

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

ORDINARY
MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Held on

Wednesday, 23rd March, 2016

At

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
CIVIC HALL,
LEEDS

In the Chair:

THE LORD MAYOR
(COUNCILLOR J CHAPMAN)

VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

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VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL
ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 23rd MARCH 2016

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon everybody. I just want to remind Members the meeting is to be webcast. Please make sure that your mobile phones are switched off unless you are waiting for an emergency call, then by all means please leave it on.

I would just like to read out a list of Councillors who will not be standing at the next election and to thank them for their service over the years.

Ann Castle. Ann was elected as a Conservative Councillor in 2000 for the Roundhay Ward. She has represented the Harewood ward since 2004. Ann was Lord Mayor in 2012.

Judith Cummins. Judith was elected as a Labour Councillor in 2012 for the Temple Newsam ward.

Maureen Ingham. Maureen was elected as a Labour Councillor in 2012 for the Burmantofts and Richmond Hill ward.

Andrea McKenna. Andrea was elected as a Labour Councillor in 2003 for the Garforth and Swillington Ward. Andrea was Lady Mayoress in 2010.

Bill Urry. Bill was elected as a Labour Councillor in 2012 for the Roundhay ward.

At this stage I would just like to thank Council, this is my last official Council meeting, to thank you for helping me to see the year through. Yes, there have been a few ups and downs but I think we have got through it, generally speaking, unless, of course, I have surprises today which I am not expecting, so thank you all very much. *(Applause)*

On a more sombre note, I was horrified to hear of yesterday's terrorist attacks in Brussels and I would like to offer my sympathy to those affected. 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. The flag is at half mast and will be there until 2000 hrs tomorrow, which marks the end of the three days of mourning. Can I ask you all to stand, please, for a minute's silence.

(Silent tribute)

THE LORD MAYOR: Finally, one matter very close to my heart, my charity. We are doing a fire walk on April 1st. Unfortunately, I was going to be doing it but due to medical reasons *(laughter)* – it is true! – I am not allowed to do it. If you would like to see the reasons why I will bring it in and post it!

COUNCILLOR: Are you flammable, Lord Mayor?

THE LORD MAYOR: Yes, more or less! More or less. Various Members of the Council are doing the walk for us. My daughter will be walking in my place as number one and Stuart McKenna will also be there walking as number two.

I have delivered sponsor forms to various offices and I have got one, if I may, Stewart, to hand to you in the break this afternoon. All the other political parties, I have already nobbled them – I do not know what they have done with them but at least I have had a go. Also in that respect, to say to the whole Council, it has been really nice the support that I have had from everybody throughout the year regarding the charity, as I will give my support to Gerry next year when he is Lord Mayor.

ITEM 1 – MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS HELD 24th FEBRUARY 2016

THE LORD MAYOR: Let us get on with the business, shall we? Minutes of the meeting held 24th February. Councillor Charlwood.

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

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*) The motion is CARRIED.

ITEM 2 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

THE LORD MAYOR: Declarations of interest. Are there any further declarations of pecuniary interests? No, thank you.

ITEM 3 – COMMUNICATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 3, Communications.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. There is one communication to make Council aware of. It is the letter from Robert Goodwill, the Transport Minister, in relation to flooding, which is partly in response to the White Paper motion that was debated at Council in January.

ITEM 4 – DEPUTATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Deputations.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: There are three Deputations today, Lord Mayor: Parents of children in the villages of East Keswick and Bardsey regarding the impact of the Schools Transport Policy; local groups regarding the Government's Prevent Programme; and Leeds Beckett Student Union regarding lighting in Beckett Park.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Charlwood.

COUNCILLOR CHARLWOOD: I move that the Deputations be received, Lord Mayor.

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*) The vote is CARRIED.

DEPUTATION ONE – SCHOOL TRANSPORT POLICY

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

MR A BATTY: Thank you, Lord Mayor, Members of Council. I am Andrew Batty, I am the Chairman of East Keswick Parish Council. My colleague here is Andy Dodsworth, one of the many parents that are aggrieved about the situation.

We represent the parents of the secondary school children in the villages of East Keswick and Bardsey. Recently the Council changed its transport policy and this altered the way that free bus passes are issued and in the new way it is a hugely unfair way, which is causing a grave injustice to the families in those villages, as I shall explain in a second.

Previously where parents found that there was no school within three miles, the rule was that the Council provided a zero fare bus pass to the nearest secondary school. Both Boston Spa and Wetherby Schools are roughly equidistant from the villages and in fact the Leeds Schools website stated Boston Spa was the designated recommended school. On that basis, many parents chose Boston Spa school for their children.

Now, imagine the injustice that parents feel when they are told that Wetherby School, and not Boston Spa School, is nearer and that only Wetherby pupils now are eligible for zero fare.

Those parents cannot change schools as there no places and even if they were willing to allow their children to be moved they would be adversely affected by a school change.

Parents wanted to verify the distances themselves. Measurements on Googlemaps and Tom Tom and other easily available things, such as Ordnance Survey, show in many cases that Boston Spa is the nearest of the two schools, just as the Leeds Education site suggested. Ordnance Survey suggests the same, but Leeds City Council officers are saying they use a different Dutch mapping system to which the public has no access and to which they cannot check or challenge themselves.

The definition of the nearest school might be down to as little as 50 yards' difference and Council officers who attended a packed public meeting, which we organised at East Keswick Parish Council last August, said measurements were going down to the exact distance – that might even be to feet and inches. It was certainly less than 0.1 mile, which is 176 yards, less than 500 feet.

Many parents believe it would be wholly unfair to move children part way through their critical secondary education. Wetherby School has insufficient spare places anyway and

parents chose Boston because the Leeds Education website certified that that Boston Spa School was eligible.

For parents the extra unplanned-for cost is £9.50 per week. For parents with more than one child at the school that unplanned-for cost is doubled or trebled. The fare, incidentally, is higher than First Bus would charge for a week pass, but of course no service bus is available.

Whilst parents can go through the appeals process it is unfair to expect so many to do so. In fact, all the appeals that have gone to the local Council Ombudsman have been overturned – the Local Council Ombudsman has voted against the Council. We should not have a situation where we have got to go to that length in order to get fairness.

The way to correct this injustice is quite simple. I would suggest it is to allow a margin of tolerance – at Council discretion – of half a mile where two schools are nearly equidistant to the communities.

These villagers are not asking for favours, only fairness. Thank you for listening.
(*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Charlwood.

COUNCILLOR CHARLWOOD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I move that the matter be referred to the Executive Board for consideration.

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*) The vote is CARRIED.

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

DEPUTATION TWO – THE GOVERNMENT’S PREVENT PROGRAMME

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 S ADRIS: Thank you very much, Lord Mayor, respected Councillors. My name is Shahab Adris and I am from an organisation called MEND – Muslim Engagement and Development. This is Joe, he is a resident, and on my side I have got Rabin and Mothin, who are also residents of Leeds. Mothin is representing UK Imams Forum.

Thank you very much. I just want to remind us all that we are working towards the same goals, i.e. not wanting any actual, i.e. not wanting any acts of political violence on our shores. We do not want another 7/7, another Brussels, another Ankara, another Paris-style in our country, or anywhere in the world. Let us take this opportunity to send our condolences as a city to all those who have fallen victims to the brute of man’s hostility upon his fellow man, to those in Europe, the hundreds in Ankara,

the thousands in Afghanistan and Pakistan, the hundreds of thousands in Iraq and Syria and the millions in Palestine and other parts of the world.

What we are asking the Council today is to reassure us that the implementation of the Prevent Programme is not counter-productive and is not being implemented in a way that is Islamophobic or harmful, and to request that the Council pressure the Government to take it back to the drawing board.

There are deep paradoxes at the heart of the Prevent strategy. It extols democracy, free speech and mutual respect and tolerance of different faiths and beliefs while actively undermining civil society, political dissent and reinforcing an 'us' and 'them' dichotomy which divides communities and sows widespread mistrust of Muslims.

In times like this we need to be extra vigilant and ensure the measures we take to make people safe are not counter-productive knee jerk reactions. Our position is that we need any model of preventing extremism to work and for it to be proportional.

What Prevent is. Prevent is intended to combat extremism of all kinds, whether it is violent or otherwise. Prevent is one of the four 'P's that make up the Government's post 9/11 Counterterrorism strategy, known as Contest: Prepare for attacks; Protect the public, Pursue the attackers; and Prevent their radicalisation first place. Legislation passed by the Government last year meant all public bodies, including schools and hospitals, were now required to look out for and report signs of radicalisation. There is an overwhelming focus on Muslim communities and relies heavily on the much disputed and academically unsound 'conveyor belt theory' which imagines radicalisation as a simple linear progression, for example that watching enough YouTube videos will eventually make that person commit an act of violence. It is an idea that has been largely discredited by the experts. Back in August 2014, the BBC reported that despite millions of pounds, initiative after initiative, the strategy remains deeply controversial, virtually impossible to fully assess and if its critics are right, fatally compromised and incapable of achieving its goals.

At the same time our Prime Minister has repeatedly focused on the ideological factors and ignoring the every day reality of people's lives. Discrimination on people from certain backgrounds who apply for jobs, a lack of sense of belonging, low levels of community cohesion.

On this occasion I want to quote Charles Farr, the Director of the Office of Security and Counterterrorism, who stated that "The background of broken families, the lack of integration into what we might call mainstream society, some level of criminality and sometimes family conflict are all more than normally apparent" and once we have analysed the perpetrators of terrorist activities in Europe especially, we usually find they were not religiously devout individuals either.

The Prevent strategy ignores global political context of conflict over land, over resources or vested interests and seeks to deter individuals from extremism with an ill-conceived and empirically unsound definition of the word. It claims to safeguard individuals from vulnerability to radicalisation without engaging all the multi-varied factors that contribute to it, including foreign and domestic policy grievances.

I must remind you that we need to critique policies which are there for our protection, and ensure they work, and recognise discriminatory policies do not work.

Our approach at the moment is: preventing people coming forward with genuine concerns; shutting down necessary debate and forcing it underground where vulnerable people are more likely to be exploited and where extreme views go unchallenged, and on its way encouraging some people to find belonging online, where most radicalisation is actually taking place.

Many teachers have personally complained to me of the lack of proper training leading to counterproductive steps being taken. Last year in April delegates at the National Union of Teachers conference complained they were being turned into frontline storm troopers, who listen, spy and notify the authorities.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can you just say your last sentence, please, you have run out of time.

MR S ADRIS: Sorry. I had quite a bit, I was trying to do it in about six minutes or so. What we want, our request to the Council today is to provide concrete reassurance that Prevent is being implemented locally in a way that is not Islamophobic or harmful and provides hard evidence to show this is being done properly.

THE LORD MAYOR: OK, thank you. I have to ask you to stop now.

MR S ADRIS: Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Charlwood.

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

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)* The vote 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 once more.

MR S ADRIS: Good afternoon and thank you very much for the opportunity.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Deputation three, lighting on Beckett Park, have not arrived. We are not sure whether they are late due to some misapprehension of time so I am going to just wait and see if they turn up and then decide whether or not to let the Deputation go ahead.

ITEM 5 – RECOMMENDATION OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE – PAY POLICY STATEMENT.

THE LORD MAYOR: At this point we are on to Item 5, Recommendation of the General Purposes Committee – Pay Policy Statement. Councillor Blake.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Charlwood.

COUNCILLOR CHARLWOOD: I second, Lord Mayor.

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

ITEM 6 – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STANDARDS AND CONDUCT COMMITTEE – ANNUAL REPORT.

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 6, Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, in moving the Item 6 I should like to draw the attention of Members particularly to page 55, item 3.5 in the Register of Interests.

Members should be aware that not to register a pecuniary interest is a criminal offence. If someone draws the Monitoring Officer's attention to a Member not registering a pecuniary interest, then the Monitoring Officer must, by law, report the matter to the police. There is no discretion allowed and it does not matter whether or not there has been a conflict of interest during voting; it is still a crime not to register a pecuniary interest.

The Standards Committee has therefore asked the Monitoring Officer to send a reminder email every three months which will include a link direct to Members' interests. It will take only a few seconds to click on to this to check that the Register is up to date. May I recommend that Members take advantage of this reminder every time it arrives.

Details of what should be registered are in the Members' Code of Conduct and in the booklet today they are on page 64. My Lord Mayor, I move that the Standards Report be received.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Selby.

COUNCILLOR SELBY: Lord Mayor, I second the recommendation so ably moved by my colleague Councillor Nash.

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

ITEM 7 – REPORT ON ATTENDANCE

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 7, Councillor Charlwood.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Campbell.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: I second, Lord Mayor.

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

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE REPORTS

THE LORD MAYOR: We will now move on to Community Committee Reports. Consideration of each report will last for no more than ten minutes.

ITEM 8 – REPORT ON THE INNER NORTH EAST COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

THE LORD MAYOR: Firstly, item 8, Councillor Taylor.

COUNCILLOR TAYLOR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Thank you for giving me this opportunity to move this report. I would like to hear what my colleagues have to say so I will try not to take up too much time.

The Committee has met quite a few times this year to carry out and make a difference in the community. We have had several topics and issues: in June of last year topics of health; September last year we raised awareness with domestic violence; December of last year we increased our effective community hubs; March this year we have a topic on the increased physical activities with young people.

I would like to thank my other colleagues for the work they have contributed towards this Committee and for taking part so openly in these debates, and I would also like to thank the Exec Member and the officers for the support that they have given to this Committee.

I am very interested to hear what my other colleagues have to say, Lord Mayor, so I will not take up much time and move this report.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Urry.

COUNCILLOR URRY: I speak to the Minutes in the Inner North East Community Committee, paragraph 14 on page 84.

Domestic violence is any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender or sexuality. It can include psychological, physical, sexual, financial, emotional abuse, so-called honour-based violence, FGM and forced marriage and much else. These are often concealed, under-reported crimes and can affect both genders, every ethnic community, every occupation, every social class, every income, every age group. In Leeds police get around 40 domestic violence and abuse calls every day. In 2014 there were 14,226 reported incidents across the city; since 2011 there have been 17 domestic violence homicides. These are shocking figures and Scrutiny rightly undertook an inquiry two years ago and this is one of our sudden breakthrough projects.

Leeds must have zero tolerance for domestic violence and abuse. This needs services and interventions that meet users' needs and expectations; a consistent and better-developed response to perpetrators, Caring Dads provides a 17 week course in behaviour change. A pilot shows that half the men complete the course and families report a positive effect.

There must be robust and effective information sharing across agencies. The Front Door Safeguarding Hub considers all DV reports every 24 hours, ensuring support and guidance when most needed and we are piloting school liaison when we hear of domestic violence when there is a child in the house. This has an overwhelming effect for schools, children and families alike.

Above all, we need public awareness of domestic violence and the support available to victims to support victims and prevent tragedies and human misery.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Hamilton.

COUNCILLOR HAMILTON: Lord Mayor, I would like to let Council know about the work we have been doing to encourage activities amongst young people.

The NHS advises that five to 18 year olds need to undertake at least 60 minutes of physical exercise every day, ranging from moderate to vigorous activity. I feel very strongly that exercise for children should not be confused with regimented activities. Running, cycling, jumping and simply enjoying life actively are all ways for young people to stay healthy.

I am very glad that we have been able to think about how the Community Committee can help with this. We do already, for example by helping dancing activities, sport clubs and swimming camps. We have seen the impact of play streets in part of the area. I am glad that we are looking at where else in the Community Committee area can be used, as I know young people across my ward would be delighted to have this chance. We have some great parks in our area – Meanwood Park, Roundhay Park and Potter Newton Park to name just three. Big or small, getting great places for children to play will help to keep them active.

Lord Mayor, I hope we will be able to encourage young children to be active for many years to come. Thank you. (*Applause*)

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

COUNCILLOR TAYLOR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It is touching to hear such a wonderful report from Councillor Urry and Councillor Hamilton. Councillor Urry is right to point out the need for everyone to be engaged in increasing our awareness of domestic violence and abuse. As a Committee we have agreed to set aside £500 from each ward's budget to fund local activities; we target domestic violence. This opportunity was seized by Leeds Housing Concern, who secured £200 to run their own awareness raising activities during the 16 days of action targeting the vulnerable homeless people.

Councillor Hamilton has really put across her passion we in the Inner North East have for engaging with young people and young children. We know that giving a young child a place to play and they will not even notice that they are being active. This is why we are looking to increase play spaces straight in the community area. Building on what has been achieved as well as in Chapel Allerton, the Committee has allocated a total of £229,495 in total for 2015/16 to support local projects. This will help support, amongst others, a project which is good work with the police to keep violence down. We also support an inter-generational luncheon club, a local toy appeal, an improved local community dance facility which is provided by RJC. Some of you need to pop down and see the wonderful work that the community has helped to contribute to what the young people enjoy.

Lord Mayor, in the Inner North East it is looking to invest in our communities and make our area stronger, more resilient and more active and a better place where everyone wants to live. Last but not least, Lord Mayor, I would like to thank Councillor Urry for all the hard work that he has contributed to this committee in the past year and, Lord Mayor, I move the report. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. I call for the vote. The vote is CARRIED.

ITEM 9 – REPORT ON THE OUTER SOUTH COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 9, Councillor Bruce.

COUNCILLOR BRUCE: Thank you, my Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors. This year has been fantastic for Outer South as we have seen more and more members of the public attending and participating in the events we have held. We have seen Community Heroes celebrated, which is always a great time of year for us. We have also put on a full programme of workshops throughout the year on key issues, including supporting employment for disabled people, child sexual exploitation, health and wellbeing but as Community Safety and Environmental Champion myself I was pleased at our recent event on cleaning up our communities, as it went down very well with local people in a packed hall. The discussion was lively and I know that those who were there appreciated having a real say in the way our environmental teams in Outer South operate for the next year.

Outer South covers a lot of rural villages. The support team and local groups, though, did a great job on putting on transport for those who could not get there. It was great to see so many young people enjoying and participating in the environmental workshop, after seeing them arriving in a community minibus.

Although again we have seen a 10% reduction in funding due to the Government cuts, of course, it is great that we can still help to fund great community events which people love, like the Morley Literature Festival and the Rothwell events.

In 1408 King Henry IV, son of John O’Gaunt of Rothwell, decreed that Rothwell should have two fairs per year. Almost 600 years later this still happens, thanks to the Community Committee funding for May Day celebrations and the Rothwell Carnival. I love the display by local children, dancing around Rothwell’s maypole. Last year was even more of a spectacle as my ward colleagues David Nagle and Stewart Golton, along with Alec Shelbrooke MP, were dragged to jiggle around the maypole as well.

THE LORD MAYOR: You have run out of time.

COUNCILLOR BRUCE: This still makes me smile at the thought. Thank you, Lord Mayor. Now I look forward to hearing my colleagues. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Nagle.

COUNCILLOR NAGLE: Thank you very much, my Lord Mayor. My Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, I would like to speak on the report on the Outer South Community Committee and specifically about the work we have undertaken in relation to the local environment and community safety.

This year has been an extremely positive year for work on this agenda. To start, the Environmental Services sub-group has ensured a joined-up approach to anti-social behaviour, litter and fly tipping, meaning a more streamlined service delivery across the area.

We have also seen £36,000 of Community Committee funding allocated to a site-based gardeners' scheme. This provides dedicated gardeners who manage green spaces across the Outer South and carry out tasks such as grass cutting, de-littering, marking out sports pitches, planting and sweeping paths. Not only has this helped to improve the physical environment, it has improved security issues too, as well as leading to more public engagement to enhance visitor experience at the sites.

With regards to community safety, the Community Committee again funded a number of crime reduction initiatives. These included holiday packs which contained timer switches, television simulators and motion detector alarms to help reduce burglary. Bike security skins and shed alarms have also been provided to residents across our communities.

Another huge success was Operation Flame which took place in the run-up to Bonfire Night and the weekend after. A multi-agency approach, this tackled antisocial behaviour and environmental issues. Indeed, the Fire Service praised the contribution of the operation to the fact that the south-east of Leeds had the lowest reported incidents across the city during the period.

Specifically within my ward of Rothwell the environment has been a real focus. We have seen the building of a new skate park, footwear repairs along Leeds Road and a Junior Rangers Club at Rothwell Country Park, to name but a few initiatives.

THE LORD MAYOR: I am afraid you have run out of time. Could you just say your last sentence, please.

COUNCILLOR NAGLE: Thank you very much indeed, my Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Renshaw.

COUNCILLOR RENSHAW: My Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, I would like to speak on the report of the Outer South Community Committee.

As the Adult Social Care Community Committee Champion, I am proud to say that it has been a fantastic year for older people within our communities. Through the establishment of the Older Persons Working Group we have been able to bring together all those who work with and for older people to promote the wellbeing of older residents in the Outer South.

Providing local leadership, the group ensures that the needs of older people are met and that services are more responsive and personalised. Through strong relationship working we have focused on a number of priorities such as dementia and social isolation. I would like to highlight a couple of specific projects.

Funded by the Community Committee, 524 Wellbeing packs which contained food and warmth resources were distributed throughout the Outer South this year. To support this, a Winter Friends training session was held, enabling those completing it to promote services and resources and identify additional support required, such as flu vaccinations and energy efficiency advice. The Community Committee also provided £33,000 to support a gardening

service to the elderly and disabled. The service, delivered by Morley Elderly Action, helps older people cope with their gardens and the prevention of accidents.

Finally, September and October saw fantastic events being held in Rothwell and Morley to celebrate the International Day of Older People. These focused on promoting independent living by introducing services that could be of help and by engaging with socially isolated people living in communities. A huge success, the event saw around 400 people attend. I am delighted that we have been able to work so closely and so well with partners to the benefit of our older residents. Long may these strong working relationships continue and long may older people in our communities continue to be supported so well as a result. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Leadley.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, I would like to comment on the spending and collection of Community Infrastructure (or CIL) money, which is not mentioned here although it has arisen at two recent meetings and spending some of it is becoming part of the work of Community Committees.

What concerns me is that there are officers of Council who should know but who do not seem to understand fully how CIL is administered. It came into force in Leeds on 5th April last year and should yield substantial funds needed for public infrastructure. It is charged against development of new buildings.

We have seen an attempt to set up a sub-committee presided over by the Outer South Community Committee Chairman, which would have overseen spending of the 15% Local Community share of CIL generated throughout Outer South, even though Morley North and Morley South are covered entirely by the Parishes of Drighlington, Gildersome and Morley which, according to national regulations must receive directly from Leeds their 15% local shares, as must the three Neighbourhood Forums which cover parts of Rothwell. There has been some reluctance to acknowledge that the 15% must be handed over to Parishes and Neighbourhood Forums where they exist.

Last week I sat through an almost endless planning public inquiry during which it emerges officers believe that the application under discussion was not liable for CIL. I thought it was and officers confirmed that this was so after taking legal advice.

CIL will not be a huge bonanza but it should make a substantial contribution towards the cost of community infrastructure so everyone must be as efficient and as well-informed as possible when collecting and spending it, especially as it has been in place in Leeds for nearly a year. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am looking at page 95, 3.2.2, the report on Adult Social Care, just to confirm our ongoing opposition to the closure of Siegen Manor in Morley, or its proposed closure, that will be considered later on in this particular year. It is not just the Morley Borough Independents that oppose this closure programme; it is also my good colleague Councillor Dawson (who is not actually here this afternoon) but he concurs with our particular view, that is based upon very clear consultations and discussions with the families of residents in Siegen Manor, with a very clear target that we need good quality extra care accommodation in and around the Morley area.

It is clear from over a thousand people who signed a petition calling for the same that this is an important issue in the Morley area, and certainly we will continue to raise it at Community Committee because we do believe that a similar arrangement to that of Knowle Manor – ie that it stays open until better extra care accommodation is available - is the decision that should be made in June. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

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

COUNCILLOR BRUCE: Thanks, my Lord Mayor. Firstly, thank you to Councillor Nagle and Councillor Renshaw for their reflections on the fantastic year we have had in Outer South. Thank you and all the other Members for your hard work. That is brilliant.

Tom, with regards the CIL, as you know we had a discussion at the last Community Committee only a week or two ago about it and nothing has been decided as yet and officers are going to come back for the next meeting with a proposal based on what we discussed and what all the comments were. Yes, we do understand the involvement of Town and Parish Councils there, that will be taken into consideration, but at the end of the day we all need to work together.

Robert, Siegen Manor, I know what you are saying and we all want the best for older people in Outer South and I am sure that will be taken forward at the Older Persons sub-group at the relevant opportunity.

My colleagues have highlighted just some of the brilliant work that has been completed for and with local residents across our community. I would like to thank all those involved with our Committee – the Members, the officers and the public – for their hard work over the last year.

I would also like to take this opportunity to highlight just what an active role our Community Committee Champions play in shaping the agendas we have worked to and their work with officers to ensure positive impact within our area. Their leadership and critical input has proven invaluable in ensuring that real action has been taken across all service areas. Children and young people with Bob as the Champion; Environment and Community Safety, me; Health and Wellbeing, Lisa; Adult Social Care is Karen; and Employment, Skills and Welfare, Neil Dawson - I want to thank you all and all the other Members who do excellent work on the sub-groups and in all the other roles that you do.

THE LORD MAYOR: You have run out of time.

COUNCILLOR BRUCE: Thank you all for your ongoing commitment. (*Applause*)

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

I now have an unusual situation on my hands here, so to make sure that I am not being biased towards anybody, the third Deputation has now arrived and it is in order if I wish to allow them to speak. I am going to ask Council to make that decision, please. You are groaning – the reason I am asking you to make that decision is because they are from the ward which I represent and therefore I am asking you to make the decision.

COUNCILLOR: That is fair.

THE LORD MAYOR: Those for? (*A vote was taken*) It is CARRIED. They are now coming in to speak.

