

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Held on

Wednesday, 14th January 2015

At

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
CIVIC HALL,
LEEDS

In the Chair:

THE LORD MAYOR
(COUNCILLOR D CONGREVE)

VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

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VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL
MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 14th JANUARY 2015

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon everybody and welcome to today's Council. I advise Members that the meeting is to be webcast. Could I ask Members to switch off their mobile phones or put them on silent when they are in the Chamber?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE LORD MAYOR: I would like to offer my congratulations to Councillor Judith Chapman who has been nominated by the Liberal Democrat Group to be the next Lord Mayor of Leeds, the 122nd. (*Applause*) Congratulations.

Congratulations to the following, who were honoured in the Queen's New Year's Honours List:

Sir John Townsley
Francis Hester, OBE
Keith Loudon, OBE
Sharon White, OBE
Ronald Pilkington, MBE
Janet Smith, MBE
Peter Alan Smith, MBE
Jeffrey Utley, MBE
Clive Cowell, BEM
Brenda Swithenbank, BEM
Jonathan Vogler, BEM.

It is with deep regret that I have to inform you of the recent death of Mr Leslie Howard Silver, OBE, who passed away on Monday 29th December 2014, aged 89. Mr Silver combined being Leeds United Chairman with a role on the Board of Governors of what was Leeds Polytechnic in 1988. Mr Silver served as first Chancellor of Leeds Metropolitan University from 1999 to 2005. He was, as many of you will know, Chairman of Leeds United for over 30 years and led the club to victory when they won the League Championship in 1992.

I also regret to inform you of the recent death of Mrs Sheila Walker, former Lady Mayoress, who passed away in Pinderfields Hospital. Sheila's funeral service is to be held on Thursday, 22nd January, 10.30am, at Rothwell Parish Church, followed by a private cremation at Cottingley. Following this there will be a reception at Salute, which is next door to the church, to which all Members are invited to attend.

I would also like to offer my sympathy to all nations affected by the terrible events of terrorism recently, in particularly the killing of 132 innocent children and nine staff at a school in Peshawar in December, the atrocities in Nigeria and the killing of 17 people in Paris last week.

As a city that promotes diversity, tolerance and peace, I would like to call on all Members to join me in expressing their sympathy and support. Can I ask you to stand for one minute's silence, please.

(Silent tribute)

THE LORD MAYOR: Could I also ask you to bear with me this afternoon, my voice is a little bit hoarse, I have had a bit of a lurgy over the New Year.

ITEM 1 – MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD 12th NOVEMBER 2014

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we move on to the Minutes of the meeting held on 12th November. Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, I move that the Minutes be approved.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Latty.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

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

ITEM 2 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 2, Declarations of Interest. Do we have any declarations of interest? None.

ITEM 3 - COMMUNICATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 3, Communications. Chief Executive. There are no communications.

ITEM 4 – DEPUTATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 4 is Deputations. Chief Executive.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Yes, to report that there are four Deputations, Lord Mayor: first, Leeds Children's Mayor regarding the winning manifesto – have fun, Play safe; second, Friends of Inkwell Gardens; third, Meanwood Valley Partnership regarding traffic management issues in Meanwood; and four, Leeds Debt Forum regarding Debt Awareness Week.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Nash.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Latty.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

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

Can we have the first Deputations, please?

DEPUTATION ONE - LEEDS CHILDREN'S MAYOR
REGARDING THE WINNING MANIFESTO – HAVE FUN, PLAY SAFE

THE LORD MAYOR: Amy Eckworth-Jones is the Children's Mayor and is a pupil at Strawberry Fields Primary School, Garforth. Can we all give her a big welcome. *(Applause)*

Good afternoon, Amy, 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.

AMY ECKWORTH-JONES: Hello. My name is Amy Eckworth-Jones and I am from Strawberry Fields Primary School. I am here with my friends Isobel and Tallulah.

Have Fun and Play Safe. If I was Children's Mayor of Leeds I would create a social club or a safe area where kids could play games and hang out with their friends instead of being in danger on the roads with all the cars. There would be one of these areas, or a park, local to schools and homes so after school children can go and do whatever they want. There would be a secret supervisor that made sure that the park is kept under control. I know that many children want to feel like they are trusted and do not want it to feel like a military school. I promise that there will be something for everyone. If it was only a safe area (no park) then I would invest in some skipping ropes and other playground toys to play with.

Every two months there would be a fundraiser where people could donate things and we would have a sale. The money that we raise will go towards equipment and things that will make the club better. We could, if we raised enough money, maybe buy a canopy and do some art and creative projects.

Obviously teenagers would not want to do the same activities as the younger children, so we would have different sections. Furthermore, if there was an emergency the secret supervisor would be on hand to solve any problems, a little like play leaders in our school. This person will sort out improvements and feedback at meetings.

There will be a meeting every two weeks for the children to discuss how things are doing. In addition to the children coming who want to come, the parents of the children can come too. During this meeting we will need to hear children's innermost feelings.

I hope you can see how much I want this and that I can make a difference to Leeds. We can make Leeds a better place for everyone. Let's build the Leeds future together. Thank you for listening.

(Standing ovation)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, I move that the matter be referred to the Director of Environment and Neighbourhoods for consideration in consultation with the relevant Executive Member.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

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

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

The second Deputation, please, Friends of Inkwell Gardens.

DEPUTATION TWO – FRIENDS OF INKWEEL GARDENS

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

MR J PARKER: Hello. I am joined by Kerry Murphy, Beverley Winfield and Lucy Marle. Good afternoon, my name is Jonathan Parker and I am here today to represent the Friends of Inkwell.

Inkwell is a safe, creative and accessible space in Chapel Allerton. It is a place where passion and skills entwine, challenging the stigma of mental health and celebrating the diversity of its participants. It seeks to engage, stimulate and absorb all abilities to creative activity. There is a threat to this facility, hence I am here to make this deputation.

There is a proposal to build flats in the garden which is used by members of Inkwell and the local community. The response to this threat is truly reflective of the divergent and extensive values of this site to the local community and mental health service users. Loss of the garden would not only be hugely detrimental in terms of social, environmental and communal value, but poses a solid threat to the continuation of services within the building in a realistic and functional way.

Inkwell came into being five years ago. Leeds MIND have refurbished the building and garden with the support of the Council, who paid for the removal of broken play equipment at the onset. Public money in the form of grants has been used to develop the facilities, in addition to the work of the volunteers. The Council funded Adult Social Care Referral classes have successfully engaged isolated and chronically ill people for over four years. The garden has been transformed into a safe, useable and productive space, extending on its former use as a local pub garden.

One of the big concerns for local residents and Inkwell users is that the loss of this green space would ostensibly be garden grabbing. Gardens were reclassified as green space in 2010 in a bid to protect the character of neighbourhoods to avoid robbing cities of vital green space which act as the lungs to the cities. Green areas, for example gardens, also aid in limiting flooding, they provide cooling during periods of hot weather and are vital wildlife habitats. All of this is especially important in urban areas such as this. There is a well used walking route which is maintained by the

local community which meets the criteria for a right of way. An application is pending to make this an official right of way.

As well as providing this for the local community the garden at Inkwell helps to promote an active lifestyle; skills acquisition encourages meaningful occupation of time and is a safe environment sensitive to the people with mental health needs supported by staff trained in mental health.

People who experience mental distress, anxiety, low confidence, poor motivation, paranoia or social problems are often unable to access green spaces in our city without support from a care provider or agency. The interactions between service users and the local community in the building and garden increase community cohesion, challenge the stigma of mental illness and provide a practical way of improving wellbeing.

The positive effects of green space on mental health and wellbeing is well documented in medical literature and the garden is highly valued by both service users and the local community. The garden has become an integral part of Inkwell's services and strategy, for example in providing social skills for future employment and a more engaged citizen; enabling and facilitating community engagement; promoting social cohesion to tackle isolation.

The space has historically had an element of community use and is valued by the local community as such. If this space is removed it would be impossible to regain this facility in the future.

Sustainability and income generation: the garden is fundamental to this at many levels including large and small events, outdoor workshops, food production, plus the aesthetic and practical value of the garden to the café and functions.

We recognise that the Council and NHS cannot fully fund the range of services that Inkwell offers. Increased financial sustainability is beneficial to Inkwell and to society. Without the garden Inkwell would struggle to maintain these services. Making any alteration to this space would have a definite and severe impact on the use of the building and the ability to continue in its current functions.

The main space/café, ceramics room, sewing room, office, and some of the studios only have natural light from the windows overlooking the garden. Any loss of this light would be impact on light levels for artistic work, the attractiveness and profitability of the main space as a café and venue, and on the cost of lighting.

Inkwell has become a much appreciated space and is used by many different groups and residents as evidenced by the number of members on our Facebook page – almost 500 – and signatures on my petition – that is almost 840.

Many community events are held in the garden, for example May Day and Bonfire Night – very popular and always sold out in advance. The café is open to the public every Saturday and is very busy. The previous use of the space as a pub garden had a negative effect on the community and local residents whose properties directly surround the garden, and this has now been completely reversed into a much loved and valued space.

I would like to thank the Members of the Council for listening to our deputation today. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, I move that the Deputation speech be referred to the Director of City Development for consideration in consultation with the relevant Executive Member.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I 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 consideration which your comments will receive. Good afternoon and thank you. *(Applause)*

DEPUTATION THREE – MEANWOOD VALLEY PARTNERSHIP REGARDING TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ISSUES IN MEANWOOD

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

MR C SHEARD: Lord Mayor, respected Councillors, ladies and gentleman. We represent Meanwood Valley Partnership, an organisation that exists to preserve, protect and enhance the unique Meanwood Valley, providing six public meetings per year. I am Christopher Martin Sheard, Chairman and a resident of Meanwood for twelve years. My colleague is Norman Ramsden, many years' resident and well known and active in support of Meanwood issues.

Our concern is what we see as perhaps the well-intentioned but *ad hoc* treatment of general Meanwood issues and the type of responses to problems which exist and develop.

The junction of Green Road, Stonegate Road and Monkbridge Road is problematic enough even without the difficulties of falling within two wards. Referencing the exciting and well known development in Poynton, we asked traffic management how they intended 106 works to fit into such a plan. We were advised a scheme similar to Poynton was prohibitively expensive in this location and would be unlikely to receive your support. While we accept the difficult prevailing financial circumstances, we would suggest that further piecemeal unsympathetic remedies in this area is inappropriate. While we accept a wide-scale Poynton style development is presently out of the question, we feel the underlying concepts are sound, appropriate to a vibrant healthy developing suburb and we ask for such appropriate consideration to be given.

We request the Council to:

Advise traffic management of your pleasure that they are to engage with us to look at traffic matters generally, review the Section 106 proposals, perhaps developing a base line plan which looks to the future of the developing district of Meanwood;

To instruct Section 106 moneys be expended to fit in with the structure of that plan to properly deal with and address matters arising as a consequence of the Waitrose development;

Further, to fund any shortfall that may arise between expediting that part of the plan which will deal with present matters arising from the Waitrose development and the Section 106 moneys available.

Meanwood is a district which has previously lacked a coherent voice with a few notable exceptions, and here I thank Councillors Charlwood, Hamilton and Sobel, together with other previous inspired local individuals, for their support to date of Meanwood.

Of relevance to full council is the issue of straddling ward boundaries with the political and administrative burdens arising. As an example, a Christmas light switch on in central Meanwood in Moortown ward was well organised and well attended. On attendance some lights were already on on one side of the street, but not the other. This was embarrassing bordering on a fiasco and caused as Weetwood ward opted to turn their lights on at a different time. The result was detrimental to Meanwood residents on both sides of the border.

There is a firm desire for Meanwood to have a defined rational boundary and identity. We ask the Council to find ways to put communities before bureaucracy. Can we not have all of Meanwood united under one Community Committee focusing on citizens' needs and aspirations not purely ease of Council administration?

These we believe are appropriate first steps in reinstating the status of Meanwood as a viable district of Leeds in its own right, a recognised important part of an important northern city. We understand ward boundary reviews should start in 2016 and we ask for the support of all parties to join Meanwood in a single electoral ward.

We believe this deputation is supportable and thank you for hearing us. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, I move that the matter be referred to the Director of City Development for consideration in consultation with the relevant Executive Member.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can Members show their support for this Deputation? (*A vote was taken*) That is CARRIED.

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

DEPUTATION FOUR – LEEDS DEBT FORUM REGARDING
DEBT AWARENESS WEEK

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.

MS S SIMPSON: Thank you. Good afternoon Lord Mayor, and my fellow Councillors. My name is Sylvia Simpson. I am speaking today on behalf of the Joint Debt Forum, representing East Leeds Debt Forum today. I have with me Norah Gibson from the West Leeds Debt Forum and Joanne Rogers representing the South Leeds Debt Forum today.

The Debt Forums in West, East and South Leeds were set up in response to concern about those caught up in debt and the consequences of debt, such as stress and the associated health-related conditions, family break up, self-harm, suicide, substance abuse, other wellbeing issues.

The Forums have campaigned extensively and effectively around these issues, in addition to signposting advisory services to a significant extent, have been a contributing factor to the identification and prosecution of loan sharks and to the increasing membership of credit unions. The Forums are now recognised locally and nationally as a valuable local resource, having been approached frequently not only by local press, such as television and radio, but also by Channel 4 and BBC television.

Debt-related problems are increasing and are not confined to the lowest paid. Mr and Mrs Average are also affected. Problems are now peaking following the Christmas spend, but an increase throughout 2015 is expected as the effects of benefit changes, food and utility costs and zero hour contracts continue to be felt and the coping strategies of the lower paid are stretched beyond their limit. Debt Advisory Services will also be affected.

The Forums are currently preparing an Action Plan in response, not only to support the available Advisory Services but also to help in preventing debt problems reaching crisis point. This plan builds on successful interventions and focuses on creating awareness in neighbourhoods and on the streets. We are working for a money-wise Neighbourhood Alert. A key component within this plan is the role of the very successful Money Buddy programme, initiated through Ebor Gardens Advice Centre.

The work of the Forums at local level complements the initiatives of Leeds City Council at a high level – initiatives such as the Take a Stand Campaign against high cost lending and the Money Information Centre. The Forums have had excellent support from Leeds City Council through both physical presence of Councillors at meetings and events through supporting campaigns to open meetings and Forum Members, including the very successful Money Buddies Scheme at Ebor Gardens Advice Centre, and the Leeds City Credit Union.

The enabling environment provided through the Leeds City Council is envied elsewhere. Following our 2014 Annual Open Meeting of the United Debt Forums, when Councillor Peter Gruen was a key speaker, participants from outside Leeds included on their evaluation forms, "I'd like to move to Leeds!"

Our action plan is our aim to promote the health and wellbeing of vulnerable groups through sounder money management. Our objectives are:

- Raise awareness of dangers of loan sharks and where to go for help. The recent action to limit the amount of total interest payable to high street lenders is very welcome but there is the associated risk that financially excluded people in crisis will go to local illegal moneylenders. The campaign against illegal loan sharks must be continued.
- Develop recognition of signs of money-related stress. Identify, sensitise and support local organisations and selected residents, street money-buddies, who are locked into their neighbourhood, trusted by their neighbours and who can, with training, spot changes in behaviour that might indicate financial stress.
- Promote affordable sources of credit, highlighting the credit unions. Leeds City Credit Union has a loan shop. This is to be promoted. Bramley Credit Union in the West and St Gregory's Credit Union in the East also are to be promoted. Raising awareness of local sources of help for family money matters, budgeting and emergencies. Increased use of social media, development of the website, frequently updated flyers available to tenants and Residents' Associations, frontline workers, libraries and all other local outlets.
- Developing a Neighbourhood Alert Money Aware scheme. Money buddies themselves and local residents identified by them to be local sources of information to act as signposts to help identify those who might be under financial stress, to organise local self-help awareness mornings and events, for example, for information sharing and problem solving. Local Tenants' and Residents' Associations skills, children's centres and other local organisations will be briefed through Consultation for Action events and other promotional events.

There is a draft budget at the back of this speech for your perusal, merely focusing on equipment that we need. The next Joint Annual Debt Forum event will take place early June in 2015 and the date and venue is to be confirmed. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, I move that the matter be referred to the Assistant Chief Executive Citizens and Communities for consideration in consultation with the relevant Executive Member.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I 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 consideration which your comments will receive. Good afternoon and thank you. *(Applause)*

ITEM 5 – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD – NATURAL
RESOURCES & WASTE LOCAL PLAN – SUBMISSION OF POLICIES
MINERALS 13 AND 14

THE LORD MAYOR: We now move to Item 5, which is Recommendations of the Executive Board, the Natural Resources and Waste Local Plan. Councillor Gruen.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, I second.

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

ITEM 6 – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD – LOCAL
COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2015/16

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 6 is Recommendations of the Executive Board, Local Council Tax Support Scheme for 2015/16. Councillor Wakefield.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: I second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Just to make a few comments on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and to pay tribute to Steve Carey and his team who have done a great job under very difficult circumstances.

When the Council Tax Reduction Scheme replaced Council Tax Benefit a lot of us had our doubts that it was fair and reasonable, and I still have those particular doubts. It really is unacceptable to suggest that the poorest in our communities should be making a contribution to Council Tax when they are already under a lot of pressure with a lot of other expenditure, and certainly if you are a single person and you are on £72 a week if you are signing on, then how you find the money to pay for this, potentially pay for the bedroom tax, is beyond me. It is unfair, it is unreasonable.

It is interesting to note that we do not seem to have, in this period running up to a General Election, any suggestions from any of the main political parties that are likely to get rid of this particular scheme. It is unfair, it is unreasonable, it ultimately costs the Council money because the revenue stream starts to be impacted upon by the Council Tax Reduction Scheme. The sooner somebody stands up and has the spine to say this is unacceptable and is prepared to put in their manifesto that it ought to be cancelled and the old scheme reinstated, the better. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor James McKenna

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on the same Minute that Robert was just speaking on and I echo much of what he has said.

For the past financial year this administration has put £471,000 into funding towards extending the Council Tax Reduction Scheme in order to protect the most vulnerable people in Leeds, many of them living in Armley and the inner city areas but also there are hard pressed families in Wetherby, Guiseley, Otley and many other places, so I think we should be all singing the same tune on this one.

There are people in our community who are struggling the most from financial hardship. This includes single parents, as Robert has said, with children under five, carers, war widows, war pensioners and those who live in a household who get severe or enhanced disability premium – in other words, people we should be strongly supporting to help them to make ends meet, survive and look after their family.

I am absolutely delighted that we have been able to find some money for this, for without this scheme that the administration has introduced these people would have to pay at least 25% of their Council Tax. That would be on top of other pressures these households are already facing. Unacceptable burden. I really think that this is the one thing we should be coming in strong on.

Leeds is one of the only Authorities in the country who have made this money available. At a time when we have had huge budgetary reductions in our resources and had to make many cutbacks, we have somehow found the money to continue to support this. I think it is a great credit to us all and I am sure that Members on all sides of the Benches will support that. Robert Finnigan's example is certainly indicating that we do.

At the end of the day it is quite right that no Government has said that they will come in and abolish this and I think we would all like to see us put pressure on our Government, whatever happens after the election, when we get back to real politics in this place and other places, that these people are just too hard pressed to have to make these sacrifices. It affects us, we feel guilty about putting unnecessary charges on. We have five foodbanks in Armley and we were able in Armley to put some money in, my two colleagues, myself, Alice and Alison, were able to put £2,000 for the Christmas foodbank from our Wellbeing fund. This is the type of thing that none of us, none of us of any age in this place, had expected to see. They are issues that belong to the 1930s that our grandparents have told us about and to be going down this road in the first 15 years of the 21st Century is actually a disgrace to all political parties. We should all be ashamed of the Government that is bringing this forward.

I wish we could have done more but it is a great credit to you for doing this and I hope that it is fully supported and we will take the action as Councillor Finnigan and myself have recommended. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield to sum up.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think both contributions are very welcome. I think Councillor McKenna reflects the task and challenges that Councillors Lowe and Smart have with him and that is in places like Armley there are 5,000 people on some form of benefit; many of those are working. When you get

benefits and people struggling you also get loan sharks and you have got, as you said, four or five loan sharks, white furniture, those kind of pawnbrokers, all those people that exploit vulnerable people.

As we know, this is right across the city. I think we have got about 60 so the support that we have given, which Robert has mentioned and this Council does, is absolutely vital and we do have hubs, we do have the DEPs, we do support the consortium and partnership with DEP, we support CAB, we do a whole range of things. I think that is right, as Councillor McKenna said, because I think that is what you call a moral responsibility for politicians. You always look, as well, at what Central Government does in this and one of the things that I think we would expect, which we have done from base one, is Central Government to play a role and responsibility in helping and assisting people who are struggling financially.

I have to say, just before Christmas the funds that moved from the DWP to Local Government were under threat and from 2013 what we call the Local Welfare Support Scheme was moved from the DWP down to Local Government so we could help people when they are struggling with fuel bills, food bills, white furniture, homelessness, the disabled, people with mental health. Sadly, just before Christmas Chris Hopkins, the Government Minister, actually indicated that there was money only to find there was no money in that system. The Government has cut that support that was vital to hundreds and thousands of people and, frankly, as Councillor McKenna said, this is not about economics, this is not about deficit; this is about punishing people who are poor and I am pleased that this administration, as it will prove in the next Council debate, is still doing everything it can to make sure that we give support in discretionary housing benefit, in local welfare systems, in advice with work and skills and so on, so that we do not turn our back on those people who need it, unlike what this Government has done in the last four or five years. I move, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

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

ITEM 7 – REPORT ON THE CALCULATION OF THE COUNCIL TAX AND BUSINESS RATES TAX BASES FOR 2015/16

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 7 is the Report on the calculation of the Council Tax and Business Rates Tax Bases for 2015/16. Councillor Wakefield.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, I second.

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

ITEM 8 – REPORT ON THE INNER WEST COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 8 is the Report on the Inner West Community Committee. Councillor Caroline Gruen.

COUNCILLOR C GRUEN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Nearing the completion of my second year as Chair of the committee and having experienced the old way of working and then the new, I would like to use my contribution to reflect on the impact of this important transition.

Firstly, I would like to formally welcome Kirkstall into the Inner West Community Committee, and I thank Kirkstall Members for their patience, support and forbearance over the period of transition. Kirkstall has brought a breadth of community issues to the Inner West mix, not least increasing the size of the group by three additional Members, now bringing our total to nine, has increased our capacity to manage the business of the committee and I believe has made us more fit for purpose in this respect.

Secondly, I think the new structure has brought about a much more local geographical focus to our work. There is a clear expectation in the Inner West for all information presented to the committee to be relevant and tailored to specific locations and community groups. The Strategic Neighbourhood Improvement Board, set up to add impetus and rigour to the improvement process has, amongst many achievements, resulted in the production of data information localised to four specific estates, now to become six to include Kirkstall. This has increased our understanding about the levels of employment, education attainment, income, health and crime on these streets – a very different picture from the whole ward or area perspective and allowing for bespoke and targeted interventions.

Thirdly, the deployment of services delegated to the committee, which now include Youth, Environment and Wellbeing, have undoubtedly resulted in a more localised provision responsive to the specific communities in our area. We have increasingly sought to combine what residents say they want with our obligation to fulfil our overall objectives – that is to increase employment, improve educational attainment and health, particularly mental health and childhood obesity, improve and extend our provision of parks and green spaces, reduce domestic violence and reduce debt, regenerate our district centres and increase the voice and influence of children and young people in the work that we do.

Finally, I believe that the new themed meetings have increased community engagement. The more informal approach to an interactive task and discussion based meeting, rather than the more formal answer and response to lengthy officer reports, has yielded more ownership, creativity and involvement from professionals, Members and the community. This has been further enhanced by a drive to reduce bureaucracy through clearer, shorter jargon-free reports which can be read and understood by all. We have recently done away with the conventional format completely, included illustrative images and a simple accessible front page.

That said, I am aware that we must not lose the Scrutiny element of the Community Committee and to that end there will be more opportunities for questioning and challenging information at future meetings.

I believe an excellent start has been made to developing a new, innovative way of working with our communities and I am indebted to all of my colleague Members in the Inner West for their hard work and commitment to the reshaping and the future of our area. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Venner.

COUNCILLOR VENNER: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Smart.

COUNCILLOR SMART: My Lord Mayor, I will be speaking on the Inner West Community Committee paper which highlights our ongoing work to effectively engage with young people.

There is a common misconception that young people are not interested in politics. It is not the case that young people do not want to be involved in politics or local decision making. What young people want, and something we often fail to do, is to make politics relevant to them. This is what we as a Community Committee and as local Councillors have a duty to ensure.

According to a recent Ipsos MORI poll, 63% of 11-18 year olds believe the way people vote makes a difference. Despite not having a vote, it is clear from these figures that young people know that elections are important and that local councils have the power to make a positive difference. Young people have a whole range of positive ideas about how their communities can be improved and they can add so much when they get involved locally.

In October, the Inner West held a special Community Committee meeting focused around the theme of engaging and increasing the influence of young people, where we invited a number of young people from youth groups across Armley, Bramley and Kirkstall. This meeting was a real success and it was brilliant hearing directly from young people what they do and do not like about their area and how they thought we could better engage with children and young people. The overwhelming feeling from the young people we spoke to was that if we were going to engage with them on local issues, we needed to connect with them in the groups and spaces where they are already engaging, rather than expecting them to show up to extra meetings for our benefit alone.

The same Ipsos MORI poll found that 86% of young people had engaged in their community in some way in a twelve month period, which shows that an interest to be involved in their local community is clearly there. An overwhelming majority of young people are active in their local area, so it is only right that we find ways for their voices to be heard.

This is why the Inner West Community Committee has resolved to create a Children and Young People's Board to actively seek out the views and opinions of young people and encourage their involvement. To improve how we interact with children and young people we need to look at a whole host of things, including holding events at times which suit them and modernising how we communicate online. We do not expect that this will be an easy task and myself and my Inner West colleagues will be keen to hear from other Councillors across the city about the successes and challenges you faced when trying to formally involve young people in your Community Committee.

This financial year the Inner West Community Committee has allocated over £43,000 to youth activity fund projects, tailored for what young people want to see. Some of the things we have spent this money on include supporting the New Wortley Community Centre performing arts clubs, for many of the participants highlighted how much they enjoyed these sessions and how much their confidence had grown as a result of them.

