

VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL
MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 14TH SEPTEMBER 2005

THE LORD MAYOR (Councillor W. S. Hyde): Good afternoon, everybody. Can I just remind everyone in the chamber that mobile telephones and other electrical equipment should be switched off when the Council is in session.

Can I also, in response to a request from Councillor Gruen, agree to Members removing their coats, if they so wish.

COUNCILLOR A. CARTER: He might have waited until you actually gave permission, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: It's not for me to comment on that.

ITEM 1 - MINUTES OF MEETINGS ON 20TH JULY 2005

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: Lord Mayor, can I move the minutes be received.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Second.

(The motion was carried)

ITEM 2 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

THE LORD MAYOR: A list of written declarations submitted by Members is on display in the ante-room, on deposit in public galleries and has been circulated to each Member's place in the Chamber. Could I invite any further individual declarations or corrections to be notified on this list.

COUNCILLOR PHILLIPS: Lord Mayor, I should declare, like Councillor McKenna, that my daughter attends Garforth Community College.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Are there any other additions or alterations? Can I then ask Members to show by a show of hands to confirm that they have read the list and agree its contents in so far as they relate to their own interests. Please indicate. Well, some of us agree that it is alright, thank you.

ITEM 3 - COMMUNICATIONS

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE (Mr. P. Rogerson): No communications to report.

ITEM 4 - DEPUTATIONS

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: No deputations, Lord Mayor.

ITEM 5 - REPORTS

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: Lord Mayor, I think some Members are having some trouble hearing you through the microphone that you have at your table. Yes, Lord Mayor, I would like to move 5(a) in terms of the notice, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

(The motion was carried)

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: Lord Mayor, contrary to what is indicated on the order paper, I move that 5(b) be noted but not approved.

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

(The motion was carried)

ITEM 6 - QUESTIONS

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Lord Mayor, will the Leader of the Council please tell me what discussions he has had with the police in relation to the policing of our communities when the new 24-hour licensing regime comes into operation?

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Lord Mayor, I have not had any formal discussions with the police on this matter, but I have had informal discussions, as I believe have Councillors Carter and Carter - male, that is - and I certainly understand that Councillor Brett as well, both in his capacity as a Member of Council and serving on the Police Authority. The nature of those discussions have fallen into two areas - from my perspective, this is - firstly, the view the police are taking of the overall implication of the introduction of the new licensing rules and, as you know, and it was made very clear by Chief Inspector, isn't it, Dodd yesterday at the meeting with David Milliband, the police are extremely concerned about the implications for the City as a whole but in particular for the city centre.

The second area of discussions obviously have been what the police are proposing to do and I cannot report that I am aware of any major specific initiatives, only that they are keeping a watching brief, that obviously they will increase police activity, but they have got to see exactly what the fall-out will be once they see the effects of the new rules.

I should, before sitting down, however, just point out that to date certainly up to

this morning we have not received a license application for a 24-hour opening. To date there have been no applications for 24-hour opening.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. In light of the Leader's concern for community safety, will he now consider restoring the cut in the proof of age scheme which was successfully piloted in Leeds and actually dealt with under-age binge drinking. It was actually supported by 90% of the retailers, supported by the schools and, indeed, young people, and actually now is running in every authority in West Yorkshire except Leeds. If he won't consider it, would he tell us why not? It cost £70,000.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Well, I won't pretend to have the details at my fingertips. You raise a valid point in Council. I would wish to discuss this with certainly Les Carter, and we will certainly look at it. It is a valid point.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Okay.

COUNCILLOR AKHTAR: My Lord Mayor, can the Executive Member responsible for narrowing the Gap comment on the future of the Council's Job Guarantee Scheme?

COUNCILLOR BLACKBURN: Lord Mayor the future of the Council's Job Guarantee Scheme is extremely secure. The scheme continues to expand and diversify. New Employer Partnerships and new occupational areas are being included, e.g. heating and ventilation, and the principles which underpin the scheme are being adapted to develop new models, e.g. Junior Job Guarantee and NHS Employability Programme.

The Job Guarantee approach is being adopted by other agencies and is fast becoming mainstream activity which can only be a benefit to the workless residents of the City. The Council has also put into place arrangements for it to become the largest Job Guarantee employer within the City, and staff from all departments are working with Learning & Leisure, Jobs and Skills and Job Centre Plus to recruit to vacancies using the Job Guarantee model.

The Council recruitment and selection procedures position Job Guarantee as a main means to attract skilled staff to the Council posts.

COUNCILLOR SHELBRooke: My Lord Mayor, would the Executive Board Member for learning agree that this year's Key Stage 3 results reflect the hard work and dedication of the pupils and staff in our schools?

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Yes. Yes, I would like (applause) I have got more to say.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Tell us why.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: I would like to pay -- it was the applause put me off. I don't usually get much from that side of the House. I would like to congratulate all our primary schools and high schools on the Key stage results this year. The Key Stage 3 results have shown further improvement. We are narrowing the gap and I think the work that Education Leeds and other agencies are doing in our schools to foster the programme of No Child Left Behind is now beginning to bear fruit and can be seen, and I think later in this chamber we will be discussing that sort of thing further.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: What about complimenting the teachers?

COUNCILLOR HARKER: And the students, sorry.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: How about the teachers?

COUNCILLOR HARKER: And the teachers. I meant them all.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: It is good of you to remember them.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Thank you, Bernard.

THE LORD MAYOR: Come along, let's stick to the rules.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: I did say "yes", Bernard.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Lord Mayor, would the Executive Board Member responsible for Education confirm if there is a programme to eliminate the use of temporary buildings within Leeds schools?

COUNCILLOR HARKER: My Lord Mayor, the simple answer is there isn't a programme as such, but while Education Leeds does not have a fixed programme they do look regularly at the temporary accommodation, and when we are in the process of remodelling schools we work to take out that temporary accommodation.

I think I know one of the schools that you have in mind and I am very conscious that they have a whole department in temporary accommodation at the moment, and I am working with Education Leeds to see what we might be able to do in the future.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Lord Mayor, by way of a supplementary, could I ask that Councillor Harker redoubles his efforts to resolve the problems that we have clearly got at Bruntcliffe High School in terms of a Maths Department still operating out of temporary buildings?

COUNCILLOR HARKER: The simple answer to that is "Yes", it is on nearly every agenda when I meet Education Leeds.

COUNCILLOR A. BLACKBURN: Would the Executive Board Member for Learning join with me in congratulating the pupils and staff of schools in Leeds on this year's GCSE and A level results?

THE LORD MAYOR: Before calling on Councillor Harker, could we please have one meeting? It would be helpful if all Members of Council could hear the questions. If we have three or four different meetings going on, it is not always possible.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: I am pleased to report to Council that again the GCSE results have shown an improvement this year, and again this is due in large measure to a lot of hard work by staff and students combined.

The GCSE results this year only report those GCSEs gained by students at the end of year 11, but I would like to also pay a compliment to a school in our six schools compact programme for narrowing the gap who put in a number of Year 10 students this year and got 154 passes, 133 of those passes at Grade A-C, so I would like to particularly single out one school, the governors, the teachers and the students of John Smeaton. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR R. LEWIS: Lord Mayor, will the Executive Board Member for Neighbourhoods and Housing please tell Council what targets are set for his department to ensure that customers' telephone calls and letters are dealt with promptly?

COUNCILLOR J. L. CARTER: Thank you, Richard. I am absolutely certain, as nothing has changed, you are aware of these figures, but I shall give you them again since you are an Executive Board Member.

The Council applies a target for telephone calls which should be answered within 20 seconds. That is still the target of our department. The majority of telephone calls in the department are handled by the Council's Contact Centre, and the target for answer rate there for a call - attempts - is 92%, to achieve 92%. As far as letters and general written enquiries are concerned, a full reply should be given within 10 working days. If that is not possible, a response to provide within five working days for the reasons why it is not possible to answer it within that 10 day period. I have no doubt now, Richard, you have got to tell me something which is nothing like that! Thank you.

COUNCILLOR R. LEWIS: Does the Member therefore agree with his lead Member,

Councillor Brett, as reported at the meeting of the Neighbourhoods and Housing Management Team Meeting on 13th May 2005, that in fact only 20% of calls to the Housing Advice Centre being picked up is unacceptable, and what plans does he have to deal with the problem?

COUNCILLOR J. L. CARTER: We are a joint administration. I am not responsible for what he says. Let me just have a look down here. What I can tell you, let me just give you one of these, actually. Environmental Services which when the last administration was in, and before we had a Corporate Contact Centre, answered 20% of its phone calls. 20%. We are up to 92 now, so I shall obviously check with Richard where he is making mistakes and we will (inaudible) in the future. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR RHODES-CLAYTON: My Lord Mayor, can the Executive Member responsible for learning comment on the future of the Building Training Academy?

COUNCILLOR HARKER: My Lord Mayor, we have a highly successful construction skills learning centre carrying out a significant job in the jobs and skills area. It is an asset, I think, which is unique to the City. It offers both on and off the job training to young people and adults through its Clarence Dock Centre, and real life construction projects across the City. It was graded as "Good" by the Adult Learning Inspectorate. The provision throughout the City allows up to 150 trainees at any one time to train on a range of construction trades.

The Construction Skills Learning Centre consistently delivers a 70% achievement level for its customers. In response to employer demands, the Centre has recently developed to allow training to take place in two new occupational areas: groundwork and maintenance operations. The City has also developed new training packages to train people in kitchen and bathroom installation.

I am pleased to say that the Centre enjoys a close working partnership with a range of employers and the College of Building and the Sector Skills Council for Construction and has recently launched a heating and ventilation job guarantee programme for 16 previously unemployed people.

The Construction Skills Learning Centre is a major partner with the contractor (?)Carillion in the development of innovative construction training programmes for young people 14-16 and is working closely with the David Young Academy to provide construction training for young people attending the school.

The Leeds Skills Board, West Yorkshire Learning and Skills Council, Yorkshire Forward and the Construction Industry Training Board have all identified the skills and labour shortage within the construction industry. This fact, coupled with the

continued capital investment ensures that Construction Skills Learning Centre will continue to play a vital role in our City's life. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR BALE: Lord Mayor, can the Executive Member responsible for learning please comment on the Job Guarantee Pilot which was launched on 10th September?

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Lord Mayor, this really is tremendous news. This is a good innovation and something we should be very proud of. The Junior Jobs Guarantee Programme, launched on 10th September, is a unique partnership between this Council's Jobs and Skills Service, the West Yorkshire Learning and Skills Council and two of our high schools -- sorry, three of our high schools: Carr Manor, Primrose and the City of Leeds. 32 young people have been signed up to a programme that allows them to follow a vocational alternative to the national curriculum, either in sports, administration or care. Two days a week are spent in work placement within the City Council, one day spent studying the vocational qualifications in the Jobs and Skills Centre of Excellence for Young People and two days are spent in school following GCSE programmes in English, Maths and IT.

This really is a forward-looking scheme which I think we can be justly proud of. The Junior Job Guarantee Programme allows the Council to market itself as an employer of choice to young people and forms part of a range of programmes run by Jobs and Skills which enables the Council to recruit a skilled workforce.

the programme lasts for two years. Upon successful completion, the young people are guaranteed a place on the Council's flagship Modern Apprenticeship Schemes or they may choose to use their experience and qualifications in other ways. What is most important is that young people who may not otherwise reach their full potential in school are being given a chance to achieve a different environment that clearly links education and training to progression to a job.

I really am proud of this scheme because we were looking forward to a new adventure in the 14-19 agenda which unfortunately the government has partially turned its back on. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR ELLIOTT: Lord Mayor, can the Executive Board Member responsible for licensing matters confirm the administrative net cost to local council taxpayers of the introduction of the Government's new Licensing Act?

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Lord Mayor, this is the short version. 2004/5, £313,834 deficit, and we have a projection for the year 2005/6 which will be - in terms of purely licensing will be £97,156, but if you add other costs relating to our activities as a responsible authority which would cover such things as what we have to do under

Environmental Health and Health & Safety in relation to Licensing, that adds a further £268,756, and although I say this at my peril, none of that includes what we pay members of the Licensing Panel to sit through the applications, but a rough estimate of that, depending upon which measure you think you should take, but the cost of the Licensing Panel will be between £60,000-£80,000 a year. So when you add all of that up it is a huge additional bill that this Council is carrying to implement the new Licensing Act.

COUNCILLOR A. BLACKBURN: Can the Leader of Council comment on steps the Council is taking to promote job opportunities in the City?

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Lord Mayor, I want to, in answering this question, really just focus on the activities of the job shops that we have around the City, which is only a part of what the Council does to try and deal with the question of unemployment and promoting job opportunities in this City.

The Tempest Road Job Shop this year has had 320 people go to it to look at job opportunities, 70% of which come from the BME communities. Roundhay Road, similarly, has had 259 potential customers, and interestingly 109 of those would be described as young adults from the BME communities. But I am particularly keen just to touch on what the new Job Shop at George Street is doing and that, of course, is a one-stop shop set up by the previous administration, but Council will be aware that we took the decision in February to move this particular facility from The Headrow and put it in the City 1 City Centre One-stop Shop at 2 George Street.

