publicly funded or educational activities, to £170 per square metre for larger retail units outside the city centre. The Council feels that these rates give the best balance in order to attract development while being able to generate funds for our local communities.

Also, the retail rates have been reduced from the preliminary calculation. This reflects changes in the economy for retail and particularly for larger stores. We are in a recession.

It is essential that we continue to provide a competitive location to allow for supermarkets to come, as long as they choose the right sites and engage appropriately with local residents.

In my Ward, Armley - Armley has residential areas in the inner area which is £5 per square metre, and the south area £45 per square metre. The line between this goes right through the centre of Armley and this will cause difficulties.

THE LORD MAYOR: Time, Councillor McKenna. Thanks.

COUNCILLOR J MCKENNA: Two different systems...

THE LORD MAYOR: Sorry, Jim – good effort! Councillor Renshaw, I think, is next, please.

COUNCILLOR RENSHAW: My Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, I am speaking today on Minute 127, page 13 of the extra Minutes, response to deputation on Hope Farm.

It should be no surprise that I am very supportive of residents for my Ward. I was very glad to see them come into the Council to share their views on important local issues. I have made my own concerns about this site very clearly to planners. There will be people in my Ward who wish to stay close to family and their support networks in the years to come and I fully understand I must try to accommodate this desire. At the same time, we must continue to respect what makes our communities special. In Ardsley and Robin Hood we are aware of the challenge of the Site

Allocations Process and understand that all areas have to accept a fair share of development. The Hope Farm site is completely greenfield and adjacent to an established community. The Site Allocation Plan suggests that up to 373 houses could be built on the site. I am sure that you will agree that this is a significant challenge for the community and one that they will have to be very clear they cannot accept.

Without the Core Strategy and Site Allocations Process, we could lose the entirety of Hope Farm to development. This really important patch of land between Middleton and Robin Hood could be swallowed up by new housing. I am in no doubt that developers see the whole site as profitable and would not hesitate to put an application to build over the whole site. The Core Strategy and Site Allocations Process is intended to help the Council defend green belt area. We must work together to make sure this is successful and also fair.

Part of the Hope Farm site has been allocated as unsuitable for housing as development of the site would constitute urban sprawl. Of course I welcome this but the separation between the two parts of the site does not work in this case. I would prefer this to be seen as a single site that is unsuitable for development. The residents make a number of very sensible points and I would very like to see this fully responded to in part of the Site Allocations Process.

The Council has a legal duty to look at the consultation responses. Some sites are not suitable for development, even up to 2028 or beyond. I welcome the role of residents in my Ward to ensure this whole site is looked at in detail. I hope the officers will consider residents' objections and make a full response as part of the Site Allocations Process. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Lowe.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: I do not want to speak, thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, it is Councillor Harper then, Janet Harper.

COUNCILLOR J HARPER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I am speaking on Minute 128 on page number 13, Council Housing Capital Programme.

The Council Housing Capital Programme includes spending £467,000 on a District Housing Scheme for the Clydes, multi-storey flats and Phil May Court. This is long overdue and potentially a very beneficial scheme for tenants.

I think it is brilliant that this Council is doing really positive work for the benefit of the residents in the Clydes and Phil May. The Clydes live in the shadow of Armley jail and not many other places have to suffer that, so I am really pleased that we are finally doing something to help these people.

We know how tough it is for the residents because of the recent rises in energy prices. It is great to see this Council stepping in to give them the support they deserve by prioritising existing commitments. It shows that as a Council we can help communities, even in the hardest of time.

The District Heating Scheme is a smart solution to the challenge of increasing fuel and heating costs with residents expecting to see around 10% reduction on their fuel bills. This is such a big achievement in helping tenants who are finding it difficult to see how they will cope with these hard hitting energy costs.

From a Council perspective the scheme could generate an income from Renewable Heat Incentive which can be used to reinvest in the other housing improvements. Councils could become very reactive in the face of Central Government cuts. The bedroom tax threatens rent accounts and adds further risks to the Council in being able to collect and use rental income. It is heartening that this Labour Council is not reneging on commitments to tenants at this time of extreme uncertainty about rental income.

There is still some work to be done, my Lord Mayor, so I would like to offer my encouragement to those working on the project to remind them of how grateful these residents are for their hard work and therefore, on their behalf, I would like to thank you for your continued dedication in putting this project into action. I am certain this will be a complete success. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. It is now Councillor Gruen to sum up.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: Lord Mayor, thank you very much. Thank you to those of you who have participated in this debate. Perhaps the first announcement I could make in terms of planning is that today we heard that the Inspector taking the appeal at Outwood Lane, Horsforth has dismissed the appeal, so I think that is good news at least. I mention it now in case anybody wants to refer to it under the Development Plan Minutes coming up shortly.

Jim, thank you for the comments on the Community Infrastructure Levy. As we said last time, we would not implement it side by side with Section 106, it does not make sense, and you got the balance just right. This Council on the one hand has to levy as much as it can in terms of contributions to fund some other developer obligations in localities whilst at the same time not ensuring that development goes elsewhere.

Karen explained I thought very well the dilemma all local Councillors face between on the one hand the strategic ambitions of the Council through the Core Strategy and on the other hand the very difficult and painful Site Allocations Process locally. I know there are many people who are quite jittery about that and all I can say is, we will be as sympathetic as we can in reaching the targets, whatever they may be, and I hope the Inspector has listened to those cautionary voices at the inquiry and will not listen to the housebuilders' lobby who want more than 90,000 units built by 2028. If he does listen then I think as the targets perhaps become slightly easier, the site allocations also take away some – not all by any means, but some – of the difficulties.

The Capital Programme, as Janet mentioned, is very good news for the Council. It was £35, £36m last year, it has gone up to £56m this year; on top of that the PFI in Little London; on top of that our own housing investment. I am acutely aware that the Council has to maximise the benefit out of that programme and by saying we are no longer going to stick to geographic priorities but priorities for the city as a whole, honouring existing commitments but also looking across the portfolio – I think that is the key thing for me.

We work with Adult Social Care, we work with Children's Services, we work with health in terms of the health agenda and the implications to ensure that we maximise and spend the Capital Programme wisely for the future of people in Leeds.

That Housing Advisory Board will steer that investment and make critical and I hope also helpful comments to hold the Director and myself to account.

The bedroom tax I could wax lyrical for a long time. We know who the guilty people are – they are not sitting on this side of the Chamber – and we know who is inflicting the misery on the tenants who are being inflicted with enormous cuts to their housing benefit quite unfairly. Thank you. *(Applause)*

(iii) Children's Services

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dowson.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am commenting on page 68, Minute 104, of the report into the annual admissions round.

School admissions are an extremely tense time for all families in Leeds and I am delighted to say that 95% of families were offered one of their top three secondary school choices and 94% one of their top three primary school places. This is a huge achievement taken against the backdrop of ever increasing number of pupils.

What I want to talk to you about today are the issues surrounding free schools and how this is affecting admissions. Currently parents can preference a new proposed free school and be allocated that school. However, Central Government delays in signing off funding agreements and difficulties finding sites can lead to severe problems for us as a Council and, more importantly, for our children and families.

Let me give you a few examples. We have a free school in Leeds which has opened but without a permanent site. The funding agreement was eventually signed off in the final week of the summer term. Parents who had preferred the school had all by then been offered and accepted an alternative place; some had even bought the uniform. This caused considerable upset for both the parents and the children. They had already adjusted to attending a different school, wearing the uniform and developing friendship groups. It has also meant that the children now attending that free school will free up places at the other schools which, although useful, caused additional work for us but, more importantly, caused distress to the children who were unnecessarily denied their first choice school.

Another free school included in the admissions booklet for entry last September does not yet even have a site. They are using a distance-based admissions policy which will obviously have an impact on our place planning. However, we are not yet in a position to say where in the city that impact will be. Once again, that may cause distress to children and families who may find that they actually have to travel large distances to get to school.

This highlights just some of the problems that the current rules around free schools have caused but, of course, there are even more and I have only got three minutes.

We want to work closely with free school providers to ensure that we are in a position to positively plan our school place provision. What we need the Government to understand is the difficulties which delays cause us as a Local Authority and families up and down the country. Common sense seems to be in short supply with this Government. We need them to recognise the urgent need for more joined up thinking when it comes to school place planning. We need them to give us back our ability to build new schools where we need them most. We need the funding currently being diverted to Michael Gove's vanity projects to enable us to do just that; then and only then will we be able to effectively fulfil our Statutory duty to provide a school place for every child in Leeds. Thank you. *(Applause)*

(a) Advisory and Procedural Committees

(iii) Development Plans Panel

THE LORD MAYOR: It is 4.20 and I am going to move forward to the top of page 10 and look at Committees and the first one is the Development Plans Panel, Councillor Coulson.

COUNCILLOR COULSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Minute 11, page 248. I think we can all agree that the housing targets that have been given to us and our Development Core Strategy are far from ideal. I think you will all agree with that. However, they also present an opportunity to direct and influence the development and regeneration of housing, retail and green space. This can be done by engaging with members of the public about how they see their local areas. It has already been done in a lot of places.

I am pleased to report that the level of public response during the initial consultation in the drop-in events, there attended a thousand people and there have been around 5,000 to 6,000 submissions in total. Local knowledge can inform the process of the site allocation not just by telling us why certain sites are not suitable for development but also people point us towards alternative sites. We can work together to make sure targets we have are set, met, with as little disruption as possible.

Disputes – we have got quite a few going on already but we have to listen to the residents. We have to consult so you are going to get that. It is important to stress that overall housing targets will ultimately be adjudicated by the Core Strategy Inspector, unfortunately, using a methodology handed down from Central Government. There may be problems with the methodology – if there are not, we will find some. Why, for instance, did it not take into account the developments that were already taking place in a lot of the Wards, including mine? I have got two very large developments and two or three smaller ones. We have had to implement ourselves more through Site Allocations Process. Nevertheless, these targets are the situation we are faced with.

All areas will have to make allowances for growth and no area should be overwhelmed or protected outright. As Members of the Council we should work to protect, preserve the individual character of our Wards, which goes without saying, I know, whether they are rural or central.

Equally though there is opportunity for us to provide more affordable housing for those struggling to get a foot on the ladder and extra care housing for elderly residents who wish to live in the areas that they call home. My own Ward in Pudsey, where the housing target is 4,700...

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Coulson.

COUNCILLOR COULSON: You are so kind, Lord Mayor! You jump me out of nowhere and then you cut me off in my prime. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Kindly sit down, thank you. *(laughter)* Councillor Maqsood.

COUNCILLOR MAQSOOD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. My Lord Mayor, fellow Councillors, I am speaking on Minute 11 page 48, Site Allocations Initial Report of Consultation.

We are now approaching a time when our city-wide target for housing growth to 2028 is set and agreed with the Core Strategy Inspector. What will then remain is where the sites required will be allocated.

I, like many of my fellow Members for inner Leeds have listened carefully to the debates and discussion for the allocation of sites throughout the district. We have worked with officers and each other to ensure that our areas are able to take on a fair share of housing growth. We have sought not only to recognise the contribution we can play to housing in the city but also to grapple with the issues that stem from the housing density that already exists in Gipton and Harehills. There are 74.2 people per hectare in Gipton and Harehills compared to a city-wide average of 13.6. This level of density is maintainable only with strong community links and infrastructure.

Inner areas cannot, therefore, permanently accommodate new developments, even if this is on brown field land such as former factories. Our parks and green spaces are as important as the larger fields and lands that surround the city. We have green lungs in our area that we need to retain so when new land becomes available we have to consider if it is in the area's interest to turn this into space for people to meet, socialise and keep healthy.

The debate needs to move on away from the target of total sites and on to how this can be achieved. I am proud that inner area is able to play its fair share in this process. I understand that housing growth is a challenge for every part of the city but we need to avoid simple and misleading answers like saying growth can be achieved without laying a finger on my area. The decisions we are making in the next few months will affect Leeds right up to 2028. Inner areas are willing to play their part but we cannot force our residents to accept further social, health and infrastructure challenges just so that another area can be development free. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Taggart.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Thank you, Lord Mayor. First of all, we should acknowledge that Leeds is a successful, growing city and the population is going to go up, which is good because in some parts of the United Kingdom they are still suffering population decline. We heard earlier on in Council what a fantastic city Leeds is and therefore it should be no surprise that lots of people want to come and live and work and study in our city.

Development Plans Panel has worked extremely hard for many months looking at sites all over Leeds. Individually Panel members are sceptical about the suggested house building number for Leeds as a whole. The trouble is, we need to have a plan which passes the soundness test and unless we do that we run the risk of having completely unrestricted development almost anywhere in the city. In a way we are having to do what the Government requires of us, even though some of us individually are really sceptical about the proposed house building rates. Nevertheless, we do need more houses, we need more social housing in particular and Leeds is a growing city.

The other thing to say is that we on Development Plans Panel took on board every single concern that Ward Members raised with us about suitability or otherwise of particular pieces of land. We had an extensive series of site visits. Those of us who are on the Panel will remember some of them visited parts of the city they said they had not really been to before, but we went all over the place. Barry Anderson in

particular will recall every single site he asked us to go and look at we did go and look at, didn't we, Barry?

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: Yes.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: And in many cases we agreed with you that the particular site should be coloured red, i.e. not suitable for development. Anyone who says the members of the Development Plans Panel do not care about these issues, do not care about the special character of the different parts, it is simply untrue. We have done a very thorough, professional, caring job and I would like to thank all the officers in Planning in particular who have been involved and all the Members of the Panel who have put so many hours and days in to help me in my work. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I reassure Councillor Taggart, nobody is saying they have not done a thorough job as regards the monitoring of these most unfortunate number of sites that have had to have been brought forward.

What annoys Members on our side is that the current Government is wanting the same number of houses to be built in Leeds as the last Government. There is hardly any difference whatever between what the last Government inflicted upon us in the RSS and what we have now been landed with in the Core Strategy that you put forward. Whilst we supported the need to get a Core Strategy in place for the reasons that you have given – and some Local Authorities were way behind us in the process and are going to find themselves in even more difficulty than we will – there are some points where I think you slipped up and I hope that we can do something about it.

My colleagues and I went to the Core Strategy meeting and a number of us spoke at length on the basis that the figures you have put forward in your Core Strategy, a net 70,000 new properties, is too many and that in point of fact since we began the Core Strategy process, figures from the Office of National Statistics bear out the fact that the number of houses in total that you still have got in the Core Strategy are too many.

An interesting situation at the Core Strategy, we had three arguments going on. We did not argue about the principle of having the Core Strategy inquiry but that you were arguing for 70,000 net, the builders were arguing for 84,000, Peter, not 90 but still far too many, far too many, and the rest of us were saying it is too many, you have not take enough notice of the new projections on population.