DEPUTATION THREE – LIGHTING ON BECKETT PARK

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

MR J MALPASS CLARK: Mick Austin, Student Voice Manager and I am Jay Malpass Clark Student Union President and Leeds SUs Working Together representative.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, please begin.

MR J MALPASS CLARK: Dear Councillors, thank you for taking the time to listen to our proposal for lighting in Beckett Park.

To begin with, I must draw your attention to the history of the problem, and the interest in resolving it that has been generated from our students and other members of our community who also take this route. For the past decade this has been an issue that the Students Union and it has heard from its membership that it is a significant problem. Previous attempts to raise the issue with Leeds City Council have not generated a satisfactory outcome, and the lack of lighting continues to be raised as a major concern for our community.

Most recently, in November a petition was started and put forward by a student called Kelly-Anne Watson calling for lighting in Beckett Park. Within just two weeks that petition had secured an impressive 3,000 signatures.

Historically, criminals have identified this route as a place that students will choose to walk though and have targeted attacks here as it is dark enough to make an approach without being seen. The actual number of these attacks may have been significantly higher than what has been reported to the police, as we know that not all crime does get reported. In my time as a student I remember that in my close circle of 15 friends, four of them, including myself, had incurred some form of attack in Beckett Park. I was the only one who reported that incident. The rest did not.

Please allow me to provide some further context for the pathway we are asking for lighting on. It is a regular pedestrian route between two of our campuses - Headingley Campus and Pavilion/Stand Campus. Thousands of students move between these campuses every day as it is part of their timetabled study commitments. Additionally, we have a sports centre open until midnight, with students commuting between Headingley town and campus to take part in our sports offering, often also going home though this pathway on to the Headingley Mounts. This participation in sport and other evening activities is a crucial and integral part of university life.

Furthermore, we are one of the few universities to offer 24 hour libraries 365 days a year. I was one of those students who took advantage of this provision, often working through until the early hours in the days before my assignments were due. For many students this is a necessary reality due to balancing study and part-time work and other life commitments.

Lastly, it should be noted that our partnerships with other transport providers are limited at this time because we are working with a private transport provider. Tiger Bus stop their service at 9.00pm most nights.

When conversations were had about the idea with members of the surrounding community, many were in support. However, there were some concerns raised, mainly with the arguments of dark-spotting - where the lighting will create further and darker areas in which attacks could be made. These concerns, however, do not address the fact that the pathway we are talking about is already a dark spot because there is lighting on either side.

What I am asking for today is an assurance from the City Council that it takes seriously the safety concerns of your citizens and students, for you to demonstrate that you think it is important that our student population feels cared for and welcomed in the city of Leeds. Believe me, these are the things students take into mind when they make the decision of whether to stay in the area or continue their studies in the area and contribute positively to the local economy and to wider society.

Now I do not just stand here as the principal representative of 24,000 students at Leeds Beckett pleading for this change, but also as the representative of Leeds SU's Working Together that represents 101,000 students. This totals to around one quarter of your citizens who wish to walk in this area in safety and with your Council also as co-creators, to shape an environment that they value and to build the comfort and trust for them to stay in Leeds on a long-term basis. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Charlwood.

COUNCILLOR CHARLWOOD: I move that the matter be referred to the Director of Environment and Housing for consideration, in consultation with the relevant Executive Member.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Latty.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

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

MR J MALPASS CLARK: Thank you.

ITEM 10 - QUESTIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: We move back to the Order Paper, we are on Item 10, which is Questions. As you know, 30 minutes is allowed for questioning.

The first question, Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Will the Leader of Council (not the Leader of Council, I see we have got the substitute) will Councillor Dobson confirm the number of PCSOs operating in Leeds in 2016/17?

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Yes, thank you, Lord Mayor. The number budgeted for next year in terms of PCSOs will be 244 for Leeds. That will consist of 227 of which they are either fully funded or jointly funded between West Yorkshire Police and Leeds City Council; a further 17 funded or part-funded posts with partners will be provided and 13 of those have already been renegotiated. That represents for Leeds next year a rise of 20 PCSOs.

THE LORD MAYOR: Do you have a supplementary?

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Yes, Lord Mayor. My supplementary is in two parts. First of all, does Councillor Dobson agree with me that it is unacceptable for the Police and Crime Commissioner to be sitting on a front line staffing underspend in this financial year of three and a half million pounds and also to be sitting on reserves of £120m, approximately five times as great as the Revenue Reserves of Leeds City Council?

The second part of the supplementary is this. The Executive Board on 9th May, his Leader for whom he is now providing a firewall, told the Council, and I quote, "Councillor Blake referred to there being more PCSOs on Leeds streets than we have had before."

Either she does not know the true figures or she was deliberately trying to mislead the Executive, the Council and the people of Leeds. Which is it, Councillor Dobson?

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: To answer the first part of the supplementary, Lord Mayor, the fact remains that if the PCC was sat on massive reserves of £104m with no plans to spend those reserves, I think that would be a matter of concern. £64m are already earmarked for spending and whilst it could be argued that the reserves which the PCC currently holds are large and perhaps disproportionate to Leeds City Council, what is clear is that going into the Comprehensive Spending Review in the autumn, nobody had the first clue what was going to come out of that particular Spending Review, and I think it was actually wise and (to use an old expression I have not heard for some time from a former Chancellor and Prime Minister) prudent to keep his powder dry in terms of what was actually held in terms of reserves.

Now, I think the crux of the matter for us is that in 2014 we entered a two year deal on PCSOs where we were funding on a 20/80 split with the PCC. The PCC's initiative around this is actually to secure and protect the PCSOs service in Leeds in a much more sustainable manner and that will be achieved by actually having reserves that will be spent over a four year period to ensure that Leeds does not find itself in the situation in two years' time or one year's time where it is scrabbling around trying to make a budget that will protect the PCSOs service.

I think in doing that, whilst it does raise legitimate questions, the answers I have received satisfy me that there is a plan, a strategy around sustainability for the service which actually leads me to go forward with a great degree of confidence.

In terms of the second part of the question, I am sure, Andrew, you will know that the Leader would not try and mislead anybody on any issue of this Council but it is fair to say and there is no getting away from the fact that there was an erosion of PCSOs in the city over the last few years. The 64,000 dollar question is why? The fact of the matter is over the last five years West Yorkshire Police in Leeds have had a budget cut of £24m and that is taking into

account rises in precepts year on year. The actual budget cut would have been a lot more substantial.

We are in a position now where we have got safety and security and surety around the PCSO service and I am happy to report to Council that the future of the PCSO service in Leeds looks a lot brighter, a lot rosier and that has been done as a real collaborative piece of work between the Council, West Yorkshire Police and the PCC and I think it is something we should be celebrating. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Townsley.

COUNCILLOR TOWNSLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Does the Executive Member agree with me that it is a missed opportunity not to install Automatic Number Plate Recognition cameras on the newly constructed A65/A6120 ring road roundabout so that the police have a tool with which to gather evidence as recommended by three years' worth of emails from Council officers?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Just to clarify, Highways and Transportation Urban Traffic Management Control have a camera at Horsforth roundabout to monitor traffic conditions and enabling us to remotely control and adjust the traffic signal timings as appropriate. UTM does not record any camera images from this.

On the other hand, ANPR is done by the police force. At present there are around 8,500 ANPR cameras nationally which submit between 25m and 35m number plate images to the National Database every day. In principle there is no objection to West Yorkshire Police deploying ANPR cameras at or in the vicinity of Horsforth roundabout. They have proven a very useful tool as I am sure many of us realise and have experience of it in detecting and deterring criminal activity.

However, of course, that decision is one to be taken by the police based on their operational needs. West Yorkshire Police tell us that, according to national guidelines, an assessment must be conducted as to whether it is a good idea to have a camera to demonstrate that there is clear need, taking into account the following factors: national security and counter terrorism; serious organised and major crime; local crime; community confidence and reassurance; and crime prevention and reduction.

We can keep up the dialogue with the police force but it is ultimately their decision, their strategic decision, as to how they wish to spend their money. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Do you have a supplementary question?

COUNCILLOR TOWNSLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor, yes, I suppose sort of, although strangely enough both Councillor Carter and Councillor Dobson have already alluded to this.

Quite right, Councillor Lewis, yes, the police are certainly sitting on an awful lot of reserves and what have you. Whilst this Council has been having huge cuts it seems to me still that the police are missing a big trick here because every time they come to us in the Community Committees they shout the praises of the ANPR cameras, so I still think that you,

Councillor Lewis, would you please put more pressure on them to get an ANPR camera on that particular roundabout.

THE LORD MAYOR: *(Pause – problem with sound system)* Could you stand up and repeat that, please, so that they can hear because it is a question if you are asking “Would...”

COUNCILLOR TOWNSLEY: Yes, I am asking Councillor Lewis if he will put extra pressure on the police to spend some of their money and put in a very useful ANPR camera on that particular roundabout.

COUNCILLOR: Instead of spending our money.

THE LORD MAYOR: Do you wish to respond?

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: I think it is probably more my colleague, Councillor Dobson, who would have those discussions with the police.

There is one thing in your original question about three years’ worth of emails from Council officers. I have certainly had no Council officer emails about this as a subject and I think that that would be where I would expect people to get in touch. The fact that the roundabout has been built is not in any way a barrier to an ANPR being installed at some time in the future. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Iqbal.

COUNCILLOR IQBAL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Please will the Leader of Council update Members on recent announcements concerning flood defences in Leeds?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Councillor Iqbal. As I promised in the past, I welcome the opportunity to update Council as the situation regarding the aftermath of the dreadful Boxing Day flooding unfolds.

I think it is fair to say there was a collective outcry from the city and beyond at the direct consequences of the failure of the Government to fund the original scheme in 2011 and the devastating consequences along particularly the course of the River Aire going through Kirkstall into the city centre and beyond.

I am delighted to say that there has been sustained pressure on the Secretary of State for the Environment cross party from the Council, from all the MPs in Leeds and going down together to meet with Elizabeth Truss to put that pressure on.

There was an announcement in the Budget, a sum of money attached to that and I think the significance that is taken by the Front Bench of the Government, we had both George Osborne and Elizabeth Truss herself in Leeds the day after the Budget to talk about the response.

The wording they are using is that they confirm that there will be a good level of protection for the city of Leeds. We do not know exactly what that level will be but what they have confirmed is that the scoping exercise for the feasibility study will be announced at the

end of this month, so we are expecting that next week, and then we will have a feasibility study for the whole catchment area of the River Aire.

I think most of you will be aware the reaction from the people directly affected and people across the city is that they will wait to see what the exercise brings out but that we are committed to continuing to put the pressure on to make sure that we get all of the funding from Government that we need to protect our communities. This is not going to be a short-term process, however. The Government estimates that it could take up to two years for the feasibility study to be completed and then once on site it could take several years after that for the whole scheme to be in place. We will continue to keep pressure to get the results as quickly as we possibly can.

We have a situation where significant businesses along the corridor have already made the decision not to continue to operate in that area – devastating for the people who work, the ones who are going to lose their jobs and the ones who risk the uncertainty of the businesses being moved elsewhere. We also have houses in the city where people have not been able to go back and live, along the length of the River Wharfe.

One of the areas that we have to continue to work on is the area of insurance. If we are not careful the whole of the Aire Corridor will be blighted by the inability of businesses to get insurance, and we will join the national lobby to make sure that the insurances for businesses comes into line with the new arrangements for residential areas.

When the Secretary of State was in Leeds she was told by one of the companies they had just got their insurance premium to renew and their excess had gone up by over 200%. This is the scale of the challenge that is facing businesses who want to continue to operate in the Aire Corridor. This is urgent and we must all work together to give them the answers that they need. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Member for Environmental Protection and Community Safety tell me what the procedure is for informing bin collection crews of any highways work that may affect their ability to complete their round?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dobson.

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am happy to tell Councillor Blackburn that there is a robust system of reporting between Highways and my service department in terms of where roadworks will take place, and that is not only where the Council are doing roadworks – of course there are lots of roadworks in the city at present – it also includes when utility companies are coming on and exercising their statutory right to do roadworks on the public highway.

What I will say is this, it is never going to be a precise science because whilst we can get the reporting, and clearly we do, there is always going to be issues around the practicality of actually delivering a service on a certain day. The relationship between Highways and the Department, as I say, is robust but the fact is, and there is one particular example that stands out in your ward around the Tongue Road area. That service where, despite that internal knowledge being passed forward, it was simply not possible on a certain day in question to deliver a black service and then the same happened with the green service. What we did, of

course, is we went back and emptied the black bins within a day and we did not leave the green cycle for 14 days, it was done within six days, so whilst there are always going to be anomalies to the system, I would ask Council to remember that this is a diverse and complex city, lots of roadworks happening here, there and everywhere and we do our very, very best to manage a service. We empty two million bins in Leeds every month and the number of complaints, I remember going back five years when I first took over the department, I used to actually dread opening my Inbox – they have gone down to such a degree now we can actually pinpoint where most delays on most days are going to take place and there is a rationale behind that, so I can give you that assurance. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Do you have a supplementary question?

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Yes thank you, Lord Mayor. You referred to the matter in Tongue Road and it was mentioned that the crews went back. The fact is this happened twice and I would ask that anywhere where something happens where bins are not collected, that the following time it is noted. In this particular case there was times when they could have gone before or after a certain time and I did ring in and I did report this and they did come out another day within that time, but then the following week, when I think it was the black collection, they did not hit the timing again. I think you have just got to be a bit careful. I do accept that we do collect a lot of bins but I would just ask if we could bear that in mind. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Excuse me, Councillor Blackburn, I did not get a question there unless I missed it.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: The question is, can we make sure that when something is reported that it is taken note of so that the same matter does not happen again the following week.

THE LORD MAYOR: OK, I have got that now. Councillor Dobson, would you like to reply?

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Well go on then, why not! For old times' sake!

THE LORD MAYOR: I thought you had sat back and decided...

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: I can give those assurances, Ann. As I say, to go back to what I said in the first part of the question, it is not a precise science. We try and deliver a service and be at certain points at certain times but again, it is all subject to change, it is a diverse service, we empty two millions bins a month. We will do our best but I cannot give a hundred per cent guarantee on that one, much as I would like to.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Taylor.

COUNCILLOR TAYLOR: Thank you. Can the Executive Member for Children's Services please comment on the Chancellor's recent education announcements?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Yeadon.

COUNCILLOR YEADON: Thank you very much, Councillor Taylor. I think many of us were concerned to hear the announcements last week regarding the Government's intention to force wholesale academisation across all schools, also resulting in the scrapping of parent

governors. I think it might be fair to say that our concern is shared by many in the country including the Chair of the LGA, Lord Porter, who said of the announcements:

“The LGA reiterates our opposition to forced academisation of schools. It is vital that we concentrate on the quality of education and a school’s ability to deliver the best results for children rather than on the legal status of a school to make sure that we are providing education and support needed in each area.”

I think as an Authority we have always tried to work with all partners across the city to ensure that every child has the best start to their life as possible and the best education possible, but it is concerning when we are having to deal with a national policy which is driven solely by ideology rather than any evidence that it improves the outcomes, as Michael Wilshaw highlighted only a couple of weeks ago, the number of academy chains that are failing is incredibly concerning and there is no evidence that academisation actually improves the results for children in our city.

I think as an Authority we are concerned that academies are not the panacea and we should be concentrating on improving schools and education and looking at the particular reasons, not necessarily the governance structures, to why some schools are not benefiting the children like they should.

I think our concerns are many and it probably would not be appropriate for us to highlight them all now, but we will be campaigning and working to ask that the Government thinks again regarding this policy, that we will continue to work with all partners in the city to ensure that children have the best education they can. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Taylor, do you have a supplementary question?
Councillor Anderson.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: Does the Leader of Council agree with comments attributed to Jeremy Corbyn regarding the legalisation of prostitution?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Can I start by seeking assurance from Councillor Anderson that you fully understand that we are dealing with one of the most sensitive and complex areas of policy that we possibly can be. We are talking about communities that have been subject to certain types of behaviour for many, many years, trying to respond to a very difficult situation but can I emphasise that we are talking about some of the most vulnerable young women in this city and I hope that we are not going to bat this about in any way that does not do justice to the really detailed work that has been going on across the country to try and find a way of coping with these problems.

As I am sure you are aware, the Council does not have a view at the moment on the legal status of prostitution but there is a review going on in Parliament at the moment. Jeremy Corbyn did express a view as far as I am aware – I have not spoken to him about his view so I do not know the context of the information that I have got – but he has stated that he does not want people to be criminalised and would be in favour of de-criminalising the sex industry, but he does go on to say let us do things a bit differently and in a more civilised way.

Let us continue the debate in this city and make sure that we do everything we possibly can to protect those most at risk and most vulnerable. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Anderson.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: Does the Leader of Council agree with me that the increase in anti-Semitism being voiced by some of her national colleagues and grass roots activities *(interruption)* have no place in this country, they do not reflect well on a Jeremy Corbyn-led party as a viable alternative to Government as well as his views on prostitution.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blake. *(interruption)*

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Lord Mayor, I was assuming that you would take a ruling on that as I did not see that as a supplementary to the question that I was asked in the first place.

THE LORD MAYOR: OK, Councillor Blake, I will take advice.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: I repeat what I am saying, he is raising incredibly sensitive issues. It is not appropriate to raise them in such a way in this Chamber and does not do credit to you at all, Councillor Anderson. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: If you just bear with me, Councillor Blake, I am just going to speak to Catherine. *(pause)*

I have just taken the advice that I should have done and I was told that the advice would have been to let the question stand.

Councillor Cleasby.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Yes, I will try to follow that – it is a bit like doing the fire walk now! Could the Executive Member please update Council on the airport link road consultation?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Members of Council will recall in March 2014 there was unanimous support for a White Paper Motion which stated that:

“Council recognises the long term benefits Leeds Bradford International Airport brings to the local regional economy and fully supports the City Region’s proposed infrastructure improvements to improve both its accessibility and connectivity.”

In light of that resolution the Council supports long term improvements to surface access to the airport including both road and rail being developed as part of the West Yorkshire Transport Fund.

The initial public consultation on the A65-Airport-A658 link road closed on 26th February 2016. The consultation was undertaken to raise awareness of the scheme and to enable the views of members of the public and stakeholders to be considered alongside technical work in developing the outline business case at a very early stage of the scheme’s development.

The Council website, social media and email were used to publicise the consultation, as well as the Local Site Allocations events. There was some coverage on local TV news; twelve public drop-in events were held which were attended by a total of approximately 400 people. In addition, an unmanned stand was provided at the airport. Leaflets were distributed at the events and elsewhere, including Council, West Yorkshire Combined Authority offices, local libraries, the airport and by handing out the leaflets in Leeds City Centre.

Feedback was obtained via an online survey and a similar paper-based form was attached to the leaflet. Approximately 2,200 questionnaire responses have been received. In addition approximately 450 emails and letters were received during the consultation period. The project team is currently working through the consultation responses, emails have received an automatic acknowledgment whilst letter correspondence will be contacted over the course of the next few weeks.

The Project Team will be assessing the reasons for support or objection and considering whether changes might be made to the reasons for support or objection, and considering whether changes might be made to the design and assessments to reflect the comments received and feed these into the outline business case which will be developed through the remainder of 2016.

A report will be prepared and submitted to the Executive Board as part of the outline business case later this year. The Executive Board will then have an opportunity to consider carefully the results of the consultation alongside the strategic, economic, environmental, commercial and management cases for the scheme to decide if and how the scheme should progress to the next stage of its development. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cleasby.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. By way of supplementary, Lord Mayor, and in view of the current airport's own total access consultation now taking place, would Councillor Lewis now agree that recent Council consultation on road only access was a wasted opportunity and, more importantly, a waste of finance?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: We could have consulted on road and rail. However, rail is not about a single option. We put forward three options for a road. If you were to look at rail you would probably be talking about six different options – is it a rail link from Guiseley, is it a rail link from Horsforth, is it tram-train, is it light rail, is it a rail link from Bradford? I think it would have been totally confusing and utterly pointless to have had nine options put in front of people. I think what we did was quite right, we put three sensible options in front of people and people have responded to that. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Question 8, Councillor Pryor.

COUNCILLOR PRYOR: Thank you. Following the Deputation in January from service users, can the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adults update Council on the future of the BHA Skyline Service?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mulherin.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor and thank you, Councillor Pryor. I am relieved that we have managed to get to this question because I want to start by paying tribute on behalf of this Council to the bravery of the service users who brought their Deputation to Council in the autumn expressing their heartfelt concerns about the future of the HIV service that they rely on.

I met with them after their Deputation and arranged to meet the larger group of around 40 service users and officers from BHA Skyline in January this year. The Director of Public Health and the Director of Adult Social Services attended that visit with me to assure service users that Leeds City Council did not intend to cease the service that Skyline provides in Leeds.

The people we met with had powerful stories to tell about the positive impact that the support they received from Skyline had had on their lives and on the lives of their families. It had been a vital lifeline of support for them at a time when their future had looked bleak, and with the professional help afforded by staff but also the peer support network they have made through this service, they have been able to find a way through.

As you know this is one of the services that was threatened by the Government cuts to our Public Health budget. The contract for this service falls within the Director of Adult Social Service's responsibility, which has been primarily funded by Public Health for the last few years. An extended twelve month contract is now in place with a reduced budget because of those Government cuts, but I would like to thank the service users who met with us in January and thank both service users and staff for working with us to ensure that this service has continued to be provided in the city with as little impact on frontline service delivery as possible, given the very difficult circumstances you were placed in. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Do you have a supplementary question?

COUNCILLOR PRYOR: I would just like to thank Councillor Mulherin first of all for supporting Skyline. It has made me really proud to see that Leeds City Council is supporting...

THE LORD MAYOR: Excuse me, it is not a question.

COUNCILLOR PRYOR: I am just coming to it.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: You have let everybody else have a question.

THE LORD MAYOR: I have not let everybody else have a question.

COUNCILLOR PRYOR: I would like to say how proud I am that Leeds City Council is supporting our residents living with HIV when they have been abandoned and I wanted to ask whether the Executive Member could inform the Council whether other areas of health funding have been cut as a result of Government decisions, despite Conservative promises to protect health services.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mulherin.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. There are too many NHS Health Service cuts to mention. We know that £22bn of efficiency savings are required across the NHS. Just a few examples I would give that are really going to impact upon Leeds - the cuts to Student Nursing bursaries. Last year the Chancellor announced that the Student Nursing bursary would be replaced with loans, apparently saving £800m a year for the

Treasury. This would reduce the support provided to those who are training to be nurses. Bursaries can amount to between £1,000 and more than £4,000 a year. This is set against a backdrop of nursing shortages that are placing pressures across our social care and health services and are resulting in some of our nursing homes closing in Leeds and services being overstretched across our community, health, primary care and secondary care services in the city.

We all are aware of much publicised issues around the junior doctors' contracts, and I know that many Members in this room have been supporting junior doctors on the picket lines and the Government's mishandling of that dispute.

Just one final note of the many things I could talk about, something that has been little publicised which is the NHS Repair Fund cuts. The NHS repairs budget has been cut by £1.1bn in an announcement through George Osborne's 2016 budgets. It was only uncovered following a Labour sponsored review of the budgets through the House of Commons Library.

The capital budget the NHS has used to fund repairs and replace out of date or broken equipment, the NHS was expected to be allocated £4.8bn to cover this year and the budget revealed that the Health Service will only be receiving £3.7bn of that capital spend. It will cost the NHS an estimated £4.3bn to complete all outstanding maintenance work. This includes repairs classified as high risk which could endanger patients' lives and wellbeing if they are not repaired. Serious issues classified as high risk include leaking roofs and out of date scanners which may not pick up on serious illnesses and complications. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Mulherin.

ITEM 11 - MINUTES

THE LORD MAYOR: We now move to page 8, Item 11. Councillor Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: I move that the Minutes be received in the terms of the Notice.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Charlwood.

COUNCILLOR CHARLWOOD: I will second, Lord Mayor.

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

(a) Executive Board

Procedural Motion

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now on to a Procedural Motion. Councillor Campbell.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Given the seriousness of the decision taken by the administration to reduce PCSO cover over much of the city, I would like to move the procedural motion as set out on the Order Paper.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lamb.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: I will second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I call for the vote. Recorded vote.

(The Chief Executive announced a recorded vote would be held)

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I just halt you for one Minute. Apparently five minutes has not gone past since the bell has rung and I therefore have to wait the full five minutes before we take the vote. It is not five minutes since the bell was rung and I have been asked to wait until the five minutes is up before I take the vote.

(Short pause)

THE LORD MAYOR: We are all right now to vote.

(A recorded vote was held on the Procedural Motion)

THE LORD MAYOR: Present 83, 27 “Yes”, no abstentions, 56 “No”. The motion was LOST.

I am going to have a toffee – perhaps if I chew it and a filling drops out it will be so bad I will have to go! *(laughter)*

(i) Communities

THE LORD MAYOR: We are on to Communities now. Councillor Anderson

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I refer to Minute 154 and Minute 155. Can I first of all start by welcoming this report but there are some questions that I would like to pose and have answered.

In terms of the Council’s Letting Agency, can we have an assurance that this is not going to be used as a loss leader in any shape or form to try and take down any private sector companies, because there is a fear amongst some – it might not be your intention and I am not saying it was your intention in any shape or form, I am just asking the question.

I do welcome the focus on smaller landlords because I think that that is a part of the sector that either has not engaged with us or we are having difficulty in engaging with, so the question I would pose there is, how are we going to go about identifying the smaller landlords, because some of them might not even know that this service is going to be available to them to actually help them to let their properties.

Also, it will be quite interesting to see the legal advice when it comes back again, so I presume the legal advice about the model that is going to be used, I presume that will come back to Executive Board.