I can tell Council that since it opened in February it has dealt with no fewer than 1,810 people seeking job opportunities in the City, 50% of whom are from the black and minority ethnic communities. I think that is an excellent record in that particular sphere of what the Council is doing to promote job opportunities in Leeds.
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR LOWE: Will the Executive Board Member for City Services please tell me whether he is satisfied with the standard of service in relation to the collection of bulky household waste?

COUNCILLOR SMITH: My Lord Mayor, Councillor Lowe will already be aware through reports received at the Environment and Community Safety Scrutiny Board that a revised service was introduced in November 2004 which improved the provision to all residents within the City. Instead of four free collections per household by appointment the service was increased to thirteen free collections a year without appointment. This was a significant service change and has had some implementation problems which are being addressed.

Leeds is providing its residents with a much higher level of service than many other local authorities in the country. Our record speaks for itself and as with all the street scene services we have achieved well above the core city average. We are carrying out over 80,000 bulky collections per year with a 99.65% first-time success rate. Even with such a small failure rate we are not satisfied and we are constantly striving to improve and enhance the services provided. With this in mind, it is our intention to further improve and enhance the service this autumn by asking residents to call and let us know they have a collection. This will introduce more certainty and the delivery of more planned collection services and defined routes will make the service more efficient and provide more customer confidence.

We are also considering proposals to introduce area blitz days where such an approach may be more appropriate.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: By way of supplementary, if the collection rate is 99.65%, which sounds very good, why then ---

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Thank you.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: It sounds very good. Why then are you reverting back to the method of reporting bulky items which we introduced if it was so wrong? It is a bit of a contradiction, is what I'm saying.

COUNCILLOR SMITH: We have tried it, it is time to improve it and we are going to improve it.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: By bringing it back?

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Well, no, we are not going back to four collections. We have got thirteen collections. That is an improvement in my book.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Lord Mayor, is the Executive Member for Development able to indicate the success or otherwise of the Otley scheme as part of the Small Town Regeneration Programme?

COUNCILLOR A. CARTER: My Lord Mayor, in answer to Councillor Campbell, I cannot give the overall state of success of any of the schemes that have been submitted. However, what I can say is that we have had bids totalling just over £8 million. Some of those will not be successful. I would guess there will be about £3 million left to bid for and I hope that all Members will take this on board, that when the Area Management staff are contacted during the course of this month and next month about these schemes, I know that it doesn't necessarily mean that they can't rebid for more substantial and better worked through schemes. Having said that, what I can

say is that when we drew up the guidelines for the Town, District & Village Centre Regeneration Scheme we deliberately included parks adjacent to town and village centres that can be demonstrated to play a part in the economic regeneration of that appropriate town or village. The Leisure and Learning Department put a bid in for some £1.92 million and it has been provisionally agreed, subject to some further information on economic benefits at £1.5 million worth of that project will be agreed, and I am sure it will please Councillor Campbell to know that a significant part of that bid will be for Wharfe Meadows Park in Otley which, as he will know, and all other Members of the North-West Area Team will know, was part of a substantial bid put in by that Area Committee. Thank you, my Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Would the Executive Board Member accept on behalf of the administration the thanks and appreciation of the people of Otley and the outer areas for this innovative scheme which (Interruptions) It is interesting who is doing the jeering, isn't it? The people who didn't spend the money.

Can I say, thank you for the innovative scheme which actually put in money into the outer areas which the previous administration always consistently refused to do. (applause)

COUNCILLOR A. CARTER: My Lord Mayor, what I should say in response to Councillor Campbell is that he will recall that for the first time in many years in this year's budget this administration put half a million pounds into the revenue spending of the Learning & Leisure Department specifically to tackle the long overdue dereliction in many of our urban parks around the City.

What this programme is is a programme of parks renaissance clearly linked - clearly linked - to the major economic centres around this City, and I am sure it will be of not only great benefit in this case for the people of Otley but all the people who visit Otley, and have for many years, and a number of other significant parks will be included in the scheme and we shall make sure Members are made aware of all those very shortly. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Lord Mayor, will the Executive Board Member for Neighbourhoods and Housing please tell me whether there has been an increase in the number of rough sleepers in the City following the closure of St. Michael's Hostel and Prospect House?

COUNCILLOR J. L. CARTER: Councillor Blake will be delighted to know the answer is, "No". If I give you the figures, this might help you. You may be aware that they are audited twice a year, March and November. In March was the last audited figure, which was four rough sleepers. Then the department themselves check until the next audit, which will be in November, but in July there were four people

found and in August there were four people found.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: By way of supplementary, does he agree that, in common with other local authorities, it is acknowledged that the relationship breakdown with partners involving violence is the highest reason for homelessness in Leeds and that to address this the Sanctuary Scheme has been designed to protect victims of domestic violence in their own homes, and given your commitment to the people of Leeds welcoming this scheme in your press release of May 11th, could you explain to Council why seven days after the closure of St. Michael's hostel on July 7th the Housing Services Management Team minutes, which I have here, were advised that the working group set up to implement this scheme in Leeds was suspended?

Will councillor Carter tell us when this service will be available to women in Leeds and agree with me that it is a matter of great regret that this service was not in place before the hostel closures went ahead?

COUNCILLOR J. L. CARTER: My Lord Mayor, Councillor Blake has been going on and on and on for a long time, and she mixes homelessness, rough sleepers, she mixes everything up into one bag and comes out with all sorts of funny things at the end of the day. She just quoted a minute which I haven't a clue what she is quoting from. I haven't seen the minute, I haven't got a copy of the minute. If she had wanted a reasonable answer she would have given the minute beforehand to say, "Look, this is the situation".

She knows there is enormous commitment - enormous commitment - from this administration towards females who are under distress in the way that she is saying, and we are not holding back from that. Do you remember she moaned like mad about what was going to happen when we closed these hostels? None of her prophet of doom scenarios has come into being. I really do think if you want a proper answer, if you really do want, if you are interested in this, if you stop playing your party politics and really come down to us and say, "Look", you should let people know beforehand of the question. That has nothing to do with the question that you asked. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR MONAGHAN: Lord Mayor, can the Leader of Council give any further details on progress regarding the contact centre?

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Lord Mayor, because I fear we are not going to get to question 19, can I just start by welcoming Councillor Monaghan, the latest Member of Council, the Member for Headingley. Can I welcome him to his first Council Meeting. (Applause) And thank him for making such an immediately important contribution to Council debate.

Yes, I would like to comment. The contact centre is well under way. We are

approaching the date at which staff will start to be transferred over. There has been some discussion here previously about the numbers of staff who may transfer from the existing contact centres into the new one. I can tell Council that of 207 existing members of staff 200 are transferring and 6 have asked for redeployment which we have managed to arrange. I hope at some stage many Members of Council will have the opportunity to go and visit the contact centre both before it starts operating and after, and I will keep Council apprised of specific dates.

However, before concluding I just wish now to turn to a very innovative scheme that we are launching via the contact centre, which is an academy in conjunction with Tech North which will create 36 guaranteed jobs over and above the existing complement that we expect to work in the contact centre drawn specifically from members of the City, residents of the City, who are particularly challenged in the area of job-seeking. I can tell Council that this innovative scheme will be at a net cost to the Council of £1,000 per job per year. In other words, for £36,000 this administration has found a way of guaranteeing and creating jobs for some of the most deprived and challenged people in this City.

I would, before concluding, just like to finish on some of the issues which have been raised already on job creation initiatives from this administration. I can tell Council that in our first 14 months we have now introduced schemes representing 90%, that is a 90% increase in job creation schemes over those operated by the previous Labour administration, and so in future don't start pointing the finger at us and questioning our commitment to closing the gap and helping those least fortunate members of our society. We are putting our money where our mouth is and delivering double what you managed in 24 years. (Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Harris. That brings us to the end of the time allowed for questions. The remaining questions will be answered directly to Members in writing.

ITEM 7 - RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Lord Mayor, I move in the terms of the notice.

COUNCILLOR A. CARTER: Second, my Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR McARDLE: Lord Mayor, I am pretty certain some Members of this Chamber will welcome the imminent production of the Inspector's report regarding the revised UDP. Whilst I (inaudible) I would also welcome the local development framework plans which hopefully will bring developers kicking and screaming into community consultation, because I think developers in general have had a massive

impact in this City. Whilst I am not anti-development, what I do want is consultation with communities. This local development framework plan affords that. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: I will merely say, Lord Mayor, that consultation is a byword of this administration. We are committed to (Interruption) Was that "weasel words" or "easy words"? We are committed to the principle of consultation and will remain so.

(The Recommendations of the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee were approved)

ITEM 8 - MINUTES

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: I move in the terms of the notice, Lord Mayor.

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

(a) Overview and Scrutiny Committee

COUNCILLOR McARDLE: Lord Mayor, I wish to comment on page 43, Minute 21, regarding the flooding being overseen by Councillor Leadley, the Scrutiny Commission. Again this really relates to development. There has been such a lot of development over this last 20 years, quite a percentage - 40% - in the south of Leeds and 40% in the west of Leeds, and I am glad that it is a Commission that is being used City-wide so we will be able to look at flooding incidents in Gildersome and in Drighlington and really I think it is important that we look at also the development process in terms of this flooding because there are certain areas of Leeds that I can think of where there have been a once in 150 year evidence of flooding which has gone awry somewhat. I think one area has happened twice in 2 years or in less than 2 years, and I hope it looks at everything in the round. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR MINKIN: Thank you, Councillor McArdle for your comments. I am confident that his comments will be taken on board by the Commission. Indeed, the Gildersome Parish Council is one of those that are identified already as witnesses. The terms of reference also do make reference to increasing levels of run-off surface water due to non-porous surfaces which again allows that connection with new developments to be made, so thank you, Councillor McArdle.

(b) Scrutiny Board (Children & Young People)

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Lord Mayor, speaking to page 48, minute 17, really to just talk a little bit about the Child Trust Fund and the complexities that are associated with this particular fund. Now, it is one of these things like the Tax Credit system that was set up in a blaze of glory. Unfortunately it is very, very complicated and all those

people who need this help and assistance are confused and puzzled by how they actually access this particular scheme, and I think anything we can do to put pressure on the Government to simplify how the scheme works and to make sure that we offer straight and plain advice to those people who need it is a good thing, and that is perhaps something that we can reflect upon later.

COUNCILLOR BALE: Lord Mayor, I am grateful to Councillor Finnigan for raising this issue, which is one of those issues properly dealt with, I think, under the Members' question item at Scrutiny Board, which enables us to reflect on matters that are not within the direct remit of the Council but nevertheless of concern to all those of us who want the best for children and young people in Leeds.

Members were informed that the Child Trust Fund was automatically awarded through the Child Benefit registration system and doesn't have to be claimed separately by parents. If parents don't set up an account with the voucher they receive then the Government apparently does so on their behalf. However, there is a higher level of award for parents on low incomes of which some parents may not be aware, and it is clear, and this is our reason for raising the matter, that the take-up is lowest among those families in greatest need, and so publicity is important, and I hope that the Scrutiny Board looking at matters like this will help to raise their profile within the community as a whole.

We are also pleased to note that the Leeds Credit Union have a scheme specifically designed to allow parents to invest the money from the Child Trust Fund, and we certainly commend that to residents in the City. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

(c) Scrutiny Board (Health & Well Being)

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: Lord Mayor, I speak on page 59, minute 23 on the important issue of childhood obesity, but in so doing, Lord Mayor, I would like to congratulate all those within the Sport Department of Learning & Leisure for securing £30 million worth of PFI credits to improve our 30-odd sites, our leisure centres, right across the City. Not quite the money that we hoped for. We anticipate it will cost £60million to put right all of the failings that occurred under the last administration in terms of those leisure centres. We know, of course, Lord Mayor, 24 years of neglect in terms of maintenance of those centres have left us with this £60million bill, but I am looking forward to getting that investment into our leisure centres, Lord Mayor, and improving those facilities as much as possible, as much as the money will allow, and I am quite sure that Councillor Lancaster will agree that those refurbished leisure centres will be at the forefront of combating childhood obesity.

COUNCILLOR EWENS: Lord Mayor, I intend to speak to minute 20 on page 56 referring to the bullet points on page 57, the main points debated. I understand that

Doncaster has undertaken a review in the matter of hospital hygiene and its relation to the spread of MRSA in hospitals, so I anticipate that the Shadow visit to Doncaster by members of a task force will provide positive guidance on how we might proceed in Leeds.

I have had the opportunity to consult several articles from the British Medical Journal which refer to the importance of handwashing, particularly in relation to the spread of MRSA in hospitals where staff, particularly medical staff, have failed to observe the required frequency and quality of handwashing.

One of my residents has complained to me that on more than one of his recent frequent stays as an in-patient of up to six doctors round his bed only one washed his hands.

Please note that I say "hygiene", repeat "hygiene". There is a lot of talk about hospital cleaning and about health and safety, not only in hospitals but in care homes, schools, dentists' surgeries, etc., but cleaning does not necessarily lead to hygiene. The point was first made to me 40 years ago when a lab technician suggested that my hair, which I had washed the night before, was not really clean. He invited me to shake my head over a culture dish and clapped a lid on it - on the dish. A week later he asked me to look at the results. He took the lid off the culture dish. I retreated for the stink given off before viewing a variety of multi-coloured mini-growths which had developed from invisible fall-out from my clean hair.