We also gave just over £3,000 to Christ Church Youth Project to run a number of summer trips and activities, including visits to Chester Zoo, kayaking in York, plus in-house activities at our base in Armley, including tournaments, film showings and a drop-in play session.

We have supported a lot of successful projects for young people to engage in over the past year. The next step for us is establishing a Children and Young People's Board so that young people in Armley, Bramley and Kirkstall can have their say when it comes to how the Youth Activity Fund is spent as well as feeding into other discussions, so that when we are making decisions locally we do not ignore the voices of our young people. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ritchie.

COUNCILLOR RITCHIE: Lord Mayor, I wish to speak about an aspect of the Inner West Community Committee Report, namely the work of the Environment sub-group which I have the pleasure of chairing.

Firstly, I would like to thank the officers, elected Members and community co-optees who have supported the meetings. They have demonstrated a commitment to pushing the environmental agenda which can have a massive impact on our residents' health and wellbeing.

At the first meeting I set the challenge for the sub-group to have a positive and visible impact on the area and not become a talking shop only. The meetings are structured around a number of standing agenda items: firstly, a locality report, where the performance of the service is intensely scrutinised; secondly, a housing report in relation to environmental work undertaken and future proposals; thirdly, a Parks and Countryside regular update. Also, co-optees are given the opportunity to raise any specific concerns from their patch for officers to deal with.

Alongside these, other topics are brought to the table to introduce specific projects which aim to tackle some of the issues which blight our area. Already we have targeted environmental hotspots in each ward and pushed for locality resource to be prioritised to improve matters. For example, in the Stanningley area, where an action plan was drawn up in conjunction with officers, Members and residents, there is a marked improvement as a result.

We looked at forestry tree management and established the scope for residents to self-fund low priority maintenance requests through an approved contractor subject to their proposals being acceptable to our Tree Officers.

The progress of the Leeds Neighbourhood Approach was analysed. This is a scheme of partnership work in the Armley area which aims to tackle empty properties and

issues with private landlords. The group will continue to monitor the effectiveness of this scheme.

Alongside this, Leeds Empties have been approached to see how their excellent work can provide maximum benefit for the Inner West. Future items include proposals to introduce a dog watch scheme in Kirkstall, similar to the Garforth pilot, to tackle the problem of dog fouling. Challenges ahead include the need to improve recycling rates on particular estates in the area and a continuous battle against a minority of residents who continue to flout the law by littering and fly tipping. This can be achieved by a combination of education and effective enforcement action.

We have made a good start; we have much more to do to make Inner West the best.
(*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Caroline Gruen to sum up.

COUNCILLOR C GRUEN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to thank Councillors Ritchie and Smart for their contributions and for the leading work they are doing in chairing the sub-committees for the Environment and for Children and Young People.

Councillor Ritchie has and is making a measurable difference in his role as Community Champion to the quality of our neighbourhoods, and Councillor Smart, your understanding of and empathy with the young generation sets a real example in the Inner West.

The Community Champions in the Inner West have developed their roles in a very visible and prominent way, supporting the planning and leading of relevant Community Committee themes, undertaking active work in the community and providing a high level lead for the Inner West.

In this respect I should also like to thank Councillor Jim McKenna for the innovative and forceful work that he has done on getting young people into work in the Inner West, as well as across the city; Councillor Lowe, for the command and knowledge with which she embraces the Health and Wellbeing agenda; and Councillor Venner for her dynamic campaigning in support of vulnerable adults. The high level of ambitions and expectations brought to the Committee through Councillor Illingworth's passion for the Kirkstall Valley Green Space Project have also been much appreciated.

Much has been achieved in the Inner West but there are challenges which lie ahead. We still have difficulty in attracting sufficient members of the public to get involved; although great strides have been made we have yet to refine our approaches to engaging with children and young people and we really do need to reach the hearts and minds of those people living on the estates which we now know so much more about.

I should also particularly like to thank Councillor Hanley as a very experienced ex-Chair for being a great support in developing my personal role as a Chair and I am very, very grateful for that. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

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

ITEM 9 – REPORT ON THE INNER SOUTH COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 9 is Report on the Inner South Community Committee, Councillor Gabriel.

COUNCILLOR GABRIEL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. While I was getting ready for this speech today I was reflecting on when I first became a Councillor in 1996 and how the Council was run then. When I first joined it was all committee based, you went into rooms, the Chairs of the committees had all the power, everybody just concentrated on that particular interest. Then the Government suggested ways of changing and Keith Wakefield took up the mantle and brought in CITs, as they were known then, in 2000. Those were very small based groups, there were two Council wards for each group, we had very small delegation and we did not actually do very much work in changing the communities.

Then, in 2004, the Area Committees came into being and it has always been my privilege to Chair the Inner South. This was a way of looking more outwardly from the Council and looking at the community rather than not being able to welcome them in.

Although many Council officers did not actually buy into Area Committees and we always ended up with lots of reports that were tick-box processes for the Council, this is now changing. We also gave small grants, which were lifelines to small community groups. Some groups having as little as £200 could actually stop that group from going under and we tried to do lots of community clean-ups and we actually ring-fenced money between all our wards for skips and processes like that. We also, over the years of Area Committee, did lots of work and invested over £300,000 in young people's activities varying from trips out, free swims to young journalists and cooks, so we did lots of good work.

Actually, we had no real discussion on how the Council was progressing and although we were often well attended, we were not actually what I call very successful.

Then, since Peter Gruen has taken over the role of Community Committees with the help of James Rogers, we have changed the way we work completely. I do feel now that Council officers are buying into the process of Community Committees and I feel that we can now start making a difference with our communities. Our meetings are now totally different, as everybody says we now are focused on individual issues. We have done domestic violence, which was led by Adam Ogilvie; we did Youth Services which was actually led by myself because I am the Children's Champion for that; the next one we are doing is about employment which my colleague Kim Groves will be on.

What we have been trying to do is look at different ways of engaging with people because I think that is the best way we can talk to the community. I have to say personally I have been on Facebook and a video of myself inviting people to the meeting was looked at by over 500 people. If I had known I was going I would have put some make-up on! *(laughter)* I have to thank Martin Dean for that one.

Also, we have now personal letters go from me to every community leader inviting them to our committee. When we are out and about we are always talking to all our residents, encouraging them to come to our events, and also personal invites. One of our main concerns is transport. We always have our Community Committees in the community but with South Leeds, trying to get from Middleton to Beeston or from Hunslet to Middleton is very hard. Leeds City transport buses get us all to the city centre but not to each other, so that is one of the things that we need to overcome in the future. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Gabriel. Councillor Iqbal.

COUNCILLOR IQBAL: I formally second, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Groves.

COUNCILLOR GROVES: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am going to report on the Inner South Community Committee in my capacity of the Chair of the Employment and Skills Board.

We started an Employment and Skills Board over 18 months ago with Lead Officers from Employment and Skills, Economic Development, Citizen's and Communities. We meet every eight weeks with partners who deliver an outcome based plan.

The Inner South has the highest number of unemployed people in the city and that is really disappointing because, despite there being 2,400 businesses in the Inner South employing 66,000 people, we still have many people unemployed.

We decided to take a helicopter view and find out exactly what we needed to do to get our people back into work. We had lost industries of engineering, printing, just recently Tetley's and Waddingtons, and when the Aire Valley corridor came along, it did regenerate an area but it did not actually take the people who lived around that area with it.

With this in mind the helicopter view of what was being delivered in our wards looked at how people access services and we listened to what people were telling us, that they went to the Job Centre but it simply was not enough. They needed more help and support to get back to work.

With this in mind, the Community Committee decided that we needed four new destinations for people to be supported into work alongside the DWP, who are doing a good job but it just was not enough.

We now have the Hunslet library, St George's Centre at Middleton, The Point at the White Rose Centre and the Dewsbury One Stop Shop all provide services round unemployment. We are looking for a fifth destination because Beeston and Holbeck desperately need this type of hub.

We knew that we had to get the opportunities out there. There were jobs there but we simply were not getting the marketing and communication right, so we set about a social media network event and I am pleased to say that our campaign on unemployment is working. It is networked right throughout our south-east

community like we have thrown a fishing net over the Inner South and people, residents, are engaging, community groups are engaging and it does actually work.

People say it is just not all about digital so we actually set up the old-fashioned job boards within our hubs. We have had three successful recruitment events with our officers leading, where 1,200 people came to Asda, 750 people at the White Rose Centre and recently we joined up with our Outer South colleagues to hold an apprenticeship event at the John Charles Stadium, where 300 young people turned up.

THE LORD MAYOR: Red light, Councillor Groves.

COUNCILLOR GROVES: All right. I would like to finish on what this has brought to our communities and I have actually taken out what the Council has done.

THE LORD MAYOR: I am sorry, Councillor Groves.

COUNCILLOR GROVES: Can I just share this? No.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Davey.

COUNCILLOR DAVEY: Following on from Councillor Groves's comments on Item 9, I was pleased to see at the last meeting of the Inner South Community Committee that the Members considered the extension of the After School Vocational Training Programme in all three Outer South wards.

It is vital that young people get an early experience of working life and that they get a chance to experience different types of work. The After School Vocational Programme offers children aged 14 to 17 the opportunity to participate in vocational training in a range of different professions, such as the building industry, hairdressing, mechanics and beauty therapy.

The 48 students who were selected for this training are young people who have an interest in and are more likely to excel in vocational subjects rather than academic subjects. Academic subjects and the further study of them through the Sixth Form and University is not for everyone. Indeed, I myself left school when I was 16. It is important that the young people have the opportunity and option to pursue other avenues of learning in addition to the school curriculum.

This After School Vocational Training will give young people an insight and valuable training in professions that interest them and a helping hand into these professions, should they decide that is what they ultimately want to do. An additional outcome of this project is that it engages with local businesses to be able to offer apprenticeship or work placement positions to young people who complete the course.

This is a really positive outcome for the people who take part in the course, as not only will they get training but they will also get to put that training into practice and gain invaluable work experience.

Local businesses are also gaining the benefit of being able to take on willing and enthusiastic young people. This is a great example of the Community Committees in action and providing opportunities for young people. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Davey.

I am aware of a constant conversation going down to my left here which makes it difficult for other Members of Council to hear the speakers. I will not name the culprit this time but I will next time. I have named them before but if you want to have private conversations, please leave the Chamber and have them and come back in for the voting. If you want to speak on a paper, then get your name down and speak on it but do not have private conversations while other Members are speaking. *(Applause)*

Councillor Gabriel.

COUNCILLOR GABRIEL: Thank you, Lord Mayor, and I will have to remember those comments when you return to the Community Committee in the future! *(laughter and applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: You know I am a one-off!

COUNCILLOR GABRIEL: And you know that I will not forget, Lord Mayor!

THE LORD MAYOR: They are interrupting you as well, Councillor Gabriel.

COUNCILLOR GABRIEL: Summing up, I have not got much to say, just to say thank you everybody for their contribution. I know Councillor Groves is very keen and inspirational about her work and employment and just wanted me to say that she had actually, in the Jobs and Skills Workshop she has done, she has actually got 939 people from Middleton Ward back into work, City and Hunslet Ward 870 and Beeston and Holbeck 514 so that is her speech finished! *(Applause)*

I would also like to thank all the colleagues who help and support us: Paul Truswell for all his work that he does on Health and Wellbeing, and Environmental and Community is my colleague Adam Ogilvie, Children and Young people is me but if anybody else would like to do it they are more than welcome, and Adult Social Care is Judith Blake. We had a very interesting meeting yesterday with lots of people from the Neighbourhood Network and I think that group is actually going to take off very well, so I would like to thank officers as well, because without officer support we could not do the role we are in now. Thank you all very much. *(Applause)*

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

ITEM 10 – REPORT ON THE INNER NORTH WEST COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

THE LORD MAYOR: We move on to Item 10, the Report on the Inner North West Community Committee. Councillor Akhtar.

COUNCILLOR AKHTAR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would also like to update the Council on the North West Inner Area Committee.

Thanks to the changes which saw the old Area Committee replaced with the Community Committee, I can certainly say that they have added a new lease of life to the local decision making. The changes have refocused the committee and encouraged the Members who sit on them to think differently about how they serve the people.

Among the broad range of projects supported by the Inner West Community Committee is out of hours noise service, which has operated successfully, particularly in the area populated by our student population. We have also supported the local older people group OWLS to deliver a door-to-door weekly shopping service for elderly people in the area. This provides a minibus service for people with mobility issues who struggle to get out to do their grocery shopping. I am sure that other ward colleagues will speak on the other issues.

While sufficient progress has taken place under the new Community Committee system, there is still more to be done. In coming months we will be looking at how we can further engage with the local communities and provide services which local people really need. Only by further engagement with the local people and partners' organisations to find out what they need can the full potential of the Community Committee be fully realised.

Also, under the themes, we have had three themes. In July we had the Children and Family Health and in October we tried to bring the community centres together and to see how we can utilise our community centres, and tomorrow, which will be in January, talking about the community's employment opportunities. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Towler.

COUNCILLOR TOWLER: I formally second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Walker.

COUNCILLOR WALKER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking today on the Inner North West Community Committee paper which highlights our focus on making the most of local assets. Community centres and other assets are incredibly important spaces for bringing people together and fostering community spirit. For a number of people, particularly those who are more vulnerable, they can provide a vital opportunity to socialise in an easily accessible local venue. Therefore, we must protect them and ensure we support their use.

Our Community Committee recently held a workshop at which the passion of those residents involved with their community centres really came across, but it is not easy and they expressed some of the challenges they face, including making their operations sustainable, making their physical space pay through things like renting out office space. Perhaps the two largest concerns were overcoming seasonal usage, when the centre is often very quiet during the summer months, and problems caused by short-term project contracts which sometimes do not allow sufficient time for the community to really get behind something.

Third Sector Centres have spoken to us about how much the Council helping them to market their offer would help, in addition to holding meetings, events and the venue

being used for uses of that sort. As a committee we are keen to support our local asset however we can.

In addition to taking up the issues and concerns that have been raised, we have also been using Wellbeing funds to tackle some of the challenges. Primarily we have invested some money to improve the buildings themselves. £10,000 has gone to Hawksworth Wood Village Hall, £8,000 for the Step Community Centre (that is Supporting the Elderly People) and £11,750 to the Hindu Temple Community Centre in Hyde Park. We have also invested £6,338 in Woodsley Employability Project, which helps the BME communities in Hyde Park and Woodhouse, Burley and Kirkstall areas, to improve their chances to find work. This is done by working with the Woodsley Community Centre to give residents real world experience in a voluntary role.

Finally, I would just like to thank the volunteers who have put a huge amount of time and effort to run the local centres across Leeds. Without them many of these spaces would be completely unsustainable and they are adding so much to the fabric of our community. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gerry Harper.

COUNCILLOR G HARPER: Lord Mayor, I would also like to speak about the work of the Inner North area and our work on tackling health and wellbeing.

I am sure you both heard the news stories about the growing problem of obesity. The problem is particularly concerning amongst children, especially in Hyde Park-Woodhouse (my own ward) where childhood obesity rates are particularly high. The Inner North West Area Committee has chosen to look at ways to help reduce obesity rates among children and to encourage them to eat more healthily and be more active and live more healthy lifestyles.

Our Chair has invited officers from Children's Services, Public Health and Leeds West Clinical Commissioning Group to attend one of the community meetings to take part in a workshop discussion about this problem and how our partners can work together to find ways to deal with it. It was really useful to get lots of partners in the same room and there were lots of ideas that arose from the discussion that took place. Amongst the solutions discussed were communicating and working with local fast food providers and encouraging them to also sell healthier food options and help people and groups make better use of our local parks and green spaces for exercise and recreation.

One of the actions that arose from the discussion was the committee agreed to use money from its Wellbeing Fund to support the Fit Kids project, which encourages children to take part in sport and other recreational activities. This is a fine example of the role Community Committees can play in our local area. Not only are they best placed to communicate with people and tackle the issues that are important to them, but they can also communicate with local business and put plans in place to really make a difference to people's lives.

I hope these ideas come to fruition and look forward to our Chair, Councillor Akhtar, getting all our Councillors from the Area Committee involved in this work. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Sue Bentley.

COUNCILLOR S BENTLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on the Inner North West Community Committee.

I think the idea of Community Committees was based on our former Inner North West Area Committee, which had evolved over the year from the former Community Involvement Committees. This worked really well for our community and our area. At our group briefing, we were told that the rationale behind the proposed Community Committees was to increase attendance and participation by more members of the public, who would be encouraged to take part in the discussions around based themes.

That sounded really good, but actually it was happening in the Inner North West Area Committee, so why change something that was already working? We had open forums which lasted much more than the allotted ten minutes on the agenda, because our keen and challenging residents enthusiastically participated, raising all manner of issues. I believe our residents' attendance rate was the best in the city and always in double figures and, on one occasion, there was standing room only and there must have been about 70 or 80 people there.

Sadly, these imposed from above changes to our Community Committee have seen the loss of this vibrant atmosphere, and no longer do we have large numbers of residents attending. Indeed, at our last Community Committee we had one member of the public – one. This is a great shame and clearly residents no longer feel that they have the same involvement. Even our Hyde Park and Woodhouse Councillors are voting with their feet, as only one of them turned up at the October meeting, and that was the Chair.

As a Councillor, I feel that we are no longer able to hold officers to account for the services, or lack of them, in our area. For the record, I want everyone to know that we have had community representatives on our Planning sub-committee for the last ten years and that was not due to the Community Committee, as implied in the Minutes.

These committed residents contribute a wealth of in-depth knowledge and spend a great deal of their time trying to protect their neighbourhoods from over-development and in our area retaining precious green space. I would like to thank them and other residents across the city who work tirelessly for their communities.

In some areas these changes may have been an improvement but I think for ours the unintended consequence is that we have not got such a vibrant committee or involvement of residents. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Akhtar to sum up.

COUNCILLOR AKHTAR: My Lord Mayor, let me take this opportunity to thank each and every Member of the Community Committee for the last three-and-a-half years or so I have been elected as Chair. We try not to bring politics into our Community Committee (*laughter*) and the reason is this, Chair, because we believe from this side that we should be working with all the people who live in our locality. Sometimes it is difficult to work but I, and I am sure Sue and her colleague would say, I and my colleagues have been very, very fair with all the elected Members.

Let me just thank Councillor Harper and Councillor Walker for highlighting some of the important things that people obviously face and what we have delivered over the last few months or so.

With regard to Councillor Bentley, let me come to you and say that obviously – and I have said at the beginning, if you were listening to me – what I said was not everything is perfect, Lord Mayor, but we need to focus on some of the things how we can engage the community. What Councillor Bentley do understand, we do not have some of the local issues that people were asking for for years and years and years – Royal Park School was one of them. The other issues, West Park was – when people do not have the local issues people will not come to the meetings and this was the problem. This administration has delivered some of the local issues what people were asking us to deliver. Royal Park School is one of them and we are engaging with those communities.

Chair, let me finish - sorry my Lord Mayor. Let me just say that we as Inner North Area Community Committee, we try to rotate different sides. I will ask Councillor Bentley in this Chamber, if you organise one in your ward we are more than willing to come to your ward if there are any issues. We are willing to listen to the people of Weetwood as well. Thank you very much, my Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

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

ITEM 11 – REPORT ON APPOINTMENTS

THE LORD MAYOR: We move on to Item 11, Report on Appointments. Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, I move Item 11 in the terms of the Notice.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Selby.

COUNCILLOR SELBY: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I put that to the vote. *(A vote was taken)* That is CARRIED.

ITEM 12 – QUESTIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 12, Questions. We now move on to Question time where, for a period of 30 minutes, Members of the Council can ask questions of the Executive.

Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Can the Leader of Council inform me whether Leeds and Partners put in a bid for a Visit Britain grant?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, I can confirm that Leeds and Partners inherited a successful bid from the Council amounting to £600,000 with the Growing Tourism Bid from Visit England. Since April 2012, they have used this money to lever in an additional £12m, thereby creating 248 jobs.

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary, Councillor Carter?

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: No, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Does the Executive Board Member for Transport and the Economy agree with the stance taken by his Labour colleague, Hilary Benn MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Local Government and Communities, when he was recently quoted stating that Councils should switch to low energy light bulbs rather than switching off street lights in residential areas as, to quote, “street lights ensure that people are safe on our roads and feel safe walking home”?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. No, not entirely. *(laughter)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary, Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Since Councillor Lewis offers the slightest of hope that he might change his mind, I thought he might be persuaded by the fact that we hear about the parlous state of our finances but luckily Councillor Lewis has been given a £6.6m windfall by the people who operated the PFI contract for our street lighting and therefore he has greater choices than maybe some of his colleagues have on the Front Bench in terms of changing his mind on certain policies, and does he not think that it would be right and just to actually pursue that option preferred by his own Shadow Secretary of State and the Liberal Democrat Party group on the Council, rather than pursuing a policy which actually makes people feel less safe on their own streets?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think Hilary Benn was trying to be helpful but it is not entirely helpful for a city like Leeds which has invested very heavily in its PFI lighting scheme which, with hindsight, we would love to change and make it wholly LED, because LED lighting is wonderful. We did a trial recently on the Loop where we were able to dim down the lights by 25%, 50% and 75% to see what impact it had, and you have actually that ability to control your street lighting minute by minute when you do have LED lighting put in.

Unfortunately we are not in that position where we can speculate to accumulate and spend money and invest a huge amount because of the budgetary position of the Council.

It is very nice of Stewart to give me that £6.6m, as you have described it as a windfall, that will be for me to decide how it is spent. I do not think even if you were in control that you would have that kind of ring-fencing arrangement. No, that has got to go into

the budget. It is a one off and it does not solve any problems in the long term. It is very much something that will be helpful when it comes for a short time. It does not deal with any of our problems.

I would, to be helpful, I do think that LED street lighting is the answer long term but I am not convinced that we are in a position to not switch off street lights and I think we will look increasingly at every Local Authority in the country switching off more and more street lights because the decisions they have in front of them are either of doing something that has limited impact or cutting into their baseline services. Whether a Council is Lib Dem, Tory or Labour they will have those decisions to make and I do not think that many of them will be saying that they will keep every street light on; far from it. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Khan.

COUNCILLOR KHAN: Would the Chair of the West Yorkshire Combined Authority's Transport Committee please comment on the recent announcement from bus operator First in relation to West Yorkshire fare rises?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor James Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Councillor Khan. I had 15 minutes at a freezing cold bus stop waiting for a bus that did not turn up this morning to really think about the answer to your very good question. *(laughter)*

People started emailing me in December time to say "I have seen on the news that the price of oil is coming down and I can see the price of petrol at garage forecourts is coming down, so when are we going to see bus fares falling?" I was quite surprised to see that First Bus announced that they were actually going to raise their fares, and this puzzled me until I was leafing through back issues of the magazine Local Transport Today – I have copies available if Members want to have a flick through them *(laughter)* – and I read that last June First Bus told their investors in the City of London that they were going to put up bus fares so they could increase their profitability back to double digit figures.

I find it really disappointing. We are trying to do a huge amount to improve and invest in public transport in Leeds and across West Yorkshire, we have a bus operator saying they want to work in partnership with us; then we discover they are putting up the costs for hard pressed communities and making tickets not only more expensive for people to travel but also making it more complicated for people to travel, and I have heard examples of people being sold the wrong tickets and having to travel at vastly inflated cost because of the complexity of the ticketing system.

We are trying to do our best for West Yorkshire in terms of investment, infrastructure. We want the operators to do a lot better than they are doing at the moment and this really is a backward step and I hope that First Bus rethinks its position. It is about the travelling public of West Yorkshire, not the City of London. *(hear, hear) (Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary, Councillor Khan?

COUNCILLOR KHAN: No, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dunn.

COUNCILLOR DUNN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Executive Member with responsibility for Planning please update us where we are in the Site Allocation process?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Having completed a five hour marathon yesterday of the Development Plans Panel meeting and a three hour meeting, I think, the week before, where we are is now that we have completed the eleven individual meeting workshops we have had involving all ward Councillors on a confidential basis, that information has all been pulled together and Development Plans Panel has now made recommendations to go to the Executive Board in February.

At that Board Meeting I hope Executive Board will endorse proposals to do with housing, land, employment, retail, PAS and other issues. It will then be for officers to write a final report which will, when it is completed, be available for intensive and widespread public consultation.

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary, Councillor Dunn?

COUNCILLOR DUNN: Supplementary, Lord Mayor. Would the local communities have a further input into the process? Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: Lord Mayor, thank you very much. I and my colleagues on this side, seeing that we believe in community involvement, are very keen for communities to participate as much as they can and want to, and so the public is an essential part in terms of how we take site allocations further forward and I thank colleagues on this side of the Chamber for their involvement and their intensive work on behalf of their constituents over the last 18 months. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Anderson.

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: Will the Executive Board Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning and Personnel confirm that Greenbelt land has been allocated for development in Crossgates and Whinmoor, Kippax and Methley, Garforth and Swillington and Pudsey as part of the Council's Core Strategy?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: Lord Mayor, as put in the question, the answer is "No".

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary, Councillor Anderson.

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: Is it your intention and can you confirm how much green belt your Development Plan colleagues yesterday approved in those particular areas in terms of eating into the green belt?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: I am happy to answer that question because you got it right this time. The Core Strategy does not allocate any land anywhere. As my Shadow you will know that, of course. The Site Allocation Process does allocate land and therefore in total the green belt, the extent of Leeds green belt at the moment is 33,978 hectares, and we will use something like 2% of the current green belt in terms of the proposals put in the Site Allocations Policy.

I am also able to tell you, as you will know yourself, that we are returning twice as much rural land into the green belt as we are taking out of the green belt, so in totality this administration will be having more green belt rather than less. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cleasby.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Could the Executive Board Member for Neighbourhoods, Planning and Personnel confirm whether full consultation has taken place with Town and Parish Councils regarding the changes recently proposed by the Council to Site Allocations for Housing and Employment land?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: Yes.

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary, Councillor Cleasby?