The other concerns I have got, and this goes back a number of years ago when I did a Scrutiny inquiry into the private rented sector was the actual amount of resources that are in the department. If we give them more to do are we satisfied that there are sufficient people to actually do all this good work that is on, and I would not like to see it fail because you do not have the correct level of resources in. Also, to get it going in the first place you will need some initial funding. Has that already been identified or is it being taken out of existing budgets?

I would also want to welcome the Leeds Neighbourhood Appraisal system that you have introduced, that you have out in the Burmantofts area. I think that is an excellent initiative and I think with rolling out, I think Armley is the next area to be rolled out, I think that is the right thing to do to get involved with the private sector. I also think that using the Homeless Prevention Fund is an excellent idea as well.

The report is good but I think at the moment we are currently just talking to good landlords. What about the bad landlords? What about the rogue landlords?

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Name them.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: I wish I could name them, that would be part of the problem.

I do accept that the Housing and Planning Bill is not going to necessarily help you to deliver on some of this, it is going to be a problem, but it is how you are going to get the resources in place to be able to collect all of this information and, probably more importantly on the rogue landlords, is this going to apply just to the city, is it going to apply to West Yorkshire or is it going to apply to neighbouring places as well? I think these are questions that have to be asked. I know that you and I have already discussed a number of them but I do think it needs to be put out in the public domain the various concerns that we have got.

I would say this is a good start, we have got a good set of officers so let's just keep us informed all the time. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cohen.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I too will speak in Minute 154 and 155, though I must say, Lord Mayor, I am feeling slightly less welcome in this Chamber following the Leader's refusal to condemn anti-Semitism wherever it may be. *(interruption)* One simple sentence. Disappointing.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we...

COUNCILLOR COHEN: I turn to the matter in hand, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Yes, if you would like to take that item outside the Council, please.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Indeed, Lord Mayor. Apparently it seems we must.

Like many Members on this side of the Chamber, we are always welcoming of things that can improve matters and one of the things we are impressed with is the enterprise indeed of many Members opposite who boast a significant number of private landlords in their ranks. Indeed, the Executive Member herself falls into that category and that gives us some confidence because we have actually somebody dealing with this who has actual expertise in the area, which give us some confidence that we are coming from a place of knowledge, which is incredibly helpful and I am sure – and I say this genuinely as an aside – that the appropriate advice is in place in terms obviously of the Declaration of Interest, because as a solicitor too we know that this is now a criminal offence and, of course, we were told by Councillor Nash the importance of taking that truly to heart.

My real concern, and I think it is so important that we get the level of fees entirely correct, that this does not, as Councillor Anderson said, become a loss leader, that it is not pitched artificially low that it ends up costing Council taxpayers money to subsidise private landlords, because that would be entirely unacceptable. Again, we do not want to be undermining good private agencies out there who are also running a business. We should not be putting businesses out of business.

Turning now to the other area that I am here to speak about, the Leeds Social Value Charter which sets out the commitment for partners in the city to promote social responsibility.

Again, my concern here is it has got lots of really warm words – indeed, much within what is proposed is almost impossible to argue with and indeed no-one would argue with it, but it would be great to see something that is genuinely tangible, something that we can measure the results of and I hope that as this moves forward some of that will come out so that we can truly measure is this something that is having the positive impact that it seeks to. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It really is a long report and there is a lot of good stuff in it, as has been said, I do not think anybody can argue about that. I know that it is proposed to have a Council Lettings Scheme which will offer a management service to private landlords for a fee of 8% of the weekly rent and see that it has been agreed in principle that the repair and maintenance of this service is carried out by the Council's in-house service.

If this scheme grew, I do have concerns that this service could cope with the maintenance of these properties as well as the work they carry out on Council properties, and whether this would result in Council tenants having to wait longer for repairs to be done due to this extra workload.

On another part of the report I must say that I am pleased that the paper proposes to take a more robust approach in dealing with rogue landlords, which would result in the service of charging notices in all cases where Category 1 and Category 2 hazards are identified. I have rogue landlords in my ward and certainly when the private sector Housing Regulation Team have been involved they have done extremely good work, I cannot praise them enough. I am pleased that the paper states that it is going to go further than it does at the moment and proposes to set up a rogue landlord unit.

The only – not problem but the only thing I would say is that it is a long paper there, there are lots of things there to do, it is very good and I do look forward to further reports coming forward. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Hamilton.

COUNCILLOR HAMILTON: Lord Mayor, I am speaking on Minute 154 page 108, the Council Letting Agency.

The paper has some very interesting statistics which I would like to share. The number of privately rented homes has doubled nationally in the last decade from 2.2m to 4.4m. The most common household living in privately let property is a couple with children. There are

more than 58,000 privately rented homes in Leeds. Around 16% of property nationally has a hazard that is a severe threat to health or safety. In 2014/15 there were more than 2,500 complaints to the Council about private rented property – that is about 50 a week on average – so it is clear that we need to be doing something about the standard of private properties in the city. We would not want our children or family living in unsafe or hazardous properties. We have had many successes so far working to educate, to explain where necessary and take action against private landlords but there is more we could and should be doing to show real leadership about what can be achieved.

Lord Mayor, perhaps you have seen an advert from a holiday company. It promises a five star hotel at low prices. Reading the paper I thought of this – we are offering a full sign up and legal service dealing with rents, inspections, utility and Council Tax notification, repairs and maintenance and for all that we are proposing to charge landlords a low proportion of their rents, certainly less than many letting agencies charge for a far lower level of service.

In this way, we can show what can be done in the hope that other letting agencies will raise their game in order to compete with us but there was one more thing with the advert. It said we are the best kept secret. Lord Mayor, when the scheme is up and running I hope that we do not keep it a secret but instead shout from the rooftops about what we are doing to help private renters and combat rogue landlords in the city. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Towler.

COUNCILLOR TOWLER: Lord Mayor, I am also speaking on Minute 154 on page 108, establishing a Council Lettings Agency.

As a ward Member for Hyde Park and Woodhouse you will not be surprised that this is a matter close to my heart. 45% of households living in my ward rent from a private landlord. At some of the lower super-output area levels you could be hard pressed to find a household that is not a private tenant. These are not just student houses in Hyde Park but increasingly families and individuals who have no choice but to rent from a private landlord.

Many of the students who live here are worried about talk of a generation rent. People will be unable to purchase property in the next couple of decades but there have always been people in this situation, many of them living in my ward, who have never been able to conceive of owning their own home. As some students choose to live in purpose-built accommodation, so families are moving back into former student properties. Families will quite rightly expect that these properties are fit for habitation, contain no hazards for young children and meet the needs of their household.

Looking after a house, whether as an owner-occupier or as a landlord, is a significant duty both to the asset and also to the people whose safety depends on it. In my ward there are great local landlords fulfilling all of their duties to their tenants and going above and beyond to try and help people establish themselves in their homes. There are, sadly, also landlords who are well meaning but out of their depth, some who do not have the financial resources or, in a small number of cases, just simply do not care about the welfare of their tenants.

The recommendations of this report go some way towards trying to help those landlords who have bitten off more than they can chew. This is a practical step and one I believe we should support. There is also scope for dealing with the worse landlords first, a step I believe could make rogue landlords realise that the Council will do what it can to support tenants.

Lord Mayor, we as a Council may not be able to stem the growing tide of private rented properties, but we must work quickly to ensure that the safety and wellbeing of tenants is protected. The proposal outlined in the paper offers a way to help achieve this. I look forward to the implementation of this scheme. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Jonathan Bentley.

COUNCILLOR J BENTLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on the same Minute, on issues around the private rented sector.

This Government's antipathy towards the social housing sector and its obsession with home ownership without any real actions to make home ownership available to the average working person has led to this rise in the private rented sector across the country and particularly in Leeds, where the number of private rented properties exceeds the number in social ownership.

In itself the rise of the private rented sector is not a bad thing but there is something in the British mindset that often sees having to live in private rented accommodation is almost a sign of a lack of achievement and that the only real badge of success is owning your own home. I think those times and that thinking has got to change. Many young people setting out in life today will probably never own their own home and the biggest drawback in the private rented sector is the temporary nature of it. Most tenancies are assured shorthold tenancies for an initial six months and then on a rolling monthly basis. This means that the potential long-term tenant has no real security and is therefore unwilling to invest in the property or in the local community. The landlord can evict more or less at will and the local community suffers because of the lack of long-term permanent residents.

I do not know whether local regulations can do anything about longer term tenancies or whether this needs representation to Government but it is something I would like to see Leeds taking more action on.

If we are going to have this big growth in the private rented sector, we have to have the public policies to ensure that the private rented sector is meeting the needs of our citizens, so good regulation is important.

One of the few good things in the Government's Housing and Planning Bill is the objective to deal with rogue and criminal landlords and to ensure that rented property is safe and up to an acceptable standard. I am pleased that Leeds is taking this further with the proposal for the Leeds rental standard that will deal with property standards and management practice.

This, however, is going to be based on self-regulation from a landlord-run accreditation scheme and I have reservations about self-regulation in this sort of market and suggest that we have more debate on the compulsory registration and licensing.

Let us not forget that a lot of our Council houses that are sold under right to buy end up in the private rented sector, and whereas the appearance of our Council houses and Council estates are generally being improved, where there are private rented houses in these estates they are frequently not well looked after and undermine the appearances of the estate.

All those right to buy sales are on a leasehold basis with the Council retaining the freehold and I am sure there is something we could build into our lease conditions to ensure

that if they are subsequently rented, that landlords maintain sufficient standards of appearance and maintenance. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: The rise of the private rented sector has been phenomenal. Our position is quite clear – we would remove the right to buy, we would introduce fair rent legislation in the private sector, we would also increase the obligation on developers to increase the amount of affordable housing, houses to rent when they are building new houses.

Ultimately, previous Governments – Tory, Coalition, Labour – have failed to abolish the right to buy, have failed to introduce fair rent legislation and certainly at this particular point are failing to introduce greater obligations to provide affordable homes to rent when new homes are being built, but in terms of this particular Minute it is an improvement. There are many in the private rented sector who would welcome an opportunity for a bit of help and a bit of support and to try and do their bit. There are many in the private rented sector who are there who regard what they are doing as something very positive in order to try and offer a home to people at what they would regard as a reasonable and fairish rent, and this goes some way to making sure that they are provided with that help and support and to make sure that the tenants that are entering the private sector, often in an unwilling way because they have little if any other alternatives – can make sure that they receive properties that are of a reasonable quality and that they are getting the help and support that they actually need.

It is a good news story but it still does not address the major issues outside that. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Buckley.

COUNCILLOR BUCKLEY: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Can I refer you to page 109 Minute 155, the Social Value Charter.

This concept is an approach to life in Leeds which we can all support in a non-political way. The aims of promoting wider social economic and environmental benefits are excellent aims and, indeed, this was given full endorsement by an Act which was the Public Services Social Value Act of 2013, a prime example of compassionate conservatism.

COUNCILLOR: We have seen a lot of that this week!

COUNCILLOR BUCKLEY: Compassionate conservatism, which we will hear more of today. This requires all this to happen, to continue to happen and to expand. Corporate social responsibility is a good thing; third sector development, neighbourhood networks, examples like Time to Shine and others, etc, are all now a vital part of daily delivery of services in Leeds.

Just to put all this into some kind of a context, I was talking to a lady in my ward the other day whose husband had recently died and she was telling me that he joined the Merchant Navy as a boy and at the age of 16 found himself on the Arctic convoys. It is quite a sobering thought, is it not, to say that thank God we do not have to do that today, although we do have some pretty vile enemies that we have mentioned earlier, but it is a measure of how society has developed since then that we can actually even speak about something called a Social Value Charter.

We are looking at things like FareShare Yorkshire, social enterprises and the healthcare sector and universities working together with the private sector for the benefit of all. This is all a good thing, particularly for the underprivileged. MAEcare, for example, in my neck of the woods, very, very successful indeed.

On the monitoring side of all this, and measuring the performance, I do understand that the Charter relies on people to give it advice and support and inspiration, if you like. They are obviously not short of inspiration, we all need advice and support from time to time, but I would just make a plea to the Executive Member where possible to have a little bit more concentration on outcomes and measurement and a little bit of monitoring so that we can actually see for ourselves what this is doing in total for the benefit of all the people of Leeds. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Macniven.

COUNCILLOR MACNIVEN: My Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, I would like to speak on Minute 155 page 109, the report on Leeds Social Value Charter.

As Chair of the Third Sector Partnership in Leeds which has had oversight of the development of the Social Value Charter, I am very proud that it has now been approved by the partnership and that it is due for its official launch next month. The value and importance of the Third Sector in Leeds has been recognised for many years, having responsibilities for much of the every day community infrastructure of the city, supporting people through the good and the bad times in their lives. The sector employs 13,000 full-time equivalent staff in at least 4,000 groups and magnificently 200,000 volunteers are engaged in activities vital to building and sustaining healthy communities.

The financial challenges the Council and this city face from compassionate conservatism require creative solutions. We are looking to the Third Sector more and more to deliver our ambitions to meet the needs of citizens and communities. This is why the Third Sector partnership aims to create the optimum conditions for a thriving Third Sector, one which is able to draw in external resources not available to the public sector.

Focusing on ensuring we create conditions where the Third Sector can thrive is absolutely vital to ensuring that the fantastic services currently delivered in our city can continue. The Social Value Charter has a huge role to play in this work. It will encourage the delivery of the widest range of social, economic and environmental benefits right across Leeds. This is only part of the function of the partnership which works to encourage a flourishing Third Sector.

In 2014 we developed and launched the Leeds Third Sector Ambition Statement, setting out a clear vision of the sector we want in Leeds, one all partners can understand and help deliver. We also set up cross sector task groups to encourage colleagues to further develop work on commissioning and strategic influencing. More recently, discussions have focused on how we maximise external funding and as a result relationships with organisations such as the Big Lottery Fund have been strengthened. This will enable the sector to address city priorities, particularly around children, housing and migration.

The ambition of the Charter has relevance across all sectors and areas of delivery, not just the Third Sector. It has the potential to make a significant impact across all the Council's relationships and investments.

I am sure you will all agree that the Social Value Charter is simply fantastic news for our wonderful city and I look forward to developing this work with partners across Leeds. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*).

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Caroline Gruen.

COUNCILLOR C GRUEN: Lord Mayor, I am also speaking on Minute 155 page 109, and in particular to its reference to emphasis on promoting social responsibility and working in partnership with social enterprises.

There are two excellent examples of this in Bramley, which are both having huge benefits for the community - Bramley Baths, a community asset since January 2011, and Bramley Lawn Social Centre, a Neighbourhood Network asset since October 2014. I am pleased to have been a member of both boards since each of the transfers.

You all know the story of the threat of closure to Bramley Baths when it was running at a loss of £1,000 per year. Now, thanks to the voluntary efforts of an extraordinary group of Bramley folk, it is heading for a surplus of £30,000 this year and £50,000 next year all of which, of course, will be put straight back into improving the service further. It employs 25 staff and is now open to the public for 90 hours a week, up from 40 at the point of transfer. Swimming lessons bring 900 children per week into the pool and schools usage increases that to 1,500 per week from just 400 in 2011.

It offers a wide range of inclusive and bespoke activities including swimming for Down's Syndrome children and training for all stages of the forthcoming Leeds Triathlon in Roundhay Park. This is in addition to a rich programme of music and arts, dance and film-inspired events all of which can be viewed from in the pool or, indeed, under water using a snorkel if you wish.

Bramley Lawn was a Council run traditional day centre for the elderly which, with reduced Council funding, closed. When Bramley Elderly Action acquired the asset it was the biggest challenge and the greatest risk that they had ever taken and, still in the transition stage, Bramley Lawn has established a balanced budget, an exciting and innovative programme of community activities spanning ages nought to 100 and beyond, and created a dementia-friendly environment with a community garden and fully fitted barber shop and - my personal favourite – a pop-up restaurant run by an excellent volunteer professional chef which offers a delicious dinner to live music on a pay as you feel basis one Saturday in every month.

This is a total transformation. These two amazing things happened because of the unique working relationship between the local Councillors, the community and the Third Sector. Traditional boundaries were disregarded, barriers were broken down, trust between partners established. Mostly this happened out of a strong commitment within the community – Bramley people who are determined it should be a success and will put their time and skills into making it happen.

The Leeds Charter calls for promoting social responsibility, building social capital and delivering social, environmental and economic value. Councillors Ritchie, Heselwood and I are very proud to represent a community which has done just that with innovation and true Bramley style. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Venner.

COUNCILLOR VENNER: My Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, I would also like to speak on Minute 155 page 109, the Leeds Social Value Charter.

In particular I would like to talk about the transfer of the Queenswood Drive Day Centre in my ward of Kirkstall, to STEP, Supporting the Elderly People, which is one of our local Neighbourhood Networks.

Back in 2013 the decommissioning of the day centre was approved as part of the Council's Better Life Strategy following a review of older people's day centres. STEP, who help over 60s to live independent, comfortable and secure lives in their own homes and to reduce loneliness and isolation, literally stepped forward and expressed an interest in obtaining the site. This led to the keys to the property being handed over to them in October 2014 and in May last year the refurbished centre opened, complete with community café that is staffed by a range of staff and volunteers and is extremely well used by members of the local community.

The reopening of the centre has seen huge benefits to the local community. The number of users accessing the service has increased steadily, as has the number of volunteers who provide invaluable support through STEP. Services are now available four days a week and people can access a wide range of activities each day – for example exercise classes, dancing, a monthly quiz, bingo, film afternoons and lunches with entertainment. The centre is also used by a number of local organisations on a regular basis and indeed we use it as one of our surgery venues as local Councillors.

Like all our Neighbourhood Networks STEP are a fantastic example of the positive impact that locally based activities and support, run by people who know and love the area, can make to the lives of older people. They are also demonstrating what can be accomplished by innovative and determined local organisations who can come forward and work with us with their ideas.

By encouraging this sort of civic enterprise we can help these groups and the people they work with to have greater choice and control over what is on offer for those living in their communities. Working with local groups and organisations in this way to add value to communities, as we did with STEP in my ward, is exactly what the Social Value Charter is all about. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I will just go into the Minutes and read out a bit.

“The Assistant Chief Executive submitted a report which sought endorsement of the Leeds Social Value Charter and requested that Council Directorates seek to enhance existing activities in order to promote social responsibility, build social capital, deliver social value and maximise the social return on the Council's investments in all aspects of policy and practice.”

The word “social” is mentioned about four different times there. Each of those phrases we are in danger of just accepting and it washes over us and it all feels very good and very wholesome, but actually we have a really big challenge in turning this into effective practice across this Council.

We have had mention of compassionate conservatism and obviously these phrases here. Let us not underestimate the challenge which is ahead of us. Everybody here, whether we are an elected Member or whether we are a Council officer, we all want the best for the Council but sometimes our own prejudices get in the way. In the same way that the Conservatives are obsessed with academisation of our schools because they think that is going to have a better outcome for us, let us not underestimate, actually, the institutional resistance and the professional conservatism that we can get from some very well meaning senior officers and Councillors within us. We need to actually challenge ourselves, we need to go back. I am sorry to keep mentioning it but it is a Bible that we should all be referring to whenever we make a decision in this Council and it is the Commission for Local Government because it talks about the Third Sector as a proper partner and we should be offering them parity of esteem when we are talking about the solutions that we want.

Councillor Macniven mentioned the fact that we are seeking, we are trying to get the Third Sector to deliver our needs, said Councillor Macniven. We have to make sure that our needs are not just the Council's needs. We need to think about the community and what their needs are and instead of actually coming at it from shaping the needs of departments to the policy that we deliver in our Executive Board or whether it is here in Council, we need to think about what it is in terms of outcomes that we are meant to be delivering within our community and I think that is a challenge that we should always ask when we are having proposals brought before us, how can we actually maximise the impact of the Third Sector in this area? What organisations have we got on the ground in our area that work really well and we can ask them to do more? More importantly, actually, do we need to listen to some of these people that are not already up and running and give them a leg up, even if it is not exactly what is our core need at that time, because if the community expresses a core expression of need, then we should actually be enabling them to fulfil it. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I now ask Councillor Coupar to sum up, please.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Yes, thank you, Lord Mayor. I would just like to say at the outset thank you for most of the positive comments that were made around both reports that went to Executive Board from cross party in the Chamber today.

The report details a significant change in the ability to tackle some issues in the private rented sector, and we are not condoning the private rented sector as a whole. In fact, we are already working closely with landlords, forums and other housing providers.

Councillor Anderson talked about the Lettings Agency and we quite clearly do not intend to compete with the private sector on the Lettings Agency, but hopefully we will be able to offer a good deal for a fair price and people will be taking that up.

You just need to remember that actually this is the start of the process that we are at so all of the detail and the procedures that you talked about will be built in as we move forward, both myself and Councillor Cohen's comments - again I thank you, Councillor Cohen, for your comments.

Councillor Blackburn, there is also - she has left the Chamber which is unfortunate because I did just want to reassure her that there is no intention that our tenants are going to suffer because of the work that might go on in the private sector under the Lettings Agency. In fact, while ever I have Councillor Hamilton as my Lead Member for Council housing, she will keep repairs as a priority, I am sure, and keep officers to account for those, so if you can let your colleague know that I would appreciate it - thank you.

Councillor Bentley, I quite agree that the Government are pushing a move towards generation buy rather than generation rent, and sometimes the length of these temporary accommodations, the six months short lease tenancy, is difficult because people have no security of tenure and we quite agree with that one.

Councillor Finnigan, I accept your comments as always about the right to buy but I thank you for your support about the improvement that we are at least trying to make on a local level.

Councillor Buckley, I am ever so glad that you recognise that the Labour administration has achieved your political aims, so thank you for that. *(laughter)*

Councillor Golton, while I appreciate your comments I would just like to point out that a lot of social enterprise has worked in many places. We have heard some of them mentioned here today with Councillor Gruen in Bramley Baths, with Headingley HEART and Aspire, and I am sure we will have many more in the future because of the Social Value Charter that has been mentioned.

Whilst the Budget last week was fairly silent on housing issues, the Housing and Planning Bill has continued its way through Parliament. The provisions in this legislation will have a real impact on people living in Leeds, including those who will struggle to find a suitable and affordable property to rent. The Lettings Agency paper gives us some real teeth to deal with poor quality landlords. We will not refrain from stepping in when landlords are collecting the rent but not taking any responsibility for their homes.

Many landlords do the best they can but they only have one property and may struggle to provide the level of service we rightly expect in the city. That is why we are looking to help them through setting up a Lettings Agency that we know will work for tenants, as we will be running it. We know that more and more people are renting homes privately and I would like to thank Councillor Hamilton for making that message very clear.

In 2014/15, according to the Government's English Housing survey, only 57% of private renters expected to buy a property at some point in the future. Whether we like it or not private renting is many people's only option, so we need to make sure we do what we can to improved renters' conditions.

Indeed, there are 912,000 more households with children in the private rented sector than ten years ago. For those children we have to do our best to ensure people living in private rented homes are safe and not being exploited.

Councillor Hamilton is right that this will be a great service for a fair price. Councillor Towler has clearly understood how this can make a difference in her ward. It is not just about what we are doing but how we can influence others. If we offer a great service for a fair price others will have to compete to be better than us.

As has already been mentioned earlier today, the right to buy has had a massive impact on our estates, seeing private rented homes across traditional Council-run areas. This makes housing management harder, it makes communal repairs more difficult and means that tenants end up paying almost double the rent for the same four walls as their neighbours. I say the tenants end up paying the rent but for people who receive Housing Benefit it is the taxpayer who ends up paying the rent.

On Social Value I would like to thank Councillor Macniven not just for her speech but for all the work she has done chairing the Leeds Third Sector Partnership, with many fantastic examples of our work with the Third Sector and, not least, those in Bramley mentioned by Councillor Gruen and in Kirkstall by Councillor Venner.

Working with the Third Sector is absolutely about our organisations and how we work. It allows us to look at this one factor.

COUNCILLOR: Red light.

THE LORD MAYOR: I have seen the red light.

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

(ii) Children and Families

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cohen.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. For over 20 years education has been a passion of mine – indeed, long before I even ever considered standing to be a Councillor. I have had the privilege of being a governor of a number of schools, I have had the privilege of setting up a High School with a dedicated team of people – a High School that, for our first year next year will be oversubscribed. For me, education of our city, of the children in our city, is one of the most important things that we can have any kind of involvement in.

There is no question that there are some positive headlines and news stories that have been generated in recent weeks about Children's Services within our city and that is good to see, and there is no question that there is some very positive movement within education within our city.

I would hate us to be dazzled by the positive headlines and the positive news stories to ignore some of the very significant areas where we as a city are not achieving as we ought and where we as a city are not supporting our children to the absolute best of our ability.

With regards to something that is particularly close to my heart, children with special educational needs and those with educational health and care plans, our outcomes are still below national average at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4. Our disadvantaged pupils consistently perform below national average. We have 32,833 pupils in Leeds eligible for Pupil Premium and they score less than the national average at Key Stage 4. Persistent absence continues to be a problem within our city. We still have 461 secondary pupils who are classed as persistently absent and it goes without saying, if you are not in school you cannot be learning. Clusters are doing some great work in terms of attendance across the families of schools and I am pleased that the schools I am involved in are still involved in the clusters, but there is so much more to do if we are going to make sure that our most vulnerable pupils, the pupils that really need the care and attention, if we are going to truly do that there is much more to do and I genuinely believe when we look at, the same schools are constantly the ones that are failing. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lamb.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Before I refer to the Minutes, the same Minutes as Councillor Cohen, I just wanted to take a minute to pay tribute to Paul Brennan. Most Members will know he is retiring at the end of the month. He has achieved something quite remarkable in this city in that he has earned the respect of not only his colleagues in Children's Services, professionals across the city, elected Members on all sides of this house but also across all the people of Leeds. Personally I am going to miss working with him, it has been a privilege to work with him and on behalf of my Group I just wanted to extend our thanks for everything he has done for children and young people in Leeds.
(Applause)

I am pleased he was here to hear that bit; I am not sure he will be so pleased to be here for the next bit!