The point I am making is that hygiene is invisible, that sources of infection lurk in and on all manner of apparently clean surfaces. I quote from a BMJ article. The literature on infection control began in the middle of the 19th century. The key to interrupting the transmission of infection is, of course, a firm understanding of what makes it possible - dirty rooms, dirty equipment or dirty habits. Hands, gloved or otherwise, are the leading culprit, and transmission does not have to be direct. One investigation showed that almost half of the gloves worn by a group of nurses became contaminated with MRSA when they touched not the patients themselves but various surfaces in the rooms where those patients were being housed. Another study found the microbe on the keyboards of computers used only by clinicians, and so on; gowns, coats, stethoscopes, pagers, outside surfaces of packages of sterile goods meant MRSA goes into hospitals as well as coming out.

In one Education Leeds paper I find reference to the practice of effective handwashing in schools. On the Internet can be found a programme for teaching young children to wash their hands properly. How many of us had that kind of instruction in our primary schools? In my primary school going to the loo was referred to, "Please, Miss, can I go across the yard?" and we went straight back to the classroom, particularly in cold weather. Nowadays there are many more sources of

infection than good old fashioned open sewers and lack of running water. Early widespread infection is identified. Look at the issue of bird flu which is occupying some authorities now.

Modern science has begun to provide answers which lead to an awareness by everyone of the need for hygienic practices, handwashing with alcohol instead of soap, appropriate clothing in appropriate circumstances, isolating patients, wearing masks, covering food. What would we do without clingfilm?

It seems that we are exclusively concerned with hospitals but we are not. We are concerned with care homes, nurseries, catering establishments. Just think of the number of bugs on an open dish of peanuts on a bar counter. Responsibilities of several council departments as well as of the NHS must include prevention of the spread of infection, so it is to be hoped that any information which comes back from Doncaster with the task force and any training offered as a result of the visit will be made available to all those who should be required to make use of it, not carried out on an ad hoc basis by different departments.

One of the problems is that while hygiene is an invisible concept, lack of it is at a visible cost - the cost of lives in some case, of money in some cases for more expensive cleaning materials, of time needed for the practice of good hand hygiene, but the reward is a cut in the number of those unnecessarily ill with MRSA or outside the hospitals with sickness or diarrhoea or slow healing wounds or of visitors taking infection in.

I congratulate Scrutiny Board's decision to send the task force's visit to Doncaster and look forward to its report. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR LANCASTER: Lord Mayor, firstly Councillor Procter's comments. This minute relates to the Board's meeting on 11th July and I welcome the comments about the better facilities, the better leisure access and the money that is available, because the Scrutiny Board felt that that was a really good basis of if we could encourage children to be more active, that is one of the objectives of the group looking at the childhood obesity problems. But, following on from that meeting in July, Board Members were informed about a meeting I had with key officers from the Leeds Childhood Obesity Steering Group in July to discuss the Board's first evidence-gathering session.

During this meeting we learned about the work already under way by the Steering Group to produce a childhood obesity strategy next year. In view of this it was suggested that the Board would benefit from a more in-depth briefing session with key representatives from the Steering Group to help identify the key strategic issues and discuss how Scrutiny could add value to the work already under way in this

area. So it was felt that the terms of reference may be revised as a result of this briefing session. It was agreed at the Board's meeting on 12th September that this briefing session would be held on 27th September and that a summary of the session will be reported back to the full board at its meeting on 10th October, so your comments, Councillor Procter, are noted on that.

To pick up on Councillor Ewens' speech about MRSA, it is very, very serious. This seems to be increasing and I think any comments, any suggestions and going to Doncaster, the evidence that we gather from that, and we will discuss in November. There must be some ways out there and what other cities are doing that we can act on and Scrutiny Board is committed to having some input into doing to reduce this MRSA. Thank you.

(e) Scrutiny Board (Environment & Community Safety)

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: My Lord Mayor, I am talking to the minute 14 on page 66, specifically perhaps expanding a little bit of discussion around the Section 106 Agreements in relation to funding green and open spaces. Certainly, I am sure my frustration with some Section 106 Agreements that have been agreed in the past is shared by other Members where a developer has left a certain amount to maintain a particular area of green space and we find that that amount is totally and absolutely inadequate.

We are in a situation certainly in Morley if you go down Magpie Lane where there is a great wide green area where apparently many, many years ago the developer who developed a rather large estate left a small, an almost insignificant, sum that was left to try and maintain that particular area. We are in a situation now where monies are being drained from the parks & countryside budget to try and deal with an area that is correctly the responsibility of those developers. The developers are getting away far too cheaply in avoiding their responsibilities.

We think that perhaps a way forward on this particular matter is to look at bringing local Ward Members into negotiations of Section 106 Agreements very early on, before they are actually signed and sealed and we are left with the consequences of those, and perhaps for an opportunity for Ward Members to sit down with the planners, the developers and Parks & Countryside to talk about a sensible and realistic sum that might be necessary to make sure that those green spaces are actually maintained. What we are often left with at this particular point is an agreement that is signed and sealed and is entirely inadequate to deal with the problems that we face as Ward Members. Perhaps that is something the administration may wish to reflect upon. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR A. CARTER: My Lord Mayor, before Councillor Anderson responds as Executive Board Member responsible, can I say that I share Councillor Finnigan's

concerns absolutely. There is, I think, no Member of this Council who has not been frustrated at some time or another about the way in which Section 106 monies can and cannot be used.

We are hoping that the Deputy Prime Minister is going to allow some relaxation in the use of Section 106 monies at some stage and indeed one part of our discussions yesterday when David Milliband visited Leeds was discussions of how this City could benefit, and other councils could benefit, if developer contributions were in a lump sum not necessarily tied to anything.

But to come back to the specific, I am more than happy for any member of any party to be involved in their own wards discussions about how 106 monies should be used to enhance the environment in their particular ward, and if any Member of Council is experiencing difficulty in that respect, they should not be. So, please, as far as I am concerned, Section 106 contributions tied to environmental improvements particularly in particular Members' wards, they should be involved from the very beginning with.

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: I couldn't have said it any better. Took the words out of my mouth. No, seriously, it was an issue that was discussed quite thoroughly, actually, at the Scrutiny Board meeting and the Exec Member for Learning & Leisure was actually very favourable in the comments that were made as well, because he accepts that more needs to be done because we all want our open and green spaces to become better places for everybody to relax in and also safer places to be as well, because it's okay having green places but it is also important that you can actually use them, because if you go in some places in the City unfortunately some of the spaces are not as usable as they should be, and that was where we were coming from. But thank you for the comments.

(f) Scrutiny Board (Thriving Communities)

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My lord Mayor, I wish to refer to the draft minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Board (Thriving Communities) held on 27th July, more exactly minute 15 on page 72, where the fourth bullet point down mentions the need to review the contract for the supply of soft drinks in vending machines located in libraries with a view to providing more healthy alternative drinks.

Members who were here then may recall that I raised this matter by way of a question to Councillor Blake at our January 2004 meeting. It seemed to me that having machines selling soft drinks in public libraries was not helpful in the war on tooth decay and obesity. The question and its supplementary were greeted with puzzlement or even mild derision in the case of Councillor Andrew Carter. However, I am glad that the current administration is trying to address this problem,

notwithstanding Councillor Carter's early scepticism. Being seated all day in front of a computer screen in a public library and having to go no more than a few paces before guzzling the next can of Coke or Fanta must rank high amongst couch potato experiences. If the computer chairs were mounted on castors, their occupants would not even have to bother to walk to the vending machines. Thank you, my Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: My Lord Mayor, I speak also on the same minute 15 on page 72.

In Otley a new library is in process of being built next to the Post Office. It will also incorporate a Tourist Information and will be very convenient to the people of Otley in more ways than one - at last they will have some public conveniences.

I note in the minute it talks of the need to address the opening times of libraries in line with public demand, and I am very pleased that whilst the old library was open a mere 44.5 hours a week, the new library will now be open for 60 hours a week and will also open 7 days a week due to public demand. It is great to see, as we move into the 21st century, that libraries have been able to evolve and adapt to the changing demands of the public. The increase in opening hours in Otley clearly reflects that libraries are becoming more modern and accessible to all. I therefore look forward to the new library opening early in 2006.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Lord Mayor, Councillor Leadley's point first of all. I traced the decision back to the previous administration in 2000/2001 to decide to make money out of the libraries by selling book tokens, talking books, drinks, DVDs and hiring their space. This came to a previous Scrutiny Board, I am not sure of the name of it - oh yes, it is Leisure & Enterprise; interesting combination of scrutiny there - when there was a public perception that the libraries were moving books out to put drinks machines in, and that Scrutiny Board was happy to note from libraries staff then that the number of books were remaining the same but the number of computers and drinks machines was starting to displace them from the easily accessible parts of the libraries.

I am satisfied that libraries are going to come back to our Scrutiny Board and tell us about their healthier drinks that are going to be available in the future, not just the fizzy variety which rot teeth quite quickly.

On Councillor Downes' point, again we are quite pleased that library opening hours are increasing. When the new library in Ardsley opened what resulted then was an increase in opening hours of libraries, across Leeds City Council's area. The Patents Library has moved, in case Members hadn't noticed, from York Road to Central Libraries and the opening hours for that have increased from 40 to 60 hours a

week and when the Otley Library opens early next year again hours will be increased again, and this is completely contrary to a number of publications put out by the party opposite claiming that the current administration has reduced library opening hours. With the innovation of opening on Sundays, which is proving to be increasingly popular in various locations across the City, Councillor Procter's staff can be congratulated for extending opening hours to as many members of the public as possible. (Applause)

(g) Scrutiny Board (City Development)

COUNCILLOR ELLIOTT: My Lord Mayor, I would like to speak to page 75, No. 14, Presentations, and I would just like to comment on Going up a League, Narrowing the Gap and Developing Leeds' role as a Regional Capital were outlined in this presentation and on bullet point No. 5 the Urban Renaissance Project and a visual plan for how Leeds would look in the future. Over the page, bullet point No. 2, Attracting people to Leeds for reasons other than just for its leisure facilities.

I feel that if we are to do this what we have to be sure of is that all the main roads leading into Leeds are kept free of litter. This is not happening at the moment and I feel that it is essential that this is dealt with. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: My Lord Mayor, I just want to speak very briefly on the cultural jewel in the ---

COUNCILLOR LYONS: The Mansion.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: Yes, how did you guess? Fabulous. Anyway, we have had so far 200 responses to the consultation exercise, of which about 90% have been positive, so I think that is an excellent result, particularly considering the 700 letters of objection there were to the previous Labour Group's plans for The Mansion. 700, Les. It is, disgraceful. And it has been very interesting to read in the paper of late that somebody has kindly written into the paper suggesting that I was supportive of the previous Labour Group's plan. Now, this is not true and has never been true and it reminds me of a letter from a certain Councillor who I won't mention to the paper (Interruptions). I can't tell you her name, or that she was a former (Interruptions) But anyway, I was reported on as having been briefed 6 times and having been in favour of the plans.

Well, when we did a little bit of investigation, it turned out that that was completely and totally untrue, so what I would just like to finish up by saying is that I am delighted that the consultation has been such a roaring success. I am very pleased for all of the people who have written in and expressed their views, and I am looking forward to The Mansion opening in the future and being a very successful

jewel in not only the crown of Roundhay Park but also the crown of Leeds. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Can I speak on the same minute, please, and follow Councillor Lobley's contribution?

THE LORD MAYOR: You can if you wait your turn.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Sorry. Okay.

COUNCILLOR McARDLE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I wish to speak to Minute 15, page 76, and it is regarding the 800th anniversary of the granting of the Charter for the Borough of Leeds, and whilst I will recognise that we are talking about the Borough of Leeds and I would recognise that the main events would concentrate on the City of Leeds, I would hope that things happened in the whole Borough, and judging from Councillor Procter's comments on the £30 million available for leisure centres, perhaps Morley Leisure Centre will get a little boost in some way, shape or form. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, thank you ever so much. Councillor Lobley knows that in Council Meetings minutes are taken and if he refers back to the appropriate minutes he will recognise that he supported the scheme, parts of which he has always objected to but the majority of the scheme he has always been in favour for and has said so to Officers and others on a number of occasions.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: So he was not telling the truth.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Well, he is not telling the whole truth and nothing but the truth. No, he is not.

Councillor Harris began the Council Meeting by congratulating the administration on their meaning of consultation ---

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: Lord Mayor, under 14.6, a point of personal explanation ---

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Pardon?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen, would you just sit down for a moment. We have got a point of personal explanation, Councillor Lobley.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: Can I say I have always been in favour of investment in The Mansion. That is as far as it has gone. The plans by the Labour Group for the use of the interior of The Mansion I have never supported. Thank you. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: And, of course, you have been in favour of the restoration of the park and all those proposals and the vast majority of the £6.5 million spent out of Lottery funding. You have always supported that as well, as we all know.