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Oh yes, Lord Mayor. Can he therefore also confirm that the furore in my ward between Rawdon and Horsforth of the land recently added, massive piece of land, 717 houses, two schools and so on, has that been communicated with both of the Parish Councils in my ward, who have spent considerable time, money and effort doing Neighbourhood Plans? Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: Lord Mayor, it is good to have some proper questions. I actually wrote out to all Neighbourhood Forums, Parish Councils and Town Councils at the appropriate time to say to them, "By the way, this is where we now are with the Site Allocation Process and we would really value, really value your opinions and let us know what you think and give us any feedback you have."

Of all the Parish Councils, of all the Town Councils, of all the Neighbourhood Forums, we had three responses. None from Horsforth.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Rafique.

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Member with responsibility for the Environment comment on the role Leeds can play in reducing the UK's carbon emissions? Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dobson, this time.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor, and thank you for the question, Councillor Rafique.

The answer is, the question and contribution we can make to this agenda is huge, and it is a useful opportunity to update Council as to some of the initiatives that are actually being developed in the here and the now around reducing carbon and perhaps, more fundamentally, the reason why as a city we want to do that. It is one of the Council's breakthrough projects.

I think the thing is with carbon emissions and reduction, it cannot be seen in isolation as the responsibility of one department. From our buildings, from our transport policy and from energy generation it is cross-departmental work, the kind of which the administration wants to progress that will actually reap the dividends around this agenda.

Our targets of four per cent per year to get us to an overall reduction of 40% by 2020 remain ambitious but achievable, but we cannot do this alone. We have talked about Leeds but really as a city region the 12,000 measures on people's homes that we will be undertaking as part of the Green Deal project shows the scope of the ambition but also the needs for Leeds to work in partnership with our partners within the region.

I am also pleased today to be able to tell Council an early heads-up on a paper that will be going to March's Executive Board where we will be reinvigorating the idea of solar PVs on Council owned premises. As we were aware, we were at the point of delivery last time round when the Feed-in Tariffs were reduced. The good news, through changes in the market we will be looking to deliver that to about a thousand Council properties this year, which will have a marked impression on carbon targets.

When we look at our housing stock as a whole, clearly the work we have done in our existing stock to bring them up to scratch, but in terms of new Council housing delivery, we used to talk about Decency in terms of single glazed windows being acceptable. Any new houses that come forward in Leeds in our ambitious programme for development will be of the highest standards. That is just not about carbon reduction, that is about people; the people who live in them reducing their bills. I heard a lovely phrase today and I have written it down – thermal comfort; giving them thermal comfort in their own homes and, of course, making those properties energy efficient.

Working with Councillor Lewis on transport, park and ride, will have a huge impact on carbon. It is in its infancy but it is definitely the future and it is where we want to go as a city. Really, this idea about solar canopies that could cover those facilities, actually keep people's cars safer in those environments but actually give the city much-needed energy; the way we want to move towards charging points; the way we as a city want to take the lead on our transport and our fleet and really lead others forward in the case to make transport, public transport, more sustainable – hybrid vehicles, all the things we want to see achieved.

The development of Smart City technologies, about being able to engage with cities through Smart Cities and our people and say look, this is how you can save money, this is when you should be having your electric on, this is when you should not be, and really leading on that agenda.

I suppose for me the jewel in the crown, which will be district heating. From a contentious scheme that was debated many times in this Council we have now got the opportunity with district heating to actually get the maximum benefits from the energy from waste, the incinerator at Cross Green, and the Holy Grail would be if we can get those 2,000 properties initially heated from that system and really change the way we look as a sustainable, clean, green 21st Century city.

I am glad to give that update and thank you for the question and thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary, Councillor Rafique? No. Councillor Harington.

COUNCILLOR HARINGTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Six months on, would the Executive Member for Digital and Creative Technologies, Culture and Skills comment on the impact the Tour de France has had on Leeds and Yorkshire?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Yeadon.

COUNCILLOR YEADON: Thank you, Councillor Harington. We had a really interesting debate yesterday at Scrutiny around the impact of the Tour de France and how to ensure it has got a long-lasting impact. I think for all of us who were there on the day, I think we only had to look around to know what impact the Tour de France had on the city.

I think to judge the real success of an event it is about whether it continues to make that impact six months later. Just before Christmas we published a report called Three Inspirational Days with our partners, which really spelled out the economic and social impact of the Tour. I will give you some of those facts and figures.

The impact to Yorkshire, the direct economic impact to Yorkshire of the Tour was £102m, so that is over what we anticipated, what we aimed for and what we wanted. I think that is a real success. The total impact for the city, for Leeds, was £17m. I think we all can agree that the global view of Leeds and the impact that that has had on the city is immeasurable. We are still continuing to have global media interest in the city as a direct result.

We also have seen that 42% of Leeds residents have access to a bike, but we do want to improve this. I think the impact that we are seeing now, we should not rest on our laurels and we need to continue to really milk the Tour for what we can.

59% of residents expect the TdF will result in more cycling and exercise. We have seen the City Connect Superhighway, the work on that has begun. Bikeability in schools is now becoming the norm and we are working harder and harder. We are currently establishing a project board which will bring together all the work across the various portfolios, whether it is in Children's, in Health, in City Development, Highways as well as Sport, to ensure that we maximise the impact of the Tour as much as possible.

I just also want to pay tribute to Peter Smith who, you have seen in the New Year's Honours, was given I think it was an MBE for the work on the Tour as well as his

greater work for sports development over his time with the Council. He has now unfortunately retired and we have lost him, but I do think that the work that he did on the Tour and the team that he was working with were remarkable for what they delivered.

It is clear we have delivered our goals of delivering economic benefit and raising the profile of the city, and delivered a major event in really difficult economic circumstances, as we all know. Despite these tough times we took a brave and progressive decision for the benefit of the city and I think we delivered, and we will continue to do that. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary, Councillor Harington? No. Councillor John Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Will the Executive Board Member with the longest title in the Council *(laughter)*, namely Councillor Gruen, confirm that greenbelt land has been allocated for development in Calverley and Farsley, Guiseley and Rawdon, Horsforth and Adel and Wharfedale as part of the Council's Core Strategy Site Allocation Process?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Now you have got to answer.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: I am always happy to answer questions.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: That makes a change!

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: I note that this question composes mostly the constituent parts of the Pudsey constituency and this, therefore, is yet another stage in the operation to save Stuart Andrew's skin, and that is why we are looking at these statistics.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Jamie Hanley is doing that for them. Jamie- come-lately, as we call him.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: I do confirm that there are some wards where there is some green belt take and there are many where there are none, but the wards...

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Answer the question.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: The wards being mentioned here do have some limited green belt take, yes.

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary, Councillor Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: By way of supplementary, Lord Mayor, and, indeed, Councillor Gruen found this in his answer to Councillor Anderson, there is no excuse for badly worded questions, but I am sure he will let me have if not now in due course the figures that will map out what the green belt take is in the wards that I have referred to.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: I will, Lord Mayor. I do happen to have one figure in my mind from yesterday. The largest take of green belt is in the Wetherby Ward and it is because of the proposal which I am told, and the public has been told has been sponsored, engineered and brought about single-handedly by Councillor Procter, and that take is 65% and that is Councillor Procter's legacy to Wetherby. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Well done, John. Well done, John, great stuff. Hero!

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Sue Bentley.

COUNCILLOR S BENTLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Does the Executive Board Member for Health and Wellbeing think that Leeds's Public Health is doing enough to reduce health inequalities for our vulnerable children?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mulherin.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Reducing health inequalities is the overarching ambition of Leeds Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Public Health Leeds City Council has led on and is involved in a range of programmes aimed at reducing health inequalities, especially amongst children. All of the current Children and Young People's Public Health programmes include a focus on reducing health inequalities amongst vulnerable children living in families with complex social circumstances.

Some examples of this work includes the programme to reduce inequalities in infant deaths in the most deprived parts of the city and the Leeds Best Start programme, which aims to ensure the best start for every child from conception to age two, through early identification and target support early in the life of a child.

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary, Councillor Bentley?

COUNCILLOR S BENTLEY: In the light of the recent NICE report regarding Vitamin D supplements, do you agree with the Leader of the Council's opinion that giving young children Vitamin D supplements is a "wacky idea"?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Giving me some might not be!

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mulherin.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. As you will recall in response to the previous questions on this subject in this Chamber, I advised that the NICE investigation was taking place and that we would report back here on the findings of that investigation.

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence has published that guidance now, which recommends increasing the availability of Vitamin D supplements to certain at-risk groups, which includes infants and children under five, pregnant and breastfeeding women, people aged 65 and over, people who are not exposed to sun enough (for instance those who cover their skin for cultural reasons, anyone who is housebound or stays indoors for longer periods) and people who have darker skin, such as those from Afro-Caribbean and South Asian backgrounds.

Given the degree of the advice from NICE, we have decided to establish a group, so in response to that the Public Health team here in Leeds are pulling together a team with membership from the CCGs, NHS providers and the Third Sector to co-ordinate appropriate actions across all at-risk groups in the city. The group will identify priorities and develop a planned response to increase the uptake of supplements for at-risk groups.

It is envisaged that the focus of that group will be increasing availability through a wide range of outlets and access points, promoting Vitamin D awareness messages and information about how to access supplements amongst professionals in the public and Third Sectors, promoting Vitamin D messages and information about how to access supplements across the range of at-risk groups, and I will keep Members advised of progress. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Macniven.

COUNCILLOR MACNIVEN: Would the Executive Member be able to update Council on the recent LGA Safeguarding Adult Peer Challenge that took place in Leeds?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ogilvie.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Thank you, Councillor Macniven for that question. Can I just say, the last time I stood up to speak the Council Chamber was plunged into darkness. I am delighted to see Councillor Selby firmly sat in his place! *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR: It can be arranged!

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: Yes, if I go on too long. Lord Mayor, we have made good progress in recent years in terms of our Safeguarding Adults approach, but we thought it was timely, particularly with the Care Acts, to bring in external expertise to have a look and to give us their judgment, so at the end of November we had a team of seven from the LGA Peer Review, which included a Director of Adults from Leicestershire and a Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care from Waltham Forest. We had done a self assessment of where we thought we were at in terms of our Safeguarding Adults approach and the Peer Review Team used that as the basis of their review.

The team met a wide range of people in their week that we had them here, including elected Members from all parties, with officers, with service users, carers, partner organisations including Health and the voluntary sector. They fed back at the end of their week and we are awaiting their full report in the next few days, but they made it clear that they were particularly impressed by the political support for Safeguarding Adults here in Leeds; they also commented that we had done an accurate self assessment, we were aware of our strengths but also aware of the areas we needed to improve. They were particularly impressed by the increasing joint work with Children's, with Safer Leeds and Adults but, like us, thought we need to do more for adults who do not necessarily meet eligibility thresholds but still are vulnerable.

They endorsed the work that we are doing around the requirements of the Care Act, were particularly impressed by the voluntary sector in the city and they endorsed our recognition that we need to focus more on outcomes rather than on process.

They particularly were impressed with the campaign that we did to raise the profile of Safeguarding Adults in this city, the Doing Nothing is not an Option campaign that I sent round to every Member last year.

In summary, good progress but more to do and can I just finish by thanking Dennis Holmes, who led the process, and Hilary Paxton and her team in the Safeguarding Adults Unit. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary, Councillor Macniven? Councillor Mitchell.

COUNCILLOR MITCHELL: Would the Executive Member for Transport and Economy please update Council on developments within the Leeds City Region Enterprise Zone?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Leeds City Council has played the lead role, working proactively with the Leeds City Region Enterprise partnership, the HCA, private sector developers and DCLG to unblock and accelerate development of the Enterprise Zone.

Development is now under way on all four sites in the Enterprise Zone, with 365,000 square foot of employment space under construction and a further 77,000 square foot in the pipeline. This will support hundreds of construction jobs and has the potential to create over a thousand jobs in manufacturing and related supply chains.

Veolia's £150m Recycling and Energy Recovery Facility, which many of you will have seen is rapidly rising to the sky, is due for completion in 2016. Up to 300 people will work on the facility during construction and the plant will create around 45 new permanent jobs when operational.

A number of developments are under way on Council owned lands at Thornes Farm, which is being built up by private sector developers at a number of separate sites. Construction of 80,000 square foot of industrial premises is under way on Wilton Developments Connex 45 site. The £5m development is scheduled to complete in July 2015. CDP Ltd has started work on a new 50,000 square foot operation centre for the Samuel Grant Group and has agreed a deal with another end user to build a second 30,000 square foot unit. A third 20,000 square unit will be built speculatively. Watershed Packaging's new £2m production facility is now operational.

Work has also started on the first phase of development at Logic Leeds, an 80,000 square foot industrial unit scheduled for completion in August this year. The £5m development is the largest speculative development of its kind in West Yorkshire since the recession.

A £7.5m programme of infrastructure and groundwork is in progress at Temple Green and includes the 1,000 space park and ride facility, development plots for motor dealerships and a petrol filling station with ancillary retail, and a new spine road to

open up access to further phases of development to accommodate up to 5,000 square foot of employment space to support around 700 jobs.

A programme of landscaping work totalling £200,000 is currently being undertaken by the Council's Parks and Countryside Service to create an attractive, high quality environment and further stimulate investment.

Apprentices employed by the service will plant 147 semi-mature trees and over 50,000 bulbs, 2,850 square metres of land will be sown with wild flower seed mix and around 2,000 saplings will also be planted to create new woodland areas within the Enterprise Zone.

As it is, the Enterprise Zone is being seen as an exemplar for other zones across the country and is a real success story. We are currently lobbying for enhanced capital allowances for businesses which locate there to ensure that the jobs we get are increasingly ones which require intensive capital spend rather than just being resale or warehousing units, so it is very much a success story for Leeds and for the City Region. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary, Councillor Mitchell?

COUNCILLOR MITCHELL: No supplementary.

THE LORD MAYOR: We have had 30 minutes of Questions. In accordance with the Council Procedure Rule 11.6, any unanswered questions will receive a written response.

ITEM 13 – MINUTES

THE LORD MAYOR: We now move to page 10, item 13, which is the item to receive and comment upon the Minutes of the Executive Board Committees established by Full Council and Joint Authorities to which the Council makes appointments.

Councillor Wakefield.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, I second.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: Yes, my Lord Mayor, I move an extension of ten minutes for consideration of the Executive Board Minutes in the terms of the Notice.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Latty.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I put that to the vote. *(A vote was taken)* That is CARRIED.

(a) Executive Board

(i) Neighbourhoods, Planning and Personnel

THE LORD MAYOR: We move on to 13(a), which is Executive Board Minutes, and consideration of these Minutes will end at 4.20. (i) is Neighbourhoods, Planning and Personnel. Councillor Macniven.

COUNCILLOR MACNIVEN: My Lord Mayor, I am speaking on Minute 103, page 168, about the supply of specialist housing for older people.

As Lead Member for Adult Social Care, it has become increasingly apparent to our team that older people want to remain independent. They want to have more choice and control over how and where they live. They want to live at home for as long as possible. That is why as a Council we have a duty to provide housing to meet the wishes and needs of older people in Leeds.

Excitingly, extra care housing is an increasingly available option. Let us focus on what it looks like for older people. Self-contained homes with their own front doors; the provision of personalised care and support which comes to them as and when needed, which is designed to meet desires and required levels of independence. Extra care housing options provide a variety of facilities and services which vary from site to site. These can include 24 hour access to emergency support, on-site care teams, rehabilitation services, day care activities, minibuses for resident outings, leaning and maintenance provision for properties and gardens. In addition, many have restaurants, cafes, laundry facilities, healthcare staff bases, fitness centres and even hairdressers. All of this promotes independence and allows individuals to be in control of their own lifestyles.

The benefits of this approach have been well researched and documented. The International Longevity Centre reports that where housing includes access to extra care, people over 80 years old with recognised needs are half as likely to move into institutional facilities as those in standard housing may. Falls are a significant contributory factor to hospitalisation and death amongst elderly people, thus impacting on NHS provision. Extra care provision reduces the need for NHS intervention, allowing the Health Service to focus on the most vulnerable.

Mention must be made of the economic advantages resulting from the provision of extra care housing. The Dilnot Commission report featured and enhanced this element in its recent report.

By embracing the Extra Care model older people can take the future in hand, stay in control of where and how they live and retain control of their own resources. Providing choice is crucial, as is listening to what older people want. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Charlwood.

COUNCILLOR CHARLWOOD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on the same Minute about older people's housing. Since the Executive Board Report in February 2013 there has been progress in delivering a new supply, with around 850

units of sheltered housing, extra care or residential in the delivery pipeline. This report notes, however, that there remains a need for further provision of housing for older people with care needs and it came up again in Development Plan Panel yesterday.

The paper points out that meeting the city's need for specialist housing for older people cannot be met through a single approach and will be through a combination of routes. Private developers, alongside the Council and housing associations, will play a key role in making sure the city can meet demand for older people's accommodation.

The paper also points out that the old people's housing sector is attractive to commercial providers and there is development activity, largely in areas of the city which have higher values and income levels.

Whilst this helps meet some demand, this shows that there is unmet demand in areas with average and lower property values. Just as it is the case with housing in general, the challenges to the private sector must be to build and seek profit, not just in the areas with the highest values. Lower land value prices will mean that developers could seek to build high quality but affordable units in some of the lower value areas. Indeed, the Council is looking to continue providing land for developers and housing associations to build new older people's housing. Developers will therefore be able to buy this land quickly and cleanly with a clear plan for what the site would be used for.

Of course, private sector schemes have to make a profit. The Council cannot insist companies run themselves into the ground in order to meet demand but there are opportunities to be creative in order to make their investment back rather than the old formula of pay lots to buy and charge lots to sell.

As demand increases these opportunities include creating older people's communities with a range of different housing across the same site, it includes being creative with Section 106 agreements in order to meet demand whilst maximising viability. It means working with the Council to create a housing mix in areas rather than chancing their arm to reduce certain types of housing in order to build more and more large general housing.

Plans Panels will welcome exciting, affordable older people's housing right across where demand exists rather than large developments solely in areas of high housing values. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Anderson.

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: Lord Mayor, I refer to Minutes 103 and 138 on pages 168 and 198 respectively.

The first one, in respect of the Holt Park District Centre, can I welcome this report that came to Executive Board. Unfortunately it is a long time in the coming and I am concerned that we have missed some opportunities because of the delay that was taken in bringing this forward. That was not the fault of any politician, I would add – I am not pointing the fingers at any particular politician that that has been held up.

I have also had complaints from local residents that they did feel that the consultation itself was not the greatest exercise that was ever invented and it has left question marks over one or two things within the area, and I think it is incumbent on all of us to try and fill those gaps up as quick as we possibly can. We also do need to make sure we do take a firm line with Asda in terms of how they dominate the skyline in the area and also the effect it is going to have with the closure of the medical practice in the area as well. It would also help if we could get some better community facilities.

Linking it, one area where we could do a bit more is look at getting some older people's housing into this particular location, which links me to the other point. Again, I welcome the paper that was submitted to Exec Board in terms of bringing forward additional older people's housing but this is an issue that is city wide and we need to try and do our best to get developers to participate better in what we are doing here because I do not think they necessarily share the objectives that most of us have in terms of trying to get more older people's housing, and we also need to get our Planning Department also to take a tougher line with the developers when they are bringing forward proposals.

There are policies in the Core Strategy, I accept that and let us work towards them and yes, we need to look at trying to get some allocations, something put into the Allocation, but if we get more older people's housing it will release the family housing and it will meet the objectives that we all want which is to get more housing available, and this is one method of doing so.

Finally, it would enable people to continue to live locally because a lot of people do not want to move out of their area into sheltered complexes or any other older people's housing outside, because that is where they have lived all their lives, that is where their families are brought up, they have got a lot of connections to the area so I think it is incumbent on all of us to work to meet those objectives. Thank you very much, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking at the same time on the Social Care issue in terms of the vision of new housing and also on the Community Centres paper because they have common pressures that I think we are not adequately addressing as a Council.

The Community Centre paper talked about how the Council is looking at potential closure or asset transfer and the Social Care paper talks about how we need to engage with partners to ensure that the provision of this new style of housing is made and I am afraid that we have got a mixed record in terms of being able to encourage that partnership working to actually happen.

I am going to refer again to the Commission for Local Government because it talks about how this Council wants to take leadership in making sure that they effectively engage with communities, that they build the social capacity within those communities and that they are able to take decisions for themselves, and also to have a mature relationship with the private sector in terms of making sure that we set the standards for the services that we wish to commission or to buy, and that those partners understand what that is and that they are enabled to fulfil them.

However, we have got a mixed record. We have got some great examples of things like HEART in Headingley and also, of course, the Bramley Baths in terms of communities that are enabled to create proper social enterprises that work and that the Council could work effectively with. However, alongside that we also have failures of areas where we have been able to help those communities take on big projects. I talk about Royal Park School, which was referred to earlier and also, of course, South Leeds Sports Centre.

We need to do it apace. If we look at the Social Care paper it talks about how currently we have got around about 25% of the need identified in terms of potential supply in the future, but it leaves about 75% unidentified and we have got to reach that by 2018. However, all that we have actually done is do a spatial study which basically says we have identified lumps of land that we think these things can be built on, and some of those successes that are actually mentioned are actually windfalls that did not happen because we have actually made it happen.

It is all right having good intentions but we actually need to be able to implement it on the ground, and if you are going to talk to these Community Centres and the people that work within them and say “We want to talk to you about asset transfer” but you cannot actually demonstrate a good record of enabling that to happen and supporting those people to take those enterprises on, then you are not going to be successful.

I will refer to Social Care as well. There were three homes that were held back from closure three years ago and they were all held back because the Council said we will not close them because we need local provision and it needs to be done in partnership with either a social enterprise in Rothwell or the private sector in Otley and Morley. Three years on those solutions have still not been met and those savings that the Council wanted to make have not been made. We need to do more to enable those solutions to actually take fruit. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Campbell.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Minute 103. If you notice, it says that it was resolved “That the progressed made in increasing the delivery of specialist housing for older people be noted.” We have had various Members waxing lyrical about the increase in housing. I just would like to put on the record, though, that in the Otley and Yeadon Ward – well, just outside - Kirklands was closed, has been demolished and is up for sale as a housing site; Hawarth Court has just finished being demolished; Suffolk Court is in danger of closing, Spring Gardens in Otley is in danger of closing; and recently we heard that Rosemont in Bramhope was closing, so we are not seeing that net increase in our end of the city, but we look forward, I am sure, to it coming.

106 Community Centres. I think I need to echo something that Councillor Golton said because one of the issues in relation to the Weston Lane Centre, and I think it is probably true of all the centres that we are talking about, is the Council’s inability to manage them in a reasonable way. Despite numerous meetings and numerous requests and, to be honest, numerous promises from officers, no repair, refurbishment work has taken place on these centres, little or no effort has been made to promote those centres to encourage people to use them and if people, as ward Members have done, have tried to direct people towards the centres to use them, the booking system

is so complex and labyrinthine that quite frankly people just give up because it just does not make sense.

In this case this Community Centre is in the centre of one of the areas in the Otley and Yeadon ward that hits the highest deprivation levels and therefore I think it is wrong of this Council to remove from that community a facility that would be beneficial to them if the Council encouraged both its own departments and the community to use it more. The sad fact is that currently they are not doing it.

Just quickly on Minute 107, Leeds Home Refurbishment Standard, I think it is long overdue that we started to be much more prescriptive about how we expect developers to work on our behalf and I am looking forward to the day when actually it is not just our properties that we can regulate but in fact we have a much more robust regime which deals with new build and says to developers, “We expect a certain standard out in Leeds and we expect you to deal with it.” *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor James Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I will go on to what I was going to say in a second but when the National Audit Office said before Christmas that Conservative and Lib Dem Ministers in the Department for Local Government did not understand the impact of their funding cuts on the ground, I think I would extend those comments to those Ministers’ representatives in this Council Chamber that do not seem to understand the impact of taking £200m a year away every year from the spending this Council has and the services this Council provides. I think people are living in cloud cuckoo land if they think that there is pots of money around to solve all the problems they have identified.

I think the Community Centres Review is a good example of that, where vital services in our communities can continue to be provided but we will have to look at whether the buildings that some of these services are provided in are the right things to do. Whatever condition a building might be in today, does the Council have the money to keep them going in the future? Are we better off looking at combining services in a smaller number of buildings, at looking at whether groups’ needs are best met where they are or whether somewhere else can be found?

I think this Community Centre Review does it in a proper, organised and well run fashion – not saying hang on, waiting for something to fall down before we suddenly run round and panic and try and fix it as has happened in the past, but looking at a proper structure for doing this in.

I think it is never easy having these discussions and, like all ward Councillors affected by it, we are having to talk to some community groups about how things are done differently but I think we should have done it in a proper framework and we are actually able to protect services whilst looking at whether every single building that the Council owns we will always own and we will continue to own it for ever. I think it is the right thing to do and I think some people just need to get a realistic view of the impact that their Government’s devastating cuts, targeted on local Councils in the North of England, are having on local communities. People just need to grow up, I think. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Sue Bentley.

COUNCILLOR S BENTLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on Minute 106, page 173, on Community Centres Review.

As you are aware, Weetwood Ward has only one community centre which is in the Meanwood Community Centre, in the furthest corner of our ward bordering on Moortown, Chapel Allerton and close to the Headingley and Hyde Park wards.

Weetwood residents' groups and organisations struggle to find rooms to rent for meetings in schools or church halls across the ward as these are invariably booked up. Since the West Park Centre was demolished, this has caused ever more problems with the loss of so many rooms suitable for our small groups. I note that the Meanwood Community Centre is subject to consultation, which is ironic when some of the arts groups that used the West Park Centre are now based there. It took many of these groups a long time to find alternative accommodation, which was not always ideal, but stoically they continued their work. I have grave concerns that if they are made homeless again, the thought of starting all over again would be unbearable for them.

On a more positive note, one of our voluntary organisations, OPAL, is seeking to buy the lease for the Bedford Arms in the Silk Mills and turn it into a community centre. Weetwood Councillors are fully supportive of this project, which it is hoped will provide the sort of services available at one-stop shops, such as advice on benefits, housing, applying for jobs, etc, which are sadly lacking in this area of the city.

The Council cannot afford to provide these services or the premises in the area, and for OPAL to succeed it needs other organisations (some from the voluntary sector and some from the private sector) and services to achieve its ambitious vision for a sustainable community centre offering a wide range of services.