Interestingly, in Bradford they commissioned another review by GVA Grimley and they are now reducing the number of houses by 7.5%, in their case over 3,000. I want to know why we did not commission a review, an independent review. That 7.5% would have meant we would have been going to the public and consulting on 5,000 less residential units than we did do and if we did not do it then, why can we not do it now? If there is an opportunity to reduce that number by 7.5% in Leeds that is a lot of land saved, a lot of misery saved and 5,000 less dwellings out of a number that none of us outside a handful of people in the construction industry believe will ever be delivered anyway. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Gruen to sum up.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: Can I start by also welcoming back Councillor Taggart and looking forward to his chairing the next Development Plans Panel. It is an arduous task and it is in many ways a thankless task because those of you who are not there are not necessarily always convinced that your colleagues actually are trying to look out for the best possible balance that the city can obtain.

I am grateful that Mick Coulson told us that there were nearly 6,000 respondents. That is a lot of people actually coming back on consultation and that will be interesting to analyse.

It is good, as Neil said, that the city is a growth city, that we are attracting some extremely important employment and development opportunities.

Andrew is right that the RSS figures and these figures now are hardly different and I do not think any of us in the administration have actually argued that. The key issue that Andrew is fully aware of – and by the way, I want to thank everybody who did go to the examination in public, your comments were helpful and how helpful we await to see what the Inspector comes up with, because it was challenging for the Planning team when you have twelve national house builders, sitting one next to the other, all with their Commercial National Directors and barristers...

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: The cast of The Sopranos, Peter.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: Indeed, and then the Inspector on every point turning to the house buildings and all twelve of them surprisingly all reinforced what each other had said and then he came to one of us and said. "Now, Council, what is your view?" It is a very difficult and demoralising process, the way this is set up.

The point I want to make, as Andrew knows, it is about the five year supply. It is not about what the RSS figures are. I do not know if you have had the time yet to read the Outwood Lane Appeal decision letter – there are some pointers in there that through the Planning process we need to come back to very quickly and see what our response to that will be. It is almost impossible for any Council to demonstrate under the current guidelines a five year supply.

What is also interesting, I happen to have with me a letter from Mr Pickles which he sent in August in response to a letter to Ed Balls MP. I want you to listen to this carefully because I think all of us will find it slightly amusing in places. He tells us that the framework requires Planning Authorities to encourage the re-use of brown field land if not of high environmental value. Then he says:

"We ended the absolute prioritisation of brown field as we had seen that emphasis on brown field first helped drive up land prices..."

Really?

"...and led to unpopular high density development."

Really? Now we cannot find anyone who wants to actually develop brown field land and our policy, as Kamila and others have said, is absolutely plain. We are not going to build on every single blade of brown field land because that would be totally unreasonable. The green lungs and the green spaces, as important to the inner city as it is to the outer areas, but you do not have to walk very far from this Civic Hall to see desolate areas in NHS, Network Rail and others' ownership that could be put back into much better use. That is why we want to build on brown field first.

Mr Pickles goes on and he says that the reason that they ended this approach is because he is not in favour of a top down approach. Mr Pickles, goodness me, is not in favour of a top down approach. You could be kidding me, frankly. If that is not a top down approach, what is?

We are between a rock and a hard place in how we go forward and as colleagues have said, the worst plan is no plan. For Morley as well, the worst plan is no plan because it means unfettered rights by developers who are avaricious, who want to landbank, who want to just build up their financial portfolios and who are not yet fully demonstrating that they actually want to come on board with the Leeds proposition, with what we want for our city in the future, and that they actually want to leave a legacy that all of us can be proud of. What is what we are fighting for, nothing less than that. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

(v) Corporate Governance and Audit Committee

THE LORD MAYOR: Corporate Governance and Audit Committee. I think a comment from Councillor Bentley.

COUNCILLOR S BENTLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on Minute 25, page 254, regarding leaving care payments.

Lord Mayor, I have to say that when I read this report I was extremely concerned about the lack of clear policy and guidance to staff that has led to the internal audit report stating:

“There are significant control weaknesses that present a high risk to the controlled environment and have left the system open to abuse.”

I am pleased to say that nothing untoward has happened but, of course, it could have.

It needs to be laid out clearly what the eligibility criteria are, the different types of payment and the different rates. Recording and control of cash payments could be in two different places, which could lead to duplication of payments as there did not seem to be any reconciliation between payments in those two places.

There is no financial probity as the approval procedures were ignored and there was a lack of evidence such as receipts that the money was spent on what it should have been. Frankly, it is a complete mess and has probably cost the Council £23,000 over the last four years in unclaimed VAT. That may be a small sum – not to be sniffed at, though, in these difficult economic times and it could be someone's wage.

Let us remember that these vulnerable young people are usually around 17 or 18 years of age when they leave care and they rely on the support of these payments to help set up their homes, unlike many other young people who tend to stay with their families until they are well into their 20s and 30s these days.

We have several hundred young people leaving care every year and if records are not kept meticulously, who knows whether each young person has received the full amount of their leaving care payment, or received anything at all?

This is a shocking report with no management or control over the budget. As we are all corporate carers we need reassurance that, firstly, no young care leaver was disadvantaged by this lack of financial control and that in future all staff will be

trained on the policy, guidance and criteria along with the proper budgetary control. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Bentley. The concerns have been listened to and will be picked up but I would like to move on to the procedure for winding up the business on the Executive Board Minutes and these Minutes, so I would like to ask Councillor Wakefield to reply.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I will try and take the last debate first because it is really important to the city's future. If you remember, all of us signed up for a prospectus to give to the developers that said that the city was ambitious, it was prepared to build houses but it wanted to retain the character of the villages and towns and settlements that make Leeds such a great place. I think people are right to be slightly sceptical whether developers would sign up to that and we have been going some months now and I have to say there is not much evidence that they are listening to the aspirations that we have.

The difference I have with Andrew on this is you are right, the RSS was imperfect, too rigid...

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Too big.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: ...but at least it had sequential voting and that is what is lacking and that is what Peter was saying in the current position. We cannot point to brown field first because we go to green belt and, quite frankly...

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Prescott removed the sequential test two weeks before he left office.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: He did, I agree, I remember that comment as well but for most of the time sequential planning was the one we all supported and I think it gave us a stronger arm.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Absolutely.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Frankly, if we came back here and argued that, I would fully support and so would my Group as well in a future White Paper.

I think the point that we all want, we said we wanted houses fit for the future and the one thing that I have read quite recently was the Shelter report that said that we are not building enough affordable homes. We know we are only building 500 and we should be building 1,100 and one of the remarkable things as the private rented get more expensive squeezing out people and as mortgages get bigger, is how difficult it is for people in this city to get affordable homes. Already Shelter rightly, I think we could all say this, the housing scheme system is broken. I think it is broken nationally and it is certainly broken locally. What they claim is that only 52% of couples can afford a home on medium wage; couples without children. For those with children, only 27% can afford affordable homes and only 9% of singles. That really is building the housing crisis in this city which we have to address and unfortunately we do not have the tools to do that but it is something I think we should come back to now.

If I can start from what I thought was a good start on the recycling. Councillor Nagle, Councillor Dunn, were very positive and Councillor Cohen's most positive comment about it, although he welcomed it, was welcoming Councillor Taggart back from ill health and from then on he went downhill. *(laughter)* I have got to say that for people who are supporting this, Councillor Wadsworth and others, you spent ten

seconds supporting it and about two and a half minutes criticising it, but actually I welcome the conversion of those revolutionaries over there because most of this side were against fortnightly collections when it was suggested and we should not forget that. At least you are winning them over. When you see this city has got 42% recycling rate and I compared them to other cities last week, they were in the paper, we are doing extremely well. We are one of the best core cities in the country for recycling rates. That is something to welcome and support and I am sure that we will win over people like Les Carter in about 20 years' time.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: When he has been recycled!

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: That is being optimistic, yes, I know!

The Tropical world is just amazing. I will not say too much. Those who have been, I think it is 300,000 people go there a year. That is a national treasure and so are the Ziff family because they have given so much to this city in terms of education, cultural projects and so on. Again, it is great to see that philanthropy still exists in this city.

I really want to get on to the debate that we had about all the insulation schemes, the Wrap Up schemes. Those of us who read the report by the YEP will notice that four people every day die of cold. That was the Community Foundation's plea. They were making a very strong case for anybody who gets the winter pension for fuel who can afford it to give them. You cannot help but think that actually it is going to get worse. The fuel bill for electric went up 9%, the fuel bill for gas went up 18%, making the average fuel bill £1,500 a year. This is not just for people who are poor. I think it is affecting all middle income families as well who are making some real debates. I was out in the streets with colleagues last week in Kippax listening to an old person saying, "We get £140 pension, we spend £100 a week on fuel bills because we have the heating on all day and night" and it makes you wonder what else are they sacrificing.

The schemes like Wrap Up, which Councillor Dobson mentioned, to be able to take 550 families out and save them is a real, real positive achievement and, sadly, we still have 55,000 households in this city that are struggling with fuel poverty. I think it really does underline the need to keep the levy because the levy, although it is only 2% of the cost, actually does all the schemes, helps to, that Councillor Dobson and Councillor Mulherin mentioned.

I picked *this* leaflet up – you might gather which party delivered that with the colour (*laughter*) – and it was the Conservative candidate who is going to take on Ed Balls. I thought this must say something really important about how the levy is vital and that we should not let the energy companies off with the levies. What does it say about how people can survive these rocketing fuel bills? Off we go – I will only mention a few.

- "Try to keep the room temperature above 18 in your bedroom overnight.
- Open the window or door a little at night for ventilation.
- Never use a hot bottle in the same bed as an electric blanket (*laughter*) even if the blanket is switched off. Unplug blankets before you go to bed unless they have a thermostatic control.
- Get your electric blanket tested every three years."

Do you know, here we are, a raging debate about energy bills going up beyond most people's means of affording it. Do you know the only thing missing

there? Do you remember Currie – “Wear a hat” – wear a hat, now wear a jumper. *(laughter)* You know, when Councillor Buckley talked about the party of the poor, what he meant, he was the party of the energy companies and the party of the bankers, he meant to say, because it is quite clear if the levy goes it is not the energy company that will place it, it is everybody here who pays income tax while the energy companies get away with it and that is the scandal and that is the party of the poor beginning to manoeuvre that position so that we will have to pay to keep old people alive through winter and not the energy companies. I think that is an absolute disgrace and I think we ought to really carry on trying to do everything we can to make sure that our elderly and vulnerable are protected through the winter.

The debate on the CIL I think is a very complex one. Nobody really knows whether it is the right level or not because we have got to wait and see but as far as we can I think we have been sensitive to some of the challenges that we have had with our competitors, our rival core cities and so on. One of the things that I ought to delude(*sic*) ourselves of any belief is that the CIL will pay for all the social infrastructure. It is quite clear that we do not have enough money there to make sure that we fund our schools or we provide the right social and sporting infrastructure as well and I think that is a massive, massive problem that we have with CIL in the future and if we do not get enough money for the basic needs, then I am afraid that we will not be able to plan, we will not be able to provide for children in the future.

I think one of the last things I will say about Councillor Dowson, the kind of person that Gove is, ideologically dogmatic, has meant that this Council cannot plan for the future because it only gets two years’ capital, it cannot build because you will not allow us and it will actually run chaos with the free schools who actually can build anywhere, do not have to consult with the Local Authority and can actually do anything they want. I think Michael Gove is probably the most ideologically dogmatic, obstructive Secretary of State for Education we have ever seen. I really do think absolutely time to go. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Wakefield. Council, I am now going to call for the vote on the motion to receive the Minutes. *(A vote was taken)* The Minutes are CARRIED.

ITEM 11 – BACK BENCH COMMUNITY CONCERN

THE LORD MAYOR: I am now going to move to the bottom of page 11 where we are moving on to the item to discuss Back Bench Community Concerns submitted by Members of Council and I will invite Catherine first to give us a little bit of introduction to this item.

THE CITY SOLICITOR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I have just been asked by Whips to clarify the legal position in relation to Back Bench Community Concerns and live planning applications.

There is no restriction in law or in the Council’s Procedure Rules or wider constitution which in principle would prevent a Back Bench Community Concern which relates to a live planning matter being raised. This is because Back Bench Community Concerns are a means of Members raising community issues of concern within the forum of a Council meeting but importantly no actual decision by Council is being taken.

It is also worth noting, as Members will be aware, the effect of Section 25 of the Localism Act 2011 is to confirm that just because a Member has expressed a view on a matter does not mean that he or she has predetermined that matter.

I would nonetheless take this opportunity to remind Members of the need to be circumspect in relation to how they express themselves in respect of any Back Bench Community Concern which does relate to a live planning application. I would suggest particular caution if they themselves would be on the decision making Panel determining such an application.

I would also suggest that it would be advisable for any Member who later does sit on a decision making Panel which is determining such an application and who has commented on the matter in relation to a Back Bench Community Concern confirms at that decision making Panel that they come to that meeting with an open mind and will determine the application on its merits on the basis of all relevant information presented to the decision making Panel. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, if I may, this is in relation to page 12 item 11, the first matter at the top. Notwithstanding all of that there has been a long-standing Whips' agreement within this Council that live planning applications should not be commented on and that goes back since time immemorial.

THE CITY SOLICITOR: I will just reiterate what I said that in relation to Back Bench Community Concerns there is no Council Procedure Rule that would prevent Councillor Finnigan speaking.

THE LORD MAYOR: Let us go with Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I was recently told that the travelling community are not very keen on me and that came as a bit of a surprise, really, but I suppose, if I am being fair, they could see that I am not particularly keen on the travelling community. I wonder if other people share that reluctance to accept traveller sites.

I look around and we note that the Labour colleagues over in Allerton Bywater also were not very keen on a traveller site in their back yard.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I have got one.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Nor were those Ardsley and Robin Hood Councillors who were discussing and debating whether there should be a site on their doorstep in and around the Stanley area. They were not very keen. As we know, our Labour colleagues in Hunslet are not very keen on a traveller site in their back yard. Perhaps the fact that I think we have to have an honest discussion and debate about this is one that should be looked at broader just in case anyone suggests that I am some sort of redneck or that I am promoting problems and difficulties with the travelling community.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: It is not in your Ward.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: If I could develop the theme a little further after those very helpful heckles. Cottingley Springs is described as being in Gildersome. The community that it impacts the majority upon is the Gildersome and surrounding areas; of that there can be no doubt.

Let us look at little closer at the expansion of Cottingley Springs. Who is keen on the idea? The travelling community are not keen on the idea, Les. By and large the travelling community are not enthusiastic about it at all. GATE, the

representative organisation for the travellers, they are at the very best lukewarm on this particular application. The local community that is most impacted upon, Gildersome, via their Parish Council, are not keen. Morley Town Council is not keen. Ward Councillors in Morley North are not keen. Most of the Ward Councillors in the Farnley and Wortley Ward are not particularly keen.