I go back to consultation and the feeble interpretation of consultation by the administration. Consultation on what? A preferred scheme, and that's it. Take the scheme or leave the scheme. No options. (Interruptions)

Councillor Carter, how nice to see you back in Council. So the extra £1.5 million. Councillor Atha and I thought that perhaps it has come out of the splendid deal, no doubt, on the Roundhay Golf Course that will have been done by Councillor Procter but, of course, we can't speak about that because we don't know how much money has or hasn't been saved, etc.. But if the extra money from the golf course has been ploughed back into The Mansion, what a good idea, what an investment that would be, and in the future we will see, no doubt, you still hiding behind the minutes and you still hiding behind some kind of confidentiality clause. At some stage the truth will out and we will all know exactly how much you sold off the Roundhay Golf Course for, and then we can all comment on the splendid piece of work you may or may not have done on behalf of this Council.

Back to The Mansion. When I first started writing, and there has been lots of correspondence since and I am delighted about that, because The Mansion is an important issue and has been widely debated by the public, not as a result of your phoney consultation, which we know the result. One preferred route. 200 people responded. 180 have said, "Yes, splendid scheme. Let's go and do it." That's just rubbish.

What about the fact that you are only interested in the high end of the catering service? Who is going to come into The Mansion? Well, popular speculation, not denied - perhaps today denied but not denied by Councillor Procter, is that it will be Betty's. So we then have Betty's in The Mansion and we then have the Roundhay Lakeside Café. Who is going to afford to go into those premises? Not the people who regularly frequent the park. You are turning it into an élitist enterprise, taking the public out of the park to make it your own private little province in the park. (Laughter) That is all you are doing. That is all you are doing. It has been an election gimmick and it is backfiring on you. (Interruptions)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen, if that's not leading with the chin, I don't know what is. You deserve to have the Rottweiler set on you. I call Councillor Procter.

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. What an absolute load of claptrap. I have never heard so much rubbish since he sat over there, I don't think.

Lord Mayor, we have had 90% - 90% - positive response to a plan that was put forward. There was a whole range of possibilities, what could have been done with The Mansion - nursing home, offices indeed, converted to flats indeed, all of which were in fact evaluated, all of which - Bernard pipe down - all of which were evaluated, Lord Mayor, and I might say a number of the key interested user groups and parties were consulted with.

I have to say what sticks in the throat of Councillor Gruen and Councillor Blake - that is why she is silent on this issue - is that actually we are getting this issue right and getting applause for it, and they got it so badly wrong. That's what they can't stand. (Applause)

700 objections to the planning application to remodel The Mansion. I have sat on Planning for 13 years. I have never seen 700 objections to any other application, not a one. Not a one. And suddenly they are trying to resurrect this clapped out scheme as being one that all people might have been interested in. Nobody wanted it. Nobody was interested in it. You lot didn't want it. Something else I know, Lord Mayor: The Officers who were supposedly going to be moved into The Mansion, they didn't even want to be there either, for goodness sake. They were embarrassed by the thought of moving into what Councillor Lobley so rightly described as the jewel of Leeds.

It seems to be an idea totally concocted by certain Members opposite. Lord Mayor, it is quite telling that when I toured The Mansion and the £1.odd million that we were actually putting in, I said, "Well, what about this area here? This is untouched. This is just as it was. It looks terrible compared to the new mansion." "Oh yes, Councillor. Oh well, that's the Phoenix Bar." "And what is going to happen with that?", I said. "Oh, well, the last administration really had no plans for anything to happen with the Phoenix Bar. Someone talked about it going up two storeys but there was never any money identified, so it is not even included in this scope of works." We had to find extra money, that was passed, thankfully, by the Executive Board. I didn't hear Members opposite complaining and questioning what was going on at that time. We have had to find extra money to do the whole scheme in terms of external works where previously it wasn't even contemplated.

Let's just talk about possible users for The Mansion. It is right that there will be open competition for people to come in and put their bids forward in the normal way in terms of the use of any of our buildings. I might say that it is a bit rich of Councillor Gruen, and I might add Councillor Wakefield, I notice he is staying quiet on this matter, because both of them have approached me and said, "Oh, is this rumour I hear true? Is this rumour I hear true about Betty's coming to The Mansion? That would be absolutely fantastic." That's what they like. I can just see it. Wakefield

and Gruen taking high tea on the terrace of The Mansion, probably waited upon by Councillor Atha. (Interruptions)

Lord Mayor, I am sure that whatever --- I hope, I really sincerely hope that we are able to attract a good operator into The Mansion. Councillor Gruen does actually raise a serious point. He tries to make out excluding people from the facilities of Roundhay Park in terms of the catering facilities. Far from the case, and he knows it as well. What we are seeking to do is create a range of facilities that can cater for all, not create mediocrity across the board. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Council, utterly and completely appalled by the 15 minutes I have had to sit and endure the three people who spoke on The Mansion did not speak on the minutes of City Development. The minutes are important. One is the minutes of a presentation of the Director of Leeds Initiative talking about the future of how they intend to work with us to develop this City as an international city. The next was with the new Chief Executive Marketing Leeds. I find it incredible that it comes down to a slanging match over the Mansion House. All those involved deserve all the fertiliser that is flying about at the moment.

Could I turn to Councillor McArdle, and hopefully Councillor Procter will provide us with an answer, Councillor McArdle. It is in his hands where the Board ask if Elected Members could be involved in Celebrate Leeds for exactly the reason you suggested that the townships should be involved and not just the City as it used to be, because now we must celebrate the whole, so we are still waiting for an answer to come back from Councillor Procter's office, and I hope by the time we get to next Thursday we will have an answer so the Board can discuss it.

As for the lady from Morley, I agree with you totally, would like to take your comments further and I do know that on this side we want every street in the City clean, not just those prestige entrances. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

(k) Plans Panel (East)

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Lord Mayor, I am speaking on minute 65 on page 94, which perhaps it is no surprise is the issue to do with the addition of a roller shutter to the front of a hair and beauty salon at 110-112 Queen Street, Morley. It will come as no surprise to people that we have a particular passion for our town centre, and one of the issues that regularly comes out of this is the fact that many of the shops there need to be protected from the rampages of drinkers who are taking advantage of the Government's looser licensing laws, but taking that to one side, we get a little puzzled about this particular issue.

Now, Next, down at the White Rose Centre, put in a very similar application

and theirs actually ran through and got approved. Perforated shutters, which is really what we were looking for at this particular point. So we are beginning to get a little puzzled because, as people will know, the White Rose Centre is actually in Morley, it is in the town centre area in Morley, and we are confused why there seems to be contrary things occurring in this particular area.

Now, we are told you need to change the policy, and God knows we have tried in Morley, we really have. We have pitched this in terms of change to the Planning Department the best part of 8 months ago. Councillor Leadley, to his credit, has tried on several occasions over the last few months to try and move this particular policy forward.

Now, the fact of the matter is there is not much point pumping lots and lots of money into regenerating town centres if we can't defend that particular space on an evening, when you have got shops moving out of a particular place because they can't afford the insurance of a third broken window. We need a shutters policy that is sensible and that is appropriate to the problems we specifically face.

Now, no-one is going to suggest to me that the white Rose and Next are the sort of organisations that need to be defended at 12 o'clock at night following kicking out of the extended drinking hours of some of the public houses in that particular area. It is shut up. It does not need that sort of protection. What we are saying is we want the same fairness shown to those smaller traders that don't have the multi-millions that Next have but need a little bit of help and a little bit of support, and I suspect it is happening in Morley, we have got these difficulties, it is going to have the same difficulties in Otley, you are going to have the same difficulties in Pudsey, and we need a change that relates to the specific problems in those communities.

We will not let this one go away. We will be back and grind out a result on this particular one. It is not a one-size-fits-all. We have specific issues in Morley. We want to make sure that policy is changed. We want to understand why there seems to be conflicting decisions made, and inevitably with this particular matter, we will be back. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR C. FOX: My Lord Mayor, this particular decision, of course, is one that was taken by the Panel in their wisdom, and that has to be accepted. This is the fifth refusal in about 10 years on Queen Street for various premises, mainly -- well, all of them involving shutters in some form, and the key to this issue is this is a conservation area and the policy on the conservation area is that the character of the area has to be either enhanced or at least maintained by any development which takes place, and the Panel were obviously persuaded that the adding of a roller-shutter was not an enhancement and indeed was not a maintenance of the character of that particular area.

There was an appeal a couple of years ago for No. 63 Queen Street where the Inspector considered the issues and at that time very persuasive evidence was presented as to the levels of crime and the problems that persisted on there but, nonetheless, the Inspector said that the fact that it was a conservation area was the overriding consideration, and we are bound by these policies. So I cannot speak for the decision of the Panel as such, but I personally feel it was the right decision within the conservation area, and it leaves us to reflect sometimes we call for conservation areas perhaps without thinking of the consequences of what we are saying when we get these conservation areas.

So our sympathy goes out to the traders who are suffering from crime and vandalism and so on, but it does not alter the fact that, it being a conservation area, special considerations apply. The Inspector, incidentally, did say that it didn't rule out security measures and in the 63 Queen Street appeal said that alternative security measures should be considered, but that the overriding consideration was that shutters of this form detracted from the character of the area, and I suspect if this one goes to appeal a very similar outcome would result.

(m) Plans Panel (City Centre)

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Lord Mayor, good afternoon. Before I start, could I just refer to the Mansion House and advise Councillor Gruen and Councillor Wakefield that you can buy cakes from Betty's by post.com if you want to keep your anonymity and don't want to be seen there. As you can tell, I do as well.

I would like to speak on the minute item 43 on page 123, the development of Quarry Hill. You may remember that some of my colleagues and myself on the Board at West Yorkshire Playhouse were somewhat concerned over this development and I am pleased to note that there is now to be an allocation of 500 car parking spaces in a basement car park there. I am also pleased to note the positive comments in the notes here, that the Planning Manager spoke to the application and highlighted the changes the developers had made in the light of workshops which had been held and the comments the Panel had made on the applications. Members welcomed the application and the way in which developers had worked with the Planning Officers on the applications and taken on board the comments made at previous City Centre Plans Panels.

I think the outcome of this particular application demonstrates what can be achieved when Members of Leeds City Council work together on issues, rather than playing at party political games. I would like to thank Councillor Andrew Carter for agreeing to meet with the Directors of West Yorkshire Playhouse, including myself, to discuss this matter, to take on board the concerns which they raised, and obviously to

thank the Members of the City Centre Plans Panel for taking on board the concerns raised by the Board of West Yorkshire Playhouse. I know that my colleagues at West Yorkshire Playhouse are grateful for their attention to this matter. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR MRS. A. CARTER: Lord Mayor, thank you, Councillor Grayshon for those comments, and also for your contribution during the planning discussions. It was most useful.

It became apparent to the Panel that the planning brief which was drawn up under the last administration was not adequate and indeed all Members of the Panel were very concerned about that. The decision was not easy to come to because half the Panel had to declare an interest but, to be fair, it was an all-party decision that car parking must be a priority. We listened very carefully to what the users had to say of the area, in particular the Playhouse, and their comments did in fact mould what we came to a decision on in the end.

The other issue that we had as a Panel was the lack of green space and I am glad to see that the developers took on board everything that the Panel put to them and they came back with not a perfect plan but one that we think is workable and one that we think as a Panel, I believe, is a good site for a greener gateway to our City. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

(p) Corporate Governance and Audit Committee

COUNCILLOR R. LEWIS: Lord Mayor, the minute I am raising concerns the KPMG report on Social Services budget position. You may remember that two meetings ago Councillor Mark Harris was kind enough to give us all a sneak preview of this report. I don't want to say much about the report itself, other than it only gave an advantage to Mark when nobody else had a copy that they were able to look at and actually consider the contents, and judge it accordingly, because it certainly isn't that kind of smoking gun that Mark was selling it as at that meeting.

I was very much reminded at the last Council Meeting when Andrew Carter was talking about the reports on EASEL that went to Exec Board and the leaking of that report, and that was incredibly serious. That was a report about the procurement process that could have led to perhaps the wrong contractor getting the contract or, you know, the whole process being upset - clearly a big, serious matter.

Does this matter that Mark Harris chooses to quote a report at us all that nobody else has seen? And I think the answer is fairly obvious to 98 of us, even if it isn't to Councillor Harris. That is a report and it does not belong to you. It is not a personal report for the Leader of the Council to quote those bits that he particularly

likes or doesn't like in a Council Meeting. There are procedures that should be used, there is a way of working in this Council that I think most of us understand, and that means that you have proper debate on issues and everybody has access to the information. You chose not to give people that opportunity. You chose to kind of jump the gun two meetings ago in what I think is a kind of wholly unacceptable way and, interestingly enough, it was just as you started you gave one of your kind of once a meeting apologies to Council for doing something, and that apology was to say that you had got it wrong about the responsibility and culpability of the Labour Group for what had happened with the Social Services' budget, and then what do you do? You compound it, as you always do, by going on quoting a report that really should have gone somewhere else before it came to this place.