Councillor Cohen has rightly pointed out some of the issues around standards. It is great that we have had improvements across the city but the Government's education reforms have seen improvements across the whole country and we start from a disadvantage. We know only too well in this city that Local Authorities, this more than any other, have not been historically very good at running education – so much so, of course, that this administration previously had to have education taken off them by their own Government. We have seen far too many vulnerable young people left behind still. We are looking at it closely in Scrutiny under Councillor Bentley's Chairmanship and there is a great deal of work to do in order to close that gap, particularly for those most vulnerable children.

There are two other things, briefly, that I hope Councillor Yeadon might be able to comment on when she sums up. Firstly is the situation of school places. In North Leeds there is now an approved free school. There is a suitable site, it is in Council ownership but things do not seem to be progressing. Perhaps she can give us an update on that when she sums up.

She referred to academies earlier. Obviously the one comment I would have, this is a natural extension of what was started by the previous Labour Government.

The final thing I wanted to comment on was around Early Years. We really need some clarity about the administration's focus on Early Years. The strategy seems to be cut a little bit every year and hope that at some point something will come up. There is really important work done in our children's centres across the city. Every year the funding has been cut a little bit. I appreciate the pressure that the budget is under but we really do need to have a coherent strategy to protect Early Years provision in our city, and perhaps Councillor Yeadon can comment on that. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harland.

COUNCILLOR HARLAND: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, I would like to comment on the Annual Standards Report, Minute 148 page 104, specifically the progress that Leeds has been making over the recent years.

We all know that we are not there yet where we want to be, but it would be churlish and unfair on our teachers and young people if we did not recognise the significant progress that has been made. We have the best educational provision in the region with 92% of children attending a good or outstanding primary school. This is the highest number we have ever had. We have never before been top of the region and Ofsted will not judge a school to be good or outstanding if its pupils are not making good progress. This is something that we are rightly

proud of and has been achieved through dedication, closer working between the Local Authority and schools, and increasing challenge and support.

We know that we are not yet where we want to be in terms of results. However, it would be wrong just to take the data at face value. What we need to acknowledge is the progress made; young people in Leeds make consistently high progress from their relative starting point. In every year since 2012 the percentage of children making expected or better than expected progress in reading, writing and maths has been above the national average.

If you look at the pupil groups in Leeds and the starting points that some of our children and young people have, you will see a picture of increasing needs and increasing complexity of needs. There has been an increase in the percentage of children in poverty, children with SMEH and SEND needs and increasing numbers of children with English as an additional language.

Alongside this, as part of our child friendly Leeds obsessions, we have the highest school attendance rates we have ever experienced as a city. Today almost 2,000 more children will be in school than in 2010. This must also be recognised for the success that it is.

Sir Michael Wilshaw in his annual Ofsted Report was critical of certain Local Authorities. Leeds was not one of them. When he was interviewed on the radio he said that Leeds should be working with places such as Bradford to help them raise their attendance and attainment levels.

We are working with the National Education Endowment Foundation to improve our performance. We have also seconded an outstanding primary school headteacher to develop provision for children that have Pupil Premium funding and have a targeted intervention programme with underperforming schools.

In summary, a very welcome report that outlines the very real progress that has been made but which also recognises the challenges still to be met. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dowson.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. So, we all know the best place for our children is to be in school, which is why I am so pleased, as Mary has just said, that our improvement in attendance has been so good. Two thousand more children than in 2010; we recognise there is still a lot more to do but we have got to recognise success where it exists and that is a huge success. We are rightly proud of our schools and in Leeds 92% of our primaries and 87% of our secondaries are good or outstanding. That puts us in the top quartile in the country and I would like to pay tribute to the pupils, the teachers, the support staff and the governors who all work extremely hard day in, day out for the benefit of our young people. The progress our children make is amongst the highest in the country and that is worth noting. *(Applause)*

Just imagine how they feel right now after all that hard work when last week the Government announced the unthinkable - the forced academisation of every single school in England. Freedom of choice has gone, the ability of your school to decide what is the best thing for itself and its pupils has been ripped away by people who know absolutely nothing about the communities here in Leeds.

I find myself struggling to find the words to describe a Government that are so arrogant, so blinkered and so dogmatic as to believe academies are the universal fix-all. We all know they are not.

Government advisers have been putting huge pressures on some of our schools in Leeds so it is worth noting also that only 48 out of 272 schools have chosen to become an academy. Sir Michael Wilshaw, the Ofsted Chief Inspector, recognises this and recently wrote a letter outlining the huge amounts of public money paid to some academy bosses when results are, quite frankly, appalling. I read recently that one is earning £225,000 per year of public money, and many more are well over £100,000. That money should be going into school for children. *(Applause)*

We have had to step in on more than one occasion when academy chains have failed – we have all read about it in the papers. It has been down to us to pull that school out of the mire and ensure that continued education in Leeds for Leeds children. Part of Nicky Morgan’s latest outrage is to remove the requirement for academies to have parents as governors. This is a paper she announced last week as “listening to parents”. *(laughter)* We already have situations where people travel from London to governing body meetings here in Leeds so with no requirement for Local Authority or parental representation, just where is the accountability for academies?

Last week’s announcement has confirmed what we already knew – the Tories will not stop until our education system is completely privatised and all our schools become businesses. They could not give two hoots about the consequences for children and young people.

THE LORD MAYOR: OK, red light.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: Absolute disgrace, Lord Mayor, absolute disgrace. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Renshaw.

COUNCILLOR RENSHAW: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would also like to comment on Minute 148 page 104, Annual Standards Report, but I would like to focus on one area in particular – our fantastic teachers.

Our teachers do an amazing job, a job that seems to go unrecognised and unacknowledged by this Tory Government who seem to take every opportunity to undermine and criticise our teachers and teaching staff. Is it any wonder why the targets for the number of new trainee teachers have been missed for the third year running? In 2015 at secondary school teacher level must 82% of the target was met, leading to increased fears amongst academics of a worsening recruitment crisis.

Ofsted Chief Inspector Sir Michael Wilshaw has now warned that thousands of teachers are being lured away from the UK to teach abroad for far higher salaries. He goes on to say that we should be putting more effort into holding our teachers back in this country. I could not agree more. If I recall it was a previous Labour Government that introduced the cash bonus scheme to attract teachers into shortage subjects, or tough areas. These were scrapped in 2011. According to our Chief Ofsted Inspector, we should be looking to bring them back. One suggestion which has been put forward to try and tackle the shortage is that the Government writes off the undergraduate tuition fees of students who become teachers and remain in the UK state system. Those would be the tuition fees Labour would never have introduced in the

first place and which represent the betrayal of thousands of students and a raft of broken promises.

The language used by Sir Michael Wilshaw includes a need to talk up the profession. What a shame that this is now necessary, what a shame that the people we rely on to educate the next generation are now so demoralised we have to be told to talk them up.

We have now heard much more progress we are making in terms of education in Leeds but what we also need to see is progress made by this Government, progress made against recognising, acknowledging and rewarding the thousands of teachers up and down the country who go above and beyond to help generation after generation of children. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. You really do have a tendency to re-write history, don't you? I was just reminded, you just mentioned academies and you have mentioned tuition fees. Those were things that were all brought in by Labour. They might have been taken a step further by somebody else but they were all brought in by you, so I am afraid you have set the precedent. You set the precedent of the centre coming in and saying, "You are not doing good enough, we are going to do it for you" and I am afraid that is the problem we have. It is not anything to do with any particular party, it is to do with the ever-increasing centralisation of control and our inability to actually demonstrate our value of local oversight. That is something that is really going to be key if we are actually going to achieve what we want to achieve.

Far from what Councillor Dowson said about Mr Gove and now, of course, his replacement, it is not privatisation – it is Maoist centralisation, it is nationalisation because it is all about control from the centre and they are controlling all the money. The fact that they have got some of their mates in the private sector to actually give them a little bit of help is actually nationalisation and it is not progressive, and it is not one where local communities can actually have any kind of influence, so it would seem. That, as I said, is our challenge.

I am afraid that Councillor Yeadon is in an invidious position because we have had a really good story about Children's Services, and I know the Conservatives went back in history and said, "Oh, well, it got taken out of your hands it did." I am very well aware that under our administration (because it was under my stewardship) we actually got rated as "inadequate" and so I know what a huge amount of work has taken place since then to actually get us to a good place where we need to be in terms of Children's Services. However, a lot of the concentration has been in the area around safeguarding, around social care and I am afraid our educational attainment does not quite live up to our own PR.

We are supposed to be the best city, we are supposed to be the best city for this, that and the other, we are supposed to be the best city for children. We might be in some aspects but I am afraid in education we are not and actually we are improving all the time, and all of those headlines that you gave us are great, but the thing is rather than us turning the curve for ourselves, we are actually riding a national improvement wave.

What we need to do, I am afraid, given the threat that we have got about the increasing academisation of our school system, is that we need to demonstrate that we can actually make that difference between now and 2022 to say, actually in Leeds we can make a difference between what is happening nationally and what is happening locally, so we need to get those

gaps narrowing that at the moment are not and that is going to be a real challenge for us, and I would like to know from Councillor Yeadon whether or not the academies that we have already in the city are up to working with us to do that. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harington.

COUNCILLOR HARINGTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. This is Minute 149, page 105.

Right. My family. What a mess. I warned our Katy that if she went and lived with that bloke she'd mess up her whole life and the lives of her kids an'all. She said, "Well you messed up your own life, dad, so I'm not listening to you", so she didn't. Her bloke's in and out of prison. When he's back home she says he doesn't beat her up but bruises on her face say different. They've got three kids. They've got Daniel aged nine, Carly aged four and they have got Zac aged three, but it's up to Katy to look after them and she can't cope. She gets letters from school saying "We have high expectations for your Daniel" – well that's not much use if he's never there to learn owt. He's too busy on estate trying to learn to be top vandal.

I can see what's going to happen. There'll be social workers round to whisk our kids away from her, it happened to us before so I know all about it. Social worker did come and first of all she said summat about clusters. I said, "What, Cluster's last stand?" I thought it were funny but she didn't get what I were on about. She says, "No, it's agencies working together. We listen to you, they listen to us and we try and find a plan that we are all happy with." I thought well, it will just be more talk but at the end of it they'll still take kids away, but when it came to it it were like she said, we had this meeting and there were members of our family and social worker and there were a teacher and someone from antisocial summat and a health visitor and they listened. They listened, made us feel like what we said mattered, and then the social worker says to our Katy, "Right, love, you need a lot of help with a lot of things. You need help with your depression, you need help with your parenting skills. Your Daniel needs some help to get back into school, he needs help with some youth work, he needs some help with his mental issues and your other kids, they need to be in nursery and your partner, when he comes out of prison, maybe to begin with he ought to be in a flat of his own, try and get his head sorted out, get him some work before you try and get back together again."

She says, "What we are trying to do now is keep families together. Won't be easy, we have got to give you the right support but we need to get it in there as soon as possible so that it makes a difference."

It has made a difference. It hasn't solved all us problems, we have still got some, but our Daniel, he is at school. Must be first one of our kids that ever were at school learning owt. Our Katy, she's in so much better place. Social worker says Leeds has won an award for being best Council in England, social, for Children's Services. I says if they've tret other people like they've tret me then they deserve it. Well done Leeds!

Right, that's me done, thank you very much! *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Sobel.

COUNCILLOR SOBEL: Follow that, yes! Thanks, Roger. I wish to speak on Minute 149 page 105. Just before I do, I do understand Councillor Cohen's personal feelings but I thought it was Councillor Anderson using anti-Semitism as a party political football in this Chamber. I am disappointed, Barry, I thought better of you.

The Best City for Learning Paper outlines our ambitious plans for Education Leeds from zero through to 19. It shows how it links in with other plans such as the Children and Young People's Plan and the Child Friendly Leeds Ambition.

One of the things that underpins all of this and has just been commented on is the vital work of the Early Intervention Services in a very dramatic way by Councillor Harington. We have seen and heard the evidence that Early Intervention Strategy works and really does improve outcomes for vulnerable groups. How sad, then, that a recent report released by the Children's Society, an independent charity, shows that Government funding for Early Intervention Services in Leeds has fallen by 60% since 2010 and is expected to have fallen by 72% by 2020.

The Children's Society is calling on the Government to commit to annual Early Intervention top-ups for Local Authorities like ours. The need for this funding becomes all the more obvious when you realise that the Authority in the Yorkshire region that is going to be hardest hit is not Leeds but Rotherham.

We have made a clear commitment here in Leeds to protect our children's centres for as long as we possibly can. It is a commitment that sets us apart from other Authorities up and down the country who are being forced to close their centres. We have done this in part through increasing the contribution of families for the costs of running children's centres, but this year the fees are frozen, acknowledging the fact that families particularly of young children are continuing to struggle due to austerity and the economic growth is not being equitably shared throughout the country and our society.

Our Council is a compassionate Council and this policy again reflects that. Local Authorities which have had to make closures are now in a position whereby, having had to close their centres due to funding cuts, they may now find that the Sure Start funding they were given to open them is actually clawed back by the very Government that has forced the closures, so they are being punished twice for a failure that is not even theirs.

We know that programmes such as Families First produces results and we, as Councillor Harington in his inimitable way mentioned, have recognised national recognition for our programme when we won the Local Government Chronicle Award for Children's Services, and I congratulate the Children's Services team on the award, but why does the Government continue to insist on taking up Early Intervention but failing to adequately fund it? How much longer can Local Authorities continue to fill the gap? Is it yet another example of a short-sighted cut? How much will a lack of Early Intervention services cost society in the long run? Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Jarosz.

COUNCILLOR JAROSZ: Thank goodness I didn't have to follow Roger! Can I speak on Minute 150 page 107.

Lord Mayor, I am just delighted – I am always delighted (no I'm not!) *(laughter)* - to comment on this paper, the expansion of Greenside Primary School in Pudsey. I have got to pay tribute to the teachers, staff and governors who have supported this initiative. For many parents choosing which school to send their child to can be an extremely stressful time and the time they have to wait before they know which school – I know November is the time they apply and they won't hear while the middle of April. It is difficult.

The main driving factor why parents and carers submit their choices is closeness of the school to their home. I think everybody would agree that all children should be able to attend their local school. However, we are faced with a rising birth rate and in Pudsey, my God, all you see is pushchairs everywhere! *(laughter)* It has become more and more difficult to find local places. You have too many electricity cuts in Pudsey, that's what happens I think!

We have worked extremely hard in Leeds to maintain a close relationship with schools and that is how we have worked together to address this need. Pudsey Greenside is a good example of this. It is an old Victorian school, it is not going to be an easy job to adapt but they are working hard and they are doing it.

Pudsey is an increasingly popular area of the city and we need to ensure that the correct infrastructure, including schools, is in place. Attracting families is a key part of our ambition to be the best city in the UK. If we want Leeds to succeed, if we want to have a strong economy in a compassionate city, then we want people who want to live here. We want to see them move here, we want to see them educated here, we want to see them stay here in employment and we want them to be happy here. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ritchie.

COUNCILLOR RITCHIE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am pleased to be speaking in support of the paper on the expansion of Bramley Primary School, Minute 152 page 107 of the papers. It is great to be able to endorse a consultation model which uses the outcome based accountability format. The process has proved an effective tool to give all our stakeholders the opportunity to comment and shape the proposals, coming together to find a solution that best meets the needs of the Bramley community.

As well as the expansion of school places from a two to a three form entry ultimately increasing the overall capacity from 280 to 420 pupils, is a proposal for provision for children with complex communication difficulties, including those who may have a diagnosis of autistic spectrum condition. This is an area of increasing need in the city and it is important that children with these needs are able to access the best possible local provision.

As a result, pupils will have access to the balanced mainstream curriculum as well as being supported by experienced and specialist staff within the school. The governing body was particularly keen to establish a high quality SEN provision and thanks must go to officers who were able to put in place the necessary funding so that the provision is available from Day One in September 2017, this following feedback from the governing body.

As well as being excellent news for Bramley, the SEN provision is also great news for the city and should lead to a considerable cost saving for the Authority by reducing the need for the considerably more expensive out of area placements for ASC provision.

With primary offer day coming up next month it is reassuring to know that more local children will be able to attend their local school thanks to the measures this Council has introduced to develop capacity - this within the constraints of an ideological attack on Local Authority schools in part by removing our ability to deliver brand new schools in the areas we know need them. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lowe.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am commenting on page 107 Minute 153.

According to the Mental Health Taskforce led by the MIND Chief Exec Paul Farmer, one half of all mental health problems are established by the age of 14. This increases to 75% by the age of 24. As well as this, one in every ten children aged between five and 16 has a diagnosable problem with mental health and children from lower income families are three times more at risk of mental illness compared to the highest income families, so investment in mental health is crucial if young people are to get the services they need and the chance of a full life that we and our communities hope for them.

I think we all recognise that our social, emotional and mental health provision in Leeds has been suffering from a lack of investment for a number of years. That is why I am so pleased to see that in partnership with the Wellspring Academy Trust we are now seeing a real commitment to help improve outcomes for one of the most vulnerable and challenging groups of young people in the city.

These plans will see a clear path for social, emotional and mental health provision from primary school right the way for secondary for children and young people with these complex needs. The vision for the provision is to bring together the three pupil referral units and the BSC SILC under one leadership that will ensure the continuity of provision that is currently lacking. It will also increase the number of such places across the city and this is also an area of growing need.

The transition between primary and secondary school can be very difficult for any child and even more so for those with specific needs. The proposal to create a through school provision will help ease that transition period and provide a much more flexible approach. Additionally, these proposals will reduce the need for some children and young people to travel outside Leeds to access provision. By being able to keep them within the city we will also be reducing the amount of time they have to spend travelling each day but also, crucially, saving the Authority money.

Last year we spent approximately £3m placing children in outside provision. We have already committed to investing £45m in this new provision, investment that I welcome wholeheartedly as we seek to bring our educational provision for some of our most vulnerable groups up to a world class standard. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Flynn.

COUNCILLOR FLYNN: Thank you, Lord Mayor and please excuse any tickles that you may hear over the next three minutes or so.

I agree with a lot of what the last speaker actually said with a number of caveats. While there is an obvious need to do something radical with Elmete Wood, I have to ask why it has taken so long for the Council to grasp the nettle. It has been going on for far too long and I am glad to see that something at last is being done.

At the same time I am not entirely convinced of the logic of transferring the Oakwood Lane site to the proposed academy at this stage, but more on that later.

Elmete Wood is a school that looks after some of the most vulnerable young people in Leeds and I just want to echo the sentiments of Alan Lamb and Dan Cohen before about the

way in which perhaps these young people have been left lacking somewhat in the past. As long ago as 2007 the school was shut by Ofsted as requiring special measures. There have been 18 Ofsted visits since then, five since 2014 alone. It is quite remarkable. I can only wonder on the effect of so many inspections on the morale of staff and the knock-on effects on the children. I am a school governor myself, many of you will be as well, you know the feelings you get when an Ofsted inspection is announced. It must be pretty devastating for staff to be putting up with that so many times.

The school was taken out of special measures in 2009 but given notice to improve two years later. It was judged “inadequate” in 2012 and requiring special measures in 2014, leading to the present plans to create an academy of the Wellspring Academy Trust. I shudder to think of the potential damage visited on to vulnerable children over the period it has taken to make this decision.

I appreciate that Elmete Wood is not an easy place to teach and it has clearly suffered under inadequate leadership and governance for a number of years and I think we need to look at ourselves fairly seriously because most of us in this Chamber have been around for that length of time and it is pretty disgusting that a school has been allowed to get into that state.

I am glad to note that the most recent Ofsted visit last month found that the leaders and managers are taking effective measures towards the removal of special measures but, of course, we have been there before. Assuming Wellspring Academy does take over provision at Elmete Wood, I welcome the initiative. However, the capital outlay for the new academy, at around £45m, not to mention the recurring management fee for Wellspring, is a significant investment but I will not begrudge a penny if it is successful.

I think the importance of the initiative and the reputation of this child friendly city is such that full Council should be kept regularly informed of progress, particularly regarding the quality of leadership, teaching and learning at the academy and I ask that should happen.

Back to the proposed transfer of the Oakwood Lane site to the academy. I wonder if it is taking an unnecessary risk in moving what is already an outstanding provision at this site to one requiring special measures. I just ask that you give a little bit of thought before you actually decide to do that.

THE LORD MAYOR: Excuse me, you have run out of time.

COUNCILLOR FLYNN: We must get it right this time. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Bentley. You will be the last speaker.

COUNCILLOR J BENTLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on this same Minute as Councillor Flynn, the Social, Emotional and Mental Health provision by Wellspring Academy. This whole scheme does have the support of our group.

We have had a lot of discussion about academies and we generally are not in favour of transferring Local Authority provision into the academy system but where there is a need for specialist provision and the Local Authority provision is failing, outsourcing to a specialist is probably the best solution in the interests of these very vulnerable young people. I am pleased that the administration is taking a pragmatic rather than an ideological view of this by putting the young person at the centre of this decision.

Integrating the Pupil Referral Units into the SENH provision is also welcomed, leading to an end to end services covering all age groups and realigning the Pupil Referral Units to be geographically based rather than age based is also a positive move and will mean that young people are not having to travel long distances across the city every day and they will have a provision relatively close to home which would help with their ability to learn as well.

Provision to the north of the city is going to be in my ward in Weetwood on the site of the current Tinshill PRU. This is going to be demolished and replaced by a purpose built state of the art facility which ward Members are really very pleased about and we think it will improve the whole area, as the current building is dilapidated and is not built for the sort of provision it is currently being used for.

Could I just leave this thought with Councillor Yeadon, if she gets a chance to sum up, or if she does not perhaps she would like to contact Weetwood ward Members afterwards at another time, and that is to ask whether there is any joined up thinking within the Children's Services department when it comes to planning schools and education provision. We all know about the shortage of schools in north Leeds and recently there was a consultation exercise identifying the need for a primary school in the Cookridge area of north-west Leeds and the ideal site that was identified was the Tinshill PRU site but, of course, that has been earmarked now for the new Wellspring provision.

However, there is another suitable site in north Leeds that could accommodate the new Wellspring provision and that, of course, is the site of the former West Park Centre which was demolished a couple of years ago and nothing has been done on it since. It is in the Site Allocation Plan as a site for educational purposes, so with a bit of joined up thinking, a bit of imagination, the Wellspring provision can go on to the West Park site with all the benefits that would give in terms of accessibility and transport etc in north Leeds, and a new primary school for Cookridge could go on the PRU site which is already in Council ownership. I will leave that thought with you for your comments. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. We are now moving on to other Minutes on page 11. It is now 3.50. We are going to consider the other Minutes until ten-past four.

(c) Advisory and Procedural Committees

THE LORD MAYOR: We move on to Advisory and Procedural Committees.

(iii) Development Plans Panel

THE LORD MAYOR: We are on page 11 now, Councillor Walshaw, please.

COUNCILLOR WALSHAW: Thank you, Lord Mayor. We have had a really feisty interesting Council so far so I thought we could add to that by talking about Planning for the next ten minutes or so! Planning is not exciting? Of course Planning is an exciting subject. I will talk to a few points on the Minutes, Minute 34 on page 181, Lord Mayor, the Development Plans Panel.

Cities change, don't they, and cities are dynamic places and city centres are perhaps the crucible where you see that change most of all. At this particular DPP meeting we were talking about the South Bank. The South Bank is a really important area to us strategically as a city

and it would be fair to say there is an awful lot going on there. We are talking about major transport change with the potential for HS2 to arrive, we are talking about major residential investment, major education investment, health infrastructure. We are talking about the returning of high value manufacturing to the edge of the city centre and that is really important – a lot of very, very, very useful jobs for the people of Leeds. There is a whole web of telecom infrastructure going into that area so we like to talk about that on Development Plans Panel. It is important, it is where the Council can have a really, really vital role in shaping the strategic future of the city, that is all to the good.

One of the sites we were particularly looking at was the Tetley Brewery site, the former brewery site. It is sad to see the brewery go but that gives us a huge opportunity. We had identified the site to have 830 homes on, but Vastint, who are the owners of the site and who are part of the Ikea Group (and one Councillor did make a comment about flat pack homes but they will remain nameless – OK, it was Councillor Leadley!) they wanted this capacity to increase hugely. They wanted to capacity to increase from 830 to 1,635, hence Councillor Leadley's joke.

We agreed with that huge capacity increase but why would we do that? Well, Napoleon Bonaparte once said that quantity has a quality all of its own. What is quantity in this context? What does that quantity give us? That quantity gives us the ability to work with the developer to ensure excellent design, Passivhouse standards, low carbon footprint, we want to see photovoltaic, we want to see good play space, we want to see good green space and with capacity, with size, with massing we can do that, so we should not be afraid of that as a city in locations where that is appropriate and I put it to you, colleagues, this is a situation where it is exactly appropriate. This is the city centre, it is going to have a park as well, it is exactly where we should be going for mass and oomph. I say that to developers, we want to see that. There is a lot we can do for the city.

My only real fear, Lord Mayor, with this site is when it comes to affordable housing. Under the current system we would be able to insist that a huge percentage of those properties would be affordable rented, maybe up to 35% if we can work effectively with the developers. That would be good. In Leeds I think this administration, on this side of the Chamber, we believe in balanced communities where people from different income groups, different ethnic groups, different social groups are living together and the city centre is exactly somewhere where we could have that. We should not indulge, we should not allow and we should try to fight against any kind of social economic cleansing, and I am afraid the danger of the Housing and Planning Bill with the changes to affordable housing are bringing that to the fore. This will make this happen.