If we look at it from a purely planning point of view it has little support outside this administration and let us look at it in terms of its planning status. It is expansion into the green belt so by its very nature it is inappropriate development, breaches the NPPF policy on travellers; of that there is no doubt. It breaches the policy that was recently agreed by Executive Board that traveller sites should be on brown field sites close to local facilities. It breaches that.

It is very clear that at this particular point the Minister and Eric Pickles are very unenthusiastic about expansion of traveller sites into the green belt. Indeed, Ministerial statements are very clear in saying the lack of traveller pitches is not enough to overturn the protection that green belt has. When we are reflecting on the expansion of Cottingley Springs we need to think very seriously about what the alternatives are.

What are the alternatives? There are alternatives. There are alternatives all over the place. We are in a situation where we all have to accept – in my Ward let us deal with my Ward and let us look at small traveller sites in my Ward. Nepshaw Lane in Morley where there is a small traveller site which had the support of my colleagues in the Morley North Ward. No objection from any of us, unlike Hunslet, unlike Allerton Bywater – they objected. Have a look.

We are in a situation where in my own Ward of Morley North we have accepted that small family sites are the way forward. If you look at Whitehall Road we also have a site, as you well know, Les, for those folk that run the fairs. People will also know on Howden Clough Road there is a small travellers' site that we recognise. People will also know that on Gildersome Lane there is a travellers' site, so quite frankly we do not need any of you suggesting that we need to put travellers' sites in our back yard. *(interruption)* The rest of you, your Hunslet types, your Allerton Bywater types, your Ardsley and Robin Hood types will all do this synthetic enthusiasm towards the travelling community and need to look at what the alternative options are.

Why is that? That is what national policy tells you, that is what local policy tells you, that is what GATE tells you and that is what the travelling community tells you. Cottingley Springs is fraught with difficulties. It is the wrong expansion in the wrong site. This is a problem that faces us all. All of us have to offer some solution to this particular problem.

We have in Morley North, we have shown some leadership. It is time for the rest of you to show similar leadership. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Gruen to respond.

COUNCILLOR HARDY: Be nice, Peter.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: I am grateful for the sensitive way in which Councillor Finnigan approached this subject. All of us know, from Councillor Les Carter when he did my role onwards, that nothing excites the local residents more than talking about travellers' sites and we have tried for three years now to take some of the steam and heat out of this and the reason is because – and I say this factually rather than politically – our view was that we could not continue to simply

spend money on moving travellers around illegal encampments from site to site, legal costs, all the abnormalities in terms of clearing up, to start that cycle over and over again.

In those years we spent £2m doing that as a City Council and, Councillor Finnigan, was that money well spent? Of course not.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Of course not, Peter. Small family sites, Peter.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: We were trying an alternative to say can we actually, one, acknowledge the lifestyle of travellers and gypsies; secondly recognise that there are real health issues and educational issues among that community that we should not just accept; and thirdly, if we say we are basing our policy on housing need, as we do with tenants, then why should we not see if we can find some suitable site or sites?

Council will remember, because we had a bit of an argy bargy with my good friend Les Carter when you will recall that senior officers went to see him in his then office and somebody unwisely waved a list of 250 to 300 potential sites and Les grabbed the list, locked it away in his filing cabinet and said, "You are not having it back and if you do come outside and I will fight you for it." *(laughter)* The fact that that was a female officer is by the by! *(laughter)*

The fact is, we have looked at a lot of sites. We have had recommendations. I am not going to go anywhere near the planning issues which will come up in due course. We want to do the right thing.

The Core Strategy means we have to identify a certain number of sites and I know that it will be as difficult as finding sites in Guiseley and Rawdon or in Adel because everybody will object to having housing sites.

I welcome the plea from Councillor Finnigan and I have listened to it carefully that he is going to show leadership in this. You are going to show leadership and we will comb through Morley North and see where, with your agreement, you are going to show the leadership for some site. Fantastic

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Already done. Time for you to come, Peter.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: Just one further word. Please do not insult some of my colleagues here because some of the temporary sites we have had over the last year have been in City and Hunslet, have been in Burmantofts and Richmond Hill and have been elsewhere and people here have accepted that for the time being and we have to continue with that level headed approach, step by step, incremental, using money wisely and not feverishly trying to excite everybody here this afternoon, although I have enjoyed it. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Council, I have good news, I think it is tea time. I would like to invite the guys from the gallery to come and join us – there is a guy with a lot of medals there, I would like to have a chat with Mr Sadique having tea, so let us have tea.

(Short break)

ITEM 12 – BACK BENCH COMMUNITY CONCERN

THE LORD MAYOR: Welcome back. It is Item number 12. I am kicking off! I would if Neil Walshaw was in the room! It is Item 12, Back Bench Community Concern and it is Councillor Walshaw.

COUNCILLOR WALSHAW: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Where does one start with this? I am afraid, colleagues, that myself and Councillor Walker must bring to your attention a subject of the utmost seriousness. In fact, you will have seen from the title of this Back Bench Community Concern that that is really a title that I would have hoped that none of us would ever have to make a speech about.

I want to set out a bit of context as to what happened and explain what is going on and what we would like to see and then Councillor Walker has got a few words to say.

About a month ago I was on social media – I am on Twitter a lot, as some of you may know. I started seeing these tweets about a student night called Tequila. They had made this video. There is really no other way to say this, colleagues. They had made a video where they were in the club and the club night is called Freshers Violation and they made a fake interview where an interviewer was talking to a student and they were both looking at a very drunk young girl and they were having a conversation where she was going to get drunk, she was buying the drinks, he was going to take her home and he was going to rape her.

Where do you start with that? Where does one begin? That is appalling, isn't it? It is vile – it is beyond vile. It is not so much crossed the line as sprinted over the line and is doing a circuit of the globe. I am not often rendered speechless but I was at that moment and so myself, Councillor Walker and an awful lot of people complained, and boy did they. This video has caused a tremendous amount of upset.

What it has triggered, though, is a Leeds City Council Licensing investigation and a West Yorkshire Police Licensing Team investigation, and I would like to commend both the City Council and West Yorkshire Police for the promptness and the professionalism of their response to this.

As you can tell, this has made me quite enraged but as a parent and as a human being, as a man, that this is appropriate, that this is how young men and women should be thinking about each other in 2013.

I think what is really appalling is that somebody has sat, a couple of people have sat around – and they probably were men – and thought, "Here, how shall we promote our student night? I'll tell you what, let's use rape." Somebody has had that thought process and then other people have said, "Yes, let's do that" and then they have made the damn film – excuse my language. Then the company who promotes it have signed off on it and they put it up on their social media sites, on FaceBook, on Twitter, yadda yadda. Words fail me.

I think there are some heartening things and I have already mentioned the police and Leeds City Council's Licensing response, but the commentary from people on social media was almost universally negative and condemnatory of this film. There have been protests outside Tequila, which is at a place called Mezz Bar. I am pleased to see that both the City Council and the police are looking to take the strongest possible sanctions. Certainly myself and Councillor Walker have been pressing for that.

Before I hand over to Councillor Walker I just would issue this warning to promoters, to venues, to anyone thinking about this. Do not do this, this is wrong.

Everyone in this room can see this is wrong, everyone in Leeds can see this is wrong. Do not do it. We will take the strongest possible action and press for as many sanctions as we can. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR WALKER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I condone totally what Councillor Walshaw is saying today and I am sure that you will all agree it is absolutely disgusting and disgraceful.

I want to focus on this issue not only from a Ward Councillor perspective but also from a mother and an aunt of teenage girls. My 17 year old daughter is in college and she will soon be starting at university pathway and hopefully she will access one of the city's fantastic universities but what I want is to be ensured that she is in an environment where she can enjoy all aspects of the city but safely.

Promotions of this kind that glorify offences against women I am sure will not only affect whoever but also the young people who access these promotional evenings, they are not going to know, they are going to go out and enjoy themselves but are we sure with that 100% degree of certainty that under the influence of drink we are not sending the wrong messages here to our young people.

I have got a niece who accesses and enjoys the night city, she enjoys the nightlife. I cringe and I hold my breath and hope that she has come home safely. I also represent a ward that is full of students and young people and what I want to do is to be reassured that these young people that, more often than not, are just away from home for the first time, are safe and that they can access our city and enjoy the night time experience without all this promotion and without parents worrying that they are sending their children and supporting their children to access our city whilst we are promoting this culture.

It is totally unacceptable and I know it is being addressed through Licensing. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: It is Councillor Wakefield to respond.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It is quite topical that it is a live issue because I think many of us have always adhered to the protocol if it is not the law and if it is a live issue, it is better not talking to it until it is dealt with and the Licensing Committee will now deal with it and in a very thorough way investigate it and I am sure in a very thorough way discuss and debate what should be done about that licensing.

I think you have heard enough emotion and passion about this issue to condemn any organisation that uses the rape of young girls and violence against young girls as some attraction to a party for freshers, and that is the origins of it.

I want not only to congratulate the Councillors for raising the issue here but I also want to congratulate the 3,000 signatures organised by students, who often get dismissed as being frivolous and not serious but have actually taken this on to campaign very hard. The police have taken the appropriate action and removed the video from websites and I think the students have actually showed real responsibility, passion and commitment against this rather offensive marketing culture.

I think it does reflect something that Councillor Walker has been saying. We have got something like 60,000 students in this city and I do not think any of us should underestimate the contribution they make to our economy, to our culture and to the vitality of this city. One of the reasons they like this city, if you ever talk to them, is that they love being part of the community. There are other campus

universities that are miles away from communities, they all live on the campus and they do not really know or get to understand the city. The strength of this city is that it has universities rooted right in the community where they often live with local residents.

I do think we have to be careful of what is being promoted in their name because, like other big cities, one of the big challenges for Leeds – there was an interesting article last week about retaining students here because they have got the qualifications, skills and intellectual capacity that can contribute to the economy of this city. If you look at cities that struggle because they do not retain the students – many students want to stay here, have families here and so on.

You are right, if you look back over the last 30-odd years some of us can remember the horrors of Headingley when the Ripper case was around. That left a huge shadow and fear for a lot of young people who were living there. We also had people in the city centre, the National Front used to occupy, I think Neil Taggart and Paul probably remember when they used to colonise all the pubs in the city centre. I think one of our ambitions to be a family friendly city includes making sure that people are not living in fear because people are promoting open violence (and I have seen the images) against young girls and rape culture in order to promote booze and their club.

I am pleased to hear and I look forward to the Licensing Committee taking a very rational and considered view about what should happen in future. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

ITEM 13 – BACK BENCH COMMUNITY CONCERN

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 13 is Councillor Harland.

COUNCILLOR HARLAND: Thank you, Lord Mayor. My Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, I would like to speak to you about the effects of the Peckfield Landfill Site on the lives of people in Micklefield.

The Peckfield landfill site is right on the doorstep of the residents of Micklefield in my Ward of Kippax and Methley. Over the years there have been persistent problems caused by disgusting odours that are the product of gas emissions from the site. Residents have complained time and again about these smells without getting what you could call a proper level of response to an issue so close to home for them. They have been waiting far too long for a resolution to these problems. They have had to live with unacceptable, offensive odours in their day to day lives which some residents believe have led to worrying health issues for themselves and for their children.

Residents have told me that you can almost taste the smell. One even said that living near the landfill was like living in a dustbin and I can tell you that, having been near enough to the site and these smells, it is not a pleasant experience by any stretch of the imagination. Residents are truly fed up, and rightly so.

Myself and fellow Councillors for Kippax and Methley have stressed to the Environment Agency in the strongest possible terms that local residents should not have to put up with this. The time has come to move on from the process of simply collecting complaints and reports; now we must see that proper action is taken to reach a solution for the local residents.

Action needs to be taken against Caird Peckfield, the company responsible for managing this site. Their website paints an idyllic picture of a restored site full of wild flowers and rare birds. In reality, though, it is a rather different picture. Residents are not so much concerned by the likelihood of a flourishing local swallow population as they are with the awful smells that they experience every day.

In August the Environment Agency ordered Caird Peckfield to resubmit their Odour Management Plan after their initial proposals were found to be inadequate. Work is currently in progress to install additional gas extraction wells at the top of the site. Although this work will lead to short term increase in odour emissions, the Environment Agency has made it clear that it expects this work to be completed in the shortest time possible. Yesterday a multi-agency taskforce attended the site and found many issues that need to be addressed. We shall be keeping a close eye on how things progress.

As Kippax and Methley Councillors we are committed to seeing that acceptable solutions are reached as quickly and as efficiently as possible for the people of Micklefield. Nobody wants to live in a dustbin and certainly the residents of Micklefield should not be made to feel that they do just because the company managing this site is dragging its feet when it comes to providing much needed solutions and fast. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis to comment.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. So soon after the tea break, do not worry, Council Members, I will not get too much into the detail about the fetid and rotten rubbish there is on this site.

What I do think is quite important to understand is three or four simple actions we think could be put in place to make sure that the site is properly run and the impact on local residents is minimised.

First of all there needs to be proper monitoring and scrutiny of the waste that is accepted on that site so that we know that the waste that is being delivered to that site and landfill is waste that is supposed to be there and not any other materials.

Secondly, that as the site is being worked on the waste is not left unnecessarily uncovered so that not only the smell is coming out but also in windy weather that litter is actually being blown round the area.

Thirdly, when elements of the site have been completed, the landfill process, that they are properly sealed and capped so that the rubbish is kept in place.

Fourthly, following on from that, that the landfill gas that is generated from rotting rubbish that is properly collected is actually gas that not only does collecting it remove the smells and odours from the area but it is also used for electricity generation by reducing greenhouse gases and generating electricity. It is one very, very small benefit that can come from a landfill site.

Again, I would echo what Councillor Harland says. We are quite often told that a well-managed landfill site should have no impact on people's health in the area and we are often told that this is, again, a site that nobody notices, it is very green, nobody notices. We know the impact it has on local residents, we know the complaints we get, we know the flurries of complaints we get when there is a particular problem there and we call on everybody to work together to bring the site back into a properly managed state. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dobson to respond.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I thank my colleagues in the neighbouring Ward to my own, in Kippax and Methley, for bringing this matter to Council's attention.

What is a good landfill site? It is one that keeps odours down to a minimum and ensures that waste is buried within what I would call an acceptable cycle, 24 hours. Clearly Caird Peckfield is not currently doing that. There are a whole range of issues relating to this site that cause great concern, the odours, of course, being the tip of a very large iceberg. How waste is actually put into landfill, buried, stored, covered over, layered are all essential to avoid leachates into the water table and the like and at this moment in time I am not confident that this particular organisation are running this site to an acceptable standard.