I have to say, really, Mark, what did you think you were doing when you brought that report into the Council Meeting? What did you think you were doing when you picked it up and started quoting? Did you just think, "Oh yes, I'll have a bit of a go here. Oh, I've got this and nobody else has got it", because you are one person who should know that you don't use reports in that way.

If I can just finally say - I don't think there is much more to say because I think you look quite kind of shameless about it. What if it had been one of us who had done it? What if it had been one of the Labour Group? Because I can remember not so long back when some kind of innocuous minute had got into your hands and what were you doing? You reported myself, Suzy Armitage and I can't remember who else to the Standards Board for England, which then very quickly dealt with the matter and came back and said there wasn't anything to be considered. But if it had been one of us, I know exactly what you would have been saying. You would have been up on your hind legs, slagging us off, abuse of Council, blah-blah-blah. Well, Mark, sometimes perhaps it applies to you.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I would like to follow on that contribution on the same page, the same minute. One of the most despicable things, apart from not releasing the report at Council, is that it then took us 4 weeks - 4 weeks - you having put this report into the public domain, for officers to actually release it to us, such is the governance of this new administration.

when we came to the meeting, of course very interesting because at least we had the author of the report. Bear in mind the exhortation from Councillor Harrand that we should tell the truth, nothing but the truth and the whole truth.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: You can try for two out of three if you want.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: The conclusion of the report is that the reasons for those overspends were already reported to Council and were exactly the ones that

Councillor Wakefield, I and others had told Council about - additional community care placements, under-recovery of PCT money, higher number of looked after children than planned and higher agency and overtime costs.

The key findings which the independent senior auditor who reported this said in answer to my question, "Who commissioned this report?" Councillor Harris took that question and said that he and the Cabinet commissioned officers to investigate and report. To date we have not yet been told what the cost of this report is, and how much has it told us? What has it told us that we don't already know? Because it says in the key findings, "Based on the evidence and discussions we believe this position arose due to a lack of accurate information for projecting the position and weaknesses in the budgetary control process, including difficulty relating financial and non-financial information systems to each other."

Now, we asked the question and said, "Who is responsible for that?"

MEMBERS OF COUNCIL: You.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: No the auditor said officers.

MEMBER OF COUNCIL: You were in charge.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Hang on. You weren't at the meeting. This report was addressed to officers, action for officers in Social Services and in the Finance Department. You know all that. You paid good money to be told the same thing, because what you thought is you were going to get a great big scalp, a great big story, but what it actually says in the same key findings, "We do not believe that it was due to deliberate actions to set a misleading budget." That is the last thing you wanted to hear. What you wanted to hear is that it is mal-administration and off you can run to somebody and report us. You didn't get that story.

What you were also told when we contributed to Council is the time-table, and it says here, "The potential problems were identified in the year end and in May 2004."

In May 2004, when where were all of us? At the elections, weren't we? Because the elections were on June 10th (Interruptions) thank you. I thought at some stage you would give me the same kind of privilege as other Members from the opposition here.

So the fact is, you knew all of what is in here. You commissioned the report which didn't give you what you wanted. You are not telling the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth. You are misleading people. Annex 4. Let me just come to the last bit of this on your eligibility criteria that you have introduced, your administration, and you compare it to all the major councils. What does Birmingham

do? The criteria is for critical, substantial and moderate. Liverpool, critical, substantial and moderate. Nottingham, critical, substantial, moderate. Bradford, critical, substantial and moderate. Leeds under Labour, critical, substantial and moderate. Leeds under the administration, only critical and substantial - a cut. A cut of a thousand cuts by your administration in this report that is supposed to condemn us but actually condemns you. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Lord Mayor, first of all, the report, as I said last time, I sought officer advice, the legal advice from the Chief Legal Officer, and I was told it is perfectly appropriate for me to use the report in debate in this Council, and so I did.

It is correct, as Councillor Lewis said, I apologised last time. I apologised for suggesting that the Labour administration had done it deliberately. It is correct the report says you did not do it deliberately. I did not apologise last time for saying that you were culpable for what had happened, because you were culpable when you were in charge, and so let's just read some of the things the report says. You may have already said some of them. Page 4, referring to budgetary control, "It needs to link financial management with service provision". Well, I mean, talk about the obvious. You weren't doing that. You were culpable. You were in charge.

It talks about whether your assumptions in 2003/4 were reasonable assumptions. Well, if they were not reasonable assumptions what on earth were you doing in charge?

It talks about that in May 2004 the problem was identified. That is correct. When we took over at the end of June 2004 we were told that the problem was that the budget deficit was accelerating, the £1 million a week. Let me be generous to you. Between May and us taking control you had still been in control of Social Services for 6 weeks. If you knew in May, you did nothing to stop that £1 million a week acceleration in the budget. What were you doing?

It talked about the insufficient consideration of future variances in trends was lacking. What were you doing? You were in control. You were culpable. You should have been watching all of this. I could go on ad nauseam. I won't. However, Peter Gruen uses the word "despicable" and he talks about the eligibility criteria. Well, selective quoting. You quoted from the back page of the report. You have not mentioned that Newcastle, Manchester, Sheffield and -- did I say Manchester and Sheffield? Who controls Manchester and Sheffield? Is it the Labour party? Oh, well, Manchester and Sheffield have critical and substantial eligibility criteria, as does Newcastle, LibDem controlled, as does Bristol. I don't know what it was then but now it is LibDem majority, or they are running the show substantially. You didn't mention that they use eligibility criteria of critical and substantial, but let us just consider now, shall we, using the word "despicable" about

what is at the heart of that eligibility criteria change.

Now, does anybody remember, because I remember, the story of the poor 90-year old lady from Kippax that Councillor Wakefield illustrated his argument with over how we had cut Social Services? Well, let's now --- Do you want to add anything? Do you want to bring us up to date on the story of the little lady? Do you want to qualify anything? Well, here are the facts about that little lady, and I am sorry in any way that she suffered. However, she was receiving 1.5 hours help from Social Services when you were in control. It was your administration and your assessment that came up with the conclusion she was entitled to only 1.5 hours help, and now Council will be interested to know how much help does that lady get, now that we have changed the eligibility criteria, now that we are assessing people's needs and properly delivering what we can afford and what they need. That lady is now getting 14 hours a week help from Social Services. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Can I explain?

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: No, you can't explain. I am not inclined to let you explain anything. (Interruptions) I have been very generous to you in the past and given way. I am not giving way. Let's be clear on the facts. Your administration ---

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Point of personal explanation.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: He hasn't spoken, Lord Mayor. He can't. Your administration ---

THE LORD MAYOR: Just a moment, Councillor Harris. Councillor Wakefield, I am sorry, you are not entitled to a point of personal explanation.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: He did invite me to speak?

THE LORD MAYOR: He might have done but you are still not entitled to speak. You haven't spoken before.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: You suggested we had cut services to that person. We had not cut anything. Your administration gave her 1.5 hours a week. Our administration is giving her 14 hours a week and that is because we have changed the basis of the eligibility criteria. We are the ones providing the service. You are the ones who failed miserably. That lady is far better served by us, a caring administration, than ever she was by you, and why? Because you were incompetent. (Applause)

(r) North West (Outer) Area Committee

COUNCILLOR A. CARTER: My Lord Mayor, I don't want to speak on that, thank you very much.

THE LORD MAYOR: In that case, I doubt whether Councillor Latty will have a lot to say in winding up, but he is entitled to.

COUNCILLOR LATTY: Lord Mayor, there is nothing to sum up so I will just ---

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Point of order, he can't sum up when there has been nothing said. On a point of order, how do you sum up when there has nothing been said?

THE LORD MAYOR: I suppose you noticed that Councillor Andrew Carter has decided not to speak.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: We did notice that and therefore there is nothing to sum up, is there?

COUNCILLOR J. L. CARTER: Listen - he said that.

THE LORD MAYOR: I hear what you say and Councillor Latty is not pressing the point.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: It is nice to know that someone is interested.

THE LORD MAYOR: Quite right, Councillor Atha. You win. Let's carry on.

(s) North East (Outer) Area Committee

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, I wish to comment on draft minutes of the meeting of North East (Outer) Area Committee held on 11th July, minute 11 on page 160.

When we talked about these payments of £11,690 from each Area Committee for street cleansing at Outer South on 25th April the report said that in order for the scheme to go forward every area committee had to agree to pay up. When I raised the question of what would happen if an area committee declined to join in, I was told that this need not be a problem as our meeting was the last in the cycle and everyone else had agreed to pay. Later I found out that this was not so; few days before our meeting outer North East has resolved not to contribute without further information, and that dispute seems to go on. Later I found that the project was to go ahead without Outer North-East anyway.

When we have reports from officers they should be accurate, and when officers

answer questions they should do accurately or, if they don't know the answer, they should say so and give it later. Thank you, my Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR A. CARTER: Lord Mayor, this time I am saying something. If only Councillor Atha will have to do a lot better if he wants to try and draw attention away from Councillor Gruen yet again shooting his own leader in both feet at once. My Lord Mayor, I refer to ---

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Can I ask what the relevance of that was, Lord Mayor? (Interruptions) Don't the standing orders say ---

COUNCILLOR A. CARTER: If I refer, Lord Mayor, to the minute on page 161, minute 12, my Lord Mayor ---

THE LORD MAYOR: Just for Councillor Atha's benefit, he can speak after you, Councillor Carter. He can't speak in between you. Carry on.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Who would want to speak between him? Would you? Would you, Lord Mayor?

COUNCILLOR A. CARTER: My Lord Mayor, it is of little interest to anybody else in the Council Chamber when Councillor Atha speaks, apart from Councillor Atha, that is.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: He is still insulting me, Lord Mayor. (Interruptions)

COUNCILLOR A. CARTER: Him and Councillor Gruen bring a whole new meaning to Closing the Gap, my Lord Mayor. Quite what it is they have behind their ears, or between their ears.

My Lord Mayor, if I may now get on with the most important issue of page 161, minute 12, the Town and Regeneration Scheme, and Councillor Wilkinson I know is anxious to be made aware of how the Wetherby bids have been progressing, because they have a very advanced scheme in Wetherby for the Market Place, for which they require some extra funding. I am pleased to say that subject to the same criteria I mentioned before that scheme is to be progressed and that their Area Officers should be speaking to officers in the other appropriate departments, as I know that scheme is not far off ready to go, so that is good news for Wetherby.

In addition, in the same way as the Wharfe Meadows Park at Otley is being progressed, so is the Harland Way Park in Wetherby, so some more good news for the people of Wetherby there. Thank you, my Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR MILLARD: Lord Mayor, I would like to thank the Deputy Leader of

Council for the comments he has just made. I am sure all my residents will be grateful for that.

I would like to speak, if I may, to the draft minutes of the North East (Outer) Area Committee meeting on 11th July, page 157, minute 5(a) and the respective solution. The surgery in East Keswick is actually in the Harewood Ward but it does have a knock-on effect, the closure of this, to the Wetherby Ward, the Alwoodley Ward, as I am sure the three members for Whinmoor and Crossgates will be aware, to their ward as well.

I am disappointed that the Chief Executive of the PCT failed to attend the meeting, despite being invited to that. She also failed to attend the public meeting that was held on 21st July in East Keswick about the same matter. To let Members know, she takes between 3 and 5 weeks to reply to any correspondence, and that is lucky if you get a reply.

I am disappointed that the PCT is looking to close this surgery. Members here may recall that under the current Labour government we now have five PCTs, five in Leeds in total with five times the number of management boards and five times the number of Chief Executives and five times the cost. Let's hope that this gives the Chief Executive five times the amount of time to attend meetings and actually consult and to find a resolution to this problem, rather than digging her head in the sand.

Can I have an assurance, please, from the Chair of the Area Committee, Councillor Wilkinson, that the resolution that was passed that is on page 158 is adhered to and that the Chief Executive is invited along and made to attend the next meeting which is in only five days time so that she can actually meet with the Ward Members to discuss this vitally important issue, particularly as the consultation period has been extended. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Now, Councillor Atha, which minute on which page of the North East (Outer) Area Committee?

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I'm sorry, I'm a bit deaf in this left ear, particularly.

THE LORD MAYOR: I thought you indicated you wanted to speak.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I always want to speak. Are you inviting me to speak? If I do, I have got to observe the Standing Orders or the rules of the constitution which, as you well know, my Lord Mayor, starts off by saying that anyone addressing a minute must refer to that point or a personal explanation and, quite frankly, when Councillor Carter got up he did not do that and you gave a very strange ruling also on another occasion which someone got up in Council and referred to a report that occurred

about -- several years before ---

COUNCILLOR J. L. CARTER: Bernard, which minute?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Atha, Councillor Carter, just a jiff. Let me be clear about this. Councillor Carter indicated he was speaking on page 161, minute 12. I am by no means clear which minute you are speaking on. Can you just clarify that for us?

COUNCILLOR ATHA: No, I am not speaking on that minute (Interruptions) I am speaking in response to your invitation which I thought you were giving.

THE LORD MAYOR: Well then, let me make it very clear, then, Councillor Atha, I withdraw that invitation.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Can I therefore speak on the minute you referred to?