As I pointed out in the Chamber a few Councils ago, the affordable homes that the Government has put such great store in are simply not affordable to people on low incomes. It is wrong and we should resist that but this is, Lord Mayor, a tremendous opportunity. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Jim McKenna.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I take this opportunity to thank you for your participation in the recent St Patrick's Day Parade. You joined a very small select band of Lord Mayors who actually walked the full distance of the parade – there are very few of us - and I know you stopped and you enjoyed the festival of music and the odd half pint of Guinness. It would also be remiss of me if I did not mention the fact that the budget for the

parade, the Republic of Ireland contributed £9,000 towards the parade – very generous when you think of the austerity that goes on. Now, back to business.

I am speaking on the Aire Valley Area Action Plan. In Council and out in the wider world we have spent much time talking about the Site Allocation Plan, but it is worth dwelling for a few minutes on what the Aire Valley Action Plan is and why it is so important for our city.

The plan encompasses 400 hectares of development land which is mostly brown field, which is very welcome. It therefore has a major part to play in the sustainability and protection of further erosion of the green belt in the city – a very important point that, Lord Mayor. Thousands of jobs can be created for residents in the city in exactly the kind of industries that need purpose built or large scale operations. Training opportunities, apprenticeships and good quality jobs can flow from the new industries moving into the area. The location of the Aire Valley has great links to the motorway network but is close enough to the city centre for travel meetings to take place. People living in nearby wards will have opportunities to work closer to their homes, to find work and training and be able to gain the skills and experience to develop in their chosen fields.

Yes, there is important work that the Development Plans Panel needs to be doing in order to achieve these goals. The level of details we need to apply to each development is equal to that of the Site Allocation Plan. Future generations would not forgive us if we do not get it right. Housing is rightly part of the plan and managing the balance between housing, employment and green space is as important in this area as it is elsewhere in the city.

Leeds has a very clear ambition for high quality design and architecture throughout the city. I hope that especially when developments do come forward to the Plans Panel we look at the designs and development to ensure that these meet our ambitions for high quality design and sustainable developments.

Lord Mayor, the Aire Valley was created by the river and it is the single most important geographical feature. Getting the right scheme in place to protect homes and businesses in the valley must be at the heart of making the Aire Valley a great place to live and work.

I will finish there, Lord Mayor, I do not wish to crash the red light. Thank you very much. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Congreve to sum up.

COUNCILLOR CONGREVE: Lord Mayor, in the last few months the Development Plans Panel has continued their important work looking at the Site Allocation Plan and the Aire Valley Leeds Area Action Plan. The consultation on both of these plans has been extensive and the nearly 10,000 responses received shows that this is an important process for many people in the city.

The Development Plans Panel clearly has the task of looking at these plans in great detail and the people of Leeds would expect nothing less than this. Councillor Jim McKenna is right to point out that the Aire Valley Leeds Area Action Plan is hugely important for the whole city. Thousands of jobs and training opportunities can be created and the overwhelming use of brown field land means regeneration can happen where it is most sustainable.

It is positive that the discussions on the Aire Valley Action Plan have been undertaken in a measured and sensible way. There is a clear need to ensure that the blueprint for regeneration in this area is well designed and it is the role of the Development Plans Panel to help facilitate this sustainable high quality development.

Of course, Councillor McKenna is right to point out the flood defences and the need to ensure that this area is adequately covered by a Flood Amelioration Scheme.

Councillor Walshaw points out the need to balance housing density with high quality design, space standards and local green space. We all want the South Bank to be a success and this can only be achieved by having a clear plan and making sure developers work with us to achieve this aim.

Whilst the media are likely to focus on the big issues, areas like the South Bank and the Tetley site, the Panel also needs to get to grips with the nuts and bolts to make sure that the whole area works well. Whilst the Aire Valley is key to helping meet the employment needs of the city, there is a large proportion of it that is set to be used for housing. As we are inviting people to live in this part of Leeds, we need to ensure there is infrastructure, including education facilities and ways for people to get about sustainably alongside this new housing. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you.

(d) Community Committees

(i) Inner North West Community Committee

THE LORD MAYOR: On to Item (d), Councillor Sue Bentley.

COUNCILLOR S BENTLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on the Inner North West Community Committee Minute 31 in the late papers.

I am sure that all Councillors welcomed the devolved Youth Activity Fund for Community Committees so that local young people would be able to choose what activities they wanted to do. When our Community Committee tried several initiatives to engage with young people in the area, we found it very difficult to get anyone to attend the meetings. Last year Councillor Pat Latty explained to Council how her Community Committee had engaged with young people in the area which proved very successful, so recently our Community Committee adopted Councillor Pat Latty's model. All the schools in our area were invited to attend, send some pupils for a day's experience of activities, confidence building, questioning Councillors, having a nice lunch, deciding how to spend the Youth Activity Fund and this was followed by a tour of the Mechanical Engineering Department at the University of Leeds.

There was a real buzz and lots of excitement from the 50 young people who attended. They were aged 8 to 15 years and represented 13 schools. They were all well behaved, polite and entered into the spirit of the event. They produced lots of questions for Councillors, ranging from how much do we get paid, the importance of equality, racial issues, dealing with rubbish on the streets and how Councillors engage with young people.

The most important and most enjoyed part of the day by the young people was deciding how to spend their £24,000 on various activities which they could choose. The groups approached this task by discussing at length the activities, their appeal to different age groups,

how many people would be able to attend a session and whether they would be getting value for money.

If other Community Committees are struggling to have meaningful engagement with young people, I would recommend that they take on Councillor Latty's model and it is a shame that only four of our local Councillors attended this event but please take it on. Thanks very much. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Pryor to sum up.

COUNCILLOR PRYOR: Lord Mayor, I am a little bit shocked at Councillor Bentley's speech. She opened saying how she is surprised how these events are poorly attended and then went on to talk about the 60 children that were there and we engaged with. It was, as you say, a fantastic event. Those children, as you say, most of them the part of the day they enjoyed the most was spending the money, so perhaps we have got some future Councillors in there. A few of the children said the worst part of the day was the Councillors' question time, so maybe we should work to improve that, definitely! *(laughter)*

It was fantastic to have four Councillors there. Obviously, Lord Mayor, yourself, it is your own Community Committee, I am sure her and other Councillors had other engagements but I do not think we should say that it was poorly attended just because only four of us were there, but it was a fantastic event, thank you. *(Applause)*

(x) Outer West Community Committee

THE LORD MAYOR: On to the next item, Councillor Wadsworth.

COUNCILLOR WADSWORTH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I want to comment on the Outer West's Community Committee meeting on 2nd March where they discussed their work on the dog fouling project.

Dog fouling is something that affects all the wards and it is an absolute menace. Only the other week I was a victim of the stuff on my shoes and in the house, etc, which I have removed now, Councillor Lamb, so you are quite safe being there! As I say, it is a menace, it is antisocial but it also happens at antisocial times of the day as well so enforcement is very, very difficult because our enforcement officers cannot be everywhere 24 hours a day.

Recently we paid for some signage in Outer North West to try and improve the situation but signage has a limited value, signage tends to make the people who are already cleaning up think that they are doing the right thing, but the people who are not doing the right thing it has no effect on because they have no intention of cleaning up.

That leads me on to education, really. Education is the only way and education really in our schools is the only way, because children do say to me "He should clean up with his dog" etc, and so they are getting some of that and that will work through, but I know that Outer West Community Committee have done a lot of work on that. As time is short, Lord Mayor, I will leave it there and let Councillor Coulson sum up.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Coulson to sum up.

COUNCILLOR COULSON: Yes, it is a bit of a surprise, is this – I don't mean you!
(laughter) I was told that Paul Wadsworth was going to ask a question on an event we carried out at the Wellbeing Centre...

COUNCILLOR WADSWORTH: You were misinformed, then.

COUNCILLOR COULSON: ... engagement with all the patients, doctors and the general discussion about what they wanted to talk about, but I am flexible, I can cover the dogs in with the people and the patients.

My remarks will be that the reason we have got the project going is because we took the initiative when at one of our leadership meetings Fiona Venner gave a presentation on dog fouling. Unfortunately it was supposed to be spread out but I think Councillor Venner's visit cleaning up dog muck round her area that it has not got to the press yet, so I took the initiative along with my colleague over there, Rod Wood, had the absent Councillor Blackburn as a sub-group, Environmental sub-group, and we put together a programme on dog fouling which would have been out already but our main man is on holiday for two weeks, our Pete, so I can assure you as soon as our Pete comes back we have already got a launch planned, have we not Rod - he nods yes – where we have got a big banner. It is not going to be done individually by one Councillor, it is going to be done Outer West, which is the three wards. We have a banner with various things on it, we are going to stand and give a presentation, have our photograph taken and open the Outer West Dog Poo Campaign. If you want any details about it or samples (laughter) we are quite happy to provide anything you wish for. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: We turn to page 13 now, please, and part way down the page, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.1 (winding up of business) and before the Leader of Council sums up, I would like to invite Councillor Campbell to formally move his reference back (the amendment) and Councillor Lamb to formally second. Councillor Campbell.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Could I formally move it, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lamb.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: And I will formally second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Can I now ask Councillor Blake to sum up.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am delighted that Councillor Coulson brought the subject that is closest to all of our hearts, especially as we go out on the doorstep campaigning! That can be a dodgy situation in itself, of course, but there is nothing like us suffering from the consequences of irresponsible dog owners to bring our attention to it, so thank you for that.

Can I just say before I start, I am sorry that Councillor Yeadon just missed to get to sum up on her Minutes because I think that we have had a very good debate on children and learning today and I know that she will pick up the many specific questions that you have raised.

Just going through the order of what we talked about, I think it has been a good informative debate today and I think Councillor Coupar has summed up very well on her Minutes too.

I was quite staggered to discover that there are now more private rented properties in this city than Council properties. I think the shift in balance over the last couple of years has been really dramatic. I think also that there are a lot of individual landlords who do not have the benefit of working with other landlords to come together to share best practice, so I really do welcome the setting up of the agency, but I really think that the monitoring it and making sure that where we can we enforce is going to be absolutely critical.

The sheer fact, and we touched on it very briefly, about the Housing and Planning Bill and the potential impact that that has on the city, the Local Government Association has estimated that there will be 80,000 fewer Council houses nationally as a result of the selling off of Council houses, the affordable rents, so huge concerns. We have to get a grip of this through the different devolution asks that we make of Government going forward.

I want to pay particular tribute to the Social Charter and to Councillor Macniven. I think you have taken a very strong lead on this in your role as Lead Member so I just really want to emphasise Councillor Golton's point as well, that this is not about paying lip service to the wonderful community provision that we have and the associations that we have in this city. We have to take it forward with enormous seriousness and make sure that we do maximise the impact.

I am not sure that we do celebrate the successes that we have enough in these areas in our communities and I really welcome all of the comments that have come through the different Community Committee reports and also the reports from Councillor Gruen and Councillor Venner about the different community activities that happen in their wards. I was very pleased with the Chief Executive to have had the opportunity to come to look at the phenomenon that is Bramley Baths. It really is an example that we all need to be aware of and to go along to visit. I am not sure that we all necessarily all need to go and dive in to the pool, that might not be the prettiest site to behold, but we have got such great examples around the city and let us do everything we can to pay tribute to the people out in our communities who really do go above and beyond to make their contribution to the city.

Moving on to the different papers and different comments on education, like Alan Lamb I was quite pleased to walk into the Chamber this afternoon and see that Paul Brennan is substituting for Nigel Richardson this week – I think Nigel is on holiday in the run-up to Easter. Paul, it seems to be my great privilege at the moment to continually make you blush, and you do it very well I have to say! *(laughter)* Seriously, on behalf of the whole Council can we say an enormous thank you for the difference that you have made. We obviously refer to successes past and failures perhaps that instance in our history, if you like, that we are not so proud of, but I really do want to pay tribute to the issues that Paul has really helped us move forward on.

If you recall, in 2010 just before we came into administration we had a cross party agreement to end the contract with Education Leeds. That was a deliberate, deliberate act to bring education back into the heart of Children's Services. My real concern this week is around the announcement in the Budget of forced academisation. I think it is quite bizarre that it was announced in the Budget – the Budget that made great play of more devolution to local areas, and this has to be one of the most centralising acts that we have ever seen. We have heard through the debates the lack of evidence in terms of attainment but I think there have been some really good contributions about admissions, about school places, about special educational needs and I would say if you look at the proposals for forced academisation, those issues in particular are not addressed.

I think this is going to become an issue in this Parliament of Local Government coming together regardless of their politics against Central Government. Many of you will know that Gary Porter is the Leader of the Local Government Association. He is a Conservative Leader and he has made a statement:

“The LGA also reiterates our opposition to forced academisation of schools. It is vital that we concentrate on the quality of education and a school’s ability to deliver the best results for children rather than on the legal status of a school, to make sure that we are providing the education and support needed in each area.”

I think we have to really, all of us, question very deeply whether forced academisation is going to deliver the best things for children in Leeds and we have to plan our response to the consultation accordingly.

I was copied into a letter on 22nd February from the Primary Headteachers’ Forum writing to Nicky Morgan, writing to Government – this is before the Budget, before the announcement – saying that they were deeply concerned about losing the support mechanisms currently in place, dividing and the fragmentation of schools and what that will have on provision and cohesion, ultimately leading to a diminishing of standards and progress in our schools.

We have got headteachers rightly concerned about what the national programme is doing, we have headteachers in Leeds who are very supportive of the work that we are doing in this city to give them the support to children that cannot necessarily be given in schools alone.

I do want to refer to Councillor Cohen’s comments around anti-Semitism. Dan, I am very disappointed if you think that at every opportunity I would not stand up against anti-Semitism and I want you to have that confidence. What we can all justly be proud of in this city is the real focus that we have on social cohesion, integration with all our communities, combating racism. I am proud of the record of the Labour Party standing up fighting fascism. *(Applause)* What I cannot tolerate is an attempt to hijack an agenda and, Barry, I am really disappointed that you chose to do that. If we need to have a debate on anti-Semitism or any aspect of discrimination, let us have a full open debate with all the information on the table to move this Council forward to protect all of the citizens that live in our great city. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, I am now going to call for the vote, firstly on the amendment reference back in the name of Councillor Campbell. *(A vote was taken)* The vote is LOST.

The second vote, the motion to receive the Minutes. *(A vote was taken)* The vote is CARRIED.

That brings us to the tea break so can I invite any visitors to join us in the Banqueting Hall and could I ask if Councillor Sue Bentley could just pop into my office. I do not get a chance to speak to my colleagues!

(Short break)

ITEM 12 – REPORT ON DEVOLVED MATTERS

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now on Item 12, which is the Report on Devolved Matters, and we have 30 minutes in which to debate this subject this evening. May I ask Councillor Blake, please, to begin.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to move the Item on Devolution. There is a report in the Council pack for everyone to have a look through.

I think everyone will be aware that the purpose of putting this item on the agenda was actually to consider the way that the Growth Deal that Leeds has already achieved is being delivered for the benefit of people in Leeds but also the wider City Region, so there are some very interesting items on this agenda for those of you who do not follow it closely.

We are very pleased that there was a positive response from across the Combined Authority Area to set up a Business Flood Recovery Fund and this has come together supporting businesses with £3.6m from the Growth Deal and £1.4m from the Combined Authorities Investment Committee, and this has been used to help SMEs across the Leeds City Region. I do want to pay tribute to officers from the affected Local Authority areas in our region who have worked tirelessly to go out and help support the small businesses. We have had incredible feedback and I know from the Kirkstall and City and Hunslet ward Councillors they have had a lot of very positive response in the support that they have been getting and I do not think we should forget that it is the ability to make those decisions locally with resources coming down to us that really does make a difference. We have also discussed over the last couple of months the different grants going out to support businesses with critical capital investment requirements.

Councillor Wakefield will be picking up some of the transport announcements and it is interesting to note the comments in the Budget debate, or really before the Budget debate, picking up on the National Commission for Infrastructure that Lord Adonis is chairing and the potential impact that that will have on Leeds and the wider region, and the establishment on a Statutory footing of Transport for the North. I think there is a great deal of debate to have about the improvements we can do in the short term but also our longer term ambitions in terms of getting the investment into our area and really, critically, addressing the imbalance.

We did not have any mention of Leeds, the Leeds City Region in the debate in the Budget around devolution. Just to say negotiations are still ongoing on a Leeds City Region footprint and we look forward to being able to bring some information back to you as soon as we possibly can. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Blake. Councillor Lewis.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: On the reserving of the right to speak, can you please make sure that if you wish to speak you must come and tell me yourself so that I know that you want to speak.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: I will make it very clear, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It was disappointing again that the Leeds City Region did not feature in comments on devolution progress in the

Budget last week but, as has been mentioned by Councillor Blake, there was mention of transport. I think we must not lose sight of the fact that part of the devolution agenda is Transport for the North and I am very pleased that Councillor Wakefield is involved with that.

Also the National Infrastructure Commission made their announcement about where funding should go and the Government accepted in total all the suggestions that came from the former Labour Minister, Lord Adonis, who now chairs the National Infrastructure Commission. The only worry I have about Lord Adonis is that when he was Secretary of State for Transport he was wedded to HS2 being a 'Y' shape that would go to Manchester with Leeds to follow some time in the future. Thankfully we have got away from that, we have got, when it goes ahead, simultaneously Manchester and Leeds.

The HS3 announcement is particularly important – actually in many ways more important to us, I think, than HS2 because the Trans Pennine route and the improvement of it is crucial to the growing economies of both Manchester and of Leeds.

There has been some progress, I think, belatedly, on the City Region footprint model for a Devolved Authority that would include Leeds – indeed, hopefully it would be called the Leeds City Region. I have made my views very well known about how I think we could have got a lot further a lot sooner and that is for another day. What I will say now is that there has been some progress and I think that the fact that the Labour Leaders now accept that actually without some sort of agreement cross party it is going nowhere and we have to get that agreement cross party, and we had some meetings a couple of weeks ago at which I think a very constructive way forward was identified that we can now hopefully follow with some speed, because there is a closing window of opportunity which we must not, in my view, miss. It relies upon there now being much more open debate and a much more collegiate approach to how we persuade the Government that we can in fact deliver the Leeds City Region footprint, at least in part, fairly quickly, if necessary first of all it just being Associate Membership and the Combined Authority being the actual devolved area.

I hope I will get some reassurance today as, I have to say, I have had privately about much more close working cross party and I hope that Councillor Blake will make sure that Leaders of other parties in this room are now equally brought into the debate so they know where we are going. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Stewart Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The devolution debate tends to be a big battle between the two big parties as to what shape they think it should be expressed in, and I am aware that it is a very big prize and so that is why I appreciate why people get so worked up about it. I am aware that we tend to be the ones that do most of that worrying and getting worked up and that we are missing out, I think, on the public and how they can get involved in that debate. I think it would help our case as a City Region if we were able to demonstrate there was a popular goodwill – well, just a will, actually – to actually make this happen and that there was popular impatience alongside that of the political decision makers as well.

I think it is very important to get the public on side as well because when we are looking at the European debate as we are at the moment, I am having a lot of people coming to see me and I am sure many other Members here are and they are saying, "Oh, I just don't know, I don't know – can you just give me a list of what is good and what is bad and then I will make my mind up?" I think sometimes we just are not very good at doing the PR about what

difference some institutions make. All too often, especially with the devolution agenda, we have a lot of announcements about things that are intended to happen but not a lot about what has actually been achieved, and we should not forget that the first City Deal, even if this next phase of the City Deal is controversial and subject to difference of opinion, the first City Deal that we achieved was the most significant of any City Region and we should be able to start rolling out the really big achievements that are there so that they can be associated and can be efficiently branded with devolution and the fact that we are making decisions for ourselves as a Leeds City Region. I think that would help a lot in terms of getting those people on board and then getting the centre to take it seriously about us having our right to devolution. It is not a gift, it is a right, and when that happened with the Scottish debate it resonated and it worked and all of a sudden Westminster politicians were scrabbling to outdo each other in terms of what they could offer. I think we need to learn some of that here in Leeds too. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am getting kind of worried about myself because I found myself agreeing with a leading Conservative and it was not Councillor Buckley and it was not Cameron – you are right, it was Iain Duncan Smith...

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: The quite man.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: ... who funnily said something that I can agree with, not just on disabilities but on the so-called Northern Powerhouse.

He said that actually Osborne was more interested in spin, more interested in politics than economics. The documents that Councillor Carter has referred to are very good documents but despite David Cameron saying before the election we are going to electrify the Trans Pennine way, despite the evidence both in the One North and indeed the document that Councillor Carter has referred to saying that this one single transaction of electrifying the line would bring £10bn, it would address the 25% gap in productivity between individuals in Yorkshire and London, it would transform the connectivity between big cities, the truth is that they will not get the electrification through till 2022 at the earliest. Despite the right documents, despite the plans, despite the money to do feasibility, we still have a railway system that was at the same speed as when Mick Lyons was driving a steam engine, 40 miles an hour Trans Pennine, and that is true. It is on the same speed in the 1870s on the Great Western Way. We have not addressed it. Our roads, I do not have to tell you about the M62 roads and the biggest idea is, let us do a hard shoulder for another lane, so there is a long way to go to get substance into our transport strategy, plans, documents and everything.

Sadly, one of the things that he rightly said as well, Iain Duncan Smith, is that the Government is creating wider inequalities. Last year I said it is nine times more spent per individual in London than in Yorkshire and Humberside. I have to say today, it is now 13 times and you could tell with the Crossrail of £30bn. 13 times more in London per person, £2,732; in Yorkshire, £206.

Finally I will say this about devolution, because IDS said something else I agree with, that all the economic strategies are built round Osborne's political ambition and I am afraid some of this is being held back by a number of Tory MPs that Osborne will not stand up to with his ambition.

My simple message is this, this is not the way to implement devolution, this is not a way to run a country and it is not a right way to actually look after the people of Yorkshire. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

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

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Yes, thank you, Lord Mayor. I have a lot of sympathy with what Councillor Golton was saying, if he is listening over there. Good. I have the privilege of meeting Lord Bob Kerslake, former Leader of Sheffield City Council...

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Chief Exec.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: ... who then went to head up the Civil Service - sorry, Chief Executive, I will get that right and now in the House of Lords and he has led a piece of work bringing together various views on devolution. It actually makes interesting reading for quite a few of us together considering the discussion within it.

I would just in support of the comments that have been made, the issue about getting the public on board, Stewart, is that the problem is that the Treasury has put a confidentiality clause in so whilst you can go out and talk about the broad principles, it is actually very difficult to go out and talk about the details and I think people want to know about the details, how it is going to affect their lives. Once you can get that transparency and that clarity, then if we get the language right we can really start to inspire people to understand how much better we can do things if we have the money and the power to actually do it. I think that one of the sticking points as well is that the Government is very reluctant to give up their hands on the purse strings and whilst even the Treasury and the DCLG are talking about this, actually talking to Civil Servants in other departments, do they want to give up the levers of power that they have got in Whitehall? I would suggest that many of them do not.

Councillor Wakefield is quite right, the ultimate irony of this, living in the most centralised country in Europe if not beyond, that it is the Members of Parliament, the key people in that centralised model who are stopping progress not only in the Leeds City Region-West Yorkshire-North Yorkshire area, but up and down the country. I think George Osborne went too fast at this and assumed that the Government's model that exists in Manchester is easily replicable in other regions and it just is not the case.

Progress is being made and I think Councillor Wakefield made it very clear, the impact of getting that investment into our economy will be phenomenal. I think if we can reduce the train time, the travel time between Sheffield and Leeds by 20 minutes, it has the potential to add £6bn to our respective economies. It is these sorts of prizes that make it really valuable in moving forward.

Happy to keep the conversations going and I look forward to reporting back to you in due course. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. I need to call for the vote. (*A vote was taken*) Vote CARRIED.

WHITE PAPERS

THE LORD MAYOR: We will go on to the White papers now. We have got three White Papers for debate. Each debate will last no longer than 45 minutes and will conclude

with votes on the motion and any amendments. As before, people who are seconding and wish the right to reserve their right to speak, will you please make absolutely sure that I know you wish to speak.

ITEM 13 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – ROYAL COMMISSION ON LOCAL GOVERNMENT FINANCE

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Andrew Carter, can I ask you to introduce the first White Paper.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Yes, thank you, my Lord Mayor. I wonder if anyone can really say when the dislocation between Central Government and Local Government really began. I think it began quite unintentionally after the Second World War when all of a sudden, because of what had happened, the Government of the day found (actually a Labour Government) that not only was the country bankrupt through war but Local Authorities were, if anything, even more bankrupt and could not begin to rebuild what had been destroyed by war, so bit by bit Government, the Revenue Support Grant, the Rate Support Grant as it was then and all sorts of other mechanisms in Government became more and more involved in the financing of Local Government and then, of course, the control of Local Government. I suppose then the worst period of all was in the late 70s and 80s and Mr Corbyn and Mr McDonnell will remember this better than me, they were there in Greater London and a complete fracture took place between Central Government and Local Government.

I would put it to you that all three major political parties at national level from then on had a jaundiced view of Local Government which has never actually been dispelled because throughout the 80s, the 90s into this Century successive Conservative, Labour and the Coalition Government with Liberal Democrats involved all continue to remove power from Local Government and centralise it even more.

I had hoped the White Paper that I am pleased Councillor Finnigan is seconding could just have been agreed by all parties. It is one paragraph, it says everything you need to know about what the problem is and it can be dealt with through a Royal Commission and it is the only way to deal with it. If you like, there is unfinished business from the Redcliffe-Maud Report and Local Government reorganisation that followed in 1974.

What makes it more urgent now is two things. One, there is devolution and sometimes you wonder why you bother supporting this lot and trying to get this devolution through because statesmanship seems to have died altogether over there, they do not seem to know when people are trying to help them and that is something we can address no doubt again and later. If devolution goes ahead it will not work as it is supposed to work and it will not work as I believe it can be rolled out over the next decade if you have not done something about the arrangement and the situation between Central Government and Local Government as it currently exists, because that dislocation is still there and it will stay there.