Yesterday there was a multi-agency swoop, I think you could call it, for want of a better expression, unannounced including West Yorkshire Trading Standards, HMRC, VOSA, West Yorkshire Police, our people and the Environment Agency and some of the practices that were discovered yesterday I will only go at this stage to say left something to be desired and they have to work collectively with these agencies to address this and fast.

There is a real problem with this particular site in terms of not just the environmental management in the here and the now but what happens if these issues do not get addressed quickly and are resolved quickly and, at some point in the future, the Environment Agency may think "This is intolerable, we will remove their permit." That would leave us with an untenable situation where we would have a site in Leeds not being used that has to be managed and the environmental damage addressed. Clearly we cannot have that situation.

The Environment Agency has actually stepped up to the mark on this one on this occasion. They went round the village yesterday knocking on doors informing people what they were doing and putting out this document. I have to thank the three Ward Members involved for really getting stuck into this and highlighting, let us face facts, what is a tricky issue and one that has implications for the Council. We use in the here and now, we use landfill; everybody knows I am not a fan of landfill and everybody knows what my preferred methods of waste disposal are, but we need municipal responses to these problems which, I hate to say it, like it or loathe it, an energy from waste facility will provide.

How can it be acceptable when the City Council collect the bin routes, take them to Peckfield or any other landfill site and they are buried in a reasonable period of time and yet yesterday waste was being deposited at Peckfield from Berwick on Tweed. How long has that waste been hanging about? What does it consist of when it gets to Leeds? How long has it been corrupted? Then it is put on top of a cell waiting to be buried. That is completely and utterly unacceptable.

I welcome the multi-agency approach, it is a serious and significant issue for this city and one that the Department working in partnership with others is absolutely committed to tackling. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

ITEM 14 – BACK BENCH COMMUNITY CONCERN

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 14, Councillor Cohen.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. In our recent Street Surgeries many challenges and issues were raised with my Ward colleagues and I, challenges and issues that I dare say will be familiar to many Members of this Chamber – pot holes and road improvements, grit bins, the request for lower speed limits on roads, the absence of a proper medical centre; the list quite rightly goes on.

One issue that came up again and again was that of orphan copses, meaning woods on land of unclear ownership that have sprung up quite literally all over the Ward.

I have lived in Alwoodley my whole life. I have always been very proud of the fact, I love the fact that we are a green and pleasant part of the city. It is something to be cherished, something that we should go to great lengths to protect. I would go as far as to say that I am as fond of trees as anyone in this Chamber except, perhaps, the Blackburns. I will be quite honest and say that until I had really focused on the issue of orphan copses I had not really realised the extent of the problem. It is literally a growing problem and a problem we do need a co-ordinated approach to deal with.

Over the years as developments have occurred trees have been planted, sometimes lone trees, sometimes small copses of trees, on land rarely in the ownership of Leeds City Council – the Buckstones, the Darkwoods, the Wentworths, the Kingfishers, the Ospreys, the Lintons, the Lingfields, right across Alwoodley just some of the trees and copses that are not clearly somebody's responsibility.

As time has marched inevitably on those trees and copses have become ownerless as developers whose land they were planted on have closed or moved or just no longer seem to be legally responsible for them, and therefore the question falls, who exactly has the responsibility for these trees because no-one is maintaining them and they are, of course, doing what trees are supposed to do and growing. I would suggest for the wellbeing of Leeds residents and to ensure property is protected, it is something that we as a Council should look to act upon.

In some cases trees have been growing without proper management for over 30 years (nearly as old as me) and they are becoming overgrown and a number are posing increasing problems for local residents. Overgrown trees can cut down on people's light, have a serious implication for structures that can be damaged by overhanging branches or undermined by root growth.

At a recent surgery a number of residents in the Saxtons complained that they lived in perpetual semi darkness with trees that are in desperate need of attention. They do not choose to live in Iceland, they want to live in Alwoodley and should not have to suffer like that.

These trees can, as we saw on the news just a few weeks ago, fortunately not in Leeds, go so far as to pose a real threat to people as they become prone to dropping branches or to falling altogether either through disease or through high wind. There is also the related issue, of course, of falling leaves in the autumn being a slip hazard for pedestrians, although accepted our locality teams do a great job of working on those.

I realise that where trees and woods clearly are in the ownership of Council we do have in place a management programme, albeit one that is in need of improvement and one that really could learn on how to better engage with local Ward Members. It is those trees that are not on clearly identified land that really pose the problem that are slipping through what is quite a seriously sized net.

It is easy to dismiss issues like this as the kind of issues that come with the territory of a leafy Ward like Alwoodley, but it is not an issue isolated to my Ward, it is a growing issue in many Wards across the city and it is one worth trying to get to grips with before it becomes too big a problem to easily deal with, before real damage is done to property and before real negative effects are had on our residents' wellbeing. Thank you, Lord Mayor, thank you, Council. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Buckley.

COUNCILLOR BUCKLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Some of the older Members amongst us will recall probably a 1962 film called Day of the Triffids...

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Bernard was in that one! *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR BUCKLEY: ...and in this film the trees and plants started to get bigger and bigger and uproot themselves and started to eat the animals and then eat the people. *(laughter)*

We have not reached that point yet but there are three important issues, as Councillor Cohen said. You have got the issue of safety, because some of these trees are getting very, very tall. You have the issue of light being deprived from gardens which comes into the whole issue of wellbeing because although in some respects this sounds a minor matter, it does blight people's lives when they cannot enjoy the sunshine in the summertime.

A lot of these trees are native British trees and so it is important that they are properly conserved and managed, silver birches in particular, but other very big trees like poplars and sycamores and so on are part of this whole problem of these developers who have now disappeared from 30, 40 years ago.

The final aspect to all this is, if we get some positive comments on this and some suggested ways forward, is there a way of getting people to come together and have community conservation of these trees and so on rather than just be left to be a permanent blight. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dobson to respond. Where do you start?

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Where does one start, indeed. I would like Council to perhaps remember about it must be a year ago now when a question was raised about how we handled ash dieback and one of the things that was said at the Council, it seemed to meet with approval of Members, is we are not going to simply look at every ash tree that might be diseased or could potentially cause a problem and lop it down, because we have a measured, managed programme of managing the city's tree stock, so even something as significant as ash dieback where it does not present a problem to life and limb and the public or is on a public highway, we take a very measured approach.

What we actually do in Leeds is we categorise the trees in four categories – ones that present high risk and need regular maintenance through to ones that do not and it is a four staged approach. Quite frankly, whilst it would be a great aspiration to do more tree management, simply the budget is not there and it is very, very unlikely to be forthcoming, even in better times, because simply we have a lot of stock of trees in the city and we do manage them on the basis of risk. In terms of safety I very much subscribe to what Councillor Buckley was saying that if a tree (any tree) and that is on Council owned property, private property where we would enforce against the owner, or unadopted property, we would take the measures to mitigate that risk, quite rightly, using our categories 1 to 4.

The idea of community conservation groups is one that always interests me and I am always keen to support. Whilst it would not probably be appropriate to look at land and go down the routes of CPOs and the like which are costly and time-consuming and fraught with legal challenge, if there are areas in Wards of unadopted land with these sort of trees that are basically left in literally no man's land, through Parks and Countryside we are always more than willing and able to help community groups set up and act to conserve various areas and that we would happily do.

Really on this one there are no easy answers other than if any Member of this Council, Alwoodley or anywhere else, were to point to a tree in any piece of land, as I say, unadopted or not, that was presenting a risk to the public it will be dealt with. It will be dealt with but it has to be dealt with in a proportionate and measured way.

Again, I am happy for officers to investigate the specific problems you have got in Alwoodley. I am hoping, because every tree of a mature age should have had that grading process already done and I am hoping you can give that information. If not, that is something I am happy to progress.

As I say, perhaps not the answer you were looking for on this one but we will always look at tree management in terms of safety first. Light, unfortunately, is not something we will take active management on the light issue, although I have it in my Ward often between two private landowners where the light from trees does become quite a significant issue and has a very detrimental effect on people's wellbeing.

We have to be proportionate and we have to be pragmatic about where we actually put the resources, and it is safety first. I am happy to work with Members to progress this.

ITEM 15 – BACK BENCH COMMUNITY CONCERN

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 15, Back Bench Community Concern in the name of Councillor Chapman.

COUNCILLOR CHAPMAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, I would like to speak about the play facilities in my Ward of Weetwood. I was surprised to see that whilst the child friendly Leeds Action Plan has a whole section devoted to sport, it makes only the smallest mention of the importance of play. It worries me as the benefits of play to the development of children is very well established. The benefits of providing children with the proper time and space to play are very varied and well documented. It helps increase self awareness and esteem, it improves their physical and mental wellbeing, it helps exercise and develop their imaginations and by providing opportunities to form and develop friendships with other children, it is a very important way in which children develop their social skills.

Given that we can hopefully all agree on these points, I hope you will also share my concern that the lack of play facilities in my own Ward of Weetwood is so poor. This may surprise some of you but it is a common misconception of the north-west of Leeds as a leafy suburban arcadia, its abundance of green space the envy of the rest of Leeds, but it is not a picture that holds true in Weetwood.

The recent North Housing Market Characteristics Report lays out details plainly. Play facilities in the Ward are found in just three sites – Tinshill Garth, the Silk Mills and Beckett's Park. There are just four play areas in total alongside the solitary skate park and a teen shelter.

This means that we have just 1.69 facilities per thousand children, well under the Council target provision of two facilities per one thousand. Neighbouring wards, on the other hand, fare much better with Headingley at 3.86, Kirkstall 2.45, Adel and Wharfedale 2.9 and Moor Town at 2.02.

It is important to remember that the outer ring road effectively splits the Ward. Children living north of it rarely venture south and vice versa. This means that in reality there are even fewer opportunities for most children than even the official statistics suggest.

It is not just the number of facilities that we are lacking. It is also the type of provision that needs to improve. We have no play equipment at all for disabled children in the Ward and I think that this is something the Council needs to urgently address by providing quality accessible play equipment that is fully integrated with play equipment for able bodied children. There are opportunities available that we need to seize if this situation is to improve. I am hopeful that we will be able to secure a trim trail in the southern end of the Ward in the near future.

I also think there is still a great potential to involve schools in this agenda. In many cases they have excellent facilities and they would be perfect for the community to use outside of school hours but I do not expect such negotiations with the schools to be necessarily an easy task to potentially benefit local children.

Lord Mayor, I know that, despite our differing political colours, Councillor Dobson and I share many of the same priorities for the children in Leeds and I hope that he values play as highly as I do. I therefore look forward to being able to engage constructively on this issue with him in the near future. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dobson to respond.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: I have gone all embarrassed now, Lord Mayor!
(laughter)

Thank you for raising this, Councillor Chapman. You are quite right, in my former role as Health Scrutiny Chair we often discussed the issue of sport and play provision for our young people and older people, as an important part of the Health and Wellbeing Strategy that was just in its infancy back then.

Looking at some of the statistics that I have been given regarding Weetwood Ward in particular and inner north-west, although they have actually bunched inner north-west as an area in terms of play provision, they have got it at 3.19 in terms of the per thousand children. I am not going to get massively hung up on that because it means nothing to me, frankly. What does is when I look at some of the facilities we have got there – Beckett's Park playground, the MUGA in the same location, skateboard, the playground at Silk Mills and at Tinshill Garth, but is it enough?

I always use the simple rule of thumb that nobody knows the areas better than the Ward Members and if you are saying that there is a need for extra provision in Weetwood, then that is something that Parks and Countryside will always look at.

The downside to that agenda, of course, is a simple one – who pays? There was the Playbuilder Funding Scheme that sadly got scuppered through the cuts, but I am aware, I will give you an example, in my Ward we often have engaged with Parks and Countryside who are really great facilitators – very good at putting grants together, very good at snaffling money from here, there and everywhere and very good at formulating schemes and getting good value.

In terms of using Ward based initiatives, Section 106, grant funding, I am more than happy to put my department at the disposal of any Member who has ambitions to deliver extra play provision or enhance and improve play provision in their Wards.

In terms of the disabled access for people who need perhaps equipment that covers all part of the community, I remember a few years ago preening myself, very proud that we had delivered this lovely idea for improved facilities at Glebelands in my Ward, until I took the phone call that said "You have done nothing to look at disabled." I was quite ashamed, actually, because we had wrapped ourselves up in the scheme and got overly involved in it and missed the obvious, missed what we should have been doing and as a result of that parent and resident pressure not only have we looked again at how we deliver schemes but we always have an eye on facilities that can be used and accessed by any member of the community. That is certainly something that in this day and age we simply do not take lightly.

Just to wrap this up, happy to work with the Weetwood Members or, indeed, any Member on improved play provision but in the here and now I see Parks as facilitators, as I say grabbers of funds and certainly people who can put very, very good bespoke schemes together, but more than happy to progress on that basis. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you.

ITEM 16 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – HS2

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now moving to the White Papers. We have three tonight, this evening, for debate. Each debate will last for no more than 30 minutes and will conclude with votes on the motion and any amendments.

Item 16, White Paper Motion, Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Lord Mayor, the reason for tabling this White Paper is extremely straightforward. Who would have thought that there would be such a hoo-ha now about whether or not HS2 as a project should be moved forward or drawn to a close?

When it was first mooted by the last Labour Government there was general support across the North of England from Councils of every political persuasion. We all went and lobbied like fury because the Labour Government was proposing a route to Birmingham followed by a route up the north-west to Manchester and then at some unspecified time some sort of link across the Pennines to Leeds – end of story. All the Councils from the north-east side of the North of England and the Midlands spoke as one saying, "No, you cannot do that because if it delivers the benefits that you, Lord Adonis, say it is going to do" (now he has started to change his mind, of course) "then it has to be fair and it has to deliver those benefits to all the North of England, all the major conurbations" and we lobbied and lobbied and lobbied and the Coalition Government announced the route as a 'Y' construction, meaning that they would simultaneously build the route from Birmingham to the north-west and the north-east.

Still general support and then as ever in this great country of ours, it started. One by one people who previously had been in favour expressed doubts, all the groups – visit the websites – that said HS1 would be a disaster are now bringing out the same arguments about HS2 despite the fact they had been proved wrong with

HS1 and all of a sudden a massive investment in the North of England suddenly is put into doubt, not made any better, I have to say, by the contortions of Mr Balls.

My fear is this. I think HS2 will happen. Do I think HS2 will definitely come to the north-east? Not if we go on like we are, ladies and gentlemen, and you could well finish up with HS2 that goes to Birmingham and I will tell you what, it will certainly go to Manchester because every Local Authority in the north-west, they have already, the Leaderships of all three major parties have already said, "No way are you going to abandon this, we want this high speed rail link through to Manchester." What is happening on our side? All sorts of people with second thoughts, it is too much money, always the cry.