This is a perfect opportunity for the Council to work in partnership with a well-respected voluntary organisation to provide desperately needed services in this area. Even an official publication from the Council, which I am sure you have all seen, called "Get Online Leeds – a guide to free services in your local area", listed all 33 wards in the city and, guess what – every ward had several services listed except Weetwood, which is a blank space. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Maqsood.

COUNCILLOR MAQSOOD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. My Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, I am speaking today on Minute 107, page 175, the Leeds Home Refurbishment Standard. It is not often we can stand up in this Chamber to talk about significant investment over the next 30 years, but this is exactly what we can do with control over our own Housing Revenue Account.

This paper gives us a really good start in preparing to improve homes to assist our tenants. Every ward will have benefited from the Decent Homes Standard, which was so fundamental in improving quality in Council homes, but this has now been achieved in almost all our houses. We need to work out where we go next. We could concentrate on keeping our homes ticking over at this standard, using the money from tenants' rents to build new houses, but that would not be fair or reasonable to existing tenants. Time has moved on since the Decent Homes Standard was introduced. Those of us lucky enough to own our own homes are thinking about energy efficiency

both to save the planet and to save money. We are also looking to make sure we are safe. We therefore should equally be trying to make sure that the Council thinks about affordable warmth, providing additional security measures and fire safety.

Much like the Leeds Standard for New Housing, this policy for existing Council housing should be a beacon for private landlords to understand what is required for a 21st Century housing provider. As a Council we can and should lead the way in providing energy efficient and safe affordable housing to our tenants.

This could have been a very dry paper, setting out some basic priorities that amounted to keeping things ticking along. Instead, through our genuine ownership of the Housing Revenue Account, we have been able to deliver a standard with a clear and exciting vision for the future. I hope you will be able to join me in supporting this standard. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harper.

COUNCILLOR G HARPER: My Lord Mayor, I would like to speak today on the same Minute, Minute 107 page 175, the Leeds Homes Refurbishment Standard.

In the last few weeks we have seen cold weather, frost and snowfall and we have seen it again today, yet I know that some people in our city, especially inner city wards, people are agonising whether to turn the heating on, just as it is right across the city there are older people, people who are unwell, working people on low incomes and unemployed people who have to stop and think before bringing their homes up to a decent level of warmth. The latest figures we have show that 16% of households in Leeds are in fuel poverty. This is using the traditional definition where fuel accounts for more than 10% of a household's income. Central Government have recently taken on their own definition which perhaps, unsurprisingly, seems to make fewer people live in poverty.

Many of the Council tenants in my ward, Hyde Park and Woodhouse, are at last benefiting from the improvements as part of the Council's housing regeneration programme. They are getting a very high standard of energy efficiency in their homes after such a long wait, but what about the other tenants? We could try to rely on Central Government's heating schemes, although our experiences with this is that they are short lived and under funded. We could try to seek more funds through the PFI route, but our experience of this, as happened in Little London, it can be very slow. It took 13 years to get the PFI through from the Government approval. We could use our own housing funds to make a real difference to people's lives, replacing single glazing with double glazing, upgrading central heating and improving insulation and recladding, putting affordable warmth at the heart of how, why and when we improve our Council homes.

Perhaps the work being done to see if Council tenants can benefit from more efficient ways of making energy, such as extended District Heating Schemes or through solar energy, is the way forward, or we could even leave heating homes to the tenants and let them use up their limited income trying to gain an acceptable level of heat.

I believe as a Council we need to treat our tenants in the right way, in turn showing other landlords what can be done with a little forward thinking. This is the right thing

to do for residents in Hyde Park and Woodhouse and I am sure it will be for the rest of the city. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ann Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I wish to speak on Minute 106, page 175, Leeds Homes Refurbishment Standard.

Though Leeds achieved the National Decent Homes Standard for Council housing in 2010 through the work done by the three Arm's Length Management Organisations, the standard has dated quickly as the climate change and carbon saving agenda developed over the last ten years, leaving existing housing stock falling short of ambition for new homes contained in the Code for Sustainable Homes.

A reasonable level of thermal efficiency in SAP of more than 35 falls far short of the low carbon and ecological ambition for a modern home, particularly with regards to standards of insulation and space heating. The new standard proposed will address the shortcomings of the Decent Homes Standards.

We are pleased this includes solar PV panels to be fitted to appropriate Council properties with sufficient roof space and the right aspect and that £3m is proposed in next year's Draft Investment Programme for this.

We are also pleased that multi-storey flat roofs will be reclad and insulated and cavity walls will be filled with insulation, and that solid wall properties, such as back-to-back houses, will be considered for external wall insulation where possible and if not considered for internal wall insulation.

The HRA business plan identifies the need of £180m over the next 30 years on thermal efficiency work alone. Next year's proposed programme includes £2.5m for this work, so whilst we are very pleased that this has been proposed and totally are behind you there, we obviously realise that it will need a lot more money if all the work is to be carried out. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Sobel.

COUNCILLOR SOBEL: I wish to speak to Minute 138 on page 198 on the Holt Park District Centre Planning Statement.

The regeneration of Holt Park is of great importance to people across North Leeds as it is used by people for shopping at the district centre, physical activity at the brilliant new Holt Park Active as well as health services from the two surgeries, which I will return to later. I am really pleased that consultation has taken place and glad to see such a strong commitment on improvements to open space.

One of the issues that I talk to people about in Leeds 16 is the lack of social housing, especially for older people. I am delighted that after the earlier funding was withdrawn, there is commitment to at least 45 units. I pressed Councillor Gruen that we need more – many more, in fact – and the site can sustain them and they would be strongly welcomed. I know he will do his best and is restricted by the funds available but I would like him to try and develop more units.

The subject of new housing development is not usually welcomed in Leeds 16, as developers target our green field sites and often hears my objections, but on this occasion he should listen to my encouragement.

The smaller shops at Holt Park provide great community services, run by brilliant charities and social enterprises like OPAL, and Kids in Camps, as well as independent traders who give a vibrancy to the retail offer. They are all looking at alternative sites in Leeds 16 with the current uncertainty and I would like the planning statement to reflect more clearly a desire to see a clear retail mix, not just an upgraded superstore, as it is not clear which of the options is most widely supported in the paper.

My experience on the ground is clear, that a diversity of retail is what is most popular. Having said that, there is one tenant whose lease I and my colleagues on this side of the Chamber would like to see finish on 7th May, although I am not sure there are nine Councillors here who would agree with that.

Finally, more urgently, I would like to raise the Holt Park Health Centre and particularly the GP surgery. The GPs at Holt Park Health Centre propose to close the surgery at Holt Park due to the merger of two GP practices. In the process the GPs are proposing to close one of their resulting three surgeries – the surgery at Holt Park – and to offer patients a place at one of the remaining two in Moor Grange and Kirkstall. This would mean that patients in Holt Park, Ireland Wood, Tinsill and Cookridge would be expected to transfer to a surgery at Moor Park if they want to see their current doctor. This would present considerable difficulties for patients, especially for any patients currently served by the Holt Park surgery who do not have their own car and who cannot drive for age or medical reasons. If these proposals are implemented they will create significant difficulties.

The final decision will be made by NHS England. I am delighted that Councillor Mulherin has written, alongside me, to NHS England supporting a petition I have started. I would also like to thank Councillor Anderson for the bi-partisan discussions we have had as we both recognise the detrimental effects it will have, particularly on older patients. The report was clearly written before these proposals were in the public domain. I hope Councillor Gruen can join Councillor Mulherin and myself in writing to NHS England around the additional housing not just in Holt Park but across Leeds 16 who will need GP access and that this is a retrograde step in access to healthcare at a time of rising numbers on GP lists in the area. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gabriel.

COUNCILLOR GABRIEL: Thank you, Lord Mayor, for letting me have another chance to have my speech. It is unforgivable for missing my own time, so thank you very much. Next time you speak out of turn when you are back on the Area Committee I will keep my mouth shut! *(laughter)*

I would like to speak on Minute 103 on page 168, Supply of Specialist Housing for Older People. I was really keen to speak on this issue because it is housing in Holbeck, and Holbeck has been a forgotten area of Leeds. For the last ten years we were trying to get the PFI scheme through a Conservative Government who never allowed it to happen, but eventually has now allowed it to happen and we are very pleased and hopefully this is a regeneration of Holbeck.

I would like to give some background information about the ongoing work that has been done. This facility is what people have been asking for. It has 23 fully furnished apartments, three fully adapted for disabled tenants with two bedrooms, six two-bedroom apartments and 14 one-bedroom apartments, which is something we are really short of in Holbeck. All apartments have wet floors and new kitchens. Tenants' warmth, safety and security is being considered throughout the design with new double glazing, fire doors, Euro cylinder door locks and the improvement in central heating. The courtyard has been revamped, which is good for Holbeck in Bloom and we shall be visiting, and you can see the improvements as you drive past to the exterior as you go on Domestic Street.

There is a high demand for this sort of housing in Holbeck. As I said, we are very short of one-bedroom and specially facilitated properties. Ingram Road is one of the first schemes that has come through the Council's Growth Programme and it is therefore important that the views and experiences of the new tenants will be taken up. Not only would Ingram Road be high quality accommodation but it will also be affordable, people will be able to live in Ingram Court without breaking the bank or worrying about how they and their families are going to be able to afford it.

It is near completion and I am sure, Lord Mayor, in the next month you will be attending to its opening and I am sure that all the Beeston and Holbeck Councillors will be there with you, and could I thank Philip for all his help and support in preparing this paper. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen to sum up.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: Lord Mayor, thank you very much. Can I perhaps begin by making a brief reference to the fact that our Chief Planning Officer, Philip Crabtree, is leaving at the end of this month and I believe the Council is indebted to him and owes him a sense of gratitude for all the work he has done. Certainly I have found working with him very productive and I think the Planning team has. I am sure previous holders of the Planning portfolio will echo that. Good luck and best wishes to Phil.

Perhaps one of the Lib Dem officers might want to go outside and ask Councillor Campbell to step back in because I have got a few things to say about him. *(laughter)* I do not want to do it behind his back.

Let me just start by saying, on the older people housing provision, I am very pleased that our housing team is working so well with Adam and Christine in terms of the Adult Social Care mapping out where the needs are and that we can then use the HRA as imaginatively as we possibly can to help provide yet again where some grant applications to Government sadly have failed. This is a growing sector, you know. Everything colleagues said about that is true. Councillor Anderson's comments equally I accept. They would free up more properties and it would therefore be sensible to do that. I was delighted to hear Angela's comments about Ingram Road and again all of that is, of course, perfectly true.

Councillor Anderson, we continue as you know with our discussions on Rosemont and they are ongoing. I am not going to say too much in this Chamber, otherwise we will find that Greg Mulholland will claim all the credit for things he has not done yet again! You and I will talk outside; we know what we are doing.

There was a large dollop of discussions on areas which are not in my portfolio or on community centres which come later on in the afternoon, but I really welcome James's comments about the reality of the situation we are in.

I think *that* part of the Chamber cannot simply continue to deny the difficult financial situation that we face and it cannot keep coming back and think nothing is ever going to change, and we cannot stop being leaders of your communities and actually helping to make some changes because that is what we are all Councillors for. We all have to make some tough decisions and will in the coming year in our own wards, and that includes you and he cannot just keep coming back in here whingeing and moaning and saying the world is dreadful and another black day is coming because if that is all we have got to offer, then frankly your electorate ought to have somebody else who is a bit more optimistic and can actually try and carry a more optimistic story forward.

I think in terms of the community centres I have just had a very brief word with Councillor Akhtar and, much to my surprise after the vicious attack from Councillor Bentley, it shows you what a statesman he is (*laughter*) and how far sighted and willing to forgive slights, which is a new side to Councillor Akhtar, I have to confess! Here we are, he said that the Community Committee will look as much as they can into the lease that you were talking about. You may well find if you talk to Councillor Akhtar and others outside of here that you have an ally that you did not think you had.

In terms of the Leeds Refurbishment Standard, thank you very much, Councillor Maqsood and others. It is right and proper and great to be able to say Decency did its job in its day but Decency standard is no longer necessarily always the standard we should aspire to. Actually, our aspirations in terms of quality and thermal efficiency and energy and all these other things, where again Councillor Dobson and I, working across our portfolios, are increasingly important and it is right to see benefits accrue to tenants who pay the rent and we should properly look after them.

I noted all the comments that Councillor Blackburn made about internal and thermal efficiencies and all I can say, I recommend that in the tea interval she comes and talks to Mark Dobson about these important issues (*laughter*) so that you get some symmetry about thermal efficiencies.

Obviously, I agree with the encouragement from Councillor Sobel. I am always happy to be encouraged by colleagues.

I hope I have not missed anybody out, it is very difficult in six minutes but thank you all for your contributions. (*Applause*)

(ii) Children and Families

THE LORD MAYOR: We now move on to the second group of Minutes from the Executive Board...

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: I missed Councillor Campbell out.

THE LORD MAYOR: ...Children and Families. Councillor Lamb.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak on Minute 119 on page 184 and to talk about school place planning and actually to touch on planning in general, which is not normally an area that I get involved in. I am deeply concerned about the housing numbers that have been agreed in the Core Strategy and the impact that is going to have on planning for school places.

The problem with having what we feel is a hugely unrealistically high number of houses allocated, in the region of 70,000, is that I do not think there are many people in this Chamber who think that many houses will be built over this planning period. The problem with having a number that high is the developers can pick and choose which sites they want to build on, they can put, which I imagine will be their preference to have a small number of houses on a very large number of sites spread all over the city which we do not know what they are going to pick first, we do not know where they are going to go, deciding where the school places are going to go. If we hit that number we are going to need something in the region of, I think, 74 two-form entry primary schools, before you get into secondary schools, to meet the need. We have enough trouble as it is, for all administrations of whatever colour, trying to plan exactly how many school places we need and where they are going to be.

There are lots of opportunities to do better but the problem we have with this unrealistic high number I fear, Lord Mayor, and I hope that it is something that perhaps Councillor Gruen can address as well but in this case Councillor Blake, that we have to do an awful lot more to tighten up. I hope ultimately a review will be brought forward to reduce the numbers that are being put forward for the city because we are going to have these massive pressures on our infrastructure and it is going to be a nightmare trying to plan exactly where things like school places are going to go.

I hope that review will come forward quickly, Lord Mayor, and I hope Councillor Blake can bring some pressure into the process to do that. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harington.

COUNCILLOR HARINGTON: This is page 185 Minute 120 about the process towards the new Children and Young People's plan.

The current plan, as you probably know, uses the word "obsession". We have an obsession to reduce the number of looked-after children. I wonder whether "obsession" is in fact the right word. We might be keen, think it is vital to reduce the number, be determined to, but obsessed to do it might seem a bit over the top.

Children become looked after for a wide variety of reasons. The usual cast of suspects includes alcoholism, drug addiction, mental health issues and domestic violence. Any one or a combination of these, as we know, can lead to the most intense damage on individuals, on families, on society as a whole, because we know that the young people damaged in this way at the beginning of their lives are likely to become the adults who are the victims of poor health, unemployment, antisocial behaviour, criminal and so on and so forth, all of which adds up to the most immense cost physically, mentally but, of course, also financial for all the various agencies – NHS, Police, Adult Social Care and so on – who have to pick up the pieces.

Any city that wants to be child friendly obviously has to do its utmost to try and, if not eliminate, diminish the consequences of this damage. Sometimes, unfortunately,

children have to be taken, as we know, into care which means that as corporate parents we have to do our very best in order to provide the right processes in care homes, foster care service and the process towards adoption.

The research shows overwhelmingly that the best outcome for children is to be able to remain with their families. It is clear that they have the best chance of thriving in later life if this can happen and so the current thrust of all our work in Social Services is precisely to try and make that happen, to give the right help at the right time, to be working with families rather than to them and it looks like our policy is working because the numbers, as you may have seen, have reduced from children looked after on 31st March 2012 at 1,476 down to 31st December last year to 1,315, a decline of 159, which might not seem massive but that is against a national increase of 4%.

My dictionary says that the word “obsession” means a continual and persistent image and idea that should fill the mind. It is pretty clear to me that if we are going to have any effect on the devastation I have been alluding to, then we need to have a plan that does indeed continually and persistently fill the mind.

In our current plan we have an obsession to reduce the number of looked-after children; because of the intense importance of this issue we should continue to use that word. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Smart.

COUNCILLOR SMART: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I will be speaking on Minute 120, page 185. I would like to draw the Council’s attention to the significant progress Leeds has made when it comes to reducing the amount of young people not in education, employment or training.

The most recent figures show that between December 2013 and December 2014 the number of young people not in education, employment or training fell by over one hundred and these young people now only make up around 6% of young people in Leeds, which is significantly lower than the national figure of 17%.

In addition to young people not in education, employment or training, we also have a significant number of young people who are classed as “not knowns” – quite simply, we do not know the status of these young people. However, this group of young people is also reducing due to the amount of work that we have done alongside schools with regard to tracking young people and hopefully we will see it continue to decrease over the next year. The “not known” figure is currently the smallest it has ever been at 5.9% which, again, is much lower than the national average.

Leeds City Council should be incredibly proud that the number of young people not in education, employment or training is decreasing. These figures directly show that more young people are being able to enter employment or undertake an apprenticeship or further education course. Youth unemployment has been a national problem for the last few years but the positive steps we have taken in Leeds have meant we have been able to significantly reduce our youth unemployment figures.

However, while we have made significant improvements there are still many challenges we must overcome as the progress is not the same across all areas of the city. We need to close the gap in educational and employment outcomes for these

young people from more disadvantaged backgrounds. Unemployment is significantly higher among young people than it is among any other age group, so it is critical that the new Children and Young People's Plan continues to prioritise getting young people into education, employment and training.

It is likely that those young people who have entered education, employment or training this year are those who are actively looking for work and have the skills and experience that employers are looking for, but we also need to work hard to ensure that we see progress among those young people who are classified as economically inactive and who are lacking in qualifications and work experience. This group of young people will include some of the most disadvantaged young people in our city and those in greatest danger of sustaining lasting damage to their future employment prospects.

We are certainly heading in the right direction but far too many young people are still out at work. No young person who is available for work and actively seeking employment should be shut out of the job market. We need to strive towards every school leaver having the option to enter either further education, an apprenticeship or a job. This is why we must continue to work hard to continue to give young people the skills, confidence and experience demanded by employers and universities. Only then can we say we have done everything we can to ensure young people in Leeds are reaching their potential. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Stuart McKenna.

COUNCILLOR S McKENNA: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am also speaking on Minute 120, page 185.

My colleagues have spoken on two of the three obsessions, and so it should come as no surprise that I am concentrating on the third – improving school attendance rates. I am delighted to say that we have seen significant progress against this obsession as well. Our primary and secondary attendance rates are at their highest ever recorded levels. This is no small achievement. Our primary attendance figures last year stood at 96.3%. This is 2.2% higher than five years ago, and above not only the Core City and Statistical Neighbour figure but also above the national figure. In fact, we have out-performed the national figures for the past three years. We are above the Core City figure for secondary school attendance but slightly below national and Statistical Neighbours.

Nevertheless, we have seen substantial progress in this area. Secondary unauthorised absence rates have reduced from 2.1% in 2012/13 to 1.8% in 2013/14. The challenge remains in secondary with regards to unauthorised and persistent absence. The highest levels are concentrated in a small number of schools. In 2013/14 there were six secondary schools with unauthorised absence rates more than double the city average. This is an area we need to focus on. There are various implications for children and young people who are persistently absent. They are more likely to be NEET in later life, more likely to be unemployed and there is a link between unauthorised absence and children and young people categorised in social care terms as children in need.

We can see the results of good school attendance in Key Stage 2 results. Outcomes are improving in Leeds with more children reaching expected levels at the end of

primary school. In addition, expected progress figures for English and Maths remain higher than national. The reason is obvious; children need to be in school to learn. Our improved primary attendance is reflected in improved primary outcomes. We now need to concentrate to ensure secondary attendance enjoys the same continuing improvement. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Flynn.

COUNCILLOR FLYNN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak to the same Minute, Minute 120 on page 185.

I would like to talk about children with special educational needs and disabilities and hope that due regard is paid to this vulnerable group and the Children and Young People's Act.

I suspect – in fact I do not suspect, I know – that some of these children get a very raw deal in educational terms. Ideally all children with special educational needs and disabilities could and should be educated in their local school. This does not happen for a number of reasons but usually because the schools do not offer adequate care and facilities. These children then have to be transported sometimes right across the city to schools that are prepared to offer the right level of care.

Some Headteachers clearly play fast and loose with the system in the sense that they will always find a reason not to take a vulnerable child if they can get away with it. It is about time that these very well paid Headteachers were held account for ignoring their statutory responsibilities, relieving other schools of unnecessary additional work and inevitable extra expense, particularly because of the chronic under-funding of children with statements and/or care plans.

I also think that the Council can take the easy way out on occasion. So long as a school can be forced to take a child, quite often because the parents have been pointed towards that school by Council officers, that I feel is completely unacceptable, they do not have to take issues with the schools that will not.

I had hoped that the new Leeds Local Offer might lead to an improvement, and it might yet, but the early signs are not very promising. I looked at four schools' websites yesterday, purely at random. Two of the schools had an exemplary Local Offer; the third one had an SEN policy dated April 2013; the fourth one had one dated October 2013 but due for review in 2016. I have tried to find without success from Children's Services the total number of schools that have not yet published this information on their websites but they were unable to give that information. I do not know about you, Lord Mayor, but that does not inspire me with confidence.

I feel it is about time that every mainstream school accepted responsibility for the education and care of all the children in their catchment area and for the Council to ensure that they do. We would do well to remember that for all the waffle and hot air that we generate on occasions like this (with the exception of you, Lord Mayor, of course) and including new policies, there can be devastating effects on vulnerable children and families desperately wanting help. I hope that the Council will get to grips with those Headteachers who are not playing the game. After all, they are the usual suspects. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blake to sum up.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor, and I welcome the opportunity to talk about the refresh of the Children and Young People's Plan. I am sure you will all agree with me that one of our top priorities from the last plan, increasing the voice and influence and participation of people, was very amply brought into play by Amy coming in with her friends today and talking to Council in such an extraordinarily confident way and I think all of the young people who have been elected as our Children's Mayors in Leeds have done a fantastic job for young people and really have done us proud standing up, and everything we are doing through Children's Services, working with all our colleagues across the Council and all our partners, is to make sure that children and young people in the city have a voice, it is listened to and that things are done differently as a result.

I am very grateful to Councillors Harington, Smart and McKenna for their contributions. I think they gave us a very good update on where the Children and Young People's Plan has taken us to over the last four years and I have just some information for Councillor Harington. Since those figures you gave in terms of the number of looked-after they have actually gone down by a further ten – another ten children safely kept out of care and living with their families, so I think we need to commend an extraordinary effort in the city against a massive rise in the number of referrals coming in and I really am pleased that you gave your endorsement to the fact that it is an obsession and I believe it will continue to be so.

The startling figures about the improvement in attendance means that since 2011 there have been an additional 400,000 school days attended by children and young people in this city. I think that deserves a round of applause. It is fantastic news (*Applause*) but we are not complacent. We are out to consultation, we have to bring the new Plans Council in April, it is part of our budget and policy process but it gives us a real opportunity to look ahead to say how we can get further progress, move faster in our key areas and particularly identify emerging challenges in developing the strategies we know have to be in place to deal with that and, again, I would like to commend the partnership work in the city. We cannot do this on our own. We have fantastic partnerships in the city that help us to bring this into play and I would like to congratulate Councillor Chapman on her elevation to the seat of the Lord Mayor, but she will leave behind quite a real gap in chairing the Children's Scrutiny Board.

The advantage we have got in Leeds is that we still have a Children's Trust Board. Many other Local Authorities have got rid of their Children's Trust Boards. We believe that that partnership approach is the way to take things forward, so we are looking at the whole area of readiness for learning. We know there are massive challenges for children coming into school and not being ready to start learning. Best Start, as we have heard, the real joint work that is happening with the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Championship that Councillor Mulherin has brought to this agenda is contributing enormously. Narrowing the Gap really is still one of our top priorities, whether it is around educational outcomes, health, unemployment, as Councillor Smart said.

I would just like to pick up then, if I may, Councillor Flynn's comments about SEN. I believe SEN will be a really key feature in the new Children and Young People's Plan going forward. I have to say I do not recognise everything that you have said today. As you know, I am very happy to have the conversation with you and I am

disappointed that you did not mention the two exemplary schools that you have got in your area, Ireland Wood and Ralph Thorseby, that are just fantastic examples of inclusive schools in the city.

Obviously we have an admissions policy. If you have any evidence at all that schools are not complying with our admissions policy, then tell us and we will take action as a result.

Councillor Lamb, it is another attempt to get your key message across about the housing numbers in the city, I recognise that, but do you know, what I really want to comment on is the fact that the decisions about school planning are taken nationally by the Government. Can I ask you to stand behind your Tory counterparts up and down the country who are crying out, as David Simmonds, the Chair of the LGA Children's Board just said earlier this week, give Local Authorities back the power to build our own schools and then we can have a real chance. *(Applause)*

The other thing is, of course, and you have examples all over the country of developers not honouring their 106 agreements. Let all of us work together, we have to do this, the pressure is, as you rightly say, enormous. If we pull together I believe in Leeds we can continue to provide quality education for all of our children and young people. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

(b) Scrutiny Boards

(i) Scrutiny Board (Resources and Council Services)

THE LORD MAYOR: We now move to other Minutes, which is the Scrutiny Board Minutes, and that is at the bottom of page 12.

COUNCILLOR MACNIVEN: My Lord Mayor, I am speaking on Minute 38 on page 201 of the Minute Book in relation to the meeting of our Scrutiny Board (Resources and Council Services) on 27th October, when we were delighted to have the opportunity to have a long and interesting discussion with Richard Corbett. The session focused on a broad range of issues relating to European Union policies and priorities.

One significant issue which emerged from the session caused the Members of the group much dismay and I would like to share that issue with Full Council. This concerns the implementation of the European Budget. Of particular concern to Leeds City Region is the failure to implement the European Structural and Investment Fund – ESIF for short. This funding is essentially intended to support economic development and Leeds City Region has been allocated £340m from the fund to be spent over a seven year period – nearly £50m per year – and it should have started in January 2014.