Now the Government has an agenda that says Local Government will finance itself at least through the Revenue streams by 2020. That is fine providing the Government sees there are two sides to the coin and for Local Government to do that – which would actually be a very good thing – a whole string of new freedoms have to go with it to allow Local Government to be able to finance itself and get the independence back that it had before the last war. The only way to address those issues is through a Royal Commission that actually recommends what the relationship should be between Central Government and Local Government that both sides

respect and what is Local Government's prerogative is Local Government's prerogative, but what is Central Government's prerogative is Central Government's prerogative, and both parties have to accept that.

Unless we reach the stage, and we need to do it in a relatively short space of time, this dislocation will remain and get worse because there will be another tier of Local Government through devolution which has all sorts of powers, some of which large Local Authorities like Leeds ought to have and there needs to be a strategic view and those of us who believe in Local Government should forget their differences and forget the issues about who said what to who and why, and forget altering words for the sake of it, and realise that we have to have this Royal Commission that recommends to Parliament a 21st Century way of delivering Local Government at every level in this country from Parish to District to County to Metropolitan area because that has to be in place if devolution is to work in the medium to long term.

I am disappointed that the party opposite could not simply accept this resolution as it stands. In one paragraph it tells you everything you need to know and everything that needs to be done. It does not need amending, certainly not by two paragraphs added that actually add nothing at all to what the resolution is trying to achieve. I move the White Paper. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan to second.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: I will formally second and, to the delight of everybody, I am going to speak. I was waiting for the groans!

I have sat here since 2002 - and I am going to go over some of the ground Andrew has as well - and sat through Labour Governments and the Coalition Government and the Conservative Government - I do not think I am going to be around long enough to sit through a Lib Dem Government but I suspect, should I live to that ripe old age, we would still be in the same situation. It is this relationship between Central Government and Local Government, and Central Government by and large dislikes Local Government and has no faith in it and does not really genuinely believe that we should be given the wherewithal and the tools to be able to actively respond to the needs of our communities.

The finance packages are constantly being fiddled. There is no doubt at all that Leeds did badly from the last Labour Government compared to places like Manchester and Bristol and Nottingham. We all know that, you have all seen those particular figures. The Coalition Government make sure that Leeds did badly as it financed a lot of the Lib Dem Councils down in the West Country and a lot of the Tory Shires and this time (it is all true, Stewart) we see that the Tory Shires are actually favoured because there is, Andrew is quite right, this dislocation between Central Government and Local Government. Instead of accepting that Local Government has an active role, it is seen as an opportunity to fiddle the financial settlement to pass money to your mates in Local Government and that has all got to change. We have got to get to a situation where it is taken out of the hands of Central Government to be able to fiddle and manipulate the actual process so that Councils get a fair deal that is based upon the needs in their community.

It is the same discussion and debate about delegating down those powers. It is almost invariably the case that Central Government will say, "We will give you some cash but we expect you to do things in this way and if you do not do things in this way we will make sure that it is ring fenced so that we impose other obligations and all the rest of it."

It is time for a genuine liberation of Local Government, a liberation in as much as it gets a fair financial settlement and a liberation in as much as we are given the opportunity to deal with those demands and those concerns that are raised by our communities who look to us – often more often than they do to Central Government – to try and resolve some of the day to day issues and the day to day challenges that actually face them.

We do need a Royal Commission, I do not think there is any arguments whatsoever. You have got to take it out of the hands of the politicians and look at some consensual way of making sure that that approach is fair, that that financial settlement is fair and that as many powers as possible are dealt with at that local level. I formally second, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

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

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I moving the amendment, a couple of Members commented to me over the tea break, they said I hope you wake us up after tea so, as the topic in question is Local Government finance, I think the only way I can wake people up is by probably volume, not necessarily excitement of the matter in front of us.

I listened very carefully to what Councillors Carter and Finnigan said in moving their White Paper and I think they both outlined very well on the history of Local Government finance and the history of how we have got to where we are today, and also, as Robert raised, it is often local services that people come to for when they want things changed and want things happening in their community. Local Government provides that.

I think it is quite interesting that Andrew started his remarks going back to the Labour Government after World War II and I think it is worth reflecting on that Government that the leading figures – Clement Attlee, Nye Bevan – had all been Councillors before they rose to Parliament and then into Government and I do not think there has ever been a Government that has ever had so many former Councillors among its leading ranks. That is probably why that Government really saw the benefit that if you want to make a change in community and you want to really lift the living standards, improve public services and make some real changes, it is Local Government that will do that and that is why so much faith was put by that generation of Labour politicians into Local Government to achieve things.

Of course, then the other side is, again as has been referred to, when public spending contracts, as it has done in the last six years despite rising debt and as it did in the late 1970s, then inevitably it is Local Government that feels the squeeze on that, even though it might not have been the cause of the problem. I think there has always been this ultimate tension and any solution that brings a settlement to that I think is welcomed by everybody and, to be very clear, we have absolutely no intention of not supporting the central cause of a Royal Commission to look at that.

I think it is more we would want to go into that from our Group's perspective understanding some of the issues that we are facing now and in the immediate future and some of the real values that we need to get into that.

I think first of all a Royal Commission certainly is not on the agenda of the current Government and it is not one I can find a lot of other Councils happening to, so we do have to face up in Local Government finance there are some very immediate challenges and one of the biggest risks that is being introduced in the next few years is reform of business rates. We are going to see both on a very, very practical level how does Local Government deal with shocks,

how does Local Government deal with shocks that might come from the withdrawal of an industry or industries from an area that might be outside Council's control, how does it deal with issues of rating valuations and appeals and things like that, but also on a bigger picture what can we actually do to influence the business rates that we collect, given that there will be the start.

The second and most important thing is actually the needs of Local Government. It is clear whether it is Council Tax, whether it is business rates, whether it is a charge that can arise, the needs that Local Government tackle occur in different parts of the country in different Councils than where the revenue arises from, and that for me is the ultimate point about this. We cannot have a Royal Commission, we cannot talk about Local Government without talking about that imbalance between the needs that occur in communities like ours and the different places where our revenue arises.

I think I will finish on this point. We have all seen areas where Central Government has got it wrong. When we discover that the current Government brings out transition grants that benefit Surrey and Hertfordshire to the tune of tens of millions of pounds but nothing for big northern cities. Also we saw under the previous Labour Government where the share of the population that was deprived it did not matter if it was lost in the much bigger area. It is time to get a proper settlement, we all agree that, but there needs to be some values and some basis doing it to treat everybody fairly. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dawson.

COUNCILLOR DAWSON: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. It is interesting in Councillor Carter's opening comments he talks about Royal Commissions. Royal Commissions – and I quote from Sir Harold Wilson who said, "They take minutes but waste years." Some examples of how Royal Commissions can actually stall things. 1976, the Royal Commission on Legal Services took three years to report, took four years for the Government to respond and it took 12 years to implement the major proposals in it. In 1999 we had a Royal Commission on the House of Lords which reported; we still do not have a consensus on the House of Lords, we still have disagreement between both sides. We had disagreement in the Coalition between the House of Lords. Royal Commissions, even though I support that part of the motion, are not a panacea.

I believe most Councillors welcome the idea of a thorough review of Local Government, not only devolution but also fiscal devolution and it should be a review that is not tinkering with existing arrangements but looking at a whole wide range of alternatives, whether it is local Income Tax, Sales Tax, even Land Valuation Tax, which I am sure Councillor Illingworth would like. Crucially for most people on this side of the Chamber, and I would say for one nation Tories if they exist (and Councillor Finnigan may now be a one nation Tory, he figures on a lot of Tory literature) (*laughter*) what must happen is that we must look at the levels of deprivation and need in an area in any criteria for a settlement. We must have a mechanism that allows distribution of financial support based on need. We must get away from a system where certain Local Authorities who cannot make their books balance call on their chums to whistle up a further £300m to get financial support that they need over until the next pay day.

Councillor Carter also talks about the disconnect between Local Government and Central, Lord Mayor. I do not think it started in 1945; I think it started in the 1980s when certain Labour Authorities wanted to bring in progressive transport policies in London and South Yorkshire and the then Conservative Government actually abolished them for actually doing that, for being independent and responding to local needs. What happened then, we got

the Council Tax created, and this is an example, a Conservative review of local Government then, an example of replacing a 19th Century taxation system, rates, with a 12th Century one, the Community Charge or its real name, the Poll Tax.

This botched up Council Tax which replaced the Poll Tax left us with a property tax based on values that are now 25 years out of date. Council Tax is also pretty regressive. It penalises people in smaller properties. In reality, someone who lives in a multi-million pound mansion, say in Harewood Ward, Band H, will pay only three times more than someone who lives in a bedsit flat in the middle of Morley who is a Band A. No account taken of the earnings and the wealth which will be vastly different, or the value of their property, hence our amendment. Any reform of Local Government finance needs to recognise that communities have different needs and require more support. All Local Authorities do not start from a level playing field. They start in different places with lots of different levels of deprivation, particularly in areas of Leeds.

Business rates. Government is looking to devolve business rates and what we would say is that there is a note of caution in the Budget when the Chancellor brought in more reliefs and exemptions to business rates which may take away about £7bn from business rate collection. I would be wary of this Chancellor. We have already seen the Budget has begun to unravel within days and now he is proposing to actually do something which will penalise the tax base of Local Government.

THE LORD MAYOR: You have got a red light, can you please finish your sentence.

A Royal Commission is a step forward but it needs to be in the context of different deprivation levels and business rates. Thanks. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor John Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. When there was a proposal to webcast the proceedings of this Council I cannot say that I was overjoyed by the prospect. Some would say that I am a stick in the mud and I do not like change and that is probably a pretty reasonable assessment. That said, after what we have heard for much of today and certainly in relation to this debate, I am delighted, actually, that these proceedings are webcast, because what the people of Leeds and further afield will be able to see is that a straightforward, simple, honest, genuine attempt to bring together colleagues who week in, week out, month in, month out, every single time we meet in this Chamber complain about the settlement we have from this Government, from the last Government, from the Government before that, from the one before that, that we have had for the last 30, 40 years and more, Members opposite cannot support something as straightforward as this. It beggars, belief, Lord Mayor, it absolutely beggars belief.

What conversations took place between the Labour leadership and the proposer of this motion to try and come to a compromise, to try and arrive at a joint position? What were they? None. None whatsoever. Why is that? Because it seems to me, Lord Mayor, that there are more Members in the party opposite who want to carp and moan and groan than actually want to fix the problem. They want to blame somebody else. They want to blame the Government. They do not want to actually deal with the issue that is at hand. This was your chance. This was the opportunity.

We heard Councillor Dawson saying how terrible things are. What's your big idea then? What's your idea to fix it? You have not got one, have you? That is the whole point. There is

no big idea. There is no mechanism to fix it. The Chief Exec is sick of writing letters on an all-party basis down to Ministers and the Treasury and all the rest of it. It just has not worked. This is the chance to do something positive, to get something sorted out.

Collectively, together, with a positive approach to Government we can make a difference. Others have managed to do that on the Devolution Agenda. We still cannot manage to do that here because again, yet again, the communities of West Yorkshire, their leadership as it currently stands cannot agree anything. They cannot agree the big principles that we need to agree to move forward on collectively.

We say Manchester and those on the other side of the Pennines they can do it because they sit round a table, collectively talk about it and get the best for their communities. That is what we should be doing. We should be getting the best for the people in this city.

Because there is no-one who has come forward, you have still got a speaker left and I hope Councillor Dowson is going to come forward with your big idea, the way that you propose to solve this issue, because we ain't seen any of it yet. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Anderson.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. In supporting Councillor Carter's White Paper some of the things have already been said but I do think they are worth saying again, that we do need a new way of funding Local Government. I will be quite frank, I have been very disappointed at the way we have been funded and the way the Government has looked at Local Government recently. It is not easy sometimes trying to explain what is happening and trying to justify what is happening, so we need to get a new way of looking at it.

All of us in this Chamber have one thing in common – we want the best for this city. We might have a different way of going about it, I accept that, but we all want the best way we can do it. It is not up to anybody in London to say what is best for us in the North, hence the reason we have ended up with devolved Assemblies in Wales and Scotland, because people were being told all the time this was the way to do it and that is what happens. You end up with a rise in nationalism, and I do not have to explain to you when the rise of nationalism comes along the problems it can cause and how it can actually cause more problems than it is meant to solve.

The reason we need a Royal Commission is because we should not rule anything out. I am pleased that Councillor Dawson mentioned Councillor Illingworth's plan, because Councillor Illingworth is always telling me about the one way that he would fund it, but at least we would be able to debate John's idea. We might not agree with it but at least it would be debated and at least we would know a way forward. I think we have got to look at how we can have freedoms and flexibilities locally to raise funding for specific things that we want.

In terms of infrastructure, you have heard me drone on about infrastructure for meeting after meeting. By looking at the way that we fund things we would then start to be able to look at how we can go about funding the infrastructure, how we can go about funding social care and the Health Service in our area to make sure that it is meeting our needs – and I emphasise 'our needs' because there is no way people throughout the country can dictate to somebody else what they know is best. We know what is right for us in our own wards, we know what is right for us in our own cities and we have got to start doing that.

We do have an opportunity, as has already been said through the devolution way of doing things. We have got to grasp it. I am not going to get involved in the debate over it but we have got to grasp it, take it forward and it is a good starting point and if we can get this Commission going forward as well we can make sure that we can do things.

One of the problems we are going to have with business rates coming along is this long-standing problem over business rate appeals, which are slowing down getting things across. If we had more control over these sorts of things we would be able to dictate and move things forward.

The Government keeps saying that they are going to devolve us. Great, I believe in the business rates being devolved, but we need to watch out if they start putting in floors and ceilings to things because then if we know where we are, we are then back to redistribution of wealth all over the place. We need to be careful about these things.

In conclusion, what I would like to say is we have got an opportunity, why don't we take it in all agreeing to just a paragraph that can send a strong message down to London that we in Leeds are serious about running our city in the best interests of all of the citizens of this city, not one particular group or another. We want to represent everybody and we believe in democracy and we do not believe in being told what to do by Central Government on every occasion. Thank you, Lord Mayor, thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thanks, Lord Mayor. I am getting fatigue...

THE LORD MAYOR: I am too!

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: ...in the debate about what Central Government does and what we should do. Doing a Royal Commission yes, action, Councillor Procter. Yes, we are going to do something about it. What are you going to do about it? Actually, what a Royal Commission does is effectively kicks it into the long grass as well, isn't it? Part of what they were saying is correct in that it will take years, it might not come to any conclusion at the end of it but the thing is we have not really got anything else open to us, have we? Do you know what, that is because some people are two-faced so when Prime Minister Cameron, when he was in a Coalition Government, said to Nicola Sturgeon, "Oh, we are going to give you lots of new powers and by the way England, do not worry, you will not be left out, we are going to have a proper settlement for the English regions as well", and what did that turn into? It turned into English votes for English laws, so actually it was actually even more of a concentration of power in Westminster because it was all about Westminster and what the people within it and the Members in it actually did. It was not about us making decisions at all.

We are still waiting for that English regional settlement and there has not been one single mention of it from any of the Front Benchers in your Cabinet and I think that is a disgrace. Anyway, whilst we are at it we will have a Royal Commission so we will be supporting it.

In terms of how do we potentially, though, make it bigger than what it already is? We talked earlier in the Devolution debate about let the people at the centre know how much we care. When it is simply another letter, like you said, from the Chief Executive that says "All the three main parties, they all think it would be a really good idea if you could set up this great big national debate with all the great and the good giving evidence and concluding in three or four years' time." Why don't we instead challenge ourselves to demonstrate popular support

and will for this to happen? Why don't we try and get this through the Cabinet Office machinery that they have? Get the petition going, get 100,000 signatures on it and say do you know what, we want a proper Parliamentary debate about this dislocation between local and national Government and about our fiscal arrangements because actually it would be a challenge for our MPs at the end of the day. They all talk about, "Oh, we love Local Government, some of us came from it and we really want to support you" and then when you actually talk to them – Hilary Benn was ...

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: That is your MP. He talks like that as well.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Hilary Benn then turns round to us and says, "Oh, but you cannot have fiscal devolution because it is just not fair because some Councils are poorer than others and if you do your own tax raising then it is just not fair and we are there to make things fair. You are not there to make decisions. We are the ones that make the big decisions and then we dish it out to you. We call it devolution but it is actually just another way of dishing out the goods from the centre."

We need to show that we are serious about it and I challenge us to pass this motion and then to actually turn it into a petition and then it is up to us to get 100,000 signatures on it.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dowson.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I like the fact you think I am really full of big ideas and those of you who know me know I have got tons of great ideas, but to be quite honest I am actually too busy dealing with the Tory's small minded petty policy that is coming out (*interruption*) seriously vindictive and totally disadvantaged to the North for sure.

Anyway, Lord Mayor, extremely pleased I have been given this opportunity, a second bit to speak here in the Chamber. I did not really have enough time to say everything I wanted to say about the relationship between Central and Local Government and let's face it, at the moment that relationship does border on contempt, doesn't it? Local Authorities have been blamed for austerity, the public sector workers vilified by Central Government, now we see the removal of Local Authorities totally from education. All the time we have been told that localism is key and that we need to listen to communities who are best placed to make those decisions.

We have been told that all schools in England will be forced to convert to academy status by 2020 and I was listening very carefully to Councillor Carter when he talked about those of us who believe in Local Government, yet it is your side of the Chamber who stand up and cheer loudest for forced academisation, which is taking education away from localities and from the people who know their communities best.

Schools have been free to convert for about five years, yet most certainly in the primary sector have chosen not to. It is their individual choice, a choice made by those governing bodies and those parents locally. Apparently that sort of localism is not to be encouraged so, like naughty little children these schools are now being forced to do something they clearly do not want to do, and where is the local freedom in that?

Nationally only 15% of the largest multi academy trusts perform above national averages for pupil progress and that compares with 44% of local Councils. There will now be a duty on

Local Authorities to facilitate this process as well, so we are looking in Leeds at collectively around £5m already to pay for conversions, and that is money coming from the local budgets. There are no plans outlined by the Government to reimburse Councils for those costs or for the land and buildings that they will lose either.

Is there evidence that suggests that converting a school to an academy improves outcomes? Schools Minister Nick Gibb recognises this and only last September he said, “This Government does not believe that all academies and free schools are necessarily better than maintained schools.” So, with what has happened just lately and cynically I suspect Mr Gibb may shortly be looking for another job.

When academies fail – and some will and have already – the only recourse will be to Whitehall. Devolution would rapidly become centralisation back to London and back to Whitehall. One particular aspect of the changes that has upset me most is the removal of the requirements for parents to be represented on governing bodies or whatever Nicky Morgan will actually call them going forward. I would like to challenge anyone on the Benches opposite to explain to me how removing parents from governing bodies fits with localism. I always assumed that parents provided that on the ground perspective, that they had vested interests in holding schools to account, but apparently I am wrong. We are to believe that remote and faceless bureaucrats and businessmen are the best people to provide the local input that apparently little Johnny’s mum or dad can’t.

The shameless privatisation of education is an absolute disgrace and in years to come we will see. I am sorry, Lord Mayor, but these children will suddenly find their schools changing, there will be no requirement to follow the national curriculum, no requirement to follow Healthy Schools and, most importantly, there will be no requirement to employ qualified teachers. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Red light. I nearly had to switch the sound off there. Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Yes, Lord Mayor. Can you imagine the Labour Group meeting on Monday night? They came to this White Paper and, having all decided they actually agreed with it, they then decided how the hell do we get out of voting for it, so they put down an amendment which adds nothing to the wording of the resolution except three paragraphs of words, which is pretty typical, and then they decide who their speakers will be. They pick the juvenile lead and the rump of Labour from Morley, who only spoke because Councillor Finnigan was speaking, and then to cap it off they field Councillor Dowson who talks about education and not about the relationship of Government to Local Government.

I will just say one thing to you, Councillor Dowson, do you remember when education was wrenched away from this city altogether for ten years by your Government?

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: I do not, actually, because I was not here then. You were here. I was not. I was not a Councillor then. You were.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: That is all I will say on that subject. Let me go back to this. Someone said to me, you know an administration, it cannot just agree to a resolution put down by two Opposition politicians. Yes it can. It can if it is right and what it shows is some leadership and a statesmanlike approach from a party in control, but we know there is no leadership, not in this, not on devolution and I am saddened to see that Councillor Wakefield now seems to have been bitten by the Blake bug *(laughter)* and he cannot even

remember the days when he used to say to me “We have the Leeds approach, Andrew. When it comes to dealing with the Government we go together and ask the Government to support us.”

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: He never told us about that!

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: No, you do not do that any more. You sicken the Government off to the point where you are going to positively damage the future of this city. This resolution is one paragraph, straightforward, it calls for a Royal Commission and, yes, they take a long time but they open up a massive debate whilst they are doing the work and that is what we need – a massive debate in public by sections of the community, business, you name it, the Third Sector, about the relationship that should exist between Central and Local Government.

We have to have that if devolution is to be rolled out successfully and it will be rolled out over many years to come, I have no doubt it will take time but unless we get the relationship between Central Government and Local Government as it exists right, then that devolution will not work as it should and I am forced to come to the conclusion that Councillor Procter is absolutely right, you do not actually want the resolution to the problems at all because you are in your comfort zone moaning, groaning and complaining. I have not had one constructive suggestion from anybody on that side as to how we should go about starting a proper debate about the future of Local Government finance and the future of Local Government and Central Government both respecting the other’s respective functions. Not one suggestion from 63 of you. You should be ashamed of yourselves.

By the way, just so we don’t fall into your unfortunate predicament, we shall accept your amendment as it means nothing and it says nothing and you will have to vote on our resolution. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I will call for the vote, please. We are voting on the amendment in the name of Councillor...

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: I formally move we accept the amendment.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: I am quite happy to second that.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: No, no, we are not voting on it. We do not have to vote for it.

THE LORD MAYOR: One minute.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Vote against your own amendment then.

THE LORD MAYOR: Just wait a minute. I have got a proposer in the name of Andrew Carter and I have got a seconder in Councillor Finnigan. Right. *(interruption)* Just wait a minute, let me just see. If you could just bear with me, please. I am taking advice.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Take it as well. It is on the Order Paper.

THE LORD MAYOR: We have got a few amendments here, procedural amendments, so just bear with me and let us hope that this is acceptable.

Councillor Carter, I need you in accordance with the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 14.9(a) to seek leave of Council to alter the wording of the motion in your name.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Yes, Lord Mayor. *(laughter)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I now need to ask Council to seek leave of Council – this is getting very complicated. I am now asking for a vote on that. *(A vote was taken)*
(interruption) Could I just ask you to calm down.

Could you just please be quiet one moment and let me listen to the Whip, Labour's Whip, first. I am switching my microphone off.

COUNCILLOR CHARLWOOD: Thank you. Lord Mayor, I think on this side we would like to follow the Order Paper and we are to be asked to vote on something new and we are not a hundred per cent sure what it is we are actually voting on. That is why we are not ready to vote. Can you please explain again, or can we go back to the Order Paper as it is stated and agreed at Whips yesterday, by the way.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Recorded vote!

THE LORD MAYOR: Council, I am going to take an adjournment at this, which I think would be a good idea. Can I have all the Whips, please.

(Short adjournment)

THE LORD MAYOR: Here goes. We are going to re-run the vote of Council in the name of Councillor Carter to amend the motion to incorporate Councillor Lewis's amendment.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Can we move a recorded vote, please.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Certainly.

(A recorded vote was held on the motion in the name of Councillor Andrew Carter to alter the motion)

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, 81 present, 27 "Yes", no abstentions, "No" 54 so the vote was LOST.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: You are going to vote in favour of exactly the same motion you are voting against now.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: My Lord Mayor, on a point of information and concern, could you inform the Labour Group that they are now about to vote on precisely the same thing that they have just voted against.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Lord Mayor, do not take advice from him.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: You are taking it from your Front Bench.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Get back on your train Mick!

THE LORD MAYOR: Look if we do not carry on we will be here until midnight and I really do not want to have to do that, OK? I am now back on page 15, I am carrying on from the last three lines. I call for the vote on the amendment in the name of Councillor Lewis. (*A vote was taken*) The vote is CARRIED.

Now the substantive motion. (*A vote was taken*) The vote is CARRIED.

Did you have to do that to me on my last Council meeting!

PROCEDURAL MOTION RE ITEM 14 WHITE PAPER MOTION – PHARMACIES

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now going on to the Procedure Motion re Item 14, White Paper Motion on pharmacies. I will call upon Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: They are not going to vote this down as well, Stewart, are they?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: I don't know, I have had a reaction before off the Opposition, they might vote against this as well, even if they are seconding it.

Yes, Lord Mayor, sorry. This motion is not going to be quite as entertaining as the last one and hopefully it will have a little bit more consensus than the last one – a little bit more.

You will be glad to know that the incorporation of the Labour amendment has already been agreed prior to the meeting. (*Applause*) Therefore, in accordance with the provisions I ask for it to take place.

THE LORD MAYOR: Could you just bear with me – they are giving me information in my left ear. My hearing is not very good after this year!

We need to vote on that, please. (*A vote was taken*) The vote is CARRIED.

Next is Councillor Mulherin.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I move in terms of the Notice on the Order Paper.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Jarosz.

COUNCILLOR JAROSZ: Lord Mayor, I second the motion and I reserve the right to speak. I have got my name down to speak just before the sum up.

THE LORD MAYOR: OK. I will take a vote. (*A vote was taken*) That is CARRIED.

Now, as Councillor has given consent to the requests of Councillors Golton and Mulherin we will now consider the altered motion set out in italics below.

May I now call on Councillor Golton.