Something else you want to look at is the history of the existing railways; have a look back at the sorts of arguments there were about when the Victorians were expanding our current and still fairly antiquated rail system. If there had been the sort of media we have now there would have been just the same hoo-ha going on about the railways we all take for granted. We would still be back with the horse and cart.

This is a once in a generation, once in a lifetime opportunity for big investment which will help the North of England. Let me say this, it is not just about cutting journey times from London to the North and vice versa. It is about increasing capacity on the existing system so you can transfer freight. More than 80% of freight that comes into the Hull and Humber ports is then put on to the roads because there is not capacity on the rail network and not enough is made of that. It was one of the major reasons, in fairness to Lord Adonis, that he began to promote the scheme and indeed that the Conservative Shadow Transport Secretary at the time, Theresa Villiers, adopted the scheme. It does not just reduce commuter travel times. It creates capacity on the system and brings investment to the north. We are missing a huge trick and my worry is that it will be our side of the Pennines that loses out unless we get our act together and we get our act together very quickly. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Latty.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Golton to move an amendment.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. HS2. If you had put forward the motion that the Conservatives have say a year ago, I think you would have had a very short debate and you would have had no problem with all three parties supporting something which is a very simple assertion put into words. Actually, we are a year on from that now and we have seen how HS2 Ltd operates on behalf of the Government in terms of delivering high speed rail to the North of England.

All parties in here I think – I am not sure about the Morley Independents, I have not asked them...

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Yes.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: ...all have complained in the past because the level of investment that the north got compared to the south-east was miniscule per head of population. We lobbied and lobbied, no matter which party you were in, to make sure that some of that investment came up north.

I have to say, our amendment recognises the fact that a lot of that lobbying has been heard and we have already got some investment on our Trans-Pennine route, we have got electrification and we have got commitment to the Northern Hub. HS2 is a response to that as well because it recognises that this country, if it is going to deliver the economic growth that it requires, especially after the recession that we have had, we need all of our core cities generating that wealth and that growth and those jobs and HS2 and the connectivity that it promises should have delivered that.

Unfortunately what happens when you have something which is in principle and then gets put on paper is that it becomes a reality to people along its route and that is why the Liberal Democrats have put forward an amendment here because the simplistic motion that Andrew Carter has put forward might have been relevant a year ago but it is not relevant now that we know how many of our citizens in Leeds would be affected by the proposed route as it stands.

They have been to this Council, they have had a deputation. They asked us to recognise this in our own Council policy and I will disagree with Andrew Carter. This Government has a commitment to deliver high speed rail. HS2 have put forward their proposals as to how that should take shape. That should not stop us as leaders of our community making sure that we can actually shape it to better form our needs and our requirements and we should not be shy about it, we should not be timid. We saw how that got us with our tram; we do not have one. We were told keep quiet, play the game, the Government will appreciate it and in the end they will end up giving you what you want. We did not get what we want, we got a trolleybus and look at the debate we have had in the Chamber today about that.

The way you get things that suit you is to speak loud and proud and Manchester did it with the tram system - when the Minister said that he did not have money for them they picketed him, they literally demonstrated against him, and what did they get? They got what they wanted.

All that the citizens in my Ward are asking for this Council to do is to actually say yes, we appreciate the investment, yes, we would like a high speed rail line but please take into account what we think would be preferable for us and that is an alternative route and that you guarantee now that those people affected by blight will get the compensation that they deserve. Unfortunately the Labour amendment does not deliver this but we appreciate the sentiment behind it which says that they would like it to happen.

For me, as a local Councillor, I do not feel I can personally support HS2 until those guarantees have been put in place because I feel that would be a dereliction of duty to my constituents. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Jonathan Bentley.

COUNCILLOR J BENTLEY: Formally second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis to move a second amendment.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. There is a huge amount to agree with in both what Andrew said and what Stewart said. I was scratching my head and thinking that actually Local Authorities this side of the Pennines are a bit like Germany before unification – they are so weak before they could never agree, which is why Bismarck was such a success. We all just scrap and we never have a unified view and we have, on the other side of the Pennines, Manchester, which is a kind of über Council, is it not, that they have all the advisers, they have all the expertise and they have that ability to recruit ex-Government advisers and whoever,

all the people who have all the connections, and they are able to play the system in the way that we are just complete amateurs in comparison with. There is a huge lesson there that I think we need to learn.

I think we do need to remind ourselves why HS2 is so important to us and it is hugely important to the city, both in selfish terms, because we will have a railway station on the south bank in an area of regeneration where it has the potential of producing 10,000 jobs, where there is 136 hectares of developable land where we will do incredibly well out of HS2 if and when it comes. There will be regional HQs there, national HQs, it will really change the city in a huge way.

It will also deliver improved Labour connectivity, improved business connectivity. The latest study I have seen says about 19.1% in terms of business connectivity for businesses in West Yorkshire. There is a huge prize there for us to win.

Should we commit ourselves to what Stewart is calling for, which is very specific and there is a very odd phrase in there which is that the Leader confirms his preference for routes. I do not think that is – there is a Council preference perhaps but I would have huge concerns, having dealt with HS2 Ltd, that we go down a route of saying yes, this is the route we want and we have spent ages arguing against the massed ranks of HS2 experts and they say “Yes, that is what you want, is it?” and we would not have thought through quite what damage that did to other parts of the Leeds Metropolitan District. At a certain point they would say “Oh, that is lovely, but...” and there would be a huge “but” as to why it could not be done.

I think at this stage we need to be thinking very much about how do we make this route the best for Leeds without committing ourselves to a specific route and saying this is the one we must have. How do we make HS2 work for us? How do we make it work as they did in the Chilterns in terms of getting it as far as possible tunnelised, as far as we can to get it put where there are huge embankments on either side so that the sound issue is minimised. If that does not do enough, how do we get the best compensation deal for our residents?

Without committing ourselves to something that is very specific and nailing our colours to the mast as you want, Stewart, I think we can argue very much for Leeds to do the best for its own residents. Thanks very much, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hardy.

COUNCILLOR HARDY: Formally second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Leadley.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, as with NGT and Supertram it is a matter of judgment as to whether a big ticket investment or in this case a stupendously enormous ticket investment will give value for money. It is not about resisting progress or throwing investment back in the face of national Government, whatever colour it might be. We are not against investment but where there is investment it must be beneficial and it must give a reasonable return.

Doubt has been cast on the wisdom of spending money on HS2 by one of the world's leading authorities on the unlimited accumulation of unmanageable debt, our very own Mr Ed Balls. When Mr Ed talks about lack of value for money, you do not need to have much horse sense to know that he might be on to something.

Supporters of HS2 speak in hushed tones of investing £50b. I asked at an earlier meeting of Council how many of them know how many noughts have to follow 50 to make 50 billion. How is it possible to write out what would be virtually an open cheque?

As a nation we are in danger of becoming enslaved to debt repayment. After working to keep ourselves barely alive, most of our income will go towards enormous investment repayments and to pay inflated energy bills. We are in danger of becoming a zombie nation scarcely able to service our debts and hugely indebted to the world's cashiers. I use the term "cashier" because "banker" has fallen into disrepute. Who are the cashiers who are counting the money at the end of each day's world trading? Those who spring to mind are the major oil exporting nations, Russian natural gas oligarchs, China and other manufacturing nations. They will be the ultimate beneficial investors in HS2 because we no longer make or produce very much; they are the world's cashiers and they need places to invest their money. They believe that we will not openly default in our debts or wilfully write them down by allowing our currency to inflate away to nothing. If we are to incur debt it must be for things which will be beneficial to us, not HS2.

There are more pressing needs. It is clear that the taxpayer will have to write off the debts of the National Health Service before it collapses into financial disarray brought about partly by the accumulation of unfavourable PFI contracts. We must build much more social housing, which is unlikely ever to be provided in significant amounts in the forms of crumbs falling from the tables of commercial house builders.

HS2 is like a superficially attractive Christmas present – it may bleed us dry of cash as surely there is a smaller train set would flatten its own batteries. Listen to Mr Ed. This is a gift horse which needs looking in the mouth.

Councillor Golton's references to planning blight inflicted on property owners in or close to the path of HS2 are valid though the suggestion that the blight should be shifted to another corridor in Leeds which happens to be in Ardsley and Robin Hood Ward rather than his own Rothwell seems rather less than gallant. If it is not acceptable in Rothwell you should vote against it. Let us vote against the motion and the amendments derived from it. Thank you, my Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Sit down and do nothing.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: It's living in Morley that makes you cynical.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am sure Councillor Leadley would bring back the horse and cart because I have never heard him say anything about that.

Let us be absolutely clear about this. As Andrew has said, this is a lifetime opportunity and to argue against the first railway to the North of England in over 100 years is literally insane. You will put this region back decades.

People have heard me say this before, 86% of our public expenditure in transport is spent in London and the south-east. As soon as you talk about investment in the North, while we have people like Councillor Leadley saying "Well, we cannot afford it", let me tell you, even if we spend £50b we will still spend £1,800 trillion after. I will tell you who likes the arguments of Councillor Leadley – Manchester, Birmingham and the Chancellor because if you are going to cut costs, why do you not cut costs from Birmingham to Yorkshire? Many of us, I think every

one of us would like to start the line from Leeds, go down, because you are then guaranteed.

To me it is an absolute no-brainer on the lines of the capacity is at breaking point now, never mind in 20 years' time. I think we should have started now to try and get it in a lot earlier than 2030.

I can never understand why they employed HS2 because they got off to a disastrous start. It is a Parliamentary driven thing, planning will go through Parliament. I am puzzled by HS2 because not only did they get the consultation wrong, I think they got some of the route wrong as well and if they had worked with the Local Authority at the start we could have been much better and more helpful about the way they could avoid blighting, but they did not. At long last they have got the right arguments. It is not about speed, it is not about vanity; it is about the east line suffering and straining because it is at full capacity. It is about economic impact.

Let me just say this, that actually if it is right 29% of the supply market, 10% of the labour market, I actually think the 15,000 jobs is true. Three things they have to do before you get it absolutely right. The route needs looking at, that is why you should not talk about compensation at this stage. Secondly, I do think if it is contracts for everyone then let us make sure that British companies get a hold of this. Leeds is the home of building engines and let us not let the Chinese and the French come in and take all the contracts. The third thing, it is about connectivity. It should not just be about a line going straight up there. It is about connecting the other regional and local train lines and, I would say, aviation. If we are ever to rival the Manchester airport, then we need a fast train into a modern new airport on this side of the Pennines.

I think the last thing I would say is we should look at strong regulation of fares. We do not want a fast line that people cannot afford but overall, let us grab this opportunity and strongly argue for the Northern Line to start from Leeds. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor James Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I wanted to speak in my three minutes about the body of the excellent amendment in the name of Richard Lewis and about the need not just to talk about HS2 which will arrive in 20 years' time, but to talk about the investment we need in the rail network before then. There is no point having an 80 minute train journey from London to Leeds if passengers then are having to transfer for a 45 minute train journey from Leeds to Halifax, only a couple of dozen or so miles across West Yorkshire. I think that is absolutely the right thing to do and why it is absolutely intrinsically linked into the White Paper that was submitted.

Railways, as the amendment refers to, are overcrowded in West Yorkshire. Why is that? Because they have been a tremendous success story. Passenger numbers on the railways have doubled since the late 1990s in West Yorkshire and that has been a great benefit to the travelling public but we have not seen the capacity there, we have not seen a good deal for the travelling public of West Yorkshire from the privatised railways.

At the moment the two local rail franchises, Northern and First TransPennine, they make £100m profit every year, yet they have never delivered extra trains, extra capacity and extra seats for those passengers that travel on West Yorkshire. We need to get a better deal for travellers in West Yorkshire.

We have seen considerable amounts of public investment in the rail network in West Yorkshire, whether that is extending station car parks, whether that is providing new stations like Glasshoughton, like Low Moor in Bradford, like Kirkstall Forge when it comes on stream, but again we have to see the benefits from that public investment coming back in investment, not just fattening the calf for the city investors in the private transport network. We need to get a better deal for travellers in West Yorkshire.

We are ambitious about what we think we can do for trains in West Yorkshire. We think we can have double the number of passengers, increased services, see continued electrification so trans-Pennine electrification is not just a one-off, you see other lines done as a successor to that, and also to have it better integrated with bus services, better integrated park and ride and cycling and other means of transport so we have a wholly integrated system. We want to see a better deal from, like I say, public investment that goes into improvements and the tens of millions of pounds we spend every year subsidising railways in West Yorkshire.

Just turning on to a little bit, in my last few moments, about how HS2 itself can support local rail services as well. High Speed Rail 1 – and we already have High Speed Rail in this country, it is not a novelty but unsurprisingly it runs through London and the south-east – carries not just long-distance services but also commuter services as well. We want to see HS2 built so it can provide local services, reduce the journey time from Leeds/Sheffield and provide better services to York, Nottingham, Birmingham, Newcastle, across the North of England. I think we want to see that right from the start in HS2 and not just see it as a project with little inclusion but London.

That is why the Labour Group tabled the amendment in the name of Richard Lewis and I encourage people to support that amendment and have a proper, holistic view of how we take things forward. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, I speak as a local Councillor for City and Hunslet. Firstly, I have not heard anyone on this side of the Chamber criticise HS2. We all welcome it. For Councillor Golton to suggest that people along the route be given compensation is premature. What we do need, as Councillor Richard Lewis says, is the best possible route and I am mindful that at the moment HS2 runs through City and Hunslet Ward.

I have to say that history may be repeating itself. Back in the 1960s the M1 came right across Hunslet Moor, cut it in half, divided the community, even Hunslet cemetery is separate from Hunslet because of the motorway. When the M621 came it went straight across Holbeck Moor, cutting the historic moor in half and dividing the community. Everybody in the Council at the time (and it was before my time) welcomed it. We needed the motorways and so we did. We were billed as the motorway city of the North. Obviously we cannot do without the motorways but there should have been much more careful planning at the time.

The current proposed terminal from HS2 is by Bridgewater Place and there is a high level link with the city station. This link whizzes past people's windows. That is not acceptable.

Because we are saying it is not acceptable does not mean that we are against the scheme. Manchester, who appear to be well ahead of the game, has insisted that the last 20 miles into Manchester be through a tunnel and that has been accepted. I am not saying that a tunnel is the right answer for Leeds but

nevertheless we should be laying down ground rules now whilst welcoming the scheme. We want the best possible route for all those constituents of mine and elsewhere in Leeds. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, I was listening closely to this debate and it is going to be worth watching back, I think, on this new wondrous webcasting that we have got. I do not mean my contribution, I mean the earlier contributions and in particular the comments of Councillor Richard Lewis which, frankly, beggared belief. Bear with me before you start hissing at me. The notion that we, a city one third larger than Manchester – one third larger than Manchester – should even mention a city the other side of the Pennines is, quite frankly, remarkable. Why should that city challenge anything that we do?