As a consequence of this failure to start, a huge opportunity to stimulate growth and create jobs has been lost. To date a whole year has been lost, and we asked why. Unforgivably, this is because the UK Government has yet to reach agreement with the European Commission on how the funding in the UK should be managed, and to date a whole year of activity – much needed activity at this time of economic hardship – has been lost.

After the January 2014 official start date was missed, the EC defined a new deadline of December 2014, but the Government was unable to reach agreement by that date as well. I understand that the aim is for agreement to be reached by the end of February – tick tock. However, it is likely that summer 2015 will be the earliest that projects can start spending funds. This is a significant delay and as a consequence, ESIF supported work to support economic growth in Leeds City Region will have been at a standstill for at least 18 months. This funding focuses on local economic stimulation and the consequent creation of much needed jobs. The fact that these delays are completely as a result of the inability and failure of Government Ministers to reach agreement with the European Commission is inexcusable.

At a time when many people are struggling with low wages to make the daily cost of living, we shall watch this situation closely and press for those revised timescales to be adhered to. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Jarosz.

COUNCILLOR JAROSZ: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on the Initial Budget Proposal Report that went to Resources and Council Scrutiny Board on 22nd December. This is Minute 54, page 207.

You all know by now that the Council is facing yet another massive cut to its budget in 2015/16 as a result of Central Government cutting our grant. Reductions of around £76m need to be made in the coming year. This is on top of £250m savings that have been made in the last four years. It does feel like the Council is now close to tipping over the edge. We will hear much more on this when the Budget is debate in full in February.

However, I want to talk to day in terms of the role Scrutiny can play in helping to find the savings. There are very difficult decisions to take about the future of Council services and this is why it is vital that the decision is taken in an informed and measured way with as much consultation as possible. Scrutiny has shown in recent years that it can play a part in helping find savings. Scrutiny Boards have helped identify savings in terms of using Council workforce well, for example by minimising spend on agency staff and overtime. They have helped develop better business management and changing the workplace projects which have made much better use of Council resources. This is projected to contribute to a saving of around £2.5m in 2015/16.

We are also asking the public to have their say on the budget, which is an ongoing public consultation. The net has been spread wide to get as much feedback from the public as possible, with coverage on the Council website, in local media, social media and via the Citizens Panel. It is important as this can help confirm the Council's priorities, what they should be. For example, last year the vast majority of people who responded said that we should continue to prioritise and support services for vulnerable people, such as Children's Social Care and Adult Social Care whilst this is possibly the most difficult time for local Government and I am pleased that we are being open and transparent about the choices we have to make and that we will give people a chance to have their say on what savings should be.

THE LORD MAYOR: Red light, Councillor Jarosz.

COUNCILLOR JAROSZ: OK, I will leave it there. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wadsworth.

COUNCILLOR WADSWORTH: Lord Mayor, I would also like to comment on page 54, 207, the Initial Budget Proposals, and particularly the decision by the Citizens and Communities Directorate to consider reducing the grant to the Citizens Advice Bureau by £130,000.

CAB in Leeds provide a valuable front line service to vulnerable residents. The most vulnerable and disadvantaged in the city are the people who use CAB. This funding reduction would almost certainly see an end to face-to-face meetings in Otley. CAB are extremely worried about this and volunteers from the CAB in Otley attended the December meeting of the Outer North West Committee and wanted a Deputation here today, but the Deputations were already full for today's meeting.

Councillor Sobel in his White Paper later talks about a north-south divide and there is a north-south divide in Leeds, with Otley CAB in the north of the city possibly closing whilst the city centre and Chapeltown remain open – there is a true north-south divide there.

Volunteers are very unhappy about this possible closure and these are people who give their time for free and we are constantly asking people to volunteer more across all the directorates, such as clearing snow for people, making sure elderly residents are safe in snowy weather etc, and then these volunteers seem to be cast aside. One volunteer wrote recently in the YEP, it was a volunteer of six years:

“We are extremely concerned the reorganisation of service will be looking towards increased telephone information services. People facing complex with debt, benefit and employment can currently discuss their problems confidentially with a trained adviser, no matter where they live. That is clearly not going to be the case if these cuts are implemented.”

The Council's view is to move to a more internet and telephone based service which will see the most vulnerable in society who do not have access to the internet and unlimited access to telephones being left behind by this.

After the December Community Committee I did write to Councillor Wakefield and Councillor Grahame on this matter but as yet have not received a reply. I understand really that the Council has to cut its budgets and I agree with councils cutting budgets, it has to be done, unfortunately, it is where we were left in 2010, we are all in this together, it has to be shared, but I would ask that the Council works with the CAB in the interests of all parties to ensure that the face-to-face-sessions continue in the Outer North West as they appear to being done in Chapeltown and Pudsey. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Just as long as the cut doesn't happen in Otley we are all right.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Anderson.

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I too would like to talk about the same Minute and the same reduction in terms of the potential closure of Otley, Pudsey, Morley and Crossgates Citizens Advice Bureaux.

I was heartened with the comments that Councillor Wakefield raised earlier on when he was talking about the Council Tax scheme and let us hope that the same logic is then used on the potential closure of the CABs as well.

Fifty per cent of all the Leeds CAB clients actually go through the Otley office in terms of the amount of face-to-face work that they do and it is vitally important the face-to-face, the reassurance of speaking to somebody who you know and you trust to give you independent and impartial advice, this is being put at risk.

If everything is transferred into the city centre you are going to lose the knowledge base and the experience of all of the volunteers that are there. Some might come into the city centre but the vast majority will not and that is a loss to our communities in terms of the skills that these people bring.

Otley Library, I have had a number of people who said to me that they do not think it is too private, it would be very difficult to have discussions in Otley Library in a private way, especially raising some of the issues that people are going to be doing. There is also going to be problems with the telephone gateway proposals because these people are not advisers and they are not trained up to the same level of experience as Members of the Citizens Advice Bureau.

There is however, and this is the reason I wanted to bring this, there is a lot of confusion out there with the public as to the role and the influence of the Council against the role, power and influence and responsibilities of the Chief Executive of the Citizens Advice Bureau. The briefing that I have had, and I presume by the response that Councillor Grahame got because I did ask Councillor Grahame if she would carry out a Scrutiny enquiry and she replied back very quickly to my request after having her briefing, so presumably she got roughly the same briefing as I did, which said that the Council had nothing at all to do with this. That is not the case. There is a real problem between officer briefings and the CAB briefings to Members of CAB, so we need to address that particular point. We need clarification.

CAB do agree locally that savings are needed to be made and if you ask them, or if we make sure that they are asked properly, they do have some suggestions as to how things could be improved.

What I am asking today is not for Councillor Grahame to take responsibility for what is happening but to speak to the people within the Council who can have some influence over this and to work more closely with the CAB in clarifying exactly what is happening. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Grahame to sum up.

COUNCILLOR P GRAHAME: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I will start first of all thanking Councillor Macniven on bringing to light to Council regarding our issue with the European – it has completely thrown me now, Barry Anderson, but I will wait till I come to you.

In 2013 we invited who was then the Liberal MEP, Edward McMillan-Scott, who was supposed to come in January but unfortunately could not make it because of the weather, and because we found it such an important issue regarding the funding that is there and has not been touched and the delays, we then invited Richard Corbett, who was more than happy to come and, as Councillor Macniven has described, that is what took place and there is a lot of funding there we think that people do not know about and are not touching on.

Councillor Jarosz, as you know we went into a lot of departments looking at the duplication and all the other things. We were not about cutting staff, job losses or anything else, it was all about cost cutting, being under one house and departments all together, so thank you and I think you have both detailed everything on the work programme that we have done. The main point is to follow it through and make sure that they do deliver on the recommendations, which is something that we have done.

Councillor Wadsworth and Councillor Anderson – I cannot even look at you! We briefly touched on the CAB and unfortunately Councillor Lowe has left because she is on the Board, I do believe, but we never went into details of it as a Board, but we will be more than happy to do so. I do think one of the main issues regarding the Boards and maybe the overworking will be of the Bedroom Tax where people are going for information and help, so remember what we will be looking at. You are certainly more detailed than what I have been informed and than I am myself. I might not remember names but I have a very good memory for things, so that is something that we will be looking at. For you both to be on the same item, I do find that a little bit strange.

We could get an acceptance from a Liberal MEP to come to the Board and then from the Labour MEP to come to the Board but, as Councillor Les Carter will know, we have been inviting Mr Pickles, the Secretary of State for Local Government to come. We have never even had a response from him but as well as the CAB I think we will have on the agenda the travel costs of the Secretary of State for Local Government and exactly how much of Leeds citizens' taxpayers money are going into his first class travelling expenses and his officers, as he is happy to go to China and spend all of that money. He could come to Leeds a lot cheaper.

I would like to thank you both for those comments and I will certainly find out what information I have received that you have just informed me of now and we will have a special meeting to look at it, but just remember, it is your Government that has caused all the overwork for those volunteers. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I think it is about twenty-to five now; I will call on Councillor Keith Wakefield to sum up.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. my only little query at the moment is Councillor Wadsworth's definition of North versus South. I always thought Chapeltown was in the north, but perhaps we will get a redefinition of geography.

Again, I think the opening points that were made by Councillor Macniven about the Extra Care homes are really important because they show that demographic profile of the city with our elderly is actually changing our services and changing provision. I often go on about the profile but if you look about the next 20 years, 120% growth in

over 80s. Even in the next five years our over 80s are going to go up from 22,000 to 40,000. That has got to have a massive impact on the way that we provide services, including health services, by the way.

For those who have been watching the crisis in the Health Service and A&E, part of that crisis is that we do not have the appropriate homes for people to be discharged to, so it is a massive issue that we are facing and I am delighted that we are making progress in terms of building up to 850 Extra Care homes in the next few years.

Councillor Charlwood is absolutely right, it cannot be just the Council, it cannot just be big developers building big houses and not having any responsibility to provide for our elderly in this city. I am delighted that in the paper that you referred to, Councillor Charlwood and others, we have got a strategy that says we are going to look at brown field, we are going to look at Council land and we are going to look at existing Council properties to convert to make sure we respond to that need in our city to provide extra care homes for our elderly in the next five to 20 years. It is a very ambitious programme and I am sure Councillor Gruen will come back with Councillor Ogilvie and give us a progress report soon. I will just give you a gee-up talk like Councillor Sobel did!

The other important thing, I think Councillor Maqsood said and we have said all these points, the Decency Standard 15 years ago looked really progressive and decent and it was, but when you look back it did not tackle damp, cold, ventilation, fuel poverty and I am pleased that this is going to, along with security and disabled access. Above all, this is a really good programme because the Procurement says that Mears, who are doing this, will employ local labour so we have up to 200 jobs and 30 apprenticeships working on improving our homes, which has got to be really about regeneration of our buildings and regeneration of our people by getting the jobs and skills and opportunities that we have looked at.

I went down not with Councillor Harper at the time but I went down to Holbeck and the PFI scheme, the one that Councillor Gabriel was talking about, and one of the most moving things and inspiring things was actually listening to people who were born, bred, over 80 and wanted to stay there and actually being reassured and seeing their own community improving and their own opportunity to stay there. That is what I think restores faith in politics and politicians when you can do that to people's lives and it really was well worth the visit just to listen to these people talking about that.

I have to say that Councillor Lewis referred to the Lib Dems as not growing up on the debate on the community. I would probably say some of them have grown up too much, Councillor Lewis, because this paper that went to the Executive Board was not about closing, it was actually saying to people here is an opportunity to get into civic enterprise, to work with your community, to develop social capital, to use innovation just as you said, Councillor Golton, which is what happened with Bramley Baths, which is a great example of not closing but actually using social enterprise, social capital, innovation, to keep a great service going and we have done that with a number of libraries.

I did not see it as a closure; I saw it as an opportunity and that was not a programme on closure, it was a programme about let us use our skills and let us encourage local people to take over community centres. In Kippax alone we had a community centre

that was not being used and what happened is a dance company came in and uses it every night and it is full of local people learning a variety of different dances. I think that is what the paper is about. It was not about the end of community centres because they do play a vital role in terms of stopping isolation, community cohesion, all the things that you have said.

Councillor Sobel, it is great to have a Councillor really interested in a part of that city and I can see why the Tories are not choosing candidate because he is working very well with Councillor Anderson. The only thing I have about Councillor Anderson with his contribution about Holt Park, he spent two-and-a-half minutes talking about legitimate concerns and half a minute on what is an absolutely brilliant example of regeneration, of including elderly homes, including young spaces, of actually regenerating the retail, of providing green space and, of course, what Councillor Anderson did not mention was, of course, linking up with popular and necessary transport systems. I am sure that Councillor Sobel after May will be using that bus on a regular basis in the future. It is a really good example of what you can do if you commit and I think it is one of the best examples of regeneration I have seen.

On the other issues in terms of the obsessions that Councillors Harington, McKenna and Councillor Smart said, do you know what the real important thing is, is that a lot of people thought looked-after children were absolutely destined to fail. I think not only have we reduced the numbers which, as you say, saves £7m and goes against the national trend, but they actually were getting people succeeding in education.

My only plea is, and I know this is a commitment shared by all of us in this Chamber on looked-after children, is that we actually make sure that employers and people who provide homes also give opportunities and support to those people when they leave there, because that is the kind of thing that will make sure that they succeed.

I want to just talk briefly on the point that Councillor Macniven provided on European funds. She mentioned £340m that was being wasted, or not being used because of this deadlock and what it demonstrates is that if you are ideologically bigoted you can stop vital support coming into our inner cities. That money is not only for companies, it is actually to reskill people in inner city that are looking for jobs and employment and therefore this Government is stopping regenerating our inner cities by actually being stubborn with the European Commission and it is totally, totally out of order and not acceptable for many people here.

The other thing that they are doing, the other funding stream that is being blocked by this deadlock is actually money for food banks. £22m is being stopped because of a refusal to agree between this Government and the European Commission on the way that it is distributed. That is completely, utterly wrong.

Finally we say this on the consultation. I think the Scrutiny Boards have done a very good job on showing ways of saving money, transforming work places and so on but I think also the consultation that Councillor Jarosz did is really important. You are absolutely right. What most people showed, over 4,000 people so far, they actually said they want to protect elderly, they want to protect young and vulnerable. They do not want the cuts in our Health Service, they do not want cuts to vulnerable people, particularly the disabled, and neither do they want this Government to carry on cutting back public services and destroying Local Government.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: I now call on the vote to receive the Minutes. (*A vote was taken*) They are CARRIED.

ITEM 14 – BACK BENCH COMMUNITY CONCERNS

THE LORD MAYOR: We now move on to Back Bench Community Concerns. We have five of them this evening. We will take one before we have a break for tea and the other four afterwards. The first one is Councillor Finnigan.

(1) Back Bench Community Concern – Morley Community Centres

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. We could start this discussion on Morley Community Centres by having a rather synthetic discussion about cuts and its impact on our communities. It is synthetic in as much as Ed Balls tells us up in Morley that there is not going to be any liberation of extra cash for Local Councillors should the Labour Government get in, so we do have to get past that sort of empty rhetoric and look towards working more with our communities to see what we can do to deal with the challenges that we face, whether we do or we do not get a Labour Government later on this year.

We have to look at what we can do to return control as much as we can do down to local residents, but that does not mean abdicating responsibility; that does not mean withdrawing and leaving communities to deal with these challenges on their own.

In Morley we have five community centres at this particular point. We will deal with Lewisham in a short while. We have Stanhope – Stanhope is run by a local community group and is run very successfully; indeed, it is run a lot better than it was under City Council control. Up in Drighlington we are in the process of getting a local community group, Drighlington Rugby Club, to take over the community centre. Their belief, and we agree with them, is that they are likely to be able to run it better than the City Council can and more efficiently than the City Council can, but that does not mean that we withdraw all funding and we leave them to their own devices. It means we provide the help and the support that they need to actually achieve things.

The reason they think they can run it better is that if anybody has dealt with Central Bookings they will know what a nightmare it is. Councillor Campbell already raised that, mentioned that previously. Centres are better run by the community in their own areas and run for the benefit of that particular community.

In Gildersome we have two, we have Gildersome Youth Centre, which is the one that is presently being considered for closure, and Gildersome Meeting Hall. Gildersome Meeting Hall thrives, it is a very successful meeting hall, it is well used.

The Youth Centre at this particular point supports all sorts of different groups – Cub Scouts, Guides – it is also where the Youth work is carried out in the Gildersome area. It is also a centre that provides a mums and tots group that works during the day.

We have said for years, because we are very progressive in Morley North, that that particular building is not really fit for purpose. It needs a hell of a lot of money spent

on it, there is not the money within the Council to be able to refurbish it and that we need to look at making sure that those groups are relocated somewhere else to find another place where they can operate.

We believe that the way forward with that is to extend the community centre that we have in Gildersome, where the Library already operates. What we want to hear from Peter is that there is a commitment that the capital from that building, should the Youth Centre be closed and sold, the capital from that is used to extend the Meeting Hall in Gildersome to make sure that those other groups are accommodated.

We want a clear commitment today. We do not want any flimflam, we do not want any discussion debate, we want to make sure that we have that reassurance that should you save on the revenue, which you will do if the Youth Centre is actually closed, that money is invested in improving the community centre that will take its place. We want clear commitments there.

The other community centre that we have a concern about is the Lewisham Park Centre and closure of that centre is unacceptable. As my Councillor colleague Councillor Elliott will tell you, it is the one community centre left in Morley South – there are no others. Councillor Elliott would also pass on that, if you go into Ardsley and Robin Hood, they have five community centres. We have one. This is the last one standing in Morley South and it serves the most deprived community in Morley South. Its closure is entirely and utterly unacceptable.

What we do believe in, certainly in Morley, is returning power to the people. We are talking to the local community groups about what they can do to help and support that particular community centre. The finances of Lewisham are quite interesting. The Council's own costs are something in the region of £30,000 of those £41,000 that it costs to run that particular centre. That is to do with caretaking services; it is fascinating that the Community Buildings Recharge is £9,000. God knows what they get for that particular money. The people who use it would say bog all. We are in a situation where a lot of those particular charges, if we add in the non-domestic rates and the carbon reduction commitment levy, £30,000 of that £41,000 is money that can be side-stepped, can be removed.

What the community are looking for is a clear commitment from you, Peter, that the £10,000, £11,000, £12,000 that it costs to actually run the centre, that the Council are going to step in and do that. This is not about abdicating responsibility and leaving a vulnerable community to cope by itself. We want a clear and solid commitment that the Council is still going to put revenue into Lewisham Park Community Centre because it serves a community that deserves it. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen to respond.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: I was very pleased to note in today's Morley Observer that I had been forewarned what this Back Bench Concern is all about. The headline is, "Morley taking the fight to Leeds City Council." Here is a new one, isn't it?

"The community centre is apparently going through a review process to explore if closure would be appropriate on financial grounds"

but Councillor Finnigan said:

“We are raising the future of both centres at the full Leeds City Council meeting. As far as we are concerned, closure is not an option. We will be putting together plans to keep them open.”

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Have you got some commitment, Peter? Are you committing anything?

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: I am very glad you have got some plans because what the paper, as the Leader said, to Exec Board actually did was to say, “Can we have a discussion? Can we have a debate with you as ward Councillors who have a responsibility in your own communities?”

If you wish to dispute the facts, then I am delighted for you to come and see me and officers but the fact of the paper that we were given is that Gildersome Youth Centre is used less than 25% of the time and recovers none of its costs, and that Lewisham Park Centre is used 21% of its time and, guess what, recovers none of its costs.

The first thing as a responsible Councillor I think you should do is say, well, here are the facts. Either you agree or you do not agree. If they are wrong then we will re-work them with you. If they are right, then the question to you is how can we use them better? You have come up with some ideas which I am very pleased to take up with you and other Councillors.

In terms of responsibility, because you only speak to us really through the Morley Observer, this is how we seem to communicate.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: That is not strictly true, is it, Peter?

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: On 5th December you sent your emissary through the Morley Observer to us and it says, and this is what you said, the Leader of the Town Council:

“There is a real opportunity here for Morley Town Council or the local community to take these centres away from Leeds City Council and into our own hands.”

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: We are taking it to the people, Peter. We are taking it to the people. Quite right too.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: It gets better:

“Under these circumstances the buck stops with us.” *(Cheering and applause)*

Do we all agree with that? The buck stops with you. *(Interruption)*

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: It does not stop with the Councillor Dawson, does it? He is offering nothing. Nothing whatsoever to help. You will be saying bye-bye to him anyway in May, Peter. He is going in May. Bye-bye.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: Councillor Gettings - it is not just about you. *(interruption)* Lord Mayor, can I have extra time, please?

THE LORD MAYOR: Can you stop interrupting, Councillor Finnigan? I will only have to allow extra time.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: Councillor Gettings was equally astute and aware because he said that community activities are more important than buildings. Well done, we all agree, so I would not want to lose it unless the people use it. Thank you, Councillor Gettings, I agree with that quote and that was on 27th November.

Councillor Dunn, absolutely right, said “Closure would be a very last option. We want to save it but we want a drive to increase use.” That is the debate, how can you increase use?

Talk to us, talk to the officers, do not scaremonger, do not go out there and spread evil words on everybody. *(Interruption)* It will be the first time you would not do it. Come and talk to us.

THE LORD MAYOR: I think on that note we will have the tea break. Can I ask Members to be back for 25-past so we can get off to a start.

(Short break)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. We are moving on to the second Back Bench Community Concern. Councillor Renshaw.

(2) Back Bench Community Concern – Cycle routes in the Outer South Area.

COUNCILLOR RENSHAW: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking today about the need for more provision for cyclists in Ardsley and Robin Hood and the Outer South Area. Cycling has increased in popularity in the last few years, as we are all aware, especially following the success last summer of the Tour de France when 3.3m people watched the race in Yorkshire. Why, then, was Ardsley and Robin Hood not incorporated into the Council’s Core Cycle Network Strategy? All our ward has been excluded, with the network reaching up to some of the boundaries. What impact will this have on the health and wellbeing of our young people, where schools are offering cycle courses but unfortunately, due to the lack of our cycle lanes on our roads, the travel plans to get to school cannot always promote cycling as an option.

66% of three million people who watched this race felt inspired when it was the Tour de France and they thought it had a positive impact on their intention to take up cycling.

In Ardsley and Robin Hood at many of our junctions you will see the red boxes for cycles. Where are the red routes that lead to it? Having a colourful impact on the highways is wonderful, but not if the cycle routes are not in place.

We are constantly asked why specific areas in Ardsley and Robin Hood are excluded from our city cycling plans, especially having the A61 and the A650 as part of the network for busy A roads where many of our primary schools are positioned. All our residents are wanting to do is improve our health and our air quality, reduce casualties while creating safer, more pleasant neighbourhoods. 62% of people agree with the statement “The idea of cycling on busy roads frightens me.” Our residents have a right to cycle in our city and most of all in their localities.

On behalf of our residents, our “wannabe” cyclists, please can you incorporate our communities into the Council’s Core Cycle Network and give our residents an option for safer cycling. Currently pavements are being used as cycle routes, making it hazardous or dangerous for pedestrians and especially for the disabled. We cannot and will not allow for our pavements to be used as a substitute for our cycle lanes, which are urgently needed especially on our major link roads, the A650 and the A61.

Listening to Councillor Yeadon’s positive impact on cycling, I would urge on behalf of Ardsley and Robin Hood’s residents and young people that our area can be part of any future plans to develop and enhance cycling in our ward; not only child friendly but can we please also make it cycle friendly. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dawson.

COUNCILLOR DAWSON: My Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, recently Mrs Dawson and myself took part in an activity that we have not done for some time. *(laughter)* In fact, to be precise, the last time we did this activity was on a short weekend break in Amsterdam in 1993. *(laughter)* Of course, I am talking about cycling.

I am one of those who have not cycled for some time. Having completed the Abbey Dash in November, my next objective is to get back on my bike and take part and do the second leg of my own triathlon. Let’s Get Active is a slogan, quite correct – if I can do it then anybody in this Council Chamber and anybody in Leeds can do it.

However, the difficulties of cycling in Morley are many. It is hilly and there is lots of traffic, especially on Churwell Hill. However, we were in luck when we went cycling because fortunately the local Council has closed the main route into Morley through Churwell for 16 days, therefore traffic was much lighter than usual. Thank you to Councillor Richard Lewis for arranging that for us! *(laughter)*

There is another barrier to cycling in Morley and that is that there are no cycle ways and very few cycling lanes. They are hard to find, as Councillor Renshaw said. I think there is a consensus in this Council that we need to encourage cycling for many reasons – health, personal fitness, combating pollution, reducing the carbon footprint, improving transport.

Construction of our £29m east to west cycle superhighway has started and it is an exciting and much needed development in the city but we need to do more than that. What we need to do is particularly invest in the south of the city – and by the south of the city I mean going from the city centre to the south, not Councillor Wadsworth’s definition of the south of the city which ends in Chapeltown. I would like to see a firm commitment that the next major investment in a cycle way is north to south. On the southern leg we can debate the route, whether it goes through Dewsbury Road, Elland Road to the A61.

I know that funding is a major barrier but I keep reading that the Government of whatever colour will soon be falling over themselves to give Local Government billions of pounds for transport investment – billions to be spent on HS2, HS3. The West Yorkshire Combined Authority in December approved a spending package of £1.4bn for transport improvements in West Yorkshire.

My plea to those who are making the decisions is that we should make cycling superhighways part of this new investment in our infrastructure. As we are building the high speed railways, the trolley routes, the new roads and the motorway improvements, let us also build some major improvements to enable this city to cycle. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis to respond.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. If I could perhaps pick up on one of the key issues for me, why is there less cycling in the south than there is in, say, the north or the west? I think one of the problems we have is that there are huge geographical barriers, that disconnection that you have because of the motorway system that we have put into place, so we start off in a difficult place to get that kind of real impetus to cycling that we want to see.

I would say that the first core cycle route that we put in was out to the south but I would fully accept what my colleagues have said in terms of the major investment in cycling has been elsewhere and Ardsley and Robin Hood is not the only ward that is not touched by one of our cycle routes. However, that does not make you feel any better if you represent that ward, when you have to come here and make those points. The route does go very close, I would say that as well.