THE LORD MAYOR: You need to tell me which page and which minute.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: It is the one which Councillor Carter was speaking on, and I was speaking on the basis that the first statement he made, when you look at the verbatim, you will find it was contrary to the rules and regulations ---

THE LORD MAYOR: I'm sorry, Councillor Atha. You must either tell me the item number or we must proceed with other business.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: It was 161, minute 12 he referred to.

THE LORD MAYOR: 161, minute 12. Thank you. Proceed.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: And that minute was the minute Councillor Carter got up to speak about and the first few sentences he put together were in fact not referring to that minute, and if you look at the minutes of the constitution you will find that he was therefore out of order. That was the point I was making and I am sad, Lord Mayor, that they didn't see that when I made the point.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you for that pearl of wisdom, Councillor Atha.

COUNCILLOR A. CARTER: What the hell are you on about?

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Eeh, I don't know, lad.

COUNCILLOR WILKINSON: Try and follow that. Thank you, Lord Mayor. Firstly,

if I could tackle the problem by Councillor Leadley. I must compliment him, first of all, that this is the third time in three Council Meetings that he has tried to bring this to our attention. It is the first time he has had the opportunity, though.

I find it difficult to comment on what he had to say because he is criticising Officers within his area committee, so I can't comment on that.

As far as Councillor Carter is concerned, on Monday of this week England won the Ashes. Yesterday I had confirmation that the house I have been trying to get is now mine, and today we have had this announcement from Councillor Carter of the superb news for Wetherby. I am on a roll. I can't wait for the Lottery tonight!

I think it was Councillor Campbell that mentioned earlier that Otley had been starved of investment over the last 24 years. That same applies to Wetherby, and I am absolutely delighted for the residents of Wetherby, the visitors to Wetherby who come to see Wetherby in Bloom, which is a credit to the town, and I can't wait to get on with using this investment.

I have to disagree with two of my colleagues who said that Roundhay Park was the jewel in Leeds crown. I think that accolade should go to Wetherby.

Coming on to Councillor Millard: Yes, I will try and get (?)Fierstein. I think I have tried four times now and each time she has declined our invitation to come and speak. There is a public meeting tomorrow evening which I think Councillor Millard may be attending and hope that she is there. If she is not, we will try and get her before the consultation period ends. It has been extended from the end of August, which has now gone, until the 20-something of September, so we have still got a little bit of time. The decision will not be made on this until towards the end of October. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

(t) East (Outer) Area Committee

COUNCILLOR A. CARTER: My Lord Mayor, two points on the East (Outer) Area Committee. First, as a question to the chair, Councillor Parker: I noticed the report on the Community Centre Review. Perhaps he could advise Council if there is a community centre at the end of Personage Road, Methley. If there isn't, he might like to explain to us on what basis Personage Road, Methley managed to get from a ranking of 79 in the private streets to No. 1 on the list we inherited that was defunct when we took power. I can't really get to the bottom of how a road that ranks 79 in the rankings can reach No. 1.

Now, my Lord Mayor --- I would like an answer to that, I have to say.

Now then, on a more positive note, with the same caveats I have attached previously, I am sure that Councillor Parker will be pleased to know that a number of the schemes being progressed by the East Leeds Area Committee are progressing extremely well, and I hope that in the next few days the whole list can be sent to all the Members involved with each of the area committees. Thank you, my Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: On the same minute that Councillor Carter has just spoken on, I wonder if Councillor Parker could help me with this particular question. I have been trying to find out some information about the progress made by some of our district centre bids in the Outer East area. I have contacted officers on a number of occasions what progress was being made and Officers have told me that they were unable to help me until Councillor Carter had made his statement, which he appears to have been making today.

Is it reasonable, and perhaps Mr. Rogerson would like to pay attention to this, that Officers who are supposed to serve the whole of this Council are not able to answer questions to Members in whose ward some of these district centres lie on the progress that they are making pending a partial announcement today in the Conservative wards but in Labour Wards no announcement is made. "We hope to be able to tell you in due course." Is that another point of reasonable governance, Mr. Rogerson? And I wonder if Councillor Parker has himself put any effort to find out about these reviews and found similar obstacles.

COUNCILLOR PARKER: In response to Councillor Gruen, exactly the same response, Peter. I have been chasing up - I forget the date of the meeting but I was fully expecting we would get updated by officers following that meeting ---

COUNCILLOR A. CARTER: It was £117,000 scheme and they reckoned that was matched funding.

COUNCILLOR PARKER: The response was ---

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Lord Mayor, are you going to permit this kind of cross-talk which is broadcast over when a Member is speaking?

COUNCILLOR J. L. CARTER: You are doing it, why can't we?

COUNCILLOR ATHA: No, this is quite a serious business.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we let councillor Parker give the answer. He is summing up.

COUNCILLOR PARKER: I am responding to Councillor Gruen's question that he had

phoned up, I had phoned up and got exactly the same response that until Councillor Carter had been briefed and made a statement we would not get that information. I will not name officers that I spoke to, but that is perfectly true.

On the parsonage issue, you know as much as me, but I am sure my colleague can enlighten you but I don't see that as being part of the Outer East Area Committee, Andrew, but you have said that information coming about on the five schemes submitted by the Outer East Area Committee there will be some information shortly. I hope it is as good as the news in Wetherby. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Parker. I am sure the previous two questions will find plenty of opportunity to get their questions answered through other channels.

(u) South (Outer) Area Committee

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Lord Mayor, good afternoon. I am pleased to note that at the meeting of the South (Outer) Area Committee held on 11th July 2005 - I mention the date because that is the last time the Outer South Area Committee was quorate at a meeting - agreement was reached to allocate £15,000 to improve the user experience for disabled clients at Morley Leisure Centre. Could I ask that an assurance be given that Morley's Leisure Centre will receive its fair share of money allocated from the £30 million in PFI credits which are coming to Leeds?

COUNCILLOR McARDLE: My Lord Mayor, I wish to speak on the same minute regarding disabled access to Morley Leisure Centre. Last year, when I was eligible to sit on a Scrutiny Board, I was on Scrutiny Leisure chaired by Councillor Minkin and I don't think anybody on that Scrutiny Board could fail to be moved by the parents and carers for those disabled children who attended that, and I resolved to do something about that for my particular area, and I am pleased to say that under the chair of Councillor Finnigan in front of me we have managed to secure £15,000 towards the disabled improvements. There is also an extra £20,000 I believe from memory going to that as a contribution, and I certainly welcome that. Irrespective of whether it is de rigueur to actually facilitate that, I think it is important that we recognise, and I think the Outer South Area Committee is --- Well, I would say this because I think it is the best. It does have an impact on people's lives and I welcome this particular recommendation, and thank you.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: My Lord Mayor, I want to speak on minute 11 on page 175. I do so because I think we are now faced with a very serious issue in terms of genuine democracy in this chamber. I know that in politics there is a lot of rough and tumble and some days you win, some days you lose, and that is a part of democracy with opposition and people in power, and I have to say that a part of that process is

making sure that people can attend meetings, and even here I have to say that Councillor Carter and Councillor Harris both as leaders have maintained the tradition of if the Opposition can't make it, then they change. We did so in power and I am very pleased to say that I think both Andrew Carter and Mark Harris have done so in an honourable way, and that is right as a part of democracy.

What I think we have seen recently I think is a very, very sad step backwards from that. On 11th July the three Labour members from Robin Hood and Ardsley asked the chair of that committee to reconsider the timing of the date because they had, like many of us here, group meetings on the Monday before Council, and on that Monday we were being briefed by the Assistant Director Social Services about the future of adult care and also the Chief Executive and another Officer on the future of Children's Services. It was only right for their roles as councillors to be there at that briefing on the Monday before Council.

As I say, that request went in on 11th July. It is there in the minutes and, indeed, it was refused. Now, that is bad in itself, given the traditions of this chamber.

As I say, I don't care what political party we have always tried our best as leaders or as senior members to adjust the times of meetings and places of things, but to go out to press and actually say that to the local paper and the local YEP paper to demand the resignation of the three Labour Members I think is quite disgraceful and totally unacceptable, and I cannot understand it because there are ways around this. There are ways around it which I think, you know, the Whip may want to elaborate on it. There is simply about being flexible, but simple for me is when you become a Councillor I still regard it - and this is not humbug - as an honour. I think when you are in a position of power you are representing the Council, and the people of Morley and the people of this City deserve to have people trying their best to enhance democracy in the interests of what is our belief and our commitment to local democracy.

I think there were ways around it. I think people could have been more flexible, they could have moved their hours. I just find this absolutely vindictive, unnecessary and anti-democratic, and I am hoping that the chair of that committee will reflect and that we can actually start to accommodate and facilitate the legitimate role of local members in that ward to represent their people to the best of their abilities. I move, Lord Mayor. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: Lord Mayor, I would just like to respond very briefly to the comments that were made about the £30 million PFI credits that we have got. It is quite amazing when an announcement like this is made, Lord Mayor, the number of best friends you get around the Council Chamber. Many, many e-mails, very many warm congratulations from Members of all sides, I might add, urging the spend to go in their direction. But what I will say in terms of Morley Leisure Centre is that it is recognised as being one of the busiest, one of the most well-used centres that has

been starved of investment for quite a number of years. There has been some money, as you well know, spent in recent years, certainly in terms of the changing rooms on the dry side, but an awful lot more needs ploughing into Morley Leisure Centre. It is one of the centres that consistently hits its income targets as well. We will see how things go in terms of the review that is going to take place for spending, but I hope and I am sure something positive will come out of it in terms of Morley Leisure Centre.

Can I just very briefly, Lord Mayor, touch on the point that has been raised by Councillor Wakefield. As far as I am aware, he has never been a Whip. If he had been he would know what the usual channels are and how some of the matters he refers to ---

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I have never been (inaudible) either.

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: You never know, you are desperate for the opportunity, aren't you, though? He would know some of the ways in which matters that he refers to are dealt with. Indeed, Councillor Gruen came to me yesterday with this very matter and after our regular Whips meeting a discussion took place and I felt that we had a reasonable position at the end of that discussion, and I really do think he is over-egging the situation. Perhaps councillor Gruen hadn't communicated that discussion to him.

COUNCILLOR GALDAS: I was at that meeting as well. We had the same problem. We had a meeting that we had to split ourselves. One of our members went to that meeting and two of us went to the Outer South. I thought it was rather bad of the opposition not to send anyone because it meant that we were inquorate, and that meant we couldn't make any decisions at all. I think they could have sent one Member. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I think this matter has gone on since even before the minute that Councillor Wakefield referred to. I think it was spotted fairly early on that dates had been set erroneously with group meetings not in mind, and Councillor Leadley said yesterday that Morley Independents also have their group meetings on a Monday. It might be easier to organise and slip them by a couple of hours if you have only got four phone calls to make, but it is a lot more difficult if you have 40 people to accommodate, so therefore I think all the right channels of communication have been engaged in.

I wrote a very conciliatory note to the chair of the committee. He said he was going to consult other people and come back to me. Some of the people he consulted copied me to the responses kindly, but I never got a response back. I tried through Officers to get a response before the Monday: "Are we on? Are we off? Are we changing or not changing?" And at the end of the day for the reasons that are

made very clear by Councillor Wakefield, it is the democratic right of those three Labour Members to attend the group meeting. There can be no ifs and buts about that. We would have left it in the capable hands of John and the Whips but the press announcement and the press statement made by Robert is just beyond the pale. He has known about this for months. He has abused his chairmanship by not actually accommodating people on his own committee. I said to him, "Just move it by a couple of hours" and we would do exactly as Councillor Galdas has said. "If you show willing, we will show willing." You know, we will leave one person behind. But to totally refuse to do it when there are other meetings in the diary that also clash is unacceptable. It is not acceptable, so therefore either we have a stand-off which I don't want to have or we come to an amicable solution where the chair listens to the whole of the committee and has the meetings when they are more convenient. Simple as that.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Lord Mayor, it is perhaps not typical of me to be in this sort of controversial situation, but before we clear away the stench of hypocrisy, let's deal with some facts here at this particular point; okay? This particular date was agreed by the Labour Members earlier on in the year. This particular date is one that is broadcast so those people we actually represent can be aware and make sure that they get themselves to that particular meeting.

Now, the Liberal Democrats, to their credit, have a group meeting. They basically say, "Fair enough, we will make sure that we get somebody there so that it is quorate. We adjust our group meeting to make sure that happens." I am sure even Councillor McArdle has his own group meeting and adjusts it to actually accommodate things, unasked. What is quite interesting about this particular one, because the truth of the matter is we started at 5 o'clock. Their group meeting starts at half past 6. Now, you might say why the hell can they not send one of their particular councillors along perhaps for the first hour to make the meeting quorate?

Now, perhaps - perhaps - there is a suggestion there all three of them need to be there because they don't trust each other and they can't actually delegate the trust down. I don't know. (Applause) I don't know, but what we got back at the previous Area Committee Meeting was an ultimatum, "You change or we will make sure that that meeting is not quorate." We do not respond well in Morley to threats.