The really sad thing is, he is right. He is absolutely right. I find it astounding, absolutely astounding, and it is something that collectively we should address because that is how they go about it in Manchester.

Everybody knows, because we all say it privately to one another time and time again, that the principal Party Leaders get together, they hammer out the proposals, they bind in all their neighbouring Authorities and they all sing from the same hymn sheet all the time – all the time on the big strategic issues that matter to them, and the rest of us carp on about it. Is it not time that we got over it and moved forward?

Let us not kid ourselves, the City Region is not going to be the answer to that because we first of all need to agree here amongst ourselves. We need to get it straight and, as you can see here today, we have not.

Just think about this. Two major infrastructure projects we have been going on about for four years – four years – Supertram, then NGT and HS2. This Government has provided the money for it and I do not want to get into the arguments of are the routes the right ones or the wrong ones or any of that. The fact is that a Government (it happens to be this Government but a Government) had faith in the ask of this city and provided the money. All we are being seen to do is fall out about it. That cannot be right, Lord Mayor. Is there any wonder that Government would look elsewhere? That is something I think we need to address.

The second part of Councillor Lewis's amendment just beggars belief, Lord Mayor. He wants to renationalise the railways. *(Cheering)* Exactly – that just says it all, doesn't it? I am not sure that he has done the sums of how many millions or billions all of that would take. He has clearly got a very short memory for when Mick used to drive the trains.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Or not, as the case may be.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Or not. It might not be perfect now but my goodness it is a damn sight better than it ever was as British Rail. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Carter, it is your turn now.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Yes, my Lord Mayor. First of all, Councillor Golton referred to the motion as "simplistic". It referred to the investment HS2 will bring. It referred to the need to control the cost and it referred to the right route. It referred to everything in a paragraph. Unfortunately, it takes the Liberals twelve paragraphs where one will do and to be frank with you, his amendment is wholly

unacceptable because, as has already been pointed out, all he is doing is shifting the problem to somebody else and we do not know to whom. You cannot do that in a meeting like this. My motion covers your point, absolutely covers your point – the route needs examining, it does, and the people along it need protection, they need help, they need proper consultation and we all agree with that.

The principle is immense. Our children and our children's children will not forgive us if we end up with no high speed train to the north-east of England and the north-west gets it. They will indeed be right to say we all had our heads up the wrong end of a municipal drainpipe because that is about all we would be useful for. I get sick and tired of hearing the same people moan all the time when there is investment. As for Councillor Leadley, he goes on about the Health Service, the housing – you know in Government you have got to be able to think and chew gum at the same time. You cannot just concentrate on one issue, you have got to deal with a whole myriad of issues simultaneously and try and do the right thing for all.

In this Government we have had the biggest investment in the existing rail network for 100 years. Credit where credit is due – even Councillor Lyons says regularly at the ITA he cannot believe how much money this Government are putting into the rail network. The rail network is a success and I have to tell you, Richard, it is a success very largely because it is not run by British Rail any more. When Richard Lewis goes on about how they get together in Greater Manchester and then puts a paragraph at the end of his resolution which has got nothing to do with HS2 but makes it impossible to have an all-party resolution on HS2, Richard, you are either naïve or downright incompetent to have put a paragraph like that in there because what you have done is exactly what you have been accusing everybody else of doing – you have made it impossible for this Chamber to vote together on a resolution for HS2, and you have done it. A massive political mistake. They will be laughing all the way to the bank west of the Pennines. They fight like rats in a barrel over there over many things but they know what is in their collective interest and they get together and vote together when it is and you have just destroyed our chance of doing it. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I am now going to call for a vote and the first part is looking at the amendment in the name of Councillor Golton. *(A vote was taken)* That amendment falls. LOST

The second amendment, in the name of Councillor Lewis. *(A vote was taken)* CARRIED

Councillor Lewis's amendment now becomes the substantive motion and what I would like to do is vote on that. *(A vote was taken)* The motion is CARRIED in the name of Councillor Lewis.

ITEM 17 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – POST OFFICES

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 17, a White Paper Motion on Post Offices. Councillor Hyde to start.

COUNCILLOR HYDE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. My Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, I am going to speak on a motion about the privatisation of the Royal Mail, a historic institution of this country.

Colleagues in here should be alarmed by the breakneck speed of the Royal Mail privatisation which has thrown out a profitable public asset into the private

sector. We should be even more worried about the possibilities that the privatised Royal Mail might mean the end of the universal six day service.

Once privatised interests take hold we could see businesses vying for the most popular parts of the service, cherry picking profitable metropolitan areas and leaving rural areas behind.

Not only has the Government privatised the Queen's head but they have sold it for more than 80% less than it is really worth, and why? Not to get the best value for the taxpayer or to secure the universal services of small businesses and domestic customers. The Royal Mail has been sold by Mr Osborne so he can top up the Treasury to meet the short term targets that he has set, then failed to meet those with the cuts which we are all now affected by.

The haste with which the sale has been made and the under-valuation of the Royal Mail shares mean that taxpayers lost out of millions of pounds. What is worse, Mr Vince Cable has had the cheek to blame the Post Office workers for the low valuation because they considered striking to protect their pay and conditions in the face of competition driving wages down.

The Government has privatised the interests of private investors in Singapore and Dubai, many of whom seem to have windfall profits without concern for the long-term future of the service. To top it off, the City investors, with their shares in Royal Mail, will benefit from a Corporation Tax holiday. Taking even more money away from the taxpayer the Government has put private gains before the wishes of the general public and the Post Office workers. 70% of the British public were against the privatisation and yet they were not listened to by this Government. Postal workers in mail centres and delivery offices fear for their livelihoods once the guarantees they have been given expire after three years. They fear that the privatisation will ultimately lead to lower job security and the spread of zero hour contracts as the Royal Mail seeks to compete in private competition.

The Government says that the sale of the Royal Mail is necessary to assess the prime capital in order to grow and compete, yet the sale conditions do not guarantee that the profitable parcels arm of the company will not be sold off to the highest bidder.

In fact, putting Royal Mail in direct competition with the private companies will actually make it more difficult for it to build on its £411m profit that it has made this year, so it remains unclear as to how exactly the Government expects the public to benefit from a rushed sale.

That is not the only thing that has not been made clear to the public. We do not know how the privatisation will affect the links between the Royal Mail and the Post Offices in the centre of our communities. The current commercial agreement between Post Offices and the Royal Mail can be reviewed as early as 2017. Only Labour has pledged to extend this link beyond 2022. Nor is it clear whether the Government can guarantee that the prices will not rise for small businesses and domestic customers. The features of the universal service protected by the Post Office Services Act does not include the continuation of the first class mail and therefore the next day service. Again, Labour has promised to secure the universal services after 2015.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Hyde.

COUNCILLOR HYDE: Nearly finished, Lord Mayor – and the price of stamps from spiralling. Above all, it is not clear why the Government has chosen to sell a

successful and well-loved British company. Although the sale has already taken place we should support this White paper in order to make clear our concerns about the ill-conceived and ill-timed privatisation of the Royal Mail. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: I second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Campbell to move an amendment.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I initially say thank you to Councillor Hyde for him somewhat belatedly bringing forward this particular resolution. I think every other Labour Group on every other Council in the country responded weeks ago to the demand from the CWU contribution to Labour funds last year of £732,000 for a return on their investment, which was a resolution about privatisation. I can only assume it has taken so long in Leeds because it came second class. *(laughter)* Sorry about that one, Lord Mayor.

Obviously if you read the resolution the mover, with the best will in the world, does not understand the difference between Royal Mail and Post Office and it is patently obvious. Actually I think perhaps they do understand the difference between, and it is about attempting to scare people by threatening or pretending that things will happen that cannot possible happen.

Let us just have a look at part of the resolution. It talks about the possible closure of Post Offices. I think we on this side find it somewhat difficult to be lectured about Post Office closures, particularly when the previous Labour Government managed to close 7,000 of them – not seven, 7,000 Post Offices were closed under your administration, OK? Just bear that in mind.

I think it is fair to say that the current Coalition Government has actually effectively made a commitment to maintain the network. I will quote:

“The current Government has stated that in return for funding of £1.34b the Post Office Ltd must maintain a network of 11,500 branches.”

It is a commitment that says 99% of the UK population will live within three miles of a Post Office. Can you give that commitment? 90% of the UK population will be within one mile of a Post Office. Can you give that commitment? Quite frankly, the current Coalition Government has given that commitment. The only way it could be changed is with a change of Government and, with the best will in the world to the Welsh Nationalists, I think the only opportunity there might be for a change of Government is to a Labour Government. What you are actually saying to us is, “We cannot commit to this. We cannot guarantee the Post Office network.”

Let us just have a look about the six day service. What did the present Government do that the Labour Government, all Labour Governments have failed to do? That was to enshrine in law a six day service. It is enshrined in law. There is a commitment to that from the Conservatives, there is a commitment from the Liberal Democrats, there is a commitment from the Scottish Nationalists, there is a commitment from the Welsh Nationalists, there is a commitment from the Ulster Unionists, there is a commitment from the Greens, there is a commitment from Sinn Fein. The only people who could change that would be a new Government. That could only be a Labour Government, so this humbug of a resolution which talks about the six day service, which talks about closing Post Offices, the only people who have not and cannot and will not commit to maintaining the network and maintaining the

six day service is you. It is humbug and but in the end if you get £732,000 a year you need to pay that back some time and this is what that is about.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Chapman.

COUNCILLOR CHAPMAN: I formally second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lamb to move a second amendment.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I have to say I agree with virtually everything that Councillor Campbell said. Usually when a White Paper is put before you by one of the Opposition Parties you can find a line in there somewhere that you kind of half agree with but in a competitive field this has to be one of the most hypocritical, nonsensical and plain factually wrong White Papers that has ever been put down.

It starts off with Councillor Hyde noting with alarm the speed with which the privatisation of Royal Mail was implemented. It might have been quicker than it will take him to understand what actually happened, but it was started five years ago by Peter Mandelson under the last Labour Government, so I think five years is a relatively reasonable timescale to undertake something like this. He goes on to talk about the undervaluing of the organisation, undervaluing of assets. Who was it that sold the gold at rock bottom prices? Who was it, remind us – Gordon Brown. Look at them with their glum faces now. Who are they to talk to people about undervaluing assets. Jesus.

He goes on, Lord Mayor, “The rush to privatise the organisation has irreparably damaged industrial relations”. What did Peter Mandelson say about industrial relations? What did he say? Lord Mandelson. He said, “If we do not do this, privatise the Royal Mail, we are unlikely to cure what I think is one of its most serious diseases, which is the poor relationship and lack of trust between the management and the workforce. That really does have to change.” That was Lord Mandelson five years ago.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: From one of your own.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: He knew what was going to happen. Just like Councillor Campbell, he says they are concerned about the impact on Post Offices. He clearly does not understand the way this works. The Post Office and the Royal Mail are not the same thing, they are separate entities and your party, as Councillor Campbell quite rightly pointed out, closed 7,000 Post Offices on their watch.

Lord Mayor, he says about the worry about rural communities. I know many of their Members like to live in rural communities...

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Absolutely.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: ...many of them do.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Not many of them represent them.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: We are pleased to represent many of the Members opposite. (*laughter*) Of course, those communities have the good sense to choose us to represent them.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Absolutely.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: We understand rural communities and the need to protect them. This will actually help. The fact that the six day service is now enshrined in Statute for the first time actually helps rural communities. It is a much better position for our communities to be in.

Lord Mayor, if you listen and read Councillor Hyde's paper, it is as if the last 20 years never happened. It is as if Gordon Brown did not sell off the gold. It is as if they did not run up a huge national debt that has to be paid back. It is as if the email and the internet were not invented and the way that people post mail and interact with each other had never changed.

Lord Mayor, we live in a different world and the idea that the Royal Mail cannot change and should not change to catch up with that is just a complete fantasy land.

Lord Mayor, this is possibly the most ludicrous paper that I have ever seen before this Council Chamber. There is not a single word in it that can be supported and I would urge this Council (*interruption*) I would urge this Council – I will go on and repeat it again if you want, if you keep talking you will not hear it all. Perhaps if you stop and listen you might learn something...

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: I do not want to hear it.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: ...and you might start to understand what has actually happened. 7,000 Post Offices closed on your watch. Have you got it? Have you got it? I think you have now. Thank you very much.

Lord Mayor, this is ludicrous. Anyone who votes to support Councillor Hyde's paper will show what a complete nincompoop they are. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Cohen.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Truly delighted to formally second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dawson to comment.

COUNCILLOR DAWSON: Thank you. I think we need to be clear on this resolution on privatisation of the Royal Mail, that it has been done for political reasons. It has been done to a political timetable and it is one of the few things that the Tories and the Liberals can agree on. This Government is stagnating. The only thing it can agree on is the sale of Royal Mail.

They wanted to get it as far away from the next General Election as possible because it is incredibly unpopular.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: It was Mandelson's idea, man.

COUNCILLOR DAWSON: They also wanted the money in the Chancellor's budget in time for April, because he needs it.

Let us look at who is benefiting from this privatisation. Who benefits from this privatisation? Three organisations benefited immediately: UBS, Lazards and Goldman Sachs. They have been paid £18m as advisers...

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Postal workers as well.

COUNCILLOR DAWSON: ... for their expertise in understanding the correct timing and the pricing of the sale of Royal Mail. They recommended a price between £2.60 and £3.30. Lazards endorsed recommendations who were paid £1.5m to endorse that recommendation. That is nice work if you can get it, isn't it? £1.5m.

Vince Cable said the process comprised a combination of rigorous market testing and extensive analysis of comparable companies in the sector but these expert advisers got the price wrong and the timing wrong. Stock rose by 33% the day after and now it is 75%. What this means, an £18m reward for utter failure and incompetence.

Who else has benefited? Royal Mail executives. In 2009 they were paid £2.2m, the top three paid executives. Now, four years later, they are paid £3.3m. That means a 33% rise over the last four years in preparation for privatisation. When lots of workers have been struggling to get an increase they have had a 33% rise.

Let us look at who has lost out on privatisation. The taxpayer – a botched sell off, £2b has been lost to the taxpayer. Customers have lost. Over the last four years prices have increased on postage, 66%. We talk about rural customers. This has been mentioned. Mr Harris-Quinney of the Bow Group, a Conservative Think Tank, said "Privatisation would endanger the financial stability of the Post Office in rural areas by separating Royal Mail further from the 11,500 network that remains."