ITEM 14 – AMENDED WHITE PAPER MOTION - PHARMACIES

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am very glad to have this motion seconded by Councillor Mulherin as we are both members of the Health and Wellbeing Board for the city which is one of those bodies which seeks to include not just elected Members but also, of course, those people who are professional and working within those fields and the intention is that we actually work together not on partisan lines but instead for the interests of the city and that debates are taken in subject matter and not according to political ingenuity.

In that spirit, I am bringing this White Paper forward because it is another one of those examples, it has been a theme of the afternoon, hasn't it, that Government tells us that we are free to do things and gives us the freedom to make our decisions in some areas and then in the next breath takes an increasingly centralised decision which then affects the freedom that we are supposed to have.

In terms of the community pharmacy, for those who have not had the briefing from the Group, basically the Government, one part of the Government is hoping to make savings within the NHS budget and they are looking at how we prescribe prescriptions across the country, and they are hoping to centralise the process and thereby save around about £170m which equates to around about a 6% budget overall in terms of a cut.

However, to do this they are hoping to do a hub and spoke model - we have heard that before, have we not, in public services – but amazingly for a Government which is supposed to be supporting the creation and sustenance of small businesses, the Minister in charge of this move seems to be quite content with the prospect that between 1,000 and 3,000 community pharmacies will go by the wayside as a result of this efficiency saving, which I just find deplorable. I am glad to see that others in other parties also recognise this dichotomy.

Local pharmacies themselves you would have thought, after all the furore that we have had around post offices and the debate that was had on those in terms of how they are not just somewhere where you buy stamps, they are actually the focus of a lot of community engagement, they are places where people go for socialisation and they help to limit isolation, which is supposed to be one of the things that we are particularly concerned of and is salient right now. Pharmacies actually, in the same way as people are asked who do you trust the most, and politicians come just above journalists, when they are asked what do you value most in your community, actually pharmacies they rate higher than post offices do, so to actually be in a process to reduce them for the sake of efficiency I think is silly and that is why I think it is effective for us as a Local Authority to take a stand and say we really think you should take this back and think about it again.

I have already mentioned the fact that the pharmacies themselves are these focus points in the community. We also, of course, have a Public Health agenda which has been devolved to us and one of the areas that we are being encouraged to take on board is to try and keep people away from GP's practices that are already feeling inundated and where we already have waiting lists when you turn up to see the doctor and, of course, we are also told to try and keep people away from A&E because they are also a very expensive place for people to end up at and they also might end up blocking the treatment other people with a far more serious condition might need to get within a certain amount of time.

Of course, pharmacies are potentially that bit of the front line that could make up the difference, where people could actually be using that venue more than they do already because

the people who are behind that counter are already health professionals who have gone through many years of studying to get where they are.

To take out a whole plethora, a whole tranche of these community pharmacies will actually undermine that and so instead of saving £170m on your prescription handling, you actually will end up spending far more in terms of other parts of the Health Service having to act up and also in terms of increased medications that are handed out because people are under stress because they have had part of their community taken away from them. I will leave it at that, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Mulherin to second.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. When the Government announced its swingeing cuts to the funding of community pharmacies, it justified its decision on what it calls necessary efficiencies required in our NHS, some £22bn worth of so-called efficiencies.

We know better than most about the relentless drive of this Tory Government in the name of austerity to cut public health services in this city. As with the cuts to our funding, community pharmacy cuts undermine the very agenda this Government says it is committed to, that is the prevention of ill health. These plans could result in up to 3,000 pharmacy closures, as Councillor Golton has just said, almost certainly affecting people in the most deprived areas of the country. This move is astonishing when you consider that there are 1.6 million visits made to community pharmacies every day, with almost 80% of adults visiting a pharmacy at least once a year for a health related reason.

This time last year the Health and Wellbeing Board for Leeds published the city's Pharmaceutical Needs Assessment, which concluded that Leeds had excellent provision with all neighbourhoods having a choice of local pharmacies. Importantly, the assessment also called on the city to be more ambitious about growing the role of community pharmacy teams. Pharmacies in this city deliver crucial work as part of the prevention agenda on drugs, sexual health and smoking reduction. The Council has commissioned over 150 pharmacies to deliver a supervised consumption scheme to ensure the safe consumption of prescribed medicines. Furthermore, pharmacies also do critical work supporting drug users and providing services to reduce the prevalence of unplanned pregnancies.

A range of national organisations have criticised these proposals, including the Local Government Association, whose response to the Government emphasised that these cuts could, "leave many isolated and vulnerable residents, particularly in deprived areas, struggling to access pharmacies for their potentially life saving medicines."

So too is a social role that community pharmacies play, providing a network of support and advice for some of the most deprived and isolated communities. We cannot forget either the increasingly significant role that the pharmacies play in easing the pressure on our hospitals, GPs and community health services. I am just going to refer to some research that was sent to me by Community Pharmacy West Yorkshire which says that more pressure will be put on GPs and urgent care services if access to pharmacy services reduce. People are more likely to visit pharmacies for earache, sore throat, constipation and as likely to visit a pharmacy as a GP for flu like symptoms and skin conditions. Two in five people that they surveyed (that is 41%) said that they would go to their GP if it became more difficult to access their local pharmacy for the treatment of common conditions; 28% would go to a walk in centre or A&E.

Over a million would go to A&E, putting even more pressure on our overstretched NHS services.

We are only a few months away from the expected implementation of these cuts, yet there is no evidence that a health impact assessment has been undertaken by the Government to check that their plans are safe to introduce. Many questions remain unanswered and we have to assume that they have been given as little consideration as the Chancellor's announcement on the personal independence payments.

Lord Mayor, these cuts will clearly have far-reaching implications and it is only right that we ensure we do everything we can to mitigate their impact. However, we must be clear our pharmacies are best placed in our communities. Taking them away from our communities will do significant damage to the most vulnerable. It is time to finally say in one voice, united I hope across this Council, that enough is enough, cuts to our health services must stop, cuts to prevention services must stop and cuts to our community pharmacies must stop. Lord Mayor, I second the White Paper. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Buckley to move the second amendment.

COUNCILLOR BUCKLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. We heard a great deal there from Councillor Mulherin, a little bit less from Councillor Golton on detail, he seems to have contented himself with sending a press release to the Evening Post about possible closures to pharmacies which might happen, which could happen, which possibly will not happen and the reduction of services to the vulnerable.

We on this side are passionate advocates of local pharmacies and we strongly believe that the elderly and the vulnerable and those in remote areas should be protected from any possible closures, but let us just look at the facts.

In 2003 there were 9,748 pharmacies in England; in 2016 there are 11,674. That is a 20% increase, 2,000 more, and that is compassionate Conservatism which has served the public over all that time. *(Applause)*

Before we start firing off letters based on hearsay and "could"s and "might be"s to the Government, let me explain to Councillor Mulherin and Councillor Golton how the system is going to improve.

I have here a letter from the Minister of State responsible for these matters. With permission, Lord Mayor, I will quote from it. He says the Government believes there is a real potential for greater use of community pharmacies and pharmacists in the prevention of ill health, support for healthy living, self care for minor ailments and long-term conditions, all of which he supports and Councillor Mulherin supports under the Health and Wellbeing Board, as do I. The Minister goes on to say:

"We need a clinically focused community pharmacy service that is better integrated with primary care and public health in line with the NHS five year view. This will help relieve pressure on GPs and A&E departments."

The Department is consulting on how best to introduce a Pharmacy Integration Fund to help transform the way they operate in the NHS to the benefit of the public. They are also consulting on the introduction of a Pharmacy Access Scheme which will provide more NHS funding - that is more NHS funding – to the pharmacies which are in those locations which

serve the poorest in the community and are the most remote, so it is a better service, not a worse one. This will also address the situation where 40% of pharmacies at the moment are within ten minutes' walk of two others, as most of us are aware in our own wards.

The Minister also embraces the importance of embracing technology. Too many prescription journeys are still too slow and awkward. We will have more online, click and collect, home delivery, modernisation and about all of these things the Government is in detailed discussion with the Pharmacy Services Negotiating Committee. In other words, the whole approach from this side is in support of local consultation, strong support for the vital role of this service ensuring that the vulnerable are protected but embracing modernisation. This is the key, improving the funding methods, which will be of benefit to all - exemplified, I might just add, by the superb pharmacy facility at the brand new Alwoodley Medical Centre which my colleagues have worked so hard to get off the ground.

I have to say, if the Labour Group and the Liberal Group oppose our amendment, they will be voting against the Pharmacy Integration Fund, against modernisation and against the interests of the public. I move the amendment, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Robinson to second.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: I second, Lord Mayor, and reserve the right to speak to later in the motion.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Latty.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: No, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Macniven.

COUNCILLOR MACNIVEN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, in 2015 the Government attempted to convince the country that it was protecting the NHS by apparently increasing its budget whilst simultaneously demanding huge unprecedented efficiency cuts. This has inevitably added significant pressures to the service and has resulted in NHS England cutting its efficiency targets from an unachievable 4% to an equally unachievable 2% in the coming year. This adjustment is an indication of the Government's failure to recognise the true pressures the NHS is facing and instead seems to be adding to them.

Part of these efficiencies, as we have already heard, will come from cuts to the community pharmacy budget without adequate consideration of the devastating impact this will have not only on the quality of service but also to the accessibility for most of our deprived communities. Typically the Government is convinced that it is taking the necessary steps to tackle deficits yet, paradoxically, is determined to cut the very services which in the long term would save the NHS financially and, more importantly, by supporting the prevention agenda.

The manner in which it announced the cuts and the decision to have a short consultation (which, incidentally, it has now extended due to pressures from pharmacy services) highlights the relentless pursuit to cut key health services all in the name of austerity. Colleagues only need to consider the critical response from the Chief Executive of the Pharmaceutical Services Negotiating Committee (catchy title, PSNC I will call it now) to fully appreciate the potential consequences of those cuts to community pharmacies, which play a crucial role in the prevention agenda in this city and across the country.

Branding the Government policy as ill-informed action driven by an equally ill-informed view, the PSNC highlights that the Government would be failing to achieve its own objectives from the decision to cut pharmacy provision. Furthermore and perhaps more importantly, it raises serious questions as to whether a reduction in pharmacy provision could provide the support network of health and advice for patients that is planned, calling this assumption by the Government as simply wrong and potentially damaging to patient care.

These warnings cannot be ignored. This change is not only putting at risk the sustainability of local pharmacy services but also will quickly reach the very communities which regularly rely on access to their local pharmacy. Lord Mayor, we should not be taking away our pharmacies from communities; we should be encouraging more into the heart of our communities.

The ambition for integrating pharmacies into the NHS is further undermined when the fund established to help make this happen is set to support this unwelcome transformation with only £20m in 2016/17, falling massively short of mitigating the huge imposed cuts of £170m this year, leading to potentially thousands of closures, yet whilst privately claiming that funding will increase each year until 2020/21, the Government has yet to explain how it will offset the costs the service will face in future years.

As many of my colleagues have already stated, we will do everything we can to alleviate the impact of these cuts to pharmacy provision here in Leeds. However, it is critical today that we send out a clear message: this city, this Council sees the role of pharmacy services as crucial to easing the strain on our NHS. Pharmacy services should not be *(inaudible)*

THE LORD MAYOR: You have got a red light.

COUNCILLOR MACNIVEN: ... but should be seen as not part of the problem but part of the solution. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Jarosz.

COUNCILLOR JAROSZ: Thank you. First of all I must apologise to this Chamber for saying that I am always delighted, because I am not. In fact I have a friend who says “Why are you always angry these days?” and this is one of the reasons why I am always angry.

It may surprise you to know that I am older than the NHS by three years and the way it is going I think I am going to outlive it if this Government goes on the way it is going. For goodness sake, my mum tells me (I don’t remember at three) I do remember that we relied on the chemist, that is where we went so what are you doing, you are taking our chemists away from us now. We have only just started getting to understand the value of pharmacies, what they can do. GPs are taking on pharmacists as part of their remit because they can look at drugs, they can look at what people are on and check that it is all right because sometimes doctors in their seven-and-a-half minutes that they get with each patient, if they are lucky, they have not got time to check.

Also the Public Health side of it. Leeds City Council has been working with Public Health England to get public health checks in ASDA stores. There are four ASDA stores and they have been highlighting a lot of health problems that people did not know they had and saving lives and saving the NHS a lot of time and value.

I am not going to go on because it has all been said but for goodness sake, you are cutting down the services, you are not training enough doctors and now you are saying well, it does not matter if you have to travel. It does not matter to you if you have got cars but if you have to travel distances to get to a pharmacy because you are cutting them down, no, it doesn't matter. Thank you, Lord Mayor, that is all I have to say. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: No Labour voters have cars.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Robinson.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I wish to speak to second the amendment from Councillor Buckley.

Just a point because we have heard a great deal in the last few weeks and in today's Council about academies and Councillor Dowson was saying before about somebody having a conversation with her about academies and academisation powers. I am more than happy to have that conversation about academies because for some reason a myth seems to exist that academisation means the money will not go to Local Government and it will all be centralised. Actually the money goes direct to the school, which is the lowest level.

I make that point, Lord Mayor, because it speaks to my pertinent point around the devolution of pharmacies as well.

THE LORD MAYOR: Well, you are stretching it a bit far there, aren't you?

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would be wary, Councillor Mulherin, of the good cop/bad cop routine that seems to exist as well here where Councillor Golton seems to talk all the benefits and the flowery language and you do the Tory bashing that seems to exist, because I do not think it speaks to the fairness that goes on here.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Somebody has to do it. You do enough to get bashed for, don't you.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: There are some valuable contributions, I am sure, to be made from opposite.

I am delighted the consultation has moved to a longer period as well so that far more comments can be made from our PCTs, our CCGs and the pharmacies as well as this Chamber. The Local Government does have a key role to play in saying where pharmacies should be, but I think that the point Councillor Buckley made has not been acknowledged by other Members yet, that actually if we want a modern, 21st Century NHS, if we want an NHS that is going to be accessible, if we want an NHS that is going to outlive Councillor Jarosz, it is going to have to improvise, adapt and overcome.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Vote Labour.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: It is going to have to change the way it works. With 40% of pharmacies being near another two or three pharmacies, it actually offers very little service. The advocates of the NHS opposite often point to the quote "free at the point of delivery." That is really interesting when the point of delivery actually means that it is nowhere near some other residents, it is nowhere near remote communities, it is nowhere near rural communities and it is all in suburban areas where it is very, very close together. That actually means that

people are forced to travel in cars, it means they are forced to take extremely long journeys, often elderly people and vulnerable people who should not have to do that.

What this consultation should be able to do is, it should allow us to identify the pharmacies that need protection and the ones that could adapt, that could change, and the ones that could move forward.

Actually, if we look at the consultation, we look at the quotes in the paper from Councillor Golton as well, there is very little proposing alternatives. We did not hear any alternatives on Local Government funding and we are not hearing any alternatives on pharmacies. It is just do not cut it, do not change it, stay the same, stay as it is for ever and a day. Actually what we need to do is have these difficult conversations as a Council and to have these difficult conversations with communities as well to make sure that we are playing to our strengths, that we are saying where pharmacies are best located. If you do not want this to go through, please tell me what you are going to cut, please tell me what in the NHS you are going to cut. Please tell me because I am really interested to know because actually finding efficiencies in pharmacies offers a real lifeline to some communities. If you start wielding the axe, as you potentially want to do through some of your motions here, it actually it risks communities and it risks their safety.

There is nothing here that says that 46 pharmacies will be closed in the consultation. It is scaremongering, it is just before an election. I suppose we should not be surprised, Lord Mayor, and actually what we need to do is work together as an Authority; that is what we should be doing on so many other motions as well. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton to sum up.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I hope you will forgive me a camp analogy. The Wizard of Oz. Poor old Dorothy, she has been blown off to this land, she has been blown off course and she has landed in the land of Osborne (*laughter*) so how does she try and get back home to Kansas? She goes, "There's no place like home" and she closes her eyes and she says the same mantra over and over again. It is a bit like being stood next to Councillor Buckley going "Compassionate Conservatives, compassionate Conservatives" (*laughter*) because do you know what, you left it behind. You have been blown off course and Oz (Mr Osborne) has taken you with him.

He instils that ideology that Councillor Robinson talked about there which was "Well, if you are not going to cut this what are you going to cut?" because sometimes you do not have to cut in this particular area. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: That is not what you were saying when you were in Government with us, was it? Have you forgotten that already?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: The whole point about the Coalition is we were saying that, actually, and now we have got – and you loved the Coalition, I know there are plenty of you on there that are one nation Tories, you loved the Coalition because it held back those right-wingers who were going, "Oh, yes, we are going to cut taxes and we are going to really cut it right down to the bone and we are not going to have any public sector at all." We are not there to protect you any more, are we, so you are going to get things like this which is things that you would not intend to do. It is all about small businesses that are providing a health service in your communities and you are unable to defend them because some centralising power has

decided that they are going to do things in an efficient way and they always say because it is essential cuts that have to happen.

Do you know what, for every bit of cut that happens in a pharmacy in our community there is going to be an on cost somewhere else, because if they are not going to their pharmacy, where are they turning up? I will tell you where they are turning up, they are turning up to the doctor's surgery which is already overloaded, so they are going to be presenting there; they are going to be presenting to the St George's Centre or any of those walk in clinics there, that is a higher cost option as well, and if they cannot get any joy there they will end up at the A&E.

It is a false economy. It is you that needs to look at your sums. Do not cut at the very point in the community where you can offer a fresh front line, one that is lower cost, one which is incorporating civic enterprise because you have actually got small business people who are going to be delivering your National Health Service privately, virtually, because they are running their own companies.

The thing is, what you do not seem to understand and what your centralising Ministers do not seem to understand is that there is not a price worth paying. I do not think any of these small businesses should be put under because all of a sudden you change your formula about how you fund your prescription services because these people are small businesses that are working on a very small profit margin. Over 90% of your income is dedicated to administering prescriptions and you actually do them in a better quality way than some of those big boys out there, some of those corporates that are not actually independents based on your high street but are actually based somewhere else in the city. Do you know, they actually will deliver your medication when you need it. When they discover that you are not very well and you cannot get to that chemist they will come and see you. That is the kind of bespoke service you get from a community chemist. You will not get it from the big boys and if it means voting against the Pharmacy Integration Fund and the Pharmacy Access Scheme so be it, because we want to defend our community pharmacies. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I am now calling for the vote. The first vote is the amendment in the name of Councillor Buckley. *(A vote was taken)* The vote is LOST.

The next vote is the altered motion in the name of Councillors Golton and Mulherin, just in case there is any doubt. *(A vote was taken)* The vote is CARRIED.

ITEM 15 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – TRADE UNION BILL

THE LORD MAYOR: Now we move on to White Paper 15. Can I call upon Councillor Blake.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Lord Mayor, I did inform officers earlier I would like to make a point of order under the provisions of Council Rule 14.15. It relates to the comments that Councillor Nash made earlier in the meeting around declarations of interest. She was absolutely spot on and I am concerned that some Members may be about to make an error and I think it would be helpful if the City Solicitor could provide some clarification. If I have understood the rules correctly, and it is very implicit in the legislation and guidance, that any member of any party who is a member of a trade union should declare that in their Register of Interests and were they not to do so that would be a criminal offence.

THE LORD MAYOR: Yes.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: The potential punishment would be £5,000. (*interruption*)

THE LORD MAYOR: We know that, yes.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: I am grateful, and removal from office, Lord Mayor, and I would be grateful if the City Solicitor could clarify that.

THE LORD MAYOR: OK.

COUNCILLOR HESELWOOD: It is only if you receive payment.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: No it is not. You are wrong.

THE LORD MAYOR: Excuse me, we were ready for this. We had been warned that this could happen so the City Solicitor is here and if you would please give her due – it is a long and complicated version, so please sit back.

THE CITY SOLICITOR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think there are two questions that need to be considered by each Member personally in deciding whether or not they are able to stay, debate and vote on Item 15 and the amendment.

First of all I think you need to consider, do you have an interest which constitutes a DPI and which should therefore be registered? Secondly, is the DPI an interest in a matter being considered at the meeting? Clearly the word “in” in this case takes on a very great significance.

First then, in relation to the registration of DPIs. Members are required to register DPIs of their own or of their spouse or civil partner under three categories which have a potential for a pecuniary interest associated with trade unions and these are first of all employment, office, trade, profession or vocation, so if a Member is employed by a trade union or any other employer, that should be registered as a DPI. Secondly contracts; thirdly, sponsorship. Whilst trade union membership is not a DPI that needs registering, sponsorship – which is defined as any financial benefit other than from the Council made or provided within the last twelve months in respect of any expenses incurred by a Member in carrying out their duties as a Member, or towards their election expenses, should be registered as a DPI. It includes any payment or financial benefit paid directly to an individual Member. It does not include payments from a trade union to a local party which are then paid to a local party to an individual Member.

The second element – this is Part 2 – that Members also need to consider is whether the DPI is an interest in a matter being considered at the meeting. The intention of the legislator is to identify those DPIs that may influence Members’ decision making in that the matter in hand impacts to a Member’s personal financial benefit or detriment. A Member will have a disclosable pecuniary interest if they or their spouse or civil partner have a pecuniary interest. Interests of a spouse or civil partner are included to ensure that the public can have confidence that Councillors are putting the public interest first and not benefiting the financial affairs of themselves or their spouse or civil partner. For this purpose a spouse and civil partner includes any person with whom a Member is living as a husband or wife or as if they were a civil partner.

In considering whether a matter amounts to a disclosable pecuniary interest, the crucial element is whether the matter in question directly relates to a Member's own, or their spouse's or civil partner's financial circumstances to their benefit or to their detriment.

In respect of the White Paper relating to the trade union, the motion essentially seeks three things: first of all for Council to commit to promote the positive role that trade unions bring to society; secondly, to call on the Government to scrap the Trade Union Bill and all associated regulation and secondary legislation; and thirdly, should the Trade Union Bill receive Royal Assent, to request that the Executive Board receives a report on the implications of the Bill for Leeds City Council, its employees, trade unions and the effect on maintaining positive industrial relations.

In summation, assuming all relevant pecuniary interests have been properly registered by Members as they stand, it would appear that no Member's DPI is so directly related to the substance of the White Paper that it would constitute an interest in the matter being considered. As such, it would appear that all Members may participate and vote on the White Paper motion and any amendments.

Nonetheless it is, of course, a Member's own personal decision as to whether they have a DPI in a matter being considered, since a Member will have far more detailed understanding and knowledge of their personal financial circumstances of themselves, their spouse or civil partner than any officer could.

The purpose under the Localism Act is not to completely restrict Members' ability to engage in any and all aspects that may in some way relate or be associated with the matter in question, in this case the substance of the White Paper. The crucial element is whether the matter in hand relates directly to the Member's own financial circumstances.

As I have explained, given the Register of Interests it does not appear that any Member would be directly affected but ultimately this is a decision for each individual Member knowing in detail their own personal financial circumstances. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Quiet, please.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: A further point of order. With the greatest respect to the City Solicitor, I think she answered what she thought I was going to ask rather than what I actually asked. (*interruption*)

Lord Mayor, I do not dispute any of the advice given and I fully agree every Member should be allowed to take part in the debate based on their registered interest. What I am seeking to clarify is that if any Member is a Member of a trade union and has not declared that on their Register of Interests, that would be a criminal offence.

THE LORD MAYOR: This needs to be taken outside of here. There is no relevance to this motion. That is the advice I am given. You should already have registered it.

THE CITY SOLICITOR: It does need to be registered but, as I have explained, it is not directly relevant in this White Paper.

THE LORD MAYOR: Right. Can we get on now with the White Paper motion. Councillor Blake, please. Sorry to keep you waiting.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Lord Mayor, I am proud to be standing in Council today moving our motion to defend the rights and freedoms of workers in this city to organise and protect themselves. *(Applause)*

The Trade Union Bill is nothing less than an ideologically driven attack on workers' rights within this city and across the whole of the country. We have to acknowledge the very positive effect that trade unions have had on our society over the last century and before. They have ensured that ordinary workers are treated in a fair and civilised manner, giving protection at work, not least in the important area of health and safety. We must do everything we can to protect these freedoms and defend the rights of workers.

It is extraordinary to me that whilst this Bill is going through the House of Commons it should be the House of Lords who have put a pause on the progress of the Bill and we should listen very carefully to the cross party comments from the House of Lords in their opposition to the speed and the content of some of the measures within the Bill.

This is a very damaging Bill that will, amongst other things, restrict the right of employees to take industrial action, restrict the right to picket and peacefully protest, reduce facility time for elected trade union representatives and reduce the ability of trade union members to choose to pay their subscriptions direct from their wages.

We should not under-estimate the positive contribution that trade unions make to this city but also to the country as a whole. The TUC estimates that for every pound spent on trade union facility time in the public sector, between £2 and £5 is returned in terms of saving on the cost of dismissal and staff exit rates. The Collective Agreement signed by Leeds City Council with the trade unions in December 2014 saves the Council £7.7m a year. Further savings of £4.4m a year have been made at Leeds City Council through constructive working with the trade unions, careful management of the Early Leaving Initiative, ELI, agency and overtime costs and vacancy management. Also, despite the loss of 2,500 posts in the Council, no compulsory redundancies.

We have had no major strikes at Leeds City Council. We have been maintaining good relationships with the trade unions, avoiding disruption to services. There have been several strikes affecting Leeds City Council since 2010 but most of those have related to national Government policy, primarily around pensions.

Trade unions give employees a constructive say on matters that most affect them. This has to be a two-way approach with ourselves as the administration and trade unions and the workers that they represent. When you do not have that constructive relationship, look at what happens. Who can forget the bin strike in 2009? Three months of complete misery and disruption to the citizens of Leeds, an example of industrial relations at their very worst.

I put the motion to Council, let us stand together and defend the rights of the people the trade unions represent in the best interests of delivering public services in our city that so many people depend on. I move, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Heselwood to second.