Now, the Labour Party believed it had the right to rule in Morley, notwithstanding they had been eliminated. They believed they had the right to rule. They believed they had the right to dictate to everybody else in that Area Committee about when the meeting will be held and if they don't do, what they will do is actually rob community groups of the funding they actually need, put back community safety programmes because they want to make a political point.

What is happening to this particular Council? Who ultimately are they representing? Are they there to represent the views of their communities, or are they there to follow the party line? This is an absolute total example of following the party line. I am given a direction, I will stick with that particular direction, and that's what we have got here. There is a time of opportunity between 5 o'clock and 6 o'clock where they could have got one, they could have got two of their Members there. They chose not to do that. Why? Because the party line holds sway within that Area Committee. They are not interested in representing the community who actually put them there. They are actually there to make sure that they follow the directions that are passed on high by Peter Gruen or Keith Wakefield or whoever.

And what is an absolute disgrace - what is an absolute disgrace - is this hypocrisy that you get talking about the democratic process. What they are basically saying notwithstanding --- Okay, I will calm down. Calm down. Notwithstanding the fact that they don't have democratic support in that Area Committee, is that "If we can't have things our way, like little kids, we are not going to turn up and we will put you lot in a situation where you can't make any decisions." That is what they call democracy; the minority dictates to the majority.

Well, we are not prepared to accept it out in Morley. They have been eliminated from Morley because they served Morley very, very badly. That's why they have been eliminated, and we are in a situation where ultimately we aren't going to be prepared to accept their dictation about when we will meet just because they can attend.

I still reconfirm what I said to the actual papers. You don't put the party line first. You put the community that you represent first. The LibDems do. The Morley Borough Independents do. The Independent does. The Labour party doesn't. That is fundamentally the difference.

Now, let us deal with the actual record of this particular area committee and say that we are grateful to Councillor Procter for his views on what may happen at the Morley Leisure Centre, and we would also ask, like a lot of the other groups here in the outer areas to say we do believe we haven't had a fair deal over the last 24 years in the Morley area. When it comes to regeneration we would hope that our plan that was agreed by the Labour Councillor who could be arsed turning up at that meeting that we do have full support and that we will start to get a fairer deal, and I am grateful for those few positive comments that we have actually got at this particular point.

Now, I do hope after this full and frank exchange of views that we will not have this sort of childish behaviour from the Labour Party in the future. Now, I hope so. I hope so. We looked at what Peter said to us. We tried to accommodate, but you can't basically say to the other nine councillors, "You fit in because the Labour Party

needs an hour or so to sit at home before they go to the group meeting, and that's what is reasonable". I don't think it is. I don't think it is.

So ultimately can I just say the Outer South Area Committee has done an excellent job. Apart from this issue, it has been a very, very positive experience. And the final thing that I would say is that we have had an area co-ordinator, Jackie Ingham, who is due to leave us at the end of this particular week, who has done an astoundingly good job. I would certainly like to finish by paying tribute to her commitment, to her ideas and her drive. She will be sadly missed, but I think it was important for us all to recognise the contribution that she has made. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: I call on Councillor Harris to exercise the right of final reply.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: First of all, Councillor Finnigan's last contribution, can I just seek clarification? You did say, didn't you, that they couldn't be arsed to attend?

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Point of personal explanation: "arsed" I think is the correct northern phrase. "Couldn't be arsed".

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: I see. (Interruptions) A long time ago I seem to remember Councillor McArdle raised the question of flooding and I just want to say that the administration, and it is a serious issue, are going to have to look at the whole implication. I mean, it is a rising problem. It doesn't appear to be a one-off. Exactly what the reason is, I suspect it is very complicated but the administration has already this year committed £300,000 from contingency to try and alleviate future problems of flooding in certain parts of the City, and we are looking at it very carefully, albeit I have to say that clearly the major responsibility does not rest with us but people do look to the Council to show leadership.

Councillor Finnigan equally a long time ago raised the question of simplifying the taxation system, and I couldn't agree more with him that I would like to tell Council that yesterday I took the opportunity of going to a benefits assistance stall we were running in Kirkgate market and we literally over several days had hundreds of people come on to the stall to ask the Council for help with benefits and with their income, the rent they were paying, what benefits they were entitled to and, of course, the whole system is so staggeringly complicated. The system that is meant to provide a safety net for the most vulnerable people in our society is literally unfathomable. It is almost impossible to understand the ins and outs of the way our benefits and taxation system works and, of course, that is the dreadful irony, isn't it? The system designed to help the most vulnerable is actually impossible for them to understand because they are very often the people with the worst education which has led them to be in that situation in the first place. So, yes, we do need to simplify that, but the Council will

continue doing what it can to make the system easier, more accessible, showing people what benefits they are entitled to, even if they are not claiming them.

Councillor Elliott mentioned Queen Street and it has already been said, I don't know by whom, but I think it was Councillor Cleasby, wasn't it, that indeed we want all our streets to be clean. That is correct. I had a quick word with my colleague, Councillor Smith, whilst you were speaking and he confirms to me that City Services is looking at new initiatives that can be implemented to further improve the standard of street cleaning that we have in this City, and so we hope that that will in due course become evident and noticeable.

Finally - well, finally as concerns what I want to say - I come to Councillor Gruen's contribution on Roundhay Park, and in particular two points he raised which he very carefully, very cleverly connected. One was the value of the lease, the long lease, for Roundhay Golf Course, and the other was the accessibility of facilities in Roundhay Park.

On the question of the lease, it is - I can't make my mind up whether it is pathetic or whether it is dishonest to raise that in this Council when he knows full well, as would have been the case when you were in charge of the administration, when papers come to us that are pink and that are financially confidential on Officer advice, as was the case with you, you would never, ever have released delicate financial information into the public domain if it was classified pink. None of us would. It is absurd that you are now suggesting that we are trying to cover something up or hide behind the system. That is the system we have all agreed and held to that when papers are pink they are confidential, below the line, and we do not bring them into the public domain, and for you to suggest that there is some sort of jiggery-pokery, well, it is either pathetic or it is deliberately misleading. But in any event it shows how quickly you have forgotten about the responsibility of administration, and how quickly you have slipped into Opposition mode. Indeed, there is an argument to say you always were in Opposition mode but you just never realised it.

But you then went on - I look forward to you coming back to it - you then went on to make a very unpleasant assertion that somehow the administration was creating - and you said us, the administration - were creating a personal fiefdom, some sort of private club in Roundhay Park which was for our exclusive use where the public were excluded. Now, I ask you directly, are you accusing me, because I am part of this administration, of somehow trying to feather my nest or to create private facilities which only I and members of this administration intend to use? Is that your assertion or accusation? Because if it is you are in for trouble, because if you get up and confirm that is your assertion because that is what you said, well, we will have to consider taking it further because nobody on this side is involved in that sort of practice.

However, one of the most interesting things about being in control is we have got the key to all the filing cabinets now. Now, there are millions of filing cabinets and actually a lot of the keys have been mixed up. That probably explains, actually, why perhaps you weren't able to open the filing cabinets in Social Services, because you had lost the keys, but we are beginning to work out which keys open which filing cabinets in which dusty, dingy basements, and as Andrew suggested earlier we opened a very interesting filing cabinet which has got the title "Parsonage Road" on it, and you have the temerity to suggest that somehow we are involved in jiggery-pokery.

Somebody on your side (Interruptions) Yes, you intimated it. Somebody on your side ---

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen, would you let the Leader finish the winding up, please. I am surprised, really; you ought to know better. We don't do duets. Just let him finish winding up. (Interruptions)

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Unfortunately, Lord Mayor, because he has such scant regard for his own leader, I am afraid he shows the same ill manners towards me.

Now, Parsonage Road, somebody on your side is going to have to explain not just how it got from 79th to 1st on the list but how on earth your administration committed £25,000 from the Housing budget - the Housing budget - to repair a private road. Now, if that doesn't beg questions about very strange financial management and jiggery-pokery, I don't know what is.

We have got the keys to all the filing cabinets, as we have over Social Services. We are going to hold you accountable for the complete utter mess that you created. (Applause)

(The Minutes were received)

ITEM 9 - WHITE PAPER MOTION -
WEST LEEDS COUNTRY PARK AND GREEN GATEWAY

COUNCILLOR A. CARTER: My Lord Mayor, it gives me great pleasure to move this particular White Paper motion. For those people who have difficulty knowing precisely where West Leeds is, we have even included a map. I grant you it is not the best map in the world, but it does indicate the areas that I am talking about.

I would also like to thank Members of Council because I understand there will be all-party support for the resolution and I note Councillor McKenna is speaking and I thank him for his words of support over this past 12 months or so whilst Councillor Blackburn and I have been trying to pilot this forward.

My Lord Mayor, basically, what we are seeking to do is to bring to the Executive Board a recommendation from this Council which will result in significant protection being given to very important areas of green space that cover a number of wards in this City: Pudsey, Farnley and Wortley, Calverley and Farsley, Horsforth, Bramley, Armley and Kirkstall - a significant number of wards, all of which are in either the West or North-West of the City.

We are seeking to protect an area of very valuable green spaces, many of which have been maintained and enhanced by voluntary groups over a number of years. I think particularly of the Rodley Nature Reserve, the Rodley Wetlands, I should say, the Kirkstall Valley and Park, Calverley Woods and certainly Post Hill, areas of significant environmental importance, areas accessible to the citizens of Leeds.

What we want to see is, first of all, a horseshoe that runs from Kirkstall through to Horsforth and Calverley and Farsley Wards, joining Pudsey and running down the other side of the valley, linking in Farnley and Wortley Ward, but then hopefully that horseshoe will become more of a circle because what we want to establish is green linkages at the city centre end that give a very long and attractive circular route that joins together some of the most historic parts of the City of Leeds.

It has already been welcomed by the voluntary groups who are very active. I think by getting this City to make this sort of commitment, first of all through the Council and then the Executive Board, we can make sure that officers of the authority who, incidentally, are also extremely supportive of the proposal, that officers of the authority will flag up anything that looks like a threat or, not necessarily a threat but anything that might have an influence on those important green areas and the linkages we want to create. I think by formally establishing the West Leeds Country Park and Green Gateway we are creating something of lasting importance for future generations.

We have a wonderful City in terms of our major parks. Roundhay has been mentioned ad nauseam today, but there is Templenewsam, there is Lotherton, there is the work that has been done in Golden Acre Park, for example, but we do need to make sure that in these areas where there is not a single major park in the terms of Golden Acre and in terms of Lotherton, that we do link together the valuable green spaces that we have because it will create a wonderful - in my view, a wonderful - linear green area telling the history of our City to the western side that was not only for us but for future generations, and I do thank Members for their support. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR D. BLACKBURN: Lord Mayor, it gives me great pleasure in seconding this White Paper motion on the West Leeds Country Park. As someone who has lived all my life in the West Leeds area, I fully appreciate the wonders of Farnley, of

Post Hill, places like Calverley Woods, the Kirkstall Valley, the canal coming down through Armley, various areas like that, and I want to do my part in maintaining and enhancing those areas for future generations.

One of the great things about being brought up in Leeds was we are a big city but you are never far away from sort of green fields and parkland. Some of this is down to our predecessors, going back to the Victorian times, and we have to thank those people for the far-sighted view which made Leeds a city quite different from any other.

This motion gives us and our generation the opportunity to do the same and leave a lasting legacy for our grandchildren and future generations. For somebody who, quite a few years ago now, worked with the Post Hill Action Group and members from varying political backgrounds to defeat the proposal to turn Post Hill into a ski slope, it is most gratifying to find this wonderful wooded area as part of this proposal in forming part of this great green link stretching from Farnley through Pudsey and Calverley and down the Kirkstall Valley to Armley.

I hope all Members will support this White Paper and do their part in leaving a real, meaningful legacy for future generations. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR McARDLE: My Lord Mayor, following on from Councillor Blackburn, I will just make a few observations. The area of Leeds has over 1,000 hectares of woodland and on Scrutiny Leisure again last year we looked at the urban forestry strategy and also the current play system, Leeds 10 year play system, and I think this is extremely beneficial to all Leeds. I don't think it is just West Leeds. I think it is a wonderful opportunity to create a gateway.

I think I should also just mention that Leeds City Council has a fantastic calibre of arboriculturists, one of who is the president of the International Arborical Society, and I am pretty certain that he will be fully supportive of this. I am actually surprised I didn't see the two Councillors Carter in Calverley Woods on 30th July because there was Ted Green of the Ancient Tree Forum there discussing all sorts of deadwood habitats, and what-have-you, and again I would say that if you get the chance listen to Ted Green when he is on the radio or within the Tree Warden Days that are put on by Leeds City Council Arboriculture Officers.

Just one word of caution, I would estimate that the majority of problems that are created with trees are because they are in the wrong place. Lots of trees are planted around developments, and it goes back to this 106 issue that Councillor Finnigan mentioned earlier. Too often developers have a Section 106 Agreement, put in a load of landscaping and then they are forgotten about. It is not ill-maintained, it is just not maintained and we need to address that problem on a greater and wider

level. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: Lord Mayor, Members of Council, I am happy to support Andrew's White Paper, and certainly Andrew I think has gone about this the right way. He called a meeting on 13th June when he involved all councillors and local groups and the latest paper I have seen that has gone to the Area Committee seeks to involve more community groups, agencies, facilitators, and anybody who has got an interest in the natural environment. I think it is very inclusive and it is great credit to Andrew.