Employees will also be hurt by this - low wages, worse pensions, longer hours.

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: Gain.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Free shares. What is it, £5,000, £6,000 now worth of shares?

COUNCILLOR DAWSON: The Post Office has been around since 1635 and now it is part of George Osborne's give-away in the next budget. The Royal Mail is a public service, is a service to everyone. Now as a privatised service it will be responsible to its shareholders and it is simply there to deliver returns to its investors. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hamilton.

COUNCILLOR HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think my own view is that the Government should actually apologise in relation to this particular proposal. What have we had – we have had the bedroom tax, we have had reorganisation of the NHS, we have had freeing up schools from local control and now we have got privatising Royal Mail. Just some of the policies that the Government has continued from the previous Labour administration.

Lord Mayor, I cannot actually believe that you are even bringing this paper here today because there is one fact and one fact alone that I think we need to focus on and that is the 7,000 Post Office closures. How you can come here today and even discuss the issue of Royal Mail and the Post Office absolutely beggars belief.

I have got one suggestion and I am sure this will be supported by everyone – withdraw this White Paper; it is a disgrace. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lyons.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Thank you very much. I have sat here all afternoon and I have just heard a load of nonsense what you are coming out with.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Coming from your own side.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Let us go on record. The old guard that fought in the Crimea taught the horses to march and to ride towards the sound of the guns. You have not altered one bit hasn't the leadership, and as far as I am concerned, the Coalition Government are making mistake after mistake after mistake.

What did they do? They privatised the railways. What happens? They are chucking the keys in when they do not make millions of pounds or have skint the place. They chuck the keys in, they do not want the franchise any more. It drops to us. We pick it up and run it nationally and we show millions and millions of pounds profit. What do you do? You put it up for privatisation again. So we go on and on and on.

What happens? How much did you spend on Sid? Sid was the person that "Ask Sid" if you want to buy shares in electric and gas. How many hundreds of thousands of pounds did you spend? I listened to you come out with a load of nonsense (*laughter*) so you listen to me come out with some common sense. I have three minutes to get through this lot! As far as I am telling you now, you made a mess of the railways, you want to put it back to privatisation. You said no. We said right, nationalise it again.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: You are on TV you know, Mick.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Half of the Conservatives are agreeing with us. I have not even got on about gas and electric yet and poor old Sid. I have got you in a minute!

What happened? All this money went out of the industries. That is why we are discussing today four and five old people dying with no heating on. Why? Because you privatised the industries, that is why. No, do not shake your head, I know it is true and it is definitely true. You privatised all these industries. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR LAMB: This is about Post Offices.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: You are not learning. You are going on and on and on. What will happen – I know what will happen. What I am thinking of doing is calling Horsforth Yonderland because that is what you want – we will go to Yonderland because you do not want nowt there that makes common sense.

As far as I am concerned you made another mistake when you privatised Royal Mail. What is going to happen, who is going to pick the price is the old people and the poor that you think so much about. In years to come we want Pony Express to deliver bloody letters because unless it is there for a profit, you will not do it. I am not going to swear, Lord Mayor, because I said I would not swear.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: You are on the telly.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: The real face of Labour, everybody.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: What I really think is, honestly, you talk a White Paper down that you do not agree with. I did not agree with some of the stuff you said about students and then breaking your promise. We are not breaking no promises. What we are saying is you have made a mistake, your money is going out

of the industry and it is all coming back to Great Britain. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Red light – much as I am enjoying it, Lord Mayor, red light.

THE LORD MAYOR: Where were we up to? It is Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: As ever my timing is perfect.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Can we send a copy of that out to all the residents of Leeds, Lord Mayor?

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: I am going to take the Morley Borough line of politics on this one and simply I want to speak about the Post Office in Crossgates. I want to say how very much the people in Crossgates who were customers for the local Post Office want to keep their local Post Office in Crossgates.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Shadwell Post Office, Peter.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: It is a major facility which attracts a lot elderly people who are worried and who have told us in our surveys how worried they are if that Post Office would have to relocate because of privatisation and because of saving of money. We want the Post Office in Crossgates – I am sure I have your support.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: It is nothing to do with the motion, Peter.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: I interpret the White Paper the way I want to and the way I am interpreting it is that...

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: That is the rules of debate.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: ...I am going to speak up and fight for the Post Office in Crossgates. I think that is a reasonable attitude to take.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Procedure Rules, debate the motion.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: We do not want privatisation to mean longer journeys, less availability and less access for elderly people in Crossgates. We want to keep our Post Office where it is and that is what we are fighting for. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Peter. I think it is Councillor Robinson, is it not? It is the man on the back here.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am just going to begin by rebutting some of the things that Councillor Hyde said because he said that Royal Mail was sold for 80% less than it was actually worth. Actually if you look on the first day's sales, even by the most generous estimates it was around a quarter that they were saying was what it would have been extra, but we would never have found the investment for that. 80% is a figure that is totally out of proportion, it does not exist.

Secondly, Vince Cable blaming Post Office workers for the low cost and if we look back in 2008 it was the then Business Secretary Peter Mandelson who accused the Labour Back Benchers of shrill and damaging comments that risked investment by signing an Early Day Motion. Councillor Truswell, you may remember signing that Early Day Motion as well. (*laughter*)

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: Good for him. Well done.

COUNCILLOR HAMILTON: Councillor Campbell is correct, this is a scaremongering White paper that plays on people's fears. It plays on the fears of Post Office closures that will never happen. The administration are talking about renationalising the railways and I can already hear the strains of the Red Flag playing by the administration.

The current Shadow Business Secretary, Chuka Umunna, the Barack Obama wannabe, has already said that if the Royal Mail is privatised he will not renationalise it, there is no way he will do it. You want to talk to your own Parliamentary Labour party because that was what he has already said.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: So you have had it, basically.

COUNCILLOR HAMILTON: The Shadow Business Secretary has been very clear on this. He obviously did not get the Unite memo from the Communication Workers Union when they all decided they were going out on strike because he has actually refused to acknowledge that at all. In fact, what he has already gone on to say is that he has accused, like Councillor Hyde, the Coalition Government of underpricing and he has said that there could potentially have been a higher price. However, that higher price would have risked investment, it would have risked investment in that business and also it would have risked the shareholders that were looking out for their own business as well.

What we find ourselves in is a situation where we have a Shadow Business Secretary who actually knows nothing about business. The full-time staff of Royal Mail will have 725 shares which is £3,545 worth of shares and after three years they can sell that and in 2017 can sell the rest. Never mind Tell Sid – will somebody please tell Graham and please tell Mick that this is a good deal for people.

Sadly, we have talked about Post Offices – the Shadwell and Barwick Post Offices are still open but the Post Office in Scholes had to close down under the last Labour Government and they should try and remember that also for the next General Election.

Sadly, I cannot back Councillor Hyde in this White Paper. It is factually incorrect and I would urge people in this Chamber to vote for the amendment in the name of Councillor Lamb. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Downes.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think if we go back to our Party's manifesto it was our commitment and our pledge (*interruption*) that we would not close any Post Offices, we would learn the lesson from the previous Governments that have closed so many Post Offices in our community. As colleagues have said, over 7,000 Post Offices, 38% of the country's Post Offices were closed under Labour.

When I moved to Otley there were four Post Offices in Otley and there were three in Yeadon or nearabouts. There are now just two but there is a commitment from this Government to ensure that none of the 11,500 Post Offices will close; that number will stay the same.

This is absolute scaremongering. The Royal Mail is separate from the Post Office. There is the guarantee in place that the six day a week, one price delivery anywhere is guaranteed. That has to stay, that is now in law.

One of the other things that I would like to say is that the Post Office in Yeadon has just reopened having been completely refurbished and been modernised with extended opening hours to benefit the people of my community and that is something that has been done by this Government as part of a £1.34b investment in Post Offices. That is securing the future of Post Offices. Royal Mail was making just 4% profit which is half what Deutsche Post, for example, was making and it was right to sell it off.

I think this White Paper just does not make any sense. The staff get shares, they get benefits and it concerns me that the Labour Party do not seem to want people to actually get money because perhaps then they would not vote for them because they seem to be party of the poor and this gives people a bit of extra money.

We have also got to remember that the previous Government left this country in a lot of debt and this is one way of trying to redress that position and trying to get some money back into the Government coffers so that taxes do not have to be raised. Private individuals – it is interesting that those people that put in for the lowest bids got their bid. The people that perhaps were a little greedy and tried to get a bit more, did not. This Government has made sure that the people who need a little bit of extra help can get that extra help.

COUNCILLOR HYDE: Like the bedroom tax, that helped them so much.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Bedroom tax – let me see – Labour introduced that one, didn't they? Yes. For private tenants. You seem to conveniently forget that one as well. It is a disgrace.

Anyway, at least we have got a position now where the Post Office has got a secure future, unlike any scaremongering. Every Post Office is safe and I very much welcome that and I would hope that you would vote for the amendments and not the original White paper, which is just rubbish. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I am going to have to move on, I think, to Councillor Hyde to sum up.

COUNCILLOR HYDE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I thought I would liven the debate up a little bit this afternoon.

Firstly, Councillor Campbell, you are wrong, they can change it by Statutory Instrument in the House of Commons. It can be done and they can change it, they can break the pledges that were made.

By the way, is it right that they sell the shares for £3.30 but the next day they are £5.85?

COUNCILLOR LAMB: It is better than going the other way round.

COUNCILLOR HYDE: You have had your say. Overnight people made huge profits out of the public because they privatised it. It went from £3.30, which was the sale price, to £5.85 and a Tory sponsor made £18m profit because he invested £50m in the Royal Mail and made £18m overnight – a large funder. Just be careful of what you are saying because they are privatising it and it will affect people seriously, particularly the people that work in the Post Office who have given loyal service.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: They now own it.

COUNCILLOR HYDE: Do they own it?

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Yes, they have got shares.

COUNCILLOR HYDE: Anybody under £10,000 did not get a share. Go and look at the statistics and public records.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: We owned it before.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: We owned it before.

COUNCILLOR HYDE: We owned it before, you are right, Mick, actually, we owned it. Really, Lord Mayor, I think they are two amendments that are just the usual Tory and Liberal amendments that we get when they do not agree with something that they do not like, but it the share prices say everything. Lots of people have made lots of money out of a real public institution and that was supported by the public when 70% of the public say "Do not support it" and then the Government goes against it nationally, not locally, nationally.

The £1.34b that Councillor Downes is on about and Councillor Campbell, by the way, that was put out in 2010 and it is running out. 17% of Post Office masters – and you heard it earlier today when they brought a deputation which I did not know was coming in - said that 17% of people are in trouble in terms of it and they are worried about whether there was a good future in terms of privatisation. That is the Post Office people who actually do the service on the public counter.

Lord Mayor, I reject their two amendments. I just think it is the usual Tory/Liberal amendments that we get and I ask Council to support my White Paper, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Council, I am now going to call for the vote. I am going to call for a vote on the amendment in the name of Councillor Campbell first. *(A vote was taken)* That falls. LOST

The second amendment in the name of Councillor Lamb. *(A vote was taken)* I think that amendment falls. LOST

To the original motion now, the substantive motion proposed by Councillor Hyde. *(A vote was taken)* The motion is CARRIED.

ITEM 18 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – LEEDS CYCLE CITY

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I move on to Item 18, which is the White Paper under the name of Councillor Hamilton.

COUNCILLOR HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I hope this one is going to be a little bit calmer than the last one. We will see.

Lord Mayor, I am delighted to be able to move this White Paper. I do not think anyone can doubt that cycling is incredibly high profile at the moment. We have had the London Olympics, of course, we had Bradley Wiggins winning the Tour de France, we have even got some what you might call celebrity cyclists such as Boris

Johnson. I think all of this has helped in its own way to raise the profile of cycling and encourage more people to take it up, and I include myself in that.

I think here in Leeds we also have a lot to be proud of as well. We, of course, have our own Lizzie Armitstead who won a silver medal, we have the Brownlee Brothers who were, of course, in the triathlon and both brought back medals in cycling which is, of course, a key component of that particular event.

I suppose the real crowing glory in terms of Leeds as a city is the securing of the Tour de France. I think that was in many ways against all the odds and certainly against what was an establishment bid, if you like, that we came through. It is clear that the organisers appreciated the beauty of the Yorkshire Dales. I think they also recognised the ability of Leeds and the region to organise such a major event. I think also they appreciated there was actually genuine enthusiasm from people in Leeds and Yorkshire to host the event, so I think that is all really good.

Of course, Lord Mayor, none of this happens without investment – investment in our elite cyclists, so people like Bradley Wiggins and the people that take part in professional cycling all need investment; investment to actually mount a bid to host part of the Tour de France; the infrastructure which provides the facilities for our elite cyclists and also in terms of the Tour de France ensuring that our road surfaces are up to scratch so they will be suitable when the race comes through. These are all things that require investment.

In terms of what the spin offs are for these various events, I suspect it is quite hard to quantify but certainly I think we can all recognise that during the course of the Tour de France our local hotels will benefit hugely, restaurants will benefit hugely and also that the cameras will be focusing very much on Leeds and that must bring longer term benefits as well.

I think it will also give a further impetus, a further boost to people in this area thinking about taking up cycling, buying a bicycle and taking up cycling.

I think then the question is why should people actually cycle and I think there are probably a couple of things I wanted to focus on. I think certainly there are economic benefits, being quite hard nosed about it, to cycling and there have certainly been a couple of studies that I found on the internet in the US where they found companies that want to site new businesses often choose places with good cycling infrastructure. Also when you reduce car use you often find that people get from A to B much quicker.

I think the Council made a great start in the efforts that it is making to invest in terms of the Cycling Ambition Grant, I think that is really good news. The proposals for a cycling route along Meanwood Road are also very good and I think there are other examples of good practice in the city as well. Twenty mile an hour zones are really positive as well.

This White Paper is really about trying to establish that and cement that for the future. It is all very well having a strategy – and I am pleased to see, Richard, that one is coming forward – but I think we need to have allied to that a real plan about how we raise money.

This White Paper is saying yes, let us have a strategy, let us not see that gathering dust, let us actually have something in place in the long term that enables us to raise the money. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Bentley.

COUNCILLOR S BENTLEY: I formally second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis to move an amendment.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I did not disagree with anything that Martin said but I think that is because he did not get on to the bit about a figure per head for cycling because I think that is incredibly dangerous for us as a Local Authority at a time like this.