The first good news I would like to say is that we are currently talking about the second stage of our cycling ambition. Some extra funding was announced just on New Year's Eve and, because we took part in the last round, we have been invited to take part again. There are two routes that go out to the south that are under consideration at the moment. One is – I will not get geographically confused – basically a Moortown to Morley route and the other one is a city centre to Wakefield city centre A61-type route. I do not know at this stage what route will be put forward but the decision will be made shortly.

It is not just about that big expenditure. There is a lot of stuff that has gone on already across the city that people, I will not say they ignore but do not think of it as primarily about cycling but has a big impact on people's ability to cycle. Firstly, I would point out the 20mph zones and you will be well aware that within the South, both the Inner and Outer South, we have a fair number of those and more in the pipeline for the next tranche of work that is going to take place. There is also all those incremental improvements that we make to highways with advanced stop lines for cyclists, improved Toucan crossings at places like Tingley where there has always been considered to be a major problem for cyclists in negotiating a big junction.

We are committed to achieving the full cycling network of 17 routes. We are up to seven at the moment. That will mean we go into the Outer South but can I reassure Members that I am absolutely committed to us in every way ensuring that cycling is there for every part of the city.

In the West we are looking currently at the start of that work on City Connect which, to me, is about cycling but it is also about more than cycling. I think it has also a huge potential regeneration impact on parts of the route out on the West.

Let us also think about things like NGT. NGT has cycling provision built in. I know we have been waiting a long time but there is that. There is also work in terms of the Flood Alleviation Scheme and how that connects with things like the Rothwell Greenway from Robin Hood, so there is a lot happening.

I understand fully how Members feel and that frustration about we always seem to miss out. Let me reassure you, I am committed to ensuring that we have an ability for everyone across the city and for every school to be able to access cycle routes to get to and from school and for people who want to cycle to have that ability to do it in a way that is safe and where they feel comfortable, whether that is into the city or whether...

THE LORD MAYOR: Red light, Councillor Lewis.

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

(3) Back Bench Community Concern – We Want our Communities’ Rights Back!

THE LORD MAYOR: The third Back Bench Community Concern, Councillor Walshaw.

COUNCILLOR WALSHAW: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I am speaking about planning again, which comes as no surprise to a lot of Members in this Chamber. I have entitled this Back Bench Community Concern “We Want our Communities’ Rights Back!” and I really mean that so the first opening of my question really is, do we want to live in a city where capital and big business runs amok and communities have no rights? I am not seeing many hands, that is really good because we are about to have that visited on us in Headingley, and I will explain why.

You might have heard of something called Permitted Development which in planning terms is what you do not need planning permission for, and typically it has been quite uncontroversial stuff – it is sheds, single storey extensions, conservatories, all the stuff that goes on like that that you do not really need planning permission for.

However, the Coalition Government in its infinite lack of wisdom has massively extended permitted development rights to include wholesale changes of one use of building, or sets of buildings in this case, to another set of uses without any community rights, without any democratic accountability, completely bypassing the Planning system and, you might want to add, completely bypassing over a thousand years of accumulated rights that we have as citizens in this country.

This is all about Headingley Office Park, which is situated between the A660 and Victoria Road. It is much needed low cost business space in Headingley, because we need to have jobs locally. We have talked a lot about that during the Site Allocations process.

The owners of that now want to turn that, without my community and Jonathan and Janette’s community having any say, they want to turn it from office space (which we need, we need the jobs) into flats which, in a ward where ten per cent of properties are empty and it is right next to a development that will be loads of townhouses and flats, I think we can legitimately say we do not need these flats. I think that is an important consideration.

This is, for the people of Headingley in a high stress area, a massive, massive imposition. I think it is grossly unfair that we are seeing this and, as someone who takes a keen interest in urban planning and urban history and all how cities work and often do not work, this is the path that leads us to cities not working. This is the path that leads us to congestion, to slums, to favelas, to shanty towns and I am not exaggerating because Channel 4 News did a piece recently that under these permitted development rights in the south-east of London, an enterprising person had turned their industrial unit full of containers into flats and the local Councillors, local community, has absolutely nothing it can say about that, that is a done deal. That, I think, colleagues, is capital running amok and it is grossly unfair, it is a disgusting affront to democracy, it is imposition of change on our residents, it is a disgrace and, frankly, Lord Mayor, we want our communities' rights back. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen to sum up.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: I am sorry, Lord Mayor, I was waiting for other contributions.

THE LORD MAYOR: No, they are not contributing. No.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: They have left it all to Councillor Walshaw and I am not surprised because it was an excellent contribution and he made the point very clearly.

I do sometimes hear Members of the Conservative Group on planning matters at least have the integrity to speak out when they disagree with something on Planning issues that the Government is bringing forward. I have yet to hear a Lib Dem spokesperson ever criticise anything on planning when it is patently and plainly wrong. The Government's decision to give permitted development rights for the conversion of offices to residential accommodation in May 2013 is plainly wrong.

It severely limits the Planning Authority in what powers it can use to determine proposals to evaluate the impact in terms of traffic, in terms of land contamination and flood risk. Other concerns which we would normally take into account in the planning process such as amenity and impact on nearby residents can no longer be considered, so in densely populated close together communities this is a real issue.

Furthermore, a decision must be issued within 56 days otherwise permission is deemed to have been granted and in addition to that, no application fee is required, no Section 106 contribution or CIL payment is required. To date in Leeds, just to give you the balance of what has happened in just ten months, 906 units have been approved and a further 202 proposed residential units are in the pipeline, including 124 units on the Headingley Office Park.

The City Council so far has had to forego approximately 60 affordable housing units, over £270,000 in planning fees and a further loss of Section 106 contributions for green space and transportation amounting to another £400,000.

Think of the context of the budget we were talking about earlier on, community centres, whatever you wish to think about. That is a massive amount of money. It is a massive loss of democratic right for local communities and all of these during the

consultation process we objected, even the Chamber of Commerce objected, many Core Cities objected and even London Boroughs and Boris objected, but it continues.

So, what to do. I think the suggestion – this is an excellent Back Bench Concern and shows how it can be made to work. I will take this forward with other Planning portfolio holders across the region and ask the Director to ensure that the appropriate reports are tabled and agenda-ised properly and that we can perhaps through the City Region at least look at this again, because if we are having this experience others will be having that experience.

I look to the Opposition to come together with us and ensure that where it is so plainly wrong we can stand together and say, “This is unacceptable.” Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

(4) Back Bench Community Concern – to address concerns about highways maintenance and speed limits in Alwoodley Ward.

THE LORD MAYOR: The fourth Back Bench Community Concern is Councillor Cohen.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. My Community Concern relates to addressing concerns about highways maintenance and speed limits in the Alwoodley Ward.

The first road I want to specifically focus on is a road that will be well known to quite a number of Members of this Council, not least because quite a few of you live in my ward or at least live very near to it. Shadwell Lane, which will certainly be well known to the Deputy Leader of Council, is a 40mph road and there can be few roads more unsuitable to being a 40mph road such as this. Indeed, local residents almost to a person want this to be a 30mph road. All three ward Members want this to be a 30mph road. Bizarrely, Highways officers agree with us that this should be a 30mph road. The local Neighbourhood Policing Team agree that this should be a 30mph road.

There is a general consensus that this ought to be a 30mph road except for, it seems, one Highways Police Officer who is not entirely comfortable that it needs to be a 30mph road, notwithstanding every other stakeholder having this view, and seemingly nonsensically this one person seems to be able to stop this whole process in its tracks. It must, surely, be a nonsense and I would urge you, if there is anything we can do to look at this then we really ought to. We cannot have a situation where so many local residents, so many local stakeholders think something should be done and yet one person in uniform seems to think the opposite. It must be a nonsense.

Moving on, if I may, for some years a number of streets in Alwoodley – The Avenue, a number of streets, the High Ashes – have been in a terrible state, the roads and the pavements. To try and navigate those roads with a wheelchair or with a pushchair or if you are having to use a walking frame is literally to take your life into your hands.

I am delighted that, after pushing for many years, Highways have agreed with ward Members that these roads need to be brought forward on to the maintenance programme. I certainly hope that will happen in the next financial year.

We have always been told that roads and pavements are allocated for repair on the basis across the city of the needs that most need it first are done first. Indeed, that seems to be being cemented this year, it seems, in budget proposals and that is something I welcome because looking at some of the roads certainly in our ward, they really do need that attention.

What does worry me and I know worries everybody in this Council is when we waste money as an Authority. We have just spent considerable money quite rightly resurfacing Fir Tree Approach. Immediately off Fir Tree Approach is about 100 metres of road, Fir Tree View, that is in as equally shocking a state as Fir Tree Approach. Council Highways Officers agreed that it is in an equally shocking state and yet are proposing to fix that some time, pardon the pun, down the road.

It seems crazy to bring all the plant, all the machinery and have all the people right there on site and then not simply go the extra 100 metres to complete the job. Again, it just seems like a waste of money to look at doing short term fixes, which is what they are proposing, when everybody is right there at the moment and could look at doing the job there and then.

Councillor Lewis, you referred before to 20mph zones. As you know - and Councillor Les Carter is not here right at the moment so I can say this safely without having something thrown at me – I have made no secret of my support for 20mph roads, particularly around schools. The evidence that they make the roads to schools so much safer is generally widely accepted – not always, but generally.

Particularly given the emphasis we want as a Council to get people walking to school, if we can make those routes to school that much safer, that has to surely be something to the good. It is therefore a disappointment in Alwoodley that we are not yet seeing around any of our schools 20mph zones and I was wondering, is this another example of a north-south divide, particularly if we use the Wadsworth definition of south as being Chapeltown. If that is something that could be looked at being brought forward, it does seem odd that no Alwoodley schools have 20mph zones anywhere around them. I know there is the plan to bring it forward. If we could do that as quickly as possible I know it is something the residents of Alwoodley would genuinely welcome. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Buckley, are you wishing to speak? No. Councillor Richard Lewis to respond.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I cannot tell you where 20mph zones are planned to be introduced but if you want to come up to my office there is a big map on the wall and if you look at that you will see the proposed zones. It is not in the front of my head at the moment but I am more than happy that you come – there is no hidden agenda about trying to ensure that more people in Alwoodley have accidents than the rest of the city. However, as you are well aware, the residents of LS17 do have the worst records for speeding finds of anybody in Yorkshire. *(laughter)* I do realise that LS17 is not just Alwoodley but those speeding vehicles may have an impact on highway maintenance.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: In Moortown, Councillor.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Yes, OK, I will not rub it in. In terms of the specific points you made, we do look at speeds on highways and you will have seen the schedules that come through various documents over the years saying where usually speed limits are decreased, occasionally they are upped. It is not one that has been brought to my attention, isn't Shadwell Lane. I am more than happy to look at it. I do not know why Peter is looking shocked – it honestly has not. I will tell you the one that always concerns me most, and it is on the Wetherby Road going through Scarcroft where I think it is far too low. How is that for something controversial. Certainly Shadwell has never been brought to my attention.

In terms of the spend on highway maintenance, actually – and I have to say that I feel somewhat shamefaced in saying - spend in Alwoodley Ward has been 18% higher than average for the city, so you have not done too badly. (*Interruption*) Am I going to get out of here alive is what I am wondering at the moment!

I think one point you were trying to get at is that we have always spent on the basis of worst first, which is not true. There has always been a ward allocation which has been a bit of, I think, smoke and mirrors because roads fall into different categories. With the budget constraints that we face, I have to say that I took the difficult decision of saying we can no longer have a system that guarantees to every ward that they will have a sum spent on their roads if they are not the worst ones, because we end up where across the city you could say we are doing 50 roads on the basis of a ward allocation. If you were to look at the 50 worst roads, they would not be the same 50 roads.

Where we are now, I think we have to be in a position where we say – and that is quite difficult, it is difficult because again Members do expect that they will see something happening in their locality but we are going to move away from that and that is forced on us by where we are in terms of the budget.

I think those are most of the points and I think the last one is very much where I come from. I do not have a view that roads in Alwoodley should be worse than roads in Moortown or worse than roads in Roundhay. As far as I am concerned we should have a basic standard and as far as possible we try and ensure that every road is at that and that every part of the city is treated in the same way. I am not sure that it always happens, I will be honest with you. Part of my job is ensuring that it does.

I remain committed to ensuring that the roads in Alwoodley, Shadwell, Moortown are as good as they are in the rest of the city. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

(5) Bench Community Concern – To raise issues regarding the future of Otley Citizens Advice Bureau

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. We now move to the fifth Back Bench Community Concern, Councillor Lay.

COUNCILLOR LAY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I shall be talking on my community's concerns over the proposed closure of Otley Citizens Advice Centre.

Otley CAB is a lifeline. It is a lifeline to the poor needing help with benefits, debt, housing and utilities. It is a lifeline for the frail, the disabled and the disadvantaged unable to access the internet, unwilling to speak on the phone and too poor for the

cost of two or three buses into the centre of Leeds. It is a lifeline for the worker on minimum wage with no representation and with little or no knowledge of employment law.

Whether benefits, debt, housing, employment or any of the other myriad of advice given, the CAB does a sterling job. They support residents in most difficulty with free, independent, impartial advice.

So why am I here? For the benefits of Members I will recap. In April 2014 the Council rolled up all their grants for advice into one contract worth £1.65m, and awarded that contract to Leeds Consortium. This is made up of Leeds CAB, Chapeltown CAB and Burley Lodge Advice Services. Unfortunately, this coming year the Council is proposing to cut that payment by ten per cent, or £165,000, whilst asking the Consortium to do more with less. Clearly the Consortium and Leeds CAB in particular have a difficult job to find that level of savings, so they are proposing to close the Bureaux at Otley, Morley, Pudsey and Crossgates.

I hope that my fellow Councillors in those areas affected have been raising concerns but my concern at this time is the Otley Bureau. If one looks at the Leeds CAB map with its services, you will see a wealth of services being provided across the city in children's centres, GPs, health centres, one-stop shops and libraries. If you look all way out to Otley you will see almost nothing other than the current service and an appointment only welfare rights session in the Otley Library. It is not because there is no demand. Indeed, Otley provides 13% of the advice and at a cost of only 3% of the contract provided by the Leeds CAB service each year – remarkable value for money, if you ask me. It has 25 dedicated volunteers and two part-time staff giving tailored personalised face-to-face advice with a reach of 100,000 residents residing all over Outer Leeds North West, including Otley, Yeadon, Horsforth, Holt Park, Guiseley, Rawdon – do I need to go on?

This face-to-face advice is often very crucial to finding out why someone has come for advice. Indeed, at Monday nights Otley Town Council meeting, Councillor Jim Spencer, a volunteer adviser at Otley, told how very often it takes 45 minutes to get to what the problem is. This sort of interaction just cannot be done over the phone.

What is proposed, other than the ten per cent funding cut? The model going forward is proposed to be a hub and spoke model, with two, maybe three bureaux centred in the city with weekly sessions in a community venue as spoke session – an outpost, if you like. With the reach, the cost benefit and the value of Otley, Otley is neither a spoke nor an outpost.

The current service is based in the purposely designed offices within Otley Courthouse. This venue is a community and volunteer led facility that relies to some extent on the relatively small rent from the CAB to help deliver great arts and crafts, drama and music within the community. The unintended consequence of closing the CAB and removing this rental income will undoubtedly have a significant effect on this arts centre as well.

Furthermore on questioning, no alternative venue has yet been found. The One-Stop Shop, the Town Council offices, the children's centre and the GPs have all been asked and for one reason or another are not able to provide CAB sessions. The Civic Centre is closed, the community centre in our most disadvantaged area is proposed to close

and there is only one room in the library. It is now the only Council meeting room in Otley and that is where possibly a CAB could go but would not be appropriate, in my view.

I guess finally I am hoping Councillor Wakefield will not spend his four minutes making political points about the cuts that this Council is having to make. We all know that. I have not spent my six minutes making political points because it is important that Council understands that there is genuine concern in our communities at these proposals.

I hope to hear that Councillor Wakefield understands my concerns, the unanimous concerns of the Outer North West Community Committee and of Otley Town Council and the real concern and bewilderment not just of the community but all those involved in running the Otley CAB service.

I implore you, Councillor Wakefield, to intervene and let us work together to ensure that this vital high quality, independent service is not cut, let alone closed. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield to respond.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think that plea at the end has really changed my mind. I am going to speak in very soft tones, like Councillor Richard Lewis did, on an important issue now you have made that plea, Sandy, because I am sure it was sincere.

I think the first thing I would like to do in a serious way is to thank all the volunteers - all the volunteers in Otley and all the volunteers across this city because without them the support and advice would be on its knees and probably closed. I know many people who work for CAB and other advice organisations are absolutely stretched. Everybody knows that advice need has gone up over 100% across the city, so I would like to thank them.

I think one of the things we can say as an administration is that we have not touched, we have not cut advice money since 2010, so the money we given to the organisation has remained the same since 2010, and I think that reflects our commitment and our priority to those organisations that are doing vital services.

I think the trigger to all this was that we have cut, as you rightly say, ten per cent for next year and that has caused the CAB and other organisations to ask the question, how can we provide more because demand is going up, with a ten per cent cut. That is why they are moving to phones and websites and so on.

I will just repeat here for colleagues who do not know this, if anybody needs face-to-face as well as telephone contact, that face-to-face service will still be provided by our services.

I think I join in with what Councillor Gruen said the other day. I do get pretty sick and tired of watching *that* side come out and talk about the desperate need for advice without asking the question, why do we need this advice? Because there is an onslaught by this Government on welfare benefits and actually triple the amount of people in poverty in this city in the last few years. That is a question I have never

heard you ask and it is like other people, like Councillor Wadsworth, cuts everywhere else but not us.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Not in my back yard.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I have got to ask the question, one of the reasons why we need more advice and support is because of that odious bedroom tax. His party representative in Parliament, Greg Mulholland, actually voted for bedroom tax last week. What a shame you should be in a party that turned its back on an issue there. Let me say that fortunately we have John Eveleigh as a Town Council Leader, who has offered them money. He has actually offered money from the Town Council to support.

I put this to you, colleagues, if you are really seriously committed and you want support from us, ask how much money has gone in from the Area Committee to support CAB – nothing. I do think that at last we have somebody with a conscience in Otley, the Leader of the Town Council, who has led the way of giving money, and we have somebody here being hypocritical in this room and not even trying to organise your Area Committee to actually put money in when it is absolutely needed. Shame on you and shame on your Party. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

ITEM 15 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – CORE STRATEGY HOUSING NUMBERS

THE LORD MAYOR: We now move to the final segment of the meeting, White Papers. We have three White Papers 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.

Now, Members, I must ask you to stick to the three minutes precisely, or under the three minutes, simply because we have a lot of speakers on these White Papers. I was approached by all the Whips asking me that when the three minutes is up, to switch the microphone off and call the next speaker. That is what I will do unless Members are disciplined and keep within the three minutes. The Whips agreed that, it was their suggestion.

Right, we will start with Councillor Carter's White Paper. Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Let's get cracking!

My Lord Mayor, once again we want to give the controlling Labour Group a chance to get themselves off the hook on to which they have placed themselves relating to the 70,000 houses they have included in their Core Strategy.

There are two major statistical errors that have led us to the position that we find ourselves in now. For some unknown reason the Core Strategy was based on a population increase in the plan period of 144,000. Those are statistics taken in 2008, interestingly when the last Government's open door immigration policy was at its height.

In 2010 that population figure was reduced to 101,000 and in 2012 81,000 – a massive decrease in percentage terms, yet these housing numbers are based on the

144,000 population increase which now twice has been downgraded, and that the City Council themselves, in a letter to the Inspector, pointed out was the case. However, in that letter, after the inquiry took place, they also said, foolishly, they did not want to reopen the debate on the overall housing requirement, although patently it was overstated.

To make matters worse, the City Council are saying that all 44,000 new jobs – which we welcome – which will be created in Leeds over the planned period, every single person who takes one of those jobs will live in Leeds. That defies logic because at the moment there are 387,000 people work in Leeds and 120,000 of those, 33%, live in other West Yorkshire or North Yorkshire Council areas. How can you say that every job when the statistics say something totally different?

Finally, when green belt is lost, wherever it is lost, it is lost for ever and some of you might be quite happy about that, but I am not, particularly when it is not necessary at all. We all have accepted, we have all taken difficult decisions, we have all seen in our own wards land that will reluctantly have to go for development, but that should not be at a level that is not statistically required and that is what your plan does.

I just say to Councillor Gruen, a few moments ago he made one of his better contributions to this Council about permitted development, and I have to say I entirely agree with him and would be more than happy to lend my support to what he is suggesting, but earlier on today his comments were quite insulting to the residents of Leeds. To say to them “You have got more green belt” when actually all he has done is to put rural land in, quite rightly, in Wetherby, is just beyond belief and insulting to their intelligence. You tell people in Morley that you have put more green belt in but it is 25 miles away on the northern side of Wetherby and see what response you get. It is not worthy of you, it is wrong and it is sleight of hand that will get you in a lot of trouble that sleight of hand in the past has always got you into. I move the resolution. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lamb.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: I formally second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: I have put forward an amendment because I am hoping that we might set aside the fact that in twelve weeks’ time there is a General Election and that we might actually go back to the start of the journey two years ago and I could produce any number of quotes from Councillor Carter and Councillor Procter about we must work together, we must have a plan.

Indeed, when we had joint discussions with the then Planning Minister who came to Leeds and visited, he said, “You must have a plan. The most important thing is that you have a plan and the second most important thing”, he said, “you try your damndest to get a five year land supply. Those are the two ingredients you need to have.”

Shortly before he was removed to another post he also said to us experience across the country is showing him that apart from having a five year land supply we ought to have a buffer over and above that because he recognises, as we do, that unscrupulous

volume house builders will try and chip away and chip away on your five year land supply until you have not got one any more. We also know that if we do not have a plan, that they will come in and I understand the green belt argument, of course I do, but they will come in as they have done already and say “We want to build on two sites in Scholes, we want to build in Adel, we want to build on the green belt throughout the whole of our city” and we have no defence.

The sites I have mentioned we have refused on the basis that we have a plan. That is important. Do I think the plan is perfect? No, I do not. There is never a perfect plan but we put our plan to the Inspector, and Andrew was part of the decision that we would write to him about the latest statistics that we had, and we said to him, “That is the latest information. Are you satisfied that the plan stands or do you want to come back?” and he accepted that what we have done and the resolutions we have made were reasonable, and so he passed the plan as sound in September.

What I am not doing, and what I am standing against is that then in October or November, just because there is a General Election around the corner, we should immediately start to review the plan. I have already given a commitment that we want an early review, which I have said will be within three years and, of course, if other evidence comes in to back up the fact that the figures are too high, then why would we want to set our face against it? Why would we want a higher figure than we needed to have? We have judged it rightly.

The problem with Andrew’s resolution is, he is devaluing all the work that we have done together and the achievements we have made on the journey and is now concentrating, purely for the short term, on housing numbers. Actually, this is not a short term plan. There is not talk about phasing yet, there is not talk about any number of things and we have an opportunity in the short to medium term to take stock and review and be sensible about it and that is why I move the amendment, because you cannot in these circumstances not proceed with Site Allocations, heap uncertainty on people and cause havoc.

We want a measured way forward with your support. That is very important to us, having a joint approach because the volume house builders will pick you off any time they can. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: I formally second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Leadley.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, although we support the aim of Councillor Andrew Carter’s White Paper, it must be said that it may be too little and too late. Leeds’s excessive LDF Core Strategy housing target of 74,000 dwellings gross has been well known since at least the end of 2011 and before then was emerging from the Yorkshire and Humber Regional Spatial Strategy targets for Leeds which arose between 2005 and 2007 and were adopted in May 2008. All those targets were very similar and they assumed an endless boom creating endless exponential growth of supply and demand for housing and, really, were demonstrably foolish from the start. For a number of years they have been a spinning roundabout which many have seemed afraid to jump off.

The best time to revise the figures downwards and get off the spinning roundabout was in the spring of 2013 when we had newly published detailed returns from the 2011 census. A draft of the Core Strategy was about to be published and delaying for only one City Council meeting cycle, or less if people were in that much of a hurry, would have allowed those new and reliable figures to be substituted for the old guesstimates. It took me a single afternoon to do the more important calculations and I am sure that our officers could have gone through the entire Draft Core Strategy in a few days; the framework had been created already so it would have been rather like changing figures on a spreadsheet. There would have been no need to start from scratch.

I suggested that course of action in this Chamber in the Spring of 2013 and Councillor Carter did not support it. Using the published 2011 census returns, I was able to show that an LDF gross new housing target of 50,000 dwellings rather than 74,000 would have been more than ample. Recent press coverage shows that Councillor Carter now supports the 50,000 target. I do admit that talking to journalists is a bit like going into a minefield; as I found recently they are more than likely to tie themselves in knots over the 66,000 Allocations target, the 70,000 net of demolitions target and the 74,000 gross target than whatever alternative targets their interviewees might put forward, so getting the message across is not easy.

Setting all that aside, 50,000 is a generous and ambitious target. The number of dwellings actually likely to be built within the life of the LDF is between about 35,000 and 40,000. We will support Councillor Andrew Carter's motion because that is all that is before us today and it will be probably the best way out of the predicament which we are now in, but it is a pity that he did not support our call to build the 2011 census returns into the Draft Core Strategy when they were newly published in the Spring of 2013. Thank you, Lord Mayor – I think I just managed it within the three minutes! *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor John Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I have to say, I am in the uncomfortable position of agreeing with virtually everything that Peter Gruen said. I know it does not happen often, does it! There is a "but". Indeed, there is a position today. We heard within three years for a review and that is welcome. I think the big difference between us and, I suspect, the Labour Group is that we would like to see, as it says in this White Paper, that review completed by Autumn. The reason we would like to see that completed by Autumn is that by then the sites will be coming, will come up to being allocated, and that is the problem because once they have been allocated, once they have gone, they have gone. We can never take them back again, we can never reverse them and, indeed, there were PAS sites in areas where Labour Members represent where they would have liked those PAS sites to go back into the green belt and the advice officers gave was that is not possible. If it is not possible for a PAS site it certainly is not possible for an allocated housing site either, is it?