COUNCILLOR HESELWOOD: My Lord Mayor, seconding the White Paper. I would just like to start by saying that my name is Julie Heselwood and I work for the TUC. Are we

all happy with that? It is all out there on my declaration of interests. *(Applause)* OK? There we go.

COUNCILLOR: You have not declared it though, have you?

COUNCILLOR HESELWOOD: This Trade Union Bill is a fundamental attack on trade unions and workers' rights. It is undemocratic, ideologically driven by this Tory Government who continue to act more like a dictatorship than an elected democratic Government. *(Applause)*

The Bill asks for a 50% turn out in a trade union strike ballot and for public sector workers 40% of those voting must vote in favour, so why do these thresholds not apply to any other elections? The London Mayoral elections, only 37% of the electorate turned out, 15% turn out for the Police and Crime Commissioner elections and only 35% of the electorate turned out for the most recent European elections, so why are the trade unions having to jump through hoops for all their ballots?

In fact, if 50% turnout threshold were to be applied to Parliamentary elections, 270 out of the 331 Tory MPs would not have been elected in 2015, so why should these rules only apply to trade unions? *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Nor would you.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: You certainly would not have been.

COUNCILLOR HESELWOOD: Today we have heard that the junior doctors' strike for 26th and 27th April has been escalated to full strike action and just for reference, 98% of those junior doctors balloted voted to take that strike action, so I do not think we have any issues around the mandate for the junior doctors, do we. *(Applause)*

Your own MP, David Davies, has suggested that these proposed restrictions on pickets are like something out of Franco's dictatorship in Spain, so even your own MPs refer to your Government as a dictatorship, it is not just me. John Gummer, Thatcher's very own Tory boy, has said, and I quote, "I do not think this is a proper way to behave. We ought to make it easy and simple for people to belong to a trade union."

So what have the trade unions ever done for us? I will tell you, shall I? I feel like I'm in the Life of Brian! I will tell you. *(laughter)* They have given us the weekend, the eight hour working day, paid holidays, maternity leave, a cuddly toy, the minimum wage and last but not least the right not to be sacked because we got married or had a baby and God forbid that we should want equality like men. *(Applause)*

This Bill is a method of oppressing the masses as Hitler did when he banned the trade unions in Germany in 1933. Comrades, this Bill may have gone through the Commons and into the Lords but we are not defeated yet.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Comrades! Socialist Republic of Bramley.

COUNCILLOR HESELWOOD: Amendments have been made in our favour and we need to push for more. We need to halt this major attack on our civil liberties and let the unions get on with their job of protecting working people and working with employers like Leeds City Council to further good industrial relations practice. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR: Follow that!

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Easily.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ann Blackburn to move an amendment.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Now then, as far as trade unions are concerned, both David and I were involved with trade unions for many years and took active part in them, so certainly I have no problems in saying that I am not in favour of the Bill that is going forward by the Government on this matter.

We have put this amendment merely to do with the workers of trade unions that have a levy taken off for political reasons and we do not think that that is right. I say why should workers of a trade union have to have moneys taken off them as part of their subscriptions to fund the Labour Party or, as far as that goes, we know it is the Labour Party but as far as I am concerned any party. It should not have anything to do with it at all. (*interruption*)

You should not have to pay this as a political levy. You automatically pay it – I know that you can opt out but unless you opt out you automatically pay it. Being a member of a trade union you should not have to pay that.

THE LORD MAYOR: Please allow her to speak.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: That is all what we are saying here. The thrust of everything else you say, no problem with but it is just the unions, you believe and I know it has always been the case that unions have – not all unions now but unions do pay towards the Labour Party and, as I said, it should be above politics.

COUNCILLOR HAMILTON: What is the problem?

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Totally with you about trade unions and everything but it should be above politics. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wilford to second.

COUNCILLOR WILFORD: Thanks, my Lord Mayor. I formally second the amendment.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Jonathan Bentley to move a second amendment.

COUNCILLOR J BENTLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. This is a very long White Paper, even by this administration's standards, but we have been through all the issues there, but we wanted to distil it, really, into the essential components that we can support so firstly to say that we do acknowledge and support the role that trade unions bring to society in general and industrial relations in particular, and we do want to see the Trade Union Bill scrapped, let us make that clear.

Also to recognise that if the Government is going down the road of reforming trade union finances, there is a much bigger picture relating to the financing of political parties and political activities across the board and we want to stress that as well.

Let us get another thing out of the way to start with, and that is this Group's regular amendment at the Budget meetings to remove the funding by the Council of full-time union convenors. We always say this is not an anti-union stance, far from it, but in our view the £2m or so that has been spent on union convenors in the last five years could be better spent on front line Council services. These payments have increased at a time when all other Council services have been reduced. Our view is that unions are member organisations and should be funded by their members.

Let us get to the Trade Union Bill. We have heard some details and, just to summarise, this piece of legislation we feel was conceived in spite and being delivered with a meanness of spirit which is unbelievable. It is fighting yesterday's battles and it will bring back a divisiveness in industrial relations that we experienced in the 70s and the 80s, and this from a Government that says it is a one nation Government that we are all in it together.

I am pleased to say in the House of Lords a coalition of Lib Dems, Labour and Cross Benchers voted down this Bill, sent it back to the House of Commons to think again. That is becoming a bit of a familiar story, isn't it? Reducing tax credits, the Trade Union Bill, reducing benefits to disabled people – what have all these things got in common? They were all proposals, among many others, that the Conservatives in the Coalition Government wanted to bring forward and were prevented from doing so by the Liberal Democrats, and now they are governing on their own bringing them forward and what do we have? Rebellion, U-turns, Cabinet Minister resigning, the Budget unravelling, a £4bn black hole in the economy, a Government tearing itself apart. As Tim Farron said the other day, this is the chaos you tend to get with these unstable single party Governments. How the Conservatives must miss the calm and restraining hand of the Lib Dems to keep them out of trouble.

We all know the motivation behind the Trade Union Bill is to reduce the influence and finances of the trade union movement which in turn will reduce the amount of money going into the Labour Party. The Liberal Democrats are all for stopping vested interests having undue influence within political parties, but if we are going down to do that we have got to ignore vested interests - businesses, business associations, foreign interests as well as trade unions. Large donors who are only interested in their own particular outcomes undermine the democratic process. We need a level playing field.

In their 2015 manifestos all parties made a commitment for a full review of party funding. It is time this Government stood up to this commitment rather than launching this attack on the trade unions. I move the amendment, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cleasby to second.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I find this interesting that it was down to be promoted by Councillor James Lewis, I find it quite fascinating that it is now the Leader of the Council who is promoting this. I find it quite disturbing the piece about party funding that is in it and that gives the game away, Judith.

As has already been said by my colleague, we agree with you about the value of trade unions, we agree with your how spiteful it is that is happening now. As has already been pointed out how Labour peers and Labour MPs are supporting others to oppose this. The one thing I find startling of all in the Tory manifesto that had a section on strike action focusing mainly on the new ballot minimums for turnout and support, which is mildly ironic for a party that came to power on a national supporting vote of only 24.3%, find now of course they are in Westminster with what is it, a twelve majority and they think they can walk on water which is a

bit like Labour here, even though it has got a bigger majority. What I do find rather odd here, Judith, is that we have a management structure, every decision is devolved from the Chief Executive so if we need the unions so much to run our city, what the hell is happening with our management structure? Why are we not looking at that and strengthening it and then allowing the union to really get on with the welfare of their members, the things that used to be done in the old days that had to be done then, not to simply be there to get the backhander from Labour, as is happening in this city, and then their colleagues in London giving your party generally the millions that they do.

I think it is outrageous, Lord Mayor, and I certainly do not support this White Paper but I do support any move that will prevent this Government from exercising the powers they want to do now. Thank you, Lord Mayor, thank you, Council. (*Applause*)

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

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It is rather staggering that in this last Council meeting before elections the Leader of Council, of all the subjects she could have chosen to put down a White Paper on, has chosen that of trade unions. All the other things, all the challenges the city faces and she has focused on trade unions and you wonder why. I suspect it is more about shoring up her own position in a very divided Group than it is about anything to do with workers' rights.

Lord Mayor, I speak as someone who has been a member of trade unions at various times in my life. I do not stand here as someone who has got any kind of ideological drive against trade unions, I valued my time as a member and was very grateful to be so. I am happy and proud to join all those who welcome the contribution that trade unions have made to society, that trade unions have made to our great city and the workers' rights and various other things they have played a part in improving, but all of that does not mean they should be immune to change. It does not mean they should be immune from reform and you would have a little more sympathy with the Labour Group and what they have presented if they argued for some changes, but they have said we should keep everything just as it is, nothing should change, trade unions should be left exactly as they are. The whole approach of no change is completely indefensible, Lord Mayor.

I will focus on three things. The first, that they got very excited about before, the right to opt in instead of the right to opt out. What are they worried about with that? What is the problem with people having the right to choose to pay the political levy? What is the problem with that? I do not understand. If all of those people wanted to give that levy to the Labour Party or any other political party they are perfectly free to do so and any other money that they like to give, so I really do not understand what your objection is to that. The fact that so many people, they think, would choose not to opt in makes the argument for you. At this moment in time they feel compelled and threatened and intimidated that if they do opt out they will face all kinds of consequences within their organisations.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: No chance.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: That is what they are terrified of. It is indefensible to say people should not have the right (*interruption*) Lord Mayor...

THE LORD MAYOR: Could you please allow him to speak. They allowed Councillor Heselwood to speak so please let him speak.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Thank you, Lord Mayor. All this shouting and vitriol and anger, you would think it was a Labour Group meeting! *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: You wouldn't know, you have never been to one of them.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: We have heard plenty about them, don't worry. We have all seen the emails so we know what goes on.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Absolutely.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Lord Mayor, the right to opt in seems perfectly sensible and I am sure the people of Leeds watching this at home will wonder why on earth the Labour Party is opposed to that.

In terms of strike thresholds and notice, yes, we hear the argument about, well, politicians do not have to be elected with a threshold. Any election we stand in, any election any MP stands in, every single person over the age of 18 that is affected by the outcome of that election has the right to vote in it. When it comes to a trade union strike ballot, most of the people that will be affected by the outcome will not have the right to vote. It does not seem unreasonable to know, as a member of the public, that the majority of people in that organisation support that strike action.

The final thing, which is completely indefensible, is the public subsidy of trade unions. We heard about the shock of the Police and Crime Commissioner sitting on reserves of £122m. The Unions are collectively sat on between them reserves in the region of £500m. Sitting on reserves of £122m. The Unions are collectively sat on between them reserves in the region of £500m.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: They need it.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: They are coming to us to ask for money to subsidise their activities. It seems a very simple principle - and I hope you will let me have the time back, Lord Mayor, that I lost when they interrupted – it seems a very simple principle that those who are in trade unions should pay for the activities of the trade unions. That is a simple principle. Lord Mayor, I move the amendment. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Procter to second.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Leadley.,

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, I have sympathy with Councillor Judith Blake's White Paper in that it has been prompted by a Government tendency to re-run the 1980s rather than moving forward to tackle today's problems. We can see a range of established and emerging policies along those lines. In many parts of the country Council tenants tend to vote Labour - abolish Council houses. Miners tend to vote Labour – close the collieries. Many private landlords are Labour Councillors – abolish tax relief on buy to let mortgages. *(laughter)* One step in front of him there you see!

The enemy within in the shape of out of control trade unionism must be revived. Every 19th hole of every golf course in the land must be equipped with a tailor's dummy dressed as

Arthur Scargill upon which blazered and cravatted Members will inflict a cruel three-fold death before driving a stake through its heart and sequestering its assets to pay for the stake. Expel Barnsley from the Commonwealth! Carelessly allow Vladimir Putin to annex the Orkneys, then send in a heroic task force to retake them. We all paid a heavy price in the 1970s and 1980s after Labour failed to support Barbara Castle's In Pace of Strike Trade Union Bill in 1968, but we have moved on since then. Contracting in and contracting out were argued about at least as early as the 1920s. To make a really good job of it why not make trade unions pay their subs in person weekly in cash over the counter at the Post Office at Lerwick in Shetland and then close Lerwick Post Office. *(laughter)*

Trade unions have useful jobs to do, often at the ends of the employment market - in large organisations such as Leeds City Council, where it would be impractical for employees to negotiate on their own account and in marginal trades with small employers where poor practice and poor wages are frequent. To say that trade unionists who are not Labour supporters are having parts of their subs siphoned off by socialism will be true but it may be at least balanced by money from companies many of whose shareholders, including indirectly members of pension funds, are not Conservatives being directed into Tory coffers.

It may be easier to restage old battles than to fight new ones but that is for political historians and armchair generals and falls well short of the level of responsibility required of a currently serving elected national run Government.

Councillor Bentley's amendment concisely covers all that needs to be covered so I will be supporting that. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lyons.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Thank you very much, Lord Mayor. If I wish to give to my favourite charities, like the great crested newt and the natterjack toad, or the donkey sanctuaries, my employers will willingly have it taken out of my wages, but as a proud member of the ASLEF train drivers' union I cannot pay my subs through my wages. I wonder why? Why have they stopped me paying my subs through my wages? Do you think it is the right-wing Tory Government that are out to destroy us? They have got two aims here. First of all they want to destroy the trade unions and they want to destroy the method, the way they put our money, given freely, separately, nobody forces us, into the Labour Party. That is what you are doing. You don't say nowt about big businesses, nowt is mentioned in here about big businesses. It is all about trying to destroy the trade union.

You know, there is a myth goes round and it goes round by right-wing Tory Government and the management that are all their mates to say that all the workers, the workshy, the thieves, the liars, they are really bad people and they need watching all the time. That is funny – everywhere I go on my patch and everywhere else we have got volunteers and the Tories have spoken about how many volunteers we have got that in their own time and with their own money they go out to parks teaching kids how to play football, rugby, the neighbourhoods, showing how to look after the elderly, we have got the Magistrates, we have got Councillors that are volunteers – they are all volunteers and they all do it in their own time. I wonder why when they clock on at nine o'clock in the morning do they all become thieves and liars. Management has got to keep them under control and they cannot be kept under control if we have got a union to look after them. We have got to do this.

The best thing that management has got and the best asset that management has got is the workforce. It is the workforce that they have got and all they do is treat them like muck. They

say, "If you join the union we will pick on you." As far as I am concerned they cannot pick on us with voting. In ASLEF we are 98%, we vote every time and it comes in solid so they are trying to get away round that. So what do they do when we vote and vote their way. Julie has explained the voting system, how you got in with 24% vote but if we vote to go on strike through the methods that you are using, what do they do? They take us to court and say that we have got it wrong. We ain't got it wrong at all.

As far as I can see it is a right-wing attack on trade unions and I, after all this time, both in the trade union movement and Labour movement, am disgusted that we even have to come and discuss this today because you are out to destroy the working class people of this country but you will not get away with it. We have still got fire in our bellies and we will fight you every inch of the way, even if they have got to use the Liberal laws. Thank you very much.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Robinson.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Speaking to the White Paper. It is very interesting that the motion that was in the name of Councillor Lewis has no mention of the people of Leeds in it. I think there was an interesting point made by Councillors on my own Front Bench where this risks looking like it is dealing with internal Labour Party matters as opposed to dealing with national issues and we have got so many on the agenda.
(interruption) Thanks, Councillor Heselwood, for that valuable contribution.

It is interesting, Councillor Bentley noted it and I noted it as well reading it before this Council meeting, this is a longer White Paper in terms of words than the one at the end of 2015 in the name of Councillor Blake that was all about the Leeds economy. It was all about restarting this city and look to the future. This White Paper devotes more words and more time to it than actually the issues of jobs that matter to the people of Leeds. It deals with internal Labour Party politics.

I have got no great issue with the change to opt in. I think people should be perfectly right to choose whether they want to contribute to trade unions, whether they want to contribute to political parties at all. Actually I am a little bit surprised that in recent legislation on party funding matters we have not revisited the £50,000 cap of contributions that was proposed previously and the Coalition proposals, and there seem to be moves towards that as some sort of compromise. That has been ditched and I would encourage the Government to look again at that and the trade unions to look again at that.

In terms of strike notices as well, I have got no issue with giving people more notice of when a strike might take place. So many times do we see parents who have to find other arrangements for their children, the impact on society and the economy of strikes as they come forward. It is a big financial burden that other people have to deal with.

Speaking of that financial burden, the Deputy Chief Executive of the Council will remember that as we had the briefing about the economy I asked if he was comfortable about the reserves of this city after the Budget amendments and the Budget going forward for the 2016/17 year, and he said at that time that he felt that it was a little bit low and we would need to look to replenish those reserves again. That was before our Group started to have a look at the reserves of the unions.

I have got no issue with reducing the Convenor contributions of this Council when I look at where the reserves are of this Council if there are any emergencies that befall us and we need

to find funding when I look at what the trade unions have in their reserves. I have seen here that UNITE recorded an overall surplus in 2013 of £24m versus a surplus of £8m in 2012; that in 2014 UNISON were sat on a general fund reserve of £199m and had net assets of £226m. I have got no problem with asking the unions to contribute...

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: We do.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: ... when we are having to make some cuts in Leeds into this.

It is interesting again that the Labour Party recently have been talking about big corporations not paying tax. In September 2013 the Daily Telegraph reported that UNITE paid no tax in 2011 and 2012. It is a little bit hard to take lessons when those are the figures that have been bandied round and those are the things that are not being talked about in public.

I would finish, Lord Mayor, by saying that Councillor Heselwood's contribution where she alluded to Tories being like Hitler and like Franco does not speak to some of the values of our freedom of society, especially given some of the contributions earlier. It is the politics of insult and it is the politics of Momentum. I know that Momentum wants to purify and purge the Labour Party as the Stalinists did in communist Russia but unfortunately that is not the way to have free and open debates. I support the amendment in the name of Councillor Lamb, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Campbell.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am just wondering if Stewart is going over for Councillor Heselwood's autograph! *(laughter)* Quite frankly, Lord Mayor, I had a déjà vu moment when she got up and spoke and can I say thank you, because it must be about 1982/1983 when I last heard a speech from the Labour Party like that.

It certainly took me back to those good old days of Mrs Thatcher when we had the Labour Party railing against the Government's attempts to curb the unions and people like Councillor Lamb (who was not here then) being the voice of reason and carefully dancing round the issue which has not been raised in fact by the Conservative party tonight, that it is actually really about trying to stymie the Labour Party and Opposition parties.

The thing that concerns me in the comments from the Conservatives in particular is that at no point have they identified to me what the problem is. At the moment we have got a relationship with the trade unions. OK, we could have an argument about whether we subsidise the Convenors or not but we have got a relationship with the trade unions. Trade unions work, they represent their members, they allow employers to have a negotiation. There is not a big problem, I think, throughout England or Scotland. The system is working at the moment and we seem to be doing, I suppose what I describe it as is partisan legislation, and I think any Government that introduces partisan legislation – and this is partisan legislation, isn't it, for all the dancing round what we are talking about is trying to reduce or restrict the income from trade unions that goes towards the Labour Party. If you are going to do that why don't you just say that?

I would take exception with you, Judith, where it says "the major Opposition party" because I think that is the SNP. *(laughter)* I think if you are going to do that just be up front and say it. We want to restrict the income for the Labour Party because that is what it is all about.

We do not agree with that. If trade unions wish to make a contribution to the Labour Party, very good. We wish they would make a contribution to the Liberal Democrats but sadly at the moment they are not doing that! Never mind, maybe one day. It is part of that rationale about how do you fund political parties and we have touched on that already in that there is something wrong with a system that allows groups or individuals to skew policy, to pay for legislation, to influence Governments by simply holding the purse strings. The extreme case of that we are seeing in America at the moment. In America, as you well know, if you have the money you can buy the election and the amount of money that is thrown at elections is horrendous. Any attempt to control spending is rigorously opposed.

It is, this legislation anyway, is an attack on the funding sources of the Labour Party. It is partisan legislation. It is wrong and therefore should be opposed. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. As I said earlier today, I was originally opposed to webcasting but now it is fantastic, isn't it, and I hope all the people who are watching this or will be in the next few weeks and months will reflect upon what this debate is really about. What it is really about is self interest. That is what it is about, self interest - the self interest of Members opposite. It is the most exercised and animated debate I have seen in this Council Chamber for years, Lord Mayor. Why? Because they are bothered about the very people who actually pay for their elections.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Oh stop it, it is not about that.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Their elections. I see shaking of heads. Lord Mayor, the point that Councillor Lamb was seeking to raise – and unfortunately the City Solicitor has not addressed it, I fear it will be out of her hands and she and others in this Council will wish they had addressed it then – but what is clear is for those of us (not me, I might add but others) who routinely look through post-election expenses know full well that many Members opposite in their return of election expenses declared correctly and properly that they received direct donations from trade unions.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: The party.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: No, that is where you are wrong. That is where you are wrong, Richard, you may not have done but a number of Labour Members have directly said their elections were funded in part by a trade union and that is the point, that is very point that Councillor Lamb and others were seeking to make, because then there is a very big problem, isn't there, City Solicitor? There is and that is what we were trying to bring to your attention. It is out of officers of the Council's hands now, it will go elsewhere and Councillor Nash alluded to that earlier today.

In terms of trade unions, like Councillor Lamb that is why I am speaking as well. I was a member of a trade union for a number of years. I actually went on strike as well, I took strike action, I joined strike action as part of a dispute against the people who employed me at that particular time. What I also did was I sought to opt out of the political levy. How many of you have tried to do that? None of you.

COUNCILLOR: Anybody can opt out.

COUNCILLOR HAMILTON: You are not forced to.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: No, indeed, you are forced to opt in, it is part of the form you sign. How easy is it to opt out? It took a year...

COUNCILLOR HESELWOOD: He is *(inaudible)*

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, this is just out of control. We have clearly got the mouth of Labour, somebody who has a self interest who has declared she works for a trade union and is wandering around the Council Chamber half demented. Lord Mayor, please. *(interruption)*

THE LORD MAYOR: There is no way that I can tell whether she is walking around this Chamber half demented. Just exactly how am I meant to prove that? That is an impossible task. Could we please allow Councillor Procter to finish what he is saying.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: As I was trying to say, Lord Mayor, before I was so rudely interrupted by the mouth of Labour, Councillor Heselwood, I do not think I have ever heard her speak in this Chamber previously until now. As I said earlier...

COUNCILLOR HESELWOOD: *(inaudible)*

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Do you not know how this works?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Procter...

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: When someone else is speaking you keep quiet. That is how it works. It is called democracy but people like you do not want to hear it. They want to shout people down all the time, don't you?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Procter, I will switch the microphone off if this carries on.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, I thought the idea was that the person on their feet you allowed to speak speaks and others are quiet. *(interruption)*

Lord Mayor, if I may continue for one minute longer. What is clear throughout this entire debate that we have had this evening is that some people are very exercised, are very on edge about it. Why? Because they feel it threatens their very, very close relationship with the trade unions. Labour and the trade unions interlinked and that is the issue here, Lord Mayor. That is the issue.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Procter, it is enough now, you have had your extra time. *(Applause)*

Councillor Heselwood, can I ask you please, Councillor Heselwood not to keep shouting out. I have warned him as well. He is warned, I have warned him as well.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: You ought to behave like I do! *(laughter)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I do not quite know what to make of the behaviour this evening, I have to say. Can I now please ask Councillor Blake to sum up and will you please give her the courtesy to do this.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: So Councillor Procter welcomes the webcasting of Council. Boy, do we welcome the fact that the people of Leeds have witnessed that display just now. *(Applause)* The idea that Councillor Procter and the other people on the Front Bench sit politely by and never interrupt us, never shout personal abuse our way, is frankly laughable so let us get that on record straightaway.

I just want to summarise. The legislation, the Trade Union Bill is flagrantly partisan and it is aggressive legislation determined to inflict the most damage it possibly can on the trade unions of the country and, as Councillor Campbell has said, on the Labour Party as a result of that. It has been done under the auspices of reform. I have to say the whole issue of indiscriminate industrial action is fictitious in the current circumstances that we live in today.

The legislation is designed specifically to threaten the capacity of the Labour movement to organise and to assert itself and to form the bedrock of a democracy where parties have the ability to stand up and fight for the principles and the people that they represent. *(hear, hear)*

I think we should just think about the comments in the House of Lords and I do not think the Tories in Council would like to admit that it is one of their Lords, Lord Cormack, who has actually said “I do not want to be party to a move that would seriously disadvantage one of the great parties of this country” and, of course, he was referring to the Labour Party, a Tory Lord in the House of Lords standing up for the rights of the Labour Party to be funded and move forward.

It is just coming through bodies like Liberty as well in terms of the unprecedented violation of the right to freedom of assembly and protest.

So, this is vindictive, it is short-sighted and it is going to come unstuck. Now, where have we seen that before? Last week in the Chancellor’s Budget, how long did that take to come unstuck and the £4bn hole that has resulted because he has had to reverse his budget decision to cut the benefits to disabled people in this country, the most vulnerable people. This proposed legislation is in exactly the same vein. We will fight to defend it and defend the people we represent. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

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

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Recorded vote, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: Seconded.

*(A recorded vote was held on the first amendment in the name of
Councillor D Blackburn)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Present 79, “Yes” 2, 3 abstentions, “No” 74. The motion is LOST.

*(A recorded vote was held on the second amendment in the name of
Councillor J Bentley)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Present 79, 7 “Yes”, one abstention, “No” 71. The amendment is LOST.

*(A recorded vote was held on the third amendment in the name of
Councillor Lamb)*

THE LORD MAYOR: 79 present, 16 “Yes”, no abstentions, 63 “No”, the amendment is LOST.

(A recorded vote was held on the substantive motion)

THE LORD MAYOR: 74 present, 54 “Yes”, 4 abstentions, 16 “No” so the motion is CARRIED in the name of Councillor Blake. *(Applause)*

That concludes all business for this evening. Have a good evening.

(The meeting closed at 7.35pm)