If you say right, we are going to spend ten quid per head, we have the problem of where is the funding going to come from, and we are clearly entering an era of what I call funny money where there is going to be money for cycling but it is going to be in the form of Cycling Ambition bids, which one year we may get it, the next year we may not, the year after we may be successful again. We could actually see our spending bouncing up and down dependent on our success on those bids because there would not be the mainstream money coming through to depend on because we will not have as much LTP money available, we will not have so much money of our own as a City Council to spend on this. The figure starts to become something that we would all end up arguing about rather than something that was meaningful.

The other fear to me is that it becomes an issue of definition. If you say it is £10 per head on cycling, how would you calculate the impact of, say, a bus lane which cyclists use? You can imagine people getting their calculator out and trying to come up with something that is meaningful and failing abysmally.

Let us not get hung up on a per head figure. Let us start thinking about what we need to do for cyclists.

We are doing a huge amount, as Martin said. The Cycling Ambition funding with the Cycling Superhighway from the East over to Bradford is going to make a huge impression on the city. Our core cycling network is improving year by year, as you mentioned the 20 mile an hour zones I think are a major contribution to what we are doing for cyclists, and we are having incredibly serious conversations over issues around cycling within the city centre and city centre cycling routes about where there is a potential for conflict between disabled users of the highway and cyclists and how we resolve all those problems that we have been working on for some considerable while.

A huge amount of good work is going. Clearly as a Local Authority in many ways you are always playing catch up because the opportunity that the Tour is presenting to us is absolutely huge. We know that cycling is going to increase exponentially and as we are bound to just be following on behind unless we are very careful, so let us not say here is a sum that we must spend, let us commit ourselves to cycling as being important for the city, cycling being important in terms of the health of people, in terms of the attractiveness of the city to everybody out there and let us make sure we are really committed to it as an activity.

The Cycling Strategy we will be coming up with shortly, I do not see that as being particularly a document that is precious just to us. I want it to be something that involves everybody and that everybody is contributing to. Let us make sure that we can ensure that the offer to cyclists in this city is improving year on year without saying here is a figure that we must stick to but being realistic about what we can achieve and making sure that Leeds is proud to be a cycling city for the future. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: I second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: It is Councillor Andrew Carter to move a second amendment.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you very much, Lord Mayor. I find myself on this occasion very much agreeing with Councillor Lewis. I really cannot see the point of an outbidding exercise going on as regards Cycling Ambition in the city. We will not vote for Councillor Lewis's amendment because, once again, there is a paragraph in there which is no doubt designed so we do not vote with him, but whoever we want to blame for the fact that Local Government has got less money, the simple fact is we have got less money and to start talking now about £10 a head, that is pushing £8m presumably annually. Even if it was just a one-off, when you think of all the other priorities – we already, because we have been very fortunate in getting the bid from the Government, £18m, we are already putting some money into that, as I understand it. We are making a very big commitment to cycling, quite rightly so. I think it raises a number of other issues along the way which will need to be addressed in the Cycling Strategy because in many places we are going to have cyclists competing with people who are walking. As somebody who does like to walk on the tow path of the Leeds-Liverpool Canal, in the summer it can be a pretty hair raising experience when cyclists come whizzing past you without even ringing a bell.

Nevertheless, there are those issues but we are absolutely supportive of this strategy and the Tour de France and everything that goes with it is going to really give cycling a huge lift in the city of Leeds. We absolutely support that.

However, I cannot believe it makes any sense whatever to start trying, the Liberal Democrats trying to outbid the Labour Party on who is going to spend more on promoting cycling in the city at a time when we all know some very, very difficult decisions are going to have to be made.

I have to say to you, Martin, I think a lot of people in the city would not thank you for trying to commit a great chunk of money when they know that the Library service, the Parks service, highway maintenance, footpath maintenance are all under pressure and there has to be a proper balance drawn here between the two, and I do not think we need to start making that sort of a commitment and I think it would be very financially foolhardy to do so. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Latty.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: Seconded, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harington.

COUNCILLOR HARINGTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. There is obviously a huge amount to agree with here. This is really, as everybody can see, an unprecedented time for cycling with some of the reasons that Martin has listed, in addition to the health benefits which John will talk about, CO₂ emission cutting and so on and so forth.

It is perhaps summed up in the fact that there was a Parliamentary cross-party report and a lot of excitement when so many MPs met together and debated the issue in Parliament and therefore correspondingly a big disappointment when actually the Government did not take up a lot of those suggestions, not least the £10 a head one. If you want to look at some of the disappointment expressed, if you look

at the Cycling Touring Club website you will see some of the disappointment that was expressed.

On the other hand, of course, we in Leeds have not got the right to be entirely depressed by it because, of course, we have benefited hugely with the Cycling City Ambition bid and that in fact gives us, as you may have seen, £18 a head, which is more than you are actually asking for. On the other hand, of course, it is just tied up with the bid and it is not for every city and so not everybody is benefiting.

I obviously support what Richard's motion is but at the same time we have to agree that if we are really going to transform the city we have still got to spend a lot more money than is going to come in through the Cycling City Ambition bid. If you want to get a sense of what a transformed city would look like, then I recommend the Leeds Cycling Campaign's website – a very good list of high quality infrastructure carefully maintained, good links with public transport, good support places where you can leave your bikes and so on and so forth, and also money for education. I will be the first to admit as a cyclist that a lot of cyclists are absolute idiots and you can understand pedestrians and motorists getting furious with them. On the other hand, as a cyclist, it is not quite as bad as the States. I was cycling across the States a few years ago and suddenly a half eaten bread roll hit me on the head with a voice from the car saying, "Get off the road you dumb ass cyclist." Things have improved a little bit in this country but there is still a long way to go. Everybody needs educating. I do not want to give you any ideas about what you might do when you pass me.
(laughter)

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Keep a bread roll handy!

COUNCILLOR HARINGTON: Would I be surprised?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Or in your case, a loaf.

COUNCILLOR HARINGTON: Yes, that is what I use to cycle. In conclusion, obviously it is not just a matter of what Local Government can do, it is a matter of what the National Government can do as well and admitting that with this Cycling City Ambition bid this Government has certainly done something, but I look forward to doing all I can to persuade the newly elected Labour Government in 2015 to do a lot more. Thank you very much. (Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Downes.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to start by saying a big congratulations to the newly appointed Children's Mayor, who was appointed last week. It is a pupil that goes to Rufford Park School, which is in my Ward and I am a Government there. She is in Year 6 and her name is Charlotte Williams. Her manifesto is centred around cycling so I think it is very appropriate that in a year where we are seeing the Tour de France coming to our city, we have a Children's Mayor with a manifesto for cycling.

I am not going to steal her thunder because she will be coming to this Council in January to read you out her manifesto and I would urge us all to try and do our best to achieve at least some of her manifesto.

Moving on from that, in Otley we have a great legacy. Martin has already mentioned Lizzie Armitstead who originates from there. I was at a meeting also last week where we were looking at a project called Olympic Chevin and that is the Olympic legacy for Otley and one of the things that we are trying to provide within

that is a cycle track. We are just at the start of the process so there are some very exciting times ahead.

I also spared you all my Lycra this time and Councillor Lewis over there did tweet saying that he was quite pleased that I was not in my Lycra today.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: I speak for Council, Ryk - I am speaking for Council.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: I know you are, James, I know you are. *(laughter)* It was last time that I wore my Lycra into Council, having cycled here, that I raised the issue of cycling.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: It was his long vest that got you going.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Richard Lewis said at that time that he would form an all-party working group to look into cycling and the future of cycling in Leeds and I welcome that. Sadly, so far, nothing has happened to that in that format and I would reiterate my call that I would like to work with all parties to try and secure a better future for Leeds cyclists and so if Richard is up for that, I would be more than happy to join him and others to work towards that goal. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. After energy consumption, the transport sector is the largest contributor of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions, with private motor vehicles accounting for 30% of the country's total emissions. If four out of five short journeys were made on foot, by bike or public transport, carbon emissions would be reduced by 7.7 million tonnes. Currently only 2% of trips in the UK are made by bike compared with Germany at 14%, Australia, Switzerland, Belgium between 5% and 9%. This is despite the fact that 43% of people own or have access to a bike in Britain, and 38% of people could just as easily cycle for short trips as use a car.

We need to get more people on their bikes and I am pleased that Leeds, with Bradford, was successful in the Cycle City Ambition grant, building further on Leeds hosting the Tour de France Grand Depart in 2014, which will result in many improvements for cyclists, but what happens once the Grand Depart has departed? We must build on the work done and continue to put in place more cycle lanes to encourage more cyclists on the road. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Illingworth.

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: Lord Mayor, walking and cycling are our best hope of raising physical activity in the general population and therefore our best hope of narrowing the health gap in Leeds.

There is no doubt about the health benefits from increased exercise. In contrast to changes in diet, where the evidence of benefit is equivocal, increased physical activity has been shown to benefit health and life expectancy in dozens of first class scientific and medical investigations right across the world.

The problem in Leeds is that our most seriously disadvantaged communities particularly lack recreational local space and recreational facilities. It is very difficult to pursue many kinds of physical activity in Beeston, in Burmantofts, in Burley, in Harehills or in New Wortley either because there is not the open space and lack of

parks and playing fields, or because the residents do not have the money to pay the entrance fees to sports halls and Council facilities or private facilities.

Lord Mayor, anybody can walk or get on a bike. It is relatively cheap and it is a thoroughly enjoyable activity. Take up in the UK is much lower than in most of continental Europe but quite a modest investment in cycling facilities could make this a much more attractive option.

Lord Mayor, NICE (the National Institute of Clinical Excellence) calculates that an investment of up to £20,000 in medical treatment is worthwhile to buy one QLY – one quality life year. A much smaller investment in cycling would buy a much bigger health benefit. Those benefits include improvements in cardiovascular disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, mental health and respiratory diseases, plus a reduction in air pollution with additional benefits to older residents and to low birth weight babies, if recent research is confirmed.

Plainly, Lord Mayor, we cannot spend money that we do have but a point that is often made in clinical debate is that physical activity is a much better investment than most of our drugs and most of our acute treatments in hospital and there is an enormous budget where there is the possibility of transfer.

In health terms quite simply, investment in walking and cycling is far and away, by a factor of at least ten, possibly hundreds, the best health investment in town. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mitchell.

COUNCILLOR MITCHELL: Lord Mayor, I am delighted to be speaking on the amendment in the name of Councillor Lewis in this White Paper. Members will probably appreciate that at least at the moment I cannot claim to be a regular cyclist. However, it must be clear to everyone that cycling is soaring in popularity across our city. From a Leisure and Skills perspective, cycling has the potential to improve access to both work and recreation. We have thankfully moved a long way on from the harsh instruction of a former Employment Secretary, but for journeys under three miles cycling has a great potential to connect people to jobs they might be unable to reach on foot or by public transport.

It is easy to ignore the principle of investing in cycling but without thought of where the money comes from the original motion is simply a platitude. Planning for long term funding is a great idea in theory but when we rely on short term project-specific funding and we are faced with repeated cuts to Local Council funding, it would be irresponsible of this Council to commit ourselves to increasing funding in the long term without a clear idea of where that funding is coming from.

In his original motion Councillor Hamilton refers to the “Get Britain Cycling” report prepared by the all party Parliamentary Group on cycling. I will just read a short section from that report:

“Above all, we need a bold vision from Government that puts people first. We need those strolling the corridors of Westminster, throughout Whitehall Departments, in the Town Halls around the UK, to recognise the powerful case for a substantial investment in cycling and the huge benefits that it will deliver for our town and countryside alike.”

Having read the recommendations of the report, it is difficult to see how the original motion squares with them. Where is the bold vision from Government?

Where is the recognition of the powerful case for a substantial investment in cycling? Within the report there are 18 recommendations, yet the motion hangs on one particular interpretation of one and the creation of a cycling budget of at least £10 per person per year, increasing to £20, should be the sole responsibility of this Council? This motion makes no mention of the other necessary and supporting recommendations such as the recommendation that in addition to the Local Authority, Department of Transport and other departments where cycling contributes to their aims should fund spending on cycling from their budgets.

In this Town Hall we recognise the powerful case for investment in cycling and I endorse the overall recommendations of the report but it is not a menu of options that we can pick and choose from, which is why I am pleased to support Councillor Lewis's amendment. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hamilton, would you like to sum up?

COUNCILLOR HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It will be difficult to do justice to all the comments that have been made but I will certainly comment on a couple of them.

I think there is general agreement that the current positive climate that we have in terms of cycling is really good and something we need to build on, and I am pleased that that has been reflected in all the comments that have been made.

In terms of what I was trying to do with this motion, I was quite careful how I worded it that I was not actually calling for us to commit absolutely to spend £10 per head now or in the next two years or whatever, but simply to say that that is our aim over a period of time and the period of time may have to be quite a long period of time.

I think we have to recognise that the period of austerity will come to an end at some stage and we will have more money to spend, let us hope.

I think also John made an interesting point about the health benefits of cycling and the fact that investment in cycling in itself can save money. I think in a sense that was the logical conclusion of what we were saying. Actually, you put some money in but actually you potentially save more by doing that.

In terms of actual spend, you will probably all groan because this has been mentioned before by us but we have in the last two budgets proposed as part of our amendment reducing the mileage allowance from 65p to 45p. Nowhere else outside of Local Authorities do you get 65p a mile for your car if you are driving on business and reducing it from 65 to 45 would raise around about half a million pounds. That could be invested in cycling infrastructure in promoting cycling. That is something that we proposed the last two or three years and has never been taken up by the administration, so maybe the opportunity next year is for you to actually take that on board. Many other Authorities have now done this so it is something that is tried and tested and can be done, and use that money specifically for cycling measures.

I suggest that as an option and I hope that is something that you will consider and take up on this occasion.

I will just finish with a story. I was in Copenhagen earlier on in the year and this chap whizzed past me, quite an old chap, and he was the absolute spitting image of Bernard Atha. It may have been you! I thought, if Bernard starts taking up cycling then maybe that is a sign that we are actually making some progress.

Finally, Lord Mayor, I just wanted to mention that at the end of September, I do not know if you know, I got married and my wife actually decided to be a bit different and she cycled to the wedding. She cycled along the canal from Calverley to the Town Hall. Cheaper than hiring a car! She wanted to do it – I drove, she cycled! I have to say, it was the proudest and happiest moment of my life, Lord Mayor, but all the more so because Helen cycled to the wedding. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you for that. Looking at the time I am now going to call for the vote. I am going to start with the amendment in the name of Councillor Richard Lewis. *(A vote was taken)* That amendment is CARRIED.

The second amendment in the name of Councillor Carter. *(A vote was taken)* That amendment fails. LOST

I am taking the final vote on the substantive motion, that of Councillor Lewis. *(A vote was taken)* That motion by Councillor Lewis is CARRIED.

That brings us to the end of today's business. Let me thank you all for your commitment and your contributions and good night.

(The meeting closed at 7.42pm)