What I would like some clarity on today, though, is what actually is the view of the Labour Group. Is it that 70,000 are too high or is it, as was suggested by Councillor Charlwood yesterday and also by Councillor Walshaw, that 70,000 perhaps was right and we desperately need the new houses and actually we need to just take them and get on with it, or have I misread the situation as far as those Councillors are

concerned? I would like some clarity. If it is, as I understood, many people in the Labour Group's view was actually it is a challenging target, it is a target which none of us think will actually be reached, it is something that is way, way beyond the developing community to provide in this city as they did not produce these numbers even at the height of the boom, I would welcome hearing that from Labour Members today. The reality is that 70,000 is too high.

Councillor Leadley would give you the impression that he is right, he is always right and we should always know he is always right. The reality is that it is a changing position. There is new evidence emerging all of the time, that is the important point, and we should avail ourselves of the evidence when it is available to put that case forward and alter our plans. That is what we should do and so far that is what I think I have heard Councillor Gruen say. For my part I will be fully supportive in doing that, but we believe very firmly that we should actually move on that evidence as soon as it is available and not wait for a three year period there or thereabout. We think we should get on with it now and be firm. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Walshaw.

COUNCILLOR WALSHAW: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think the first thing to say is I do not think, I really hope not, that no Member in this Chamber wants to go back to a situation where we are losing planning applications and planning appeals hand over fist and we see development in inappropriate areas, and I think many of us have got areas where we certainly would not want to see inappropriate development.

This debate is an important debate and I will be supporting Councillor Gruen's amendment for the following reasons. Our present course, our present policies, the Core Strategy has been found to be sound, within that the housing numbers have been found to be sound by both the Government Inspector and – I was attending Councillor Procter's Scrutiny Board and for two hours there is a lot of debate and examination of Professor Boden and his team and there really was not much very fault found with those numbers at all during that Scrutiny Board session.

What does having a sound plan, sound housing numbers and a fair and equitable Site Allocation Process do to us? What does it do? What does it do for the people of our city? It enables us to dictate insofar as we can in an imperfect world how, what, where and when in terms of housing. It enables us to build sustainable communities and there is, colleagues, something joyous about providing homes and communities for the people of Leeds to live in as we see our city grow and see us attract people to live here. We have made Leeds a really rather nice place to live and I do not think any of us should apologise for that.

I think that having a sound plan puts our residents, our citizens in the driving seat and not landowners and volume house builders who, I venture, maybe do not have the people we represent's best interests at heart. Possibly that is a cynical view but I think I am right. I would at this point also ask colleagues who have been through the Site Allocation Process as we are up to date to cast your mind over the seas, the absolute oceans of red inappropriate sites on green belt, inappropriate locations, locations where residents would not want to see development. Think of all the good work that we have done, think of the line we have drawn in the sand against the forces of big capital trying to concrete over our city, particularly in wards represented by Members on the Opposition benches. I think we should bear that in mind and

celebrate the fact that we have a sound plan that is going to provide a great future for the people of this city. Thanks very much. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Latty.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: Lord Mayor, in supporting Councillor Carter's White Paper I am going to talk about Aireborough, which I have done many times before. I am not going to talk about the 2,000 homes we have already built in Aireborough, I am not going to talk about the traffic jam that Guiseley has become as a result of all the houses we have built. I am not going to talk about the lack of school places for the children that live in the houses that have been built and are going to be built. What I would like to talk about is the way that nobody seems to be listening.

The weight of correspondence to myself and the Neighbourhood Forum from residents which has been directed at the Development Department under Councillor Gruen saying exactly this, that we cannot take any more houses, that if we are going to build any more houses they are going to have to be on either green field or green belt, this in spite of the fact that the Government says that that should be a last resource. We do not seem to be a last resource but nobody has listened.

In fact, the figures published just this last couple of weeks for the Allocations as they stand at the moment shows that in Outer South-East, 138 houses have been lopped off their possible take of houses; in Outer South-West 104 have been lopped off; in East 324 have been lopped off – a total of 566 houses taken from areas which could build houses without encroaching on the green belt. The 2% of green belt must all be in Aireborough.

Against that Aireborough went up by 66 houses. Where is the sense? Who has listened? I just do not understand how it can be that an area that can only take more houses by accepting more congestion, more crowded schools, there is just no sense in it whatsoever and especially as the fact is that we have not any provision for those within the Site Allocation Process – no schools, no employment, just houses.

Lord Mayor, nobody has listened to a word we have said. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Charlwood.

COUNCILLOR CHARLWOOD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, I am speaking in favour of Councillor Gruen's amendment and I am clear that this is another attempt by the Tories to derail the Council's good governance on housing growth in the city. They have done it elsewhere in the region and it results in chaos. Furthermore, it is quite fascinating that they seek to invite developers to have a free for all on the green belt they apparently hold so dear by putting extra uncertainty into this process. Those of us on the North and East Plans Panel deal with many applications close to the green belt and Councillor Procter knows how important it is to have a certainty over where potential development is and is not suitable.

We are talking about a plan that covers up to 2028. We have barely even touched on phasing yet in these discussions but we have got to get there and move towards that if we are to ensure that we will be able to have a fully strategic plan. Taking up more resources to start reviews right now could pose a threat to that being done quickly.

I would just like to touch on housing density for a change. In Moortown there are on average 41 people living per hectare in my ward; in Gipton and Harehills there are 74 people per hectare; in Hyde Park and Woodhouse it is 67; in Calverley and Farsley there are 17 people per hectare; in Harewood it is 1.7 people per hectare.

Inner areas are taking a significant amount of new housing in the Site Allocations plans, they are doing their share but trying to increase this further by objecting to any changes in the green belt will lead to a higher density of people living in wards where it is already a concern and that is not fair.

What he raises in relation to my comments about housing numbers was to give voice to the many people who contact me about the Yes to New Homes Campaign. There are lots of people who want new houses in the city and I just support our plan. That is my position.

Our Core Strategy clearly states that we want developers to use brown field land first and set clear targets for the use of this land. If developers are not keeping to this then we can and should be robust with them in order to get them to use brown field land first. As Council has previously agreed, what we need from Central Government is a clear national brown field first policy. Protection of the green belt is important. I am glad that we have been able to retain almost all of the existing land in the city but we also have to be clear that all areas have to make a contribution and that we cannot just call on the same places again and again.

If you want to protect green belt then we have to have a definite plan backed by evidence. We have to move on with Site Allocations without distractions and quickly get to the point where we can consider phasing. We cannot do that while we are continually covering the same ground. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Campbell.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It is very good of Councillor Charlwood to tell us there are so few people in Harewood. Presumably if all the Members come to a Council meeting there is nobody in Harewood. *(laughter)* Never mind.

The Council missed a trick in 2013 when the Labour and Conservative Groups insisted that we made a decision to accept the Core Strategy - the Core Strategy we all had reservations about. Councillor Leadley, as he said, asked if we could delay it for one single cycle which we could have done quite easily when we would have had a proper set of figures and we could actually have put forward a sensible target number within the Core Strategy.

We did write to the Inspector, as I said, but actually we basically said, "We got the numbers wrong, do you want us to do anything about it?" and in effect what we should have said was "and we want to do this about it" because obviously he does not want to spend a long time going through the whole process again. We are stuck with a situation where we are asking the citizens of Leeds to accept more development, more potential development sites I should say – because I do not think we need to delude ourselves that all these sites are going to be built on – and in fact we are actually providing a land banking opportunity for a number of developers who will

store away these sites with the knowledge that we all have that they will not be building on them.

We have blighted, in many ways, a number of districts because we are asking them to take more residential development than is really necessary and that does not just include Aireborough and Otley, it includes all of Leeds.

I think, Lord Mayor, we made a mistake. I am convinced of the view that Andrew has put forward this afternoon that actually, notwithstanding the fact that he was really passionate that we should have a Core Strategy, I think you have understood there was a problem associated with this and in fact the sooner we address that problem the better it will be. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor David Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think it is clear that the figures we have been working on are incorrect and we have known that for a while but we have continued on. All right, we have got a Core Strategy and I would agree with Peter we need a Core Strategy that stand up but, as I said at the last Council meeting, there is no reason why we cannot review it at this stage when we know the figures are wrong. It is all right saying all this housing will not get developed – no they will not but Colin made a good point, what is going to happen is all the best sites are going to be taken up by builders, they are going to put in planning applications and they are gone. What happens is, all the green field sites get built on first and that is what will happen. I support the Conservative motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Carter to sum up.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you very much, Lord Mayor. Just let us clear up this issue about the Core Strategy. What was being argued for before the Core Strategy got under way was not timetable delays but delays which would have left us absolutely open to the predatory nature of the speculative house builders. It was our Group who arranged for Planning Ministers to come and meet the administration and indeed us, and we were told over and over again the Core Strategy is the key piece of work, which is why we supported the Core Strategy, not the housing numbers.

I take strong exception to any inference that we have in some way changed our position. We supported and worked with other parties to get to a position where the Council took a Core Strategy to an inquiry. We never supported the numbers. Why would we? They were the same numbers we had opposed years before in the RSS, they are within a thousand of the figure the former Labour Government tried to impose upon us from the top down, 70,000, which is why we are so suspicious now of you lot. It appears to me, to us, that what you are doing is going back to the target your previous Government was going to force on this Council and that is absolutely wrong because the figures and the statistics do not stack up.

I will say again to Councillor Gruen, do not take the people of Leeds for fools and come the con trick on the green belt because it really will not wash and you will get ridden out of town on the back of a donkey in most areas of Leeds if you try and pull that stunt. *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I would like to see that, Peter!

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: So would I, I will tell you. With more sense than you have got! It is a big donkey! Put me some time on, Lord Mayor. I do not want to hear everybody laughing for the sake of losing time.

My Lord Mayor, this is a very, very serious matter. *(laughter)* It is for the donkey!

My Lord Mayor, I say this quietly to Councillor Gruen. The final paragraph in our White Paper gives you the opportunity to undertake to this Council you will start the review by the Autumn. It stops nothing moving forward but once the land is allocated, Councillor Charlwood, it has gone and as for your Yes to New Homes, be very careful they are not just a front organisation for the speculative house builders because I would put nothing past them.

My Lord Mayor, you have got the chance to get everybody back on side. Start the review and start it in the timeframe that we have said and the arguments start to go away. You have got a chance to do it – do it, because your statistics are wrong and the housing numbers are wrong. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Carter. I now call for the vote. The first vote is on the amendment in the name of Councillor Peter Gruen. *(A vote was taken)* That is CARRIED.

We now move to the substantive motion, which is the full amendment in the name of Councillor Gruen. *(A vote was taken)* That is CARRIED.

ITEM 16 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – REVIEW OF RESOURCES FOR PUBLIC SERVICES AND INVESTMENT IN INFRASTRUCTURE

THE LORD MAYOR: We move on to the second White Paper in the name of Councillor Sobel.

COUNCILLOR SOBEL: Lord Mayor, I would like to move in accordance with the provisions of Council to seek the leave of Council to alter the wording in the motion in my name to delete the amendment in the name of Councillor David Blackburn.

THE LORD MAYOR: I put that to the vote of Council. *(A vote was taken)* CARRIED.

Councillor Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: I move that under the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 13.2(d) and 14.10 that leave of Council be given to withdraw the amendment in my name.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ann Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: I wish to second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I put that to the Council, do we agree to that? (*A vote was taken*) That is CARRIED.

I now call on Councillor Sobel to speak on his amended White Paper.

COUNCILLOR SOBEL: I would like to thank my colleagues in the Labour Group for this opportunity as a Back Bench Councillor to put forward this motion. This motion is a subject which is as much personal as political. Of course, everybody here lives in the north and in the greatest city in the north; whether by choice or by birth we are all northern. My experience is as personal as anybody's. My story of the north-south divide starts in 1980s Yorkshire, the last time the Conservatives were in office.

My family left Leeds and moved to Sheffield. In Sheffield our entire neighbourhood felt the impact of the north-south divide with steelworkers losing their jobs, my mum losing hers in 1983 and my dad never settling into long-term work. As my mum lost her job the only work she could find was at Beaconsfield and we moved to the south.

The difference between Yorkshire and Buckinghamshire taught me about disparity of wealth and it is why I am sat on this side of the Chamber as a Labour Councillor. Here we are again.

In every area inequalities between the north and south have risen – health, transport, education which my colleagues will talk about in depth. Also, Local Authority funding, infrastructure, access to finance and the arts always comes back to one subject – money and the fact that the south always gets a better settlement.

I would like to start with access to finance. Unusually for me I would like to quote Nick Clegg. He said:

“Small businesses can still face barriers in borrowing the money they need. This is compounded by a dearth of lenders outside of London and the south-east, once again accentuating the north-south divide.”

Well said. Clegg's solution is a British Business Bank, but let us look what it has lent - £346m in London, £230m in the south-east but just £151m in Yorkshire and £64m in the north-east. I kid you not, I got some Government press release from 22nd December trumpeting how the Coalition will sort out the north-south divide. A Christmas Omnishambles.

I am sure you are all keen to know what a Labour Government would do about this. Ed Miliband has been very clear. We do not just need a single investment bank serving the country, we need a regional bank system serving each and every region of the country. Regional banks have a mission to serve that region and that region alone.

Every Keynesian knows that the cornerstone of successful economic recovery is investment in infrastructure. However, infrastructure spending is not only sufficient but also imbalanced. In the Government's 2013 Infrastructure Plan £30bn was earmarked for the southern regions, a massive £36bn just for London, just £13bn in the north-east, north-west, Yorkshire and the Humber. That well-known left wing journal The Spectator muses:

“You wonder if spending £66bn in Southern England but only £23bn in the rest of England quite gets the balance right.”

Unlike The Spectator I do not wonder, I know.

It is clearly unjust that so much spending on roads, energy generation, fast broadband and all the other infrastructure we need goes on the south to the exclusion of the north.

I cannot move on from infrastructure without mentioning the missed opportunity for electrification of the Harrogate rail line. We were promised electrification in August 2013 by the current Member of Parliament for Leeds North West. When the announcement by Nick Clegg for infrastructure spending came, we got a tunnel under Stonehenge but no mention of electrification of the Harrogate line.

What are the results of all this? One of the clearest threats from housing and employment, the gap between the average price of property in London and the north-east, grew to the widest in history. A home in London costs an average of £514,000 compared to just £154,000 in the north-east of England, creating a housing bubble. In employment things are just as stark. Job seekers in Cambridge find it 200 times easier to find work than those in Salford. Of the ten best cities to find jobs, nine are in the south.

We are at tipping point. I do not need to quote Councillor Wakefield, as we in the Chamber know the figures all too well, but for the public record, Leeds has to save £76m in 2015/16 and Leeds has already saved £258m since 2010.

What about Mole Valley, a Conservative and Liberal Democrat controlled Authority in Surrey - £4 per head loss of funding, the same as Hart, Mid-Sussex, Horsham and East Dorset. In fact, the best ten settlements from the south are all Conservative or Conservative-Lib Dem administrations.

To remedy this inequality we need a fair settlement with access to finance, infrastructure, low Government funding and many other areas. As you are Councillors for Leeds and the North of England this motion should not be contentious and should have all our support and on that basis therefore I move. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor David Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Lord Mayor, thank you. I would like to second this motion. Firstly, on what was the amendment part of it, having fair resources to this area is not just good enough – it is actually having control over them and that is the problem we have had for a long, long time, that Government, when they do give us money, tell us what to do with it and what are we elected for? We are here to make those decisions for local people and the decisions need to be taken locally and that was part of my amendment, that that is a key part of doing that.

Let us put it this way, regarding the funding, take away austerity, I will go back before the last election with the previous Government. Although I have got to say the situation was not as bad for this Authority as it is now, it is a case that whatever Government we have favours the south-east, never gives fairly to Leeds and if you look amongst Authorities in the North of England, there is an unfairness there.

Manchester does better out of things than we do. The whole area needs looking at and it needs to be done, something that is fair and looks fair to all parts of the United Kingdom and that money then has to be controlled by elected Members in that locality. I second the motion, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton to move a second amendment. First amendment, I am sorry.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Yes, thank you, Lord Mayor. The reason why we are changing the amendment is because it is just so sad and cynical and it is obviously meant for an election leaflet, so we thought we would add a little bit of reality into the debate. (*Interruption*)

Is it really a north-south divide that we are talking about here? We know it is not. We know it is a London-centric rest of the country divide that we are talking about. I will tell you want, if you went down to Cornwall and moaned about the north-south divide I would not be surprised if you did not get a clip around the earhole. That is one of the poorest parts of the United Kingdom. It is not to do with how north you are in the country as to how badly you are affected by Central Government funding; it depends on how peripheral you are and how valuable you are deemed to be.

The sad fact is that for Government after Government and Parliament after Parliament peripheral areas have been undervalued. I can remember the arguments that we had in our administration when all of a sudden at every budget round - I admit nowhere near as bad as the budget rounds have been over the past few years...

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: It was, it was.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: ...but do you know what, we did not have a huge financial crash during the time that we were handling Labour budgets – we were coming back and we were told “Leeds, I am afraid you do not qualify for NRF funding any more.” I remember that one. That was a bit of a shock for us. You would have taken it in your stride now, I will tell you. We were told, “You do not qualify for that anymore, you are too wealthy.”

Let us talk about Supertram, if we are talking about how much infrastructure funding is being spent where and when. Do you know what, if we had had a decision a little bit sooner on Supertram we would not be having the NGT squirming for Alex Sobel up in Leeds North West. We might have actually had a decent transport system to be proud of but no, it got cut by a Labour Government because they started to cut Local Government funding before we even got into power.

The point is, how do you challenge what happens? Recently we had an argument about Scotland and Scottish devolution and Scottish independence and the recent complaints have been, do you know what, Scotland is able to campaign and to lobby and they have got an Alex Salmond there fighting for them and they get more than their fair share because the likes of us in the North of England are not getting what we require. Do you know what, that is what the devolution agenda is about that this Government has introduced and you should be grasping it.

The rhetoric that gets sent down to London, I have to say, from our Chief Exec and our Leader, is the right one. It basically says, “Why do you not give us our freedoms?

Why do you not allow us to actually set our own destiny, raise our own money and actually invest it in the way we want it and we can actually be a net contributor to the Exchequer? You will not need to rely on the City of London any more and because you will not need to rely on the City of London any more as a cash cow you will not have to keep feeding it with more and more infrastructure on an ever overheated south-eastern economy.”

That is what we should be concentrating on here today, not being moaners, not talking about how badly done by we are, not talking about what victories we have had. We should be talking about our potential and we should be fighting for more and more power and that is what Councillor Keith Wakefield should be doing. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Bentley.

COUNCILLOR S BENTLEY: I second, Lord Mayor.

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

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I was puzzled when I first saw the White Paper in the name of Councillor Sobel and then the penny dropped, of course, the candidate for Leeds North West and the one and only time he has moved a White Paper in this Chamber. To be honest, if that is the best he can do, and I could tell from the looks on a lot of his Members’ faces they were thinking the same as I was, they had a much better candidate last time. *(laughter)* I can see the nods there, Councillor Sobel.

It is like, when you listen to these things it is like history began in 2010 and there was no north-south divide in this country before that. Let us deal in actual facts, cold, hard facts, Councillor Sobel. Under the last Labour Government, who had 13 years to address this, the gap between the north and the south of England grew to its widest level for 60 years, for generations the widest level. The gap in inequality between the poorest in the north and in the south grew to its widest level for 60 years, so the last Labour Government do not have a very good record on this. The most recent contribution to devolution we have heard from the Labour Party is their idea of having a mansion tax which they have spent six times over in the South of England and moving all the proceeds to Scotland – not to the North of England, to Scotland. That is the best they have come up with so far.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: A vote winner.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: You mentioned austerity in your White Paper. What we also know, because your colleague in this area, Mr Balls, has revealed only this week that Labour have no plans to reverse any of the cuts that have been introduced in this Parliament – no plans whatsoever. There is going to be the same money available whoever is in Government after May. In the unlikely event that you are part of a new Government, which I think is very unlikely, the same money is going to be available.

What we have seen in the last five years is this Government - and I will be the first to concede they have not gone anywhere near far enough but there has been the biggest devolution of money and power to regions such as the North through the LEPs, through the Leeds City Region. Keith Wakefield has stood in this Chamber and congratulated the Government on the money it put into the north for transport

funding. I do not think any of it is enough, there is not enough money, there is not enough power, it does not go far enough and it does not go fast enough but it has gone an awful lot further than any Government has done in recent times and what we should be doing is building on that. What we should be hearing from Councillor Sobel is a commitment that not only will a future Labour Government, God forbid, take this forward and that they would go further and faster, but they have done the opposite. I am sorry, it is hypocritical to stand there and lecture anybody else about the north-side divide and rebalancing the economy.

The fundamental problems – and we need to have an honest debate about this – there was far too much reliance in the North of England on the public sector and public money. The key to rebalancing and closing the north-south divide is to create what this Government has tried to do in a Northern powerhouse, to get a real partnership. Yes, there is a role for the public sector to play, there is a role for City Regions, which is what we have all advocated to play in really promoting economic growth and boosting job creation in the North of England. It is getting the private sector growing that is the key.

David, they must have taken you to the pub to get you to agree to this and you must have had quite a few pints (*laughter*) because I agreed with everything that you said but it does not bear any relation to the paper, so I hope you will think again and actually read what it says and join us.

Councillor Sobel, you have got to do better than that. Come on. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Robinson.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Councillor Lamb and Councillor Golton are absolutely right. We had lectures about being optimistic from Councillor Wakefield and Councillor Gruen today and then we hear this diatribe of misery from the gentleman at the back. (*laughter*)

COUNCILLOR: Are you sure he's a gentleman!

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Well, I use the words advisedly, I have no idea whether he is or he is not!

My Lord Mayor, I was born in Leeds. I am proud of this city, I am proud of what it has achieved, what it has continued to achieve, what it will always achieve and what I want to see is Governments giving us more say over our own affairs. With that we can start to move mountains and we can start to bat, not just hit our weight but punch above our weight in the national economy.

COUNCILLOR R GRAHAME: Took away Yorkshire Forward though, they can't be allowed to do that, Andrew.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Ron, get up and talk if you want to but do not shout from your backside.

My Lord Mayor, this Government has given us a way forward with the City Deals. It is a pity we are third in the line – Manchester first, Sheffield second, we are still waiting. Thank goodness talks are still continuing and I hope that within a very short space of time there will be a deal for this city as well. It is time the Labour Leaders in West Yorkshire stopped behaving like a bunch of middle aged schoolboys in the school playground, fighting with one another as to what they want and what they do not want, and get moving and get the deal done for Leeds. Then we are on the first rung of the ladder to getting devolved powers for this city and this Combined Authority area which will start to close the gap.

I am not going to start quoting statistics sent to me by Conservative Head Office as you have quoted yours, Councillor Sobel. I am just glad I do not live in North West Leeds because at the moment it seems to me I have got a choice between two mouths on legs – you and Greg Mulholland. I will tell you what I would do, I would vote for Barry Anderson (*applause*) and if he was not a candidate then I would write his name on the ballot paper. (*Applause*)

Since 2010, I will give you one statistic, 119,000 new businesses, since 2010 in the North of England. That is because entrepreneurship, effort and hard work are all part of our fabric and that is what is going to get this region through and if we get devolved powers, as we ought to do, it will go even faster. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor James Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Before I turn to the comments I was intending to make, I thought it had turned into farce when we were discussing donkeys earlier but to be called sad and cynical by a Lib Dem in a Council debate I think is one of the worst. I make this point, Councillor Golton, because you can sit there and lecture in front of your very, very small group as long as you like but when it comes to what this city has done and what cities in the north have done to try and get more influence and try and get more resources out of London. Nobody asked Keith and the Leaders of the other big cities in the north to come together and form Transport the North. We did that, we showed the initiative, we said we will come together, we will collaborate and we will fight for resources. When your party ran this city and Sheffield and Liverpool, your Leaders could have done it and did not. It shows the lack of imagination your party have got and initiative and an intention to get out and fight. (*Applause*) You did nothing. You did nothing.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Shame.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Six wasted years. Six wasted years. You could have shown the pan-northern initiative when the Lib Dems were in power and you did nothing of the sort. All you did was sat there drawing up plans for NGT and we know where that has got us. (*laughter*)

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: We know where it has got you.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: When we look at transport across the north and we look at the disparity that we have seen over time, people are right from all sides because I

think there is a point we can all agree on here beyond how ineffective the Lib Dems were when they had any responsibility in this area. London has only 32% of the population of this country but it gets 44% of the spending on transport. That is wrong and that has held this part of the country back. £545 per person in London; £246 per person in Yorkshire. Those figures are well known.

Actually, I do not think Councillor Sobel has brought us a load of misery and I do not think he is being cynical and sad, as is being suggested. I feel there is a clear ambition for the future set out in this White Paper that says we want the next Government after the next election to wipe the slate clean and work far more efficiently on a fair and equal distribution of resources.

I know we are going to get a lot bluster from down that end of the Council Chamber, given their Government's record, but I think we want to work constructively with the next Government, whichever way it ends up, we want to work constructively with the next Government, as we have done with this Government, and let us see whether we can get the right results for this part of the area and I do not think some of the defensive and infantile comments we have had help that move forward.

I think we have got a positive White Paper here that we can all rally round and work together and it is the right thing to do and let us get on with it, let us stop finger pointing and start. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Campbell.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It is always nice to listen to James, who has got the impression that volume is more important than content.

Thanks, Alex, for explaining your northerness to me. I am glad you are adopting that line and I am sorry that you had to move down south (or Sheffield, as we sometimes call it!) *(laughter)* – it was a very deprived childhood, that is all I can say.

Having said that, let us reiterate what has already been said. This is not new. This north-south divide is not new and as said, the main issue is London. I have been on this Council for getting on for 30 years now.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: No, you had a break.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: He needs another.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Sorry, I had not realised. I can remember we have been having this discussion for the last 30-odd years in this Council and for the last 30 years we have been saying we should get control of our destiny. That is what it is about, it is about getting control of our destiny and we have consistently asked Central Government for control of our destiny, and during that period of time when the Labour Party was in power in Westminster, our ability to control our destiny has been diminished.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Absolutely. It was taken away.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Now, if nothing else – and you may not like the Coalition Government, you may not like everything they do but if nothing else...

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: You lot certainly don't.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: ...this Government is the only Government I remember who have ever said to regions, "Look, you can take responsibility, you can but there is a downside because you have to accept responsibility."

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Go and tell your electorate that. They take cash off you.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Now, if you are going to do that we have to grasp that nettle. Why are we, as Andrew says, so far behind? Why has Manchester got it sorted out? Why has Sheffield got it sorted out?

COUNCILLOR: They have not got it sorted out.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Why? Because the Labour Leaders in those areas have got their act together. Why can't West Yorkshire? I do not know why West Yorkshire cannot do it. If West Yorkshire councils were run by Conservatives and Liberal Democrats we would have sorted this out a long time ago. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Coupar.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Yes, thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking in support of the White Paper in Councillor Sobel's name and I would like to concentrate on the health side of the issues that have been raised.

Quite clearly we all recognise that we are in a time of unprecedented austerity measures introduced by this Government and the Due North Report recently published by Public Health England gives us a timely and welcome insight into the significant challenges facing Health and Wellbeing and health inequalities which are linked to economic inequity and poverty.

This is extremely important because the correlation between deprivation and poor health has been well and truly established. The north has suffered for years in comparison to the south in respect of unequal distribution of funding and the trend can be found most visibly in health, where funding in the north has been less than other areas and where health outcomes are generally poorer than other areas of the country.

We in the north are not being allocated enough resources to be able to address the health needs we have, nor are we being given enough to tackle the vast health inequalities gap we have in this region. Many people in the north live shorter lives and have longer periods of ill health than in the south and yes, Councillor Golton, I am going to moan about this.

When I first read this report I could not believe my eyes that the life expectancy gap at its worst is 17 years so, because of the place you are born and grow up and live in, you are likely to die 17 years before you would if you were born a few miles further south. You do not have to take my word for it – it is in the report. Can I suggest that you in the Opposition go and read it because then you might just realise when you raise your hand to support that Government of yours that these are the consequences we are left with.

At a time when more investment is needed to improve people's health, money is being taken out of the system and the demand for services is increasing. Local Authorities can play a key role in addressing health inequalities but the Government do not recognise this as they have been delivering vast financial cuts to us, especially in the north where Local Authorities have been hit with the greatest burden of the cuts compared to other regions and by 2016, Councillor Carter, I will give you another statistic, the Government grants to Leeds will have been cut by 45% since 2010.

There is evidence to suggest that locally controlled resources leads to better health outcomes and that there is a link between the proportion of local people influencing decisions and reduction in levels of premature death and mental illness. Local Authorities and regional partners need to be given a greater role in determining how public resources are used.

I have spent too many hours in this Chamber listening to the Opposition trying to blame our party...

THE LORD MAYOR: Red light, Councillor Coupar.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: ...for everything when it is yours to blame. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cohen.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Well, if I had any doubts that this White Paper was a party political broadcast on behalf of Labour for Leeds North West then, Councillor Sobel, you very quickly dispelled any doubts I might have had by your seeking to show us your credentials as a true northerner. Really, what it shows so many of us is why it is that so many people living in Leeds North West are crying out for Councillor Barry Anderson to be our very own candidate in Leeds North West and give a real sensible alternative (*applause*) and there is no argument he certainly is a northerner – a real northerner" (*laughter*)

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Cannot get much further north, can you, Barry? (*laughter*) Outer Hebrides is it?

COUNCILLOR COHEN: One of my favourite sayings, and I think it is a saying some Members across the way will have a great deal of sympathy with, is the greatest gift is the ability to forget. You know, it does seem that so many Members across the way have forgotten. History did not begin in May 2010. As colleagues across the way, my colleagues, colleagues in...

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: It has got a lot bloody worse since.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Actually it has not. Councillor Coupar, I wish that were the case but it has not. It is not the case. The peak was under a Labour Government for the north-south divide to be at its worst. If you want statistics we can give you a whole load of them and in short I am sure your party has a whole load of them that it would rather forget. As I say, it is a great gift to be able to forget.

Let us turn to this White Paper because this White Paper calls for greater resources to be allocated to the north and we agree with that. Of course we agree with that, but the reality is only Conservatives are going to deliver that. Manchester, getting a directly

elected Mayor, £1bn-worth of powers over transport; Sheffield's deal, Combined Authorities, more control over transport, housing and skills. The Leeds City Region deal gives us an extra £1bn as it stands with much more to come if, indeed, we are able to get our act together.

Councillor Dawson, earlier on you said, you listed the Government investment in this city. You cannot have it both ways; you cannot have it both ways. The only way we are going to get investment in this city is to get our acts together, work together properly for the good of the city but the only party that is really going to deliver that is a Conservative one. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Sobel to sum up.

COUNCILLOR SOBEL: Thank you. I am pleased that Councillor Campbell was interested in my story and you can hear much more about it, and you will in the next four months. I personally have got this newsletter, News, delivered free in Leeds and Wharfedale. It seemed like a newspaper, I know that it was a political leaflet because it was delivered by Councillor Sue Bentley herself. There seems to be a lot of co-operation here in terms of their Members and the speeches. I would just like to quote from this leaflet:

“Regional pay, policy where teachers, nurses and other public servants living in Leeds are paid less than their colleagues in London and the south-east. Thankfully this nasty Tory policy was blocked by Liberal Democrats.”

Where is the camaraderie there? Maybe Barry will want to take that up himself. Is it right to pay public sector workers less in poorer parts of the country? Interesting – interesting differences of views there between the Coalition parties.

I think it is a shame that we did not get Councillor Dowson in because I am sure she would have mentioned the wide variety in terms of funding education. The average figure for all Authorities is for £4,550 per pupil but it is up nearly £9,000 in London and our settlement is below the average and northern settlements are below the average, so even in education the settlement in London – it is a shame that she did not get to speak.

On people's comments, absolutely, and I am glad that David's amendment has come in and we do need to be fair and look fairly to all localities and everybody, I think pretty much every speech talked about devolution. I am not negotiating with the Treasury, that is Councillor Wakefield and the other Leaders' responsibilities, but all I would say, particularly to Councillor Cohen at the end, is that not every deal is a good deal. The first deal that comes along is not the one that you sign, so we are doing the right thing, negotiating, to get the best deal for Leeds and Leeds City Region and I am sure all the other Leaders in Leeds City Region would agree with that.

The Sheffield deal, you can go and look at it closely and see whether that is a deal you would have signed. I am not sure it is a deal I would have signed if I was Leader of a Council in South Yorkshire.

I sort of agree with Stewart about peripherality. In Cornwall, my in-laws live (you are getting a geography lesson about my family) live in Plymouth so it is just across the

Tamar from Cornwall and there is a lot of rural poverty. That does not underline the point that most of the material wealth, the differences in funding, are between the north and the south. There are obviously parts of the south which are under-funded.

I am glad that he agrees with some fiscal devolution. We have not been offered fiscal devolution. I am sure, Councillor Wakefield, we have not been offered fiscal devolution by Danny Alexander and George Osborne. Let us see if they come out tomorrow to offer it to us after today's debate.

The mansion tax, Councillor Lamb mentioned it.

THE LORD MAYOR: Red light, Councillor Sobel. (*Applause*)

We now move to the vote. The first vote is on the first amendment in the name of Councillor Golton. (*A vote was taken*) That is LOST.

The next vote is on the second amendment in the name of Councillor Lamb. (*A vote was taken*) That is LOST.

We now vote on the motion as amended by Councillor Sobel. (*A vote was taken*) That is CARRIED.

ITEM 17 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – COMMUNITY CENTRE REVIEW

THE LORD MAYOR: We now move on to the last White Paper in the name of Councillor Leadley.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, at a time of enforced cuts in Local Government spending, nothing can be sacred and everything must be open to review. Even so, as a Member of the Lewisham Centre Committee for about 20 years I was surprised to see it earmarked for possible closure in the Executive Board Report of 19th November. Our quoted level of usage at 21% seemed very low. When I made enquiries it turned out to be based on an assumption that the centre would be open from seven o'clock in the morning until eleven o'clock at night seven days a week, which was totally unrealistic and on the current model of management would need three caretakers, at least trebling our largest standing cost.

We would also challenge the claim that the centre has outstanding repairs amounting to more than £58,000. We believe that any backlog, if there is any, is minimal.

Lewisham is the only surviving community centre in Morley South, so it must survive. The Town Hall is different in scale, cost and purpose and for reasons of security schools are often reluctant to open their doors to outside groups nowadays.

That is not the main thrust of my White Paper, which is to draw attention to the fact that Leeds does not record the many hours of voluntary youth work or other voluntary work which takes place within its buildings. According to IPSASB, the Public Sector Accounting and Auditing Body, Local Authorities should keep account of the hours of voluntary work which their buildings encourage or enable and attribute to them a notional value at least in line with the national minimum wage. Leeds does not do

that, only financial outgoings are recorded other than the usually small amounts raised by room bookings.

One of our main groups at Lewisham is Kids for Kids, a dance group which has been going successfully and continuously for 32 years. Currently it has about 60 dancers and nine instructors and takes part in competitions throughout the North and Midlands of England as well as having its own annual competition usually held at Leeds Town Hall. Apart from the provision of premises the group pays its own way and has raised about £37,000 for various charities over the years, despite catering for some of the most deprived children in Morley. Based on typical levels of activity, Mel and Val Cust, who are the organisation's leading lights, estimate there is about 48,000 hours of voluntary work which has been put in by instructors and organisers during those 32 years.

Although the paid youth service in Morley has stabilised and become much improved since Glen O'Malley took charge, over the 20 years that I have been associated with Lewisham generally it is the paid youth service which has been affected by staff shortages, sudden resignations, illnesses, cancellation of sessions without notice and so on. It is the volunteers who have carried on regardless and have been relied upon to look after the needs of our young people. They need premises which are appropriate in style and cost to allow them to continue.

We are having a meeting with Martin Dean, author of the review report, on Friday. No doubt many questions will be asked there and we will make our formal response to the consultation in due course. It must be emphasised that we are willing to look at new models of managing and funding our youth and community centres, especially at this time of Local Government spending cuts, but we would insist that the figures underlying the proposals should be complete and reliable. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. In seconding the motion I will be concentrating on the different aspects of it. We have just been talking about our ambitions in terms of being a Local Authority which is responsible to our electors and we have also had our experiments in devolution and we have had discussions earlier about Community Committees and the efficacy with which we engage with the people who we are meant to represent and whether or not we need to do some changing in it.

I was under the impression that when Area Committees were there, community centres were something which had been devolved down to Area Committees to be making decisions about their management and about their maintenance. Then, all of a sudden we get a paper at Executive Board which talks about a review of community centres and their future and I was thinking, surely this is something which should have come to Area Committees or Community Committees in the first instance, should it not? Apparently it did not – it did not. It was decided that it went to Executive Board. I just thought who is actually responsible for our community centres now? Is it devolved or is it not devolved? Do we get to hear about it first, do we get to be consulted, do we get to make decisions at the local level before it goes to decision making Executive Board, or not?

I thought I will do a little bit of investigating so I had a look at the Community Committee Chairs meetings and it turned out that there was actually a reference in the Minutes to a paper being prepared, and I quote it because Councillor Wakefield I think was a little bit confused earlier, it actually says in the Minute a paper being prepared about the closure or asset transfer of community transfers. That is what it actually says in the Minutes, so that seems to have been the intention. That was being discussed at the Community Chairs meetings in August and October before it actually came to Executive Board in November.

Strangely, for those of us who are ordinary Members of Community Committees, in our area, in Outer South, we certainly did not get any notice about this upcoming decision taking place in our area so that we could perhaps take a closer look at it, because I do not know about you but we have a Community Centre Sub-committee and it is their role to look at the health and vitality and maintenance of our community centres.

I do think we really do need to take a look at ourselves and our centralising tendency in this Council and actually not try and make decisions like this at Executive Board without the community having access to it first and I think there is a paucity of leadership, perhaps, in our Community Committee Chairs that they did not bring that to us earlier than it did at the Executive Board. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen to move an amendment.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: Do I really have to? What a total shambles you lot are. I cannot understand any relevance of what the seconder has said to the resolution of the proposer. The resolution of the proposer is about the very worthy concept of volunteering. The seconder has missed three opportunities earlier on in the afternoon and suddenly got up and thought, "Oh, I will talk about Community Committees, I will talk about community centres." I thought we all had that debate about three hours ago. Stewart, I do not know where you were. It makes a shambles of your resolution because actually the concept of valuing voluntary work is absolutely right.

Just one more word about the seconder. The paper makes absolutely clear that we are talking about value of the work, ensuring we can maximise that work, taking account of costs and where we can perhaps eliminate some costs and it also makes absolutely clear that if as a final resort closure is actually thought about, it has to come back to Executive Board. It is not delegated to officers or to me or to anybody else. The whole prospect of this is that we want to make better use of the infrastructure, social infrastructure we have in our localities which are community centres.

I had hoped that because within my amendment I specifically value the work that Councillor Leadley has described, the volunteering, but I also say you would find us hugely negligent if you thought we are going to do a review solely based on volunteering. It has to be based on all the other things that we talked about: the focus of community centres, the emphasis of providing new sources of income, the possibility of getting other parts of the community involved. It has to pay reference, and that is the first line and we have said it before today and do not apologise for it, we are having to make absolutely massive cuts.

The point that Stewart Golton has forgotten, conveniently, is who delegated community centres first of all to then Area Committees? I am looking around for him but he is not in the Chamber. Yes, Councillor J L Carter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Because I passed it to him in the first place.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: Councillor J L Carter. Was there a single penny piece devolved with it? No.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: No, we were in trouble from the off.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: Who was part of the leadership of the Council at that stage?

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Me.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: You? You lot and you lot as well, all three of you combined together to give across to Area Committees community centres with no repair budget, no income protection, nothing. Shame on you. Shame on you.

You have not changed your mind because in terms of community effort you know the cost of everything and the value of nothing. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, I formally second.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lamb.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am going to support the motion in the name of Councillor Leadley and I think it is a shame that Peter has put an amendment in.

The first thing I want to do before I come to talk about volunteering is deal with this £250m number that they keep wheeling out. It is deeply dishonest, it is not grounded in fact and it is doing nothing to help the debate about the financial position of the Council to use it. I can very, very easily quote you the revenue budget for the last few years and tell you the actual cut has been £4m. It would be just as disingenuous as your £250m and the truth is, as I think the Assistant Chief Executive, who will be very careful not to nod or shake his head while I am speaking, it is somewhere in between that because the cuts are not the savage cuts that you try to portray them as.

One example, Lord Mayor, is that in education, this Council lost control of £30m from its Education budget. You might say that is a terrible savage cut but £60m has gone into the schools in this city directly, so we have doubled the amount of money in Education in this city. That is not a savage cut, that is an increase in funding. There are countless examples of grants and revenue streams that come that are not included in the Council's budget, that may come, they ignore in that £250m figures. Yes, we do face a very challenging financial position, there is no question about that, but stop giving us this nonsense of £250m and start being straight with people about the real figures and the real position we are in. People might have a bit more sympathy with the arguments that you put forward.

Turning to the motion in hand, volunteers are the lifeblood of this city. Councillor Andrew Carter talked about what makes this city great earlier and volunteers are the real lifeblood of things. I was very fortunate in my time when I served as Mayor of Wetherby to meet so many voluntary groups around our town and whether they are helping young people or older people or disabled people or disadvantaged people, people in challenging financial circumstances, it is those voluntary groups that are the lifeblood of this city that, in good times and in bad, will never shirk on their responsibilities, never step back and they are the people that are always there regardless of how much money they have got or have not got, they still keep turning up day after day after day to do the work that they need to do.

It seems to me that Councillor Leadley has put forward a perfectly balanced and sensible motion. There is nothing political in it. It is a simple motion to take into account the voluntary groups in a review that is taking place. I cannot understand for the life of me, Peter, other than that we are so close to an election, why you wanted to put in an amendment. It is something that everyone in this Chamber could easily have supported, it would have made no difference to anything in the budget, it would have made no difference to your review and I would urge every Member in this Chamber to support Councillor Leadley's paper. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cohen.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I will be very honest, Lord Mayor, I was planning on simply standing up and being able to support Councillor Leadley's very noble and very sensible White Paper because I think there are very few of us in this Chamber that would challenge or disagree with the notion and the importance of volunteers to this city and in truth the sums we are talking about at around £150,000 are in the context of our city's budget very small figures. In fact, I am always reminded of whenever Councillor Wakefield speaks at the annual Budget Meeting he always criticises our Group for daring to make amendments that are less than three, four, five million pounds – that is a 0.03% change, it is a trifle and does us down for daring to make such a suggestion. Of course, when the boot is on the other foot it seems wholly different.

I might add, if I may, a little to Councillor Lamb's comments in terms of this £250m that Labour like to throw about as this savage cut. Of course, what that also ignores, in addition to the £60m Education money that comes back to us, it also ignores the £25m extra that comes back to us (£50m over two years, £100m over four years to use the four year term that you referred to) that we get in other direct grants in other direct projects from Government. Of course, we do not like to show those because it does not make your figures look as good but the money is still there and it is still supporting our underlying costs.

Why is it that we have to make these cuts? The reason we have got to make these cuts is really simple. It is the Labour legacy. *(Interruption)* One in five young people unemployed, pensioners with lower pensions, gold bullion sold at the worst possible price, £3bn in benefit overpayments, paying people who had passed away, £10m in tax credits. A bigger deficit than France, Germany, Japan, and 2.47m people without a job. Thank goodness we have started to turn it around. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hussain.

COUNCILLOR HUSSAIN: My Lord Mayor, fellow Councillors, I am speaking in support of Councillor Gruen's amendment. I am very glad that Council has actively been considering the ongoing review of community centres. As Lead Member for Communities I feel that we need to be working together in order to try and ensure that every opportunity is taken for these centres. This review is unavoidable given the cuts to Council budget from Central Government. We all know the scale of this challenge - £248m, just a little £2m less than £250m, since you have been arguing, but that is to be exact - savings made in the last four years, with a further £76m in the next financial year.

In the current climate we have to accept that everything we do comes under financial consideration. There are more than 60 community centres that the Council is involved with. The ten centres currently under consultation are those which have been found to require action in the short term but this action is not centred around stopping activities from taking place; quite the opposite. It is about trying to increase the number of activities that take place at each location and working with community organisations to ensure any opportunities for community management are developed.

The list of activities that take place in community centres is impressive – exercise, dance, drama, older people and younger coming together. Every activity is available and every activity should be praised.

I support the wording in Councillor Gruen's amendment which calls on officers to look at voluntary work as part of the review. Even in the worst case scenario it has been made abundantly clear that any affected groups would be supported to move to other locations. There are often other local facilities which groups will be supported to use. No-one wants to see community groups stopping and this review is not intended to lead to that end. I hope Members will be able to continue working with the officers through the consultation period and that we will be able to ensure community centres are protected where possible. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dunn.

COUNCILLOR DUNN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to comment in support of the amendment by Councillor Gruen.

I would like to refer to one particular community centre in our ward. I know Councillor Finnigan has related to us having plentiful community centres but most of them are run by volunteers – very successful and one of them you cannot get a booking for love nor money, they are that successful.

We have got one in East Ardsley called St Gabriel's. It is a great community resource, it is providing for the residents of East Ardsley as well as surrounding areas but it has the potential to do better.

It is paramount that there is a drive to increase the use of the centres and in some cases we may need to find an alternative way of running it. In terms of St Gabriel's, ward Members are, of course, looking into improving the centre in order to attract new lettings. This is absolutely the right thing to do in these circumstances and the long consultation period gives us an opportunity to do this.

I am glad that we have the time and across the city the determination to try and keep these centres running. It does Leeds great credit to have this type of review, not one focused on closing places but one that is genuinely focused on keeping places open.

As Members we need to be actively involved in this process. We are the ones with local knowledge and we are the ones who know about the upcoming opportunities for groups who use the centres. We can be the walking and talking ambassadors for our centres.

Yes, we want to make sure that the review uses all the relevant information and this is applied consistently across the city but getting new users and advertising our centres and working to ensure community groups are empowered in this way, we can really make a difference. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Rafique.

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I believe it is worth us thinking about the Commission for Local Government which really sets us a challenge to be an enterprising Council. Enterprise is something we must have at the forefront of our minds but cuts to our funding, at least with the current Government, cannot appear to be stopped, so we must work to raise funds when we have the opportunity to do so. We have to ensure that every asset we have is being utilised to maximum.

With another £76m to find in the next year it is imperative to either raise more income or find savings. Councillor Lamb, I do not know where you get the £4m. I do not know if you live on cloud cuckoo land or you just live in a different world, and Councillor Cohen, I am amazed where you get your figures from. If you are not sure you need to go and speak to Alan Gay and he will give you the figures. *(Interruption)*

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: You need to sit down with Alan Gay so you can understand it.

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: You do not need to get it from us you need to get it from Alan Gay and our officers.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: That is where it is from.

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: No, you have not, that is not from them because we have seen the figures that we think they have given.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: It is, it is.

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: Anyway, we are here to discuss community centres. In terms of community centres it is about getting bookings in order to cover at least a significant part of the cost of the centre. The centres are there for the local community but to become a real asset they have to be utilised throughout the week. Community centres are at the heart of our areas and have the capacity to provide a great resource. They are relatively cheap, flexible and can cater for lots of groups of

different types. It goes without saying we want to keep them open but as living and well used spaces.

This is plainly an issue that Members feel very strongly about and yes, apart from the review, I hope we will look at all available information about the current users, but they are just the starting point. What we need to access are the potential users, pick those people who perhaps do not know the centres exist or just need a small nudge in order to set up a community activity.

I am pleased that the review is focused around keeping centres open. I know that officers have not been given any powers to close the centres but to work positively to keep the centres open. I hope that future reviews are as positive as this one and that we cannot succumb to this competition between wards about how the review is calculated. It must be fair and as ward Members we need to be able to scrutinise the process. We also need to work with a spirited exercise in order to boost income, seek alternative operators that have an enterprising approach to our community work. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cleasby.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am disappointed, Lord Mayor, I am not following Jack Dunn, because, Jack, I thought you were getting us back to the point about something new about communities looking forward to the future, and that is the basis of how I want to speak, Lord Mayor.

It is interesting that some years ago an officer came to us called Dylan Roberts in IT and he brought new ideas to us how we could think in a horizontal way and not in silos and that was the start of this change in our departments and so on. I think we need to be doing that with our community centres and our organisation of them.

We are still too centric. The booking of them is still too central and that could be changed. Let me give an example in Horsforth, and your Front Bench are aware of this because Keith kindly came and helped us rename the old Library in Horsforth the Brownlee Stone Centre. That is a lovely boast but we have not capitalised on it. We have a lot of people in our area that brought gold medals, silver medals and bronze medals back to the city. That is a wonderful influence on our young people and our older people too and we are not capitalising. We have community centres that we could use to do that but we charge too much.

Can I suggest, Council, that we start thinking about genuinely letting our Area Committees do it? Horsforth is a classic example. You could even in Horsforth ask us would the Town Council like to do it because they are in the same building. Above my community centres is the Area Committee. We have got a perfect opportunity.

Let me just put one further premise to you, and again your Front Bench are aware of this. Most of our football clubs, rugby clubs etc operate out of pubs. How can they sensibly operate with young people in a situation like that? We have got community centres where they could meet. What do our football clubs do with their people and their young people in the summer? They could meet in our community centres, they could have wonderful club nights. What do our cricket clubs do in the winter with their young people? They are risking losing them. It would be wonderful if we could get more and so I am asking, Lord Mayor, of Council to really look at our community

centres in a new, different way as a community resource for our community to grow and enable many of the things that have been said today in the Chamber about our elderly and so on we could help by getting a better arrangement with the use of our community centres. Thank you, Lord Mayor, thank you, Council.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Leadley to sum up.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: I would like to thank Members for a relatively sensible debate, anyway. There were one or two political points scoring but you cannot help that in the season that we are. I suspect Dylan Roberts was thinking about lateral thinking rather than horizontal thinking – it sounds a bit like horizontal collaboration, really! *(laughter)*

I thought that the point that I was trying to raise which is the value of the work put in by volunteers is something which has been missed out of that report. It was all on about how much cash we spend, it was not about the value that that expenditure brings in. It might just have been an oversight but I think the value of the volunteers is something that should be assessed as part of the review because obviously the various centres do vary quite a bit in the way that they are used - quite a lot of them are used by voluntary groups, some of them are used by groups that just use them for meetings and just pay a small fee. Our centre at Lewisham does seem to be one that is particularly used by voluntary groups, probably because it has a history of being a youth centre rather than a community centre as such.

I made clear and I am sure Peter Gruen will have heard that we are not saying that everything is sacrosanct and there must be no review at all and nothing must be changed. We do accept that there may be need to change the model on which some of these centres are managed. Having said that, I cannot really see that there was all that much purpose in his amendment because really it is not very far from what the original motion said in its general spirit. It did seem to be, to some degree, an amendment for amendment's sake.

I thank Councillor's Lamb and Cohen for their kind words. We do not always get bouquets from the Conservative Benches so I suppose I will have to treasure those for a little while anyway.

Really, all I would like to say is that we want the review to go ahead but we want it to go ahead with the full information about the volunteers being available and also that the information which is available should be reliable, not this business of saying that you have only got 21% occupancy and then it turns out to be based on a week that assumes that you are open from seven o'clock in the morning until eleven o'clock at night seven days a week.

As I say, I think some of the outstanding repair bills are somewhat dodgy. We do not believe there is £58,000 outstanding at Lewisham but we believe that there is probably far more than £103,000 at the Street Lane Centre in Gildersome which is an 1870s Board School which had very little spent on it for years. It would surprise me if you went round with a clipboard that you would find less than quarter of a million pounds of work that needed doing at Street Lane.

Anyway, I move the motion and I would urge everybody to vote for it rather than voting for the amendment, but I do not think the amendment is a million miles away

but I think if people vote for the original motion it will focus their minds on what I had originally had in mind. *(Applause)*

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

We now vote on the substantive motion which is the one in the name of Councillor Gruen. That is CARRIED.

That brings us to the end of the meeting. Can I thank Members for their very disciplined approach this afternoon. We have got through a lot of business, a lot of speakers on the White Papers and it is down to your self-discipline.

(The meeting closed at 7.42pm)