You are right, Andrew, about the map. I remember at a time when my concerns on the Supertram, while somewhat different at times than somebody else in this chamber, but I won't go there, I helpfully sent a map to a very senior officer in Metro pointing out where West Leeds was, that there seemed to be divided transport. It didn't do me any good, Andrew. I hope it does you a lot of good.

Talking about consultation, Andrew, I would ask that you take on board consultation with the local group on St. Ann's Mills and the other side of the river, the proposed Kirkstall Park is very much part of it.

The only thing, when it came to the Area Committee, I did ask what all of you ask, you know. You all say it, "Where is the money coming from? Where is the budget?" It is important and you can't do anything unless there is a budget, and I know I am straying into a danger area because I am going to get 24 years. I am going to get 24 years of neglect of the great parks under Labour, but let me tell you before you --- You know, I don't want to get too political. I have lived in Leeds 40 years and I have to tell you the neglect of our parks didn't start 24 years ago, it is all the 40 years I have lived in Leeds. If there was a policy towards our parks that Councillor Driver has referred to in Middleton, Beeston, great parks like Armley, if we had a policy it was one of benign neglect.

Now, quite rightly you talk about Roundhay. It is a premier park. I remember as a teenager swimming in the Lido - I think it is Lido they called it, not Lido. It is Lido, outdoor swimming, that has gone, but it is right we should put into it, but if it takes £1.25 million to come up with a scheme for The Mansion, when you look at the area involved in this, we are looking at many millions, and I hope --- You are very influential and I hope he has deep pockets and long arms and puts the money available.

But to give you an answer when I asked for finance regarding the officer, and I have to say maybe he wasn't as well-briefed as he thought he should have been because he was a replacement, another Officer was at Parks & Country in Torquay or somewhere, and he was trying to be helpful. I said, "Where does the money come

from?" and he said, "We will be putting a bid on from Green Leeds." Great, I hope it is a seven-figure. I hope it is a big one, but I have never heard that sort of figure from Green Leeds. And then he said, Andrew, and you will be interested because I will come to you. You are Chair of Outer West. He said, "We will come to the Area Committees and we will ask you to fund the post for a Development Officer." Well, we may well do that because Inner Area are committed to it, but it is adding up to little amounts of money.

Another paper we dealt with was regarding security measures on New Wortley Cemetery and, by the way, Andrew, we ought to think of allotments and cemeteries as well. A lot of these place around the City can fit into this, New Wortley Cemetery, St. Mary's. Armley is blessed with a lot of allotments. We ought to consult them and say, for security improvements, are they willing to let people use public open space through the allotments. They may say, "No", but we should talk to them.

But, anyway, it was costing £15,000 that Councillor Harper, Councillor Lowe, Denise, Ted and Neil took. There was a lot of damage, so we came up with a scheme where we asked leisure to contribute. It was £16,000 it was going to cost. We asked them to contribute £5,000. The Area Committee was going to put in £5,000 of our own money and we persuaded Leeds West Homes to put in another £5,000. Leisure came back to us and said, "We can't afford £5,000. We can only offer you £3,000 out of our budget." Now, you have told us all this money you have put in. It is not coming into Armley, Andrew. It is not coming into our parks.

Now, Leisure has functional responsibility for New Wortley Cemetery and they are not prepared to put in. I think that is a disgrace, quite frankly, and the committee under Councillor Atkinson is taking it up, but we need money. We need you to get into this guy's ribs and we need money.

It is going to be a great plan. It is bold, it is daring, it is exciting, we are involved with everybody. We all support you, Andrew, but get a budget. Get a budget and let's move forward, and we won't have some of the political knock-about that we have had in here today, but do remember we have many great parks, as Councillor David Blackburn said, bequeathed to us by our Victorian forefathers, and they probably were forefathers, and sadly neglected by benign neglect. Walking round many of the parks ---

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor McKenna, you have run out of time, I am afraid. Thank you, Councillor McKenna.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: I need to declare an interest, my Lord Mayor. I am a member of the board of Kirkstall Valley Park Ltd.. It is a personal interest. I don't know whether Councillor Harper has done the same.

COUNCILLOR HARPER: Yes, I have.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Illingworth to make a declaration similarly.

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: I have already done so, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR A. CARTER: My Lord Mayor, I think I should explain to Councillor McKenna, I don't need to get into anybody's ribs, we have a joint administration and we talk these things through and we generally come to a very sensible conclusion, which is why we invested £500,000 out of Revenue for capital works in parks in this financial year, and Councillor McKenna that actually included Gotts Park in Armley, so I think you might have forgotten that but there is a substantial scheme for Gotts Park and I hope in the future we can spend more.

Although born in Pudsey, like Councillor Blackburn, I have had family in most parts of West Leeds, in fact in many parts of Leeds. I spent many years as a very young boy at Gotts Park, Farnley Park and indeed Charlie Cake Park, and how sad I am to see the state of Charlie Cake Park at the moment, and that is something we need to see sorted out. Many of you looking completely puzzled, haven't a clue where Charlie Cake Park is. Well, some of us know and hopefully we will get something done about it.

My Lord Mayor, budgets. The beauty of this proposal is that --- (Fire alarm sounded)

THE LORD MAYOR: The Council Meeting is suspended. Please leave the building in an orderly fashion. Thank you.

(Short adjournment)

THE LORD MAYOR: We will resume, Members of Council. There are some untrue rumours floating about, first of all that it is my fault because I am jinxed; wherever I go - Town Hall, Civic Hall, anything like that - the fire alarm goes off. Secondly, that it is Councillor Finnigan creating hot air in the chamber. That is not true either. Can we try to resume where we left off. I think it was Councillor Carter summing up on the White Paper.

COUNCILLOR A. CARTER: And thirdly, my Lord Mayor, that Councillor Gruen had set fire to the filing cabinets. (Laughter)

My Lord Mayor, to conclude extremely briefly, this is not an issue about spending vast amounts of council money. It is to make sure that we get the

necessary investment to support the voluntary groups who are already maintaining many of these green areas. Yes, certainly to make sure we can make use of 106 monies to enhance particularly the Council land along the route in question, and also that the Area Committees, and I hope the Area Committees will, look favourably upon a modicum of funding to try and enhance these routes.

My Lord Mayor, I thank Council for their support and I move the resolution.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Can I call for the vote in favour of the motion.

(The motion was carried unanimously)

After the next White Paper, which I will call in a moment, we will be taking tea, so can I invite the members of the public who have so valiantly returned with us to witness the rest of the Council Meeting to join us for tea in the Banquet Hall.

ITEM 10 - WHITE PAPER MOTION - LEEDS' PALS MEMORIAL

COUNCILLOR A. CARTER: My Lord Mayor, I think it is appropriate to try and resolve in unanimity today the resolution before you. It is particularly appropriate, I think, because we were commemorating only a few weeks ago the 60th anniversary of the end of the Second World War.

The conflict I am talking about is the Great War, the war to end all wars, and how sad that is that that wasn't the case. Homes for heroes - you name it, all the sayings that went with that very bitter conflict between 1914 and 1918, when countries all across Europe almost sleep-walked into conflict.

It would seem to me to be very sad if there was not in the City of Leeds, and I am aware and I am sure Councillor Lancaster when she seconds this will refer to the memorial that does exist, and indeed a memorial that also did exist in the Leeds Parish Church, and I am sure she will touch on that as well, but I think it is appropriate that we commemorate in some lasting way in some central location the Leeds pals, the 15th Service Battalion 1st Leeds Prince of Wales Own West Yorkshire Regiment, more famously known as the Leeds Pals.

They were created to provide front line support. You remember the other saying, "It will be over by Christmas". The Leeds pals were formed when people became painfully aware that it was not going to be over by Christmas or for many Christmases to come. The idea of Pals Battalions was that volunteers would join and serve with friends, with relatives, workmates and colleagues, giving a feeling of comradeship. Most major towns and cities, as you are all well aware, along with

Leeds raised Pals Battalions. It seemed like a good idea. It only added to the tragedy that subsequently unfolded.

Businessmen and local dignitaries were recruited, often as officers, with many of the people who had worked for them or with them. Britain and Leeds supplied its finest. Several famous sportsmen of the day were recruited in Leeds; a famous footballer, Maurice Fleming, another famous footballer of the day, Evelyn Lintot, later to be commissioned a Leeds City and international footballer. Not Leeds United, Leeds City footballer. Among other recruits were Major Booth, Arthur Dolphin and Roy Kilner of Yorkshire County Cricket Club fame.

By 8th September 1914 the Battalion had enlisted over 1200 men, although the final number of Leeds Pals rose to almost 2,000. All of them, groups of them, friends and relatives. Each man chosen to be a pal had something special to offer, be it former military experience, leadership qualities, physical training, hence the number of sportsmen who were involved, but the average age was only between 20 and 21.

Killed in action rather early on in the war were twin brothers aged 21, killed within weeks of each other, and many other such stories can be related. But then on 1st March 1916 the Pals set sail for Marseille for the Battle of the Somme as that huge conflict became imminent, and the battle was to prove very tragic for the Leeds Pals. 900 were involved and 750 died, again so many of them friends and relatives.

Obviously any memorial that we erect should be in consultation with relatives of those people who died and suffered, suffering in the trenches that we, I think all of us, cannot imagine. If you look at all the wars since, and there have been far too many of those, the suffering in the trenches in the Great War must have been unimaginable.

I know that we have been looking for a while at some sort of area in the city centre that can commemorate individuals who performed great service or lost their lives, and I know that John Thorpe, the Civic Architect, is pursuing that, and it may be that when the report comes back to Executive Board this monument could be a centrepiece for that sort of reflective area, an area that people can go not necessarily to feel sad, although there is sorrow involved, but can go just to reflect and to look at some of the names of people who have served this City, but particularly to remember those who fell in the Great War. So what I am asking is for this report to come to the Executive Board so that we can take on board a whole variety of suggestions and to come up with something that we can be proud of as a memorial but will remind us all, and future generations, of the suffering and service of the Leeds Pals.

My oldest living relative is now 96, lived in Leeds all her life and now is in one of our excellent elderly people's homes, and I went to see her a few weeks ago. She

actually remembers as a young girl, about the same age as my son, nine, at the end of the war and remembers seeing the men in the streets of Leeds who had come back with arms, with legs, with limbs missing, still seriously injured and bandaged, and families trying to help them and collecting money to help them, giving them almost alms for the poor to people who had served this country. How sad.

So I would like to think that before the Great War is no longer something that can be remembered by any living citizen we make sure there is a fitting monument to the service and dedication and the suffering of those young men who died for this country and for this city. I move, my Lord Mayor. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR LANCASTER: Lord Mayor, I am absolutely delighted to be asked to second this White Paper. The information that Councillor Carter has given about the Leeds Pals, we did hear some of that and other Members made their contributions when a White Paper was brought a year last April to this Council about a monument which is in Colsterdale, near Masham, so I thought it would be useful to give an update as to what has happened since then and after the White Paper - and I think initially it was a resident in my own ward who asked about this memorial. She had found it up in Colsterdale and asked what it was about, about the Leeds Pals, and who was looking after it. So that led to a lot of discussions and I know Councillor Mike Fox did try to resolve this issue about who owned the land, whose responsibility it was, so it was very long involved discussions. I have to say I thank the Legal Department, particularly Patrick Kelly and Alison Bones, who did a lot of research in the Archives, who helped to bring that paper to Council, and obviously the Members fully backed it to consider in which way we could support and look after this memorial. So the outcome was that a report went to the Learning & Leisure Officer Board recommended that the Earl of Swinton's estate will take on the maintenance at a cost of £1,000 a year, and there was an allocation of £2,000 in case it needed some minor repairs.

Now, after the paper was mentioned in the Yorkshire Evening Post I did receive a letter from Lieutenant-Colonel Crossland from Harrogate who said that the cutting from the Yorkshire Evening Post had been passed on to him, which referred to the efforts to ensure the future upkeep of the memorial. "This was very encouraging news for me as my father was one of the original Pals, having joined in August 1914 with unbroken service until disbanded in February 1919. He was in the Somme Offensive on 1st July 1916 and in later years he was a lifelong supporter of their Old Comrades Association of which he served a Chairman for a time. I followed my father into the parent regiment, the West Yorkshire Regiment, serving as a regular officer for some 34 years and since retiring and returning to live in Yorkshire I have visited the cairn, as it is known, on many occasions, and invariably on July 1st and on Remembrance Sunday when those present hold an informal service. During the year my wife and I go up there to do a bit of gardening and general tidying up and from

what I see I feel sure that there are others who tend the memorial to the best of their ability", and that was one of the concerns, because people are getting older, they are finding it very difficult to go up there and tend it, and when it was brought to my attention - I think it must have been when Lieutenant-Colonel Crossland was not well because he didn't go up there for a while and it had been neglected for a little while - but we know from going up there, I go up quite regularly now, we know that there are a lot of people, a lot of supporters, who do keep an eye on it.

When I brought it to Council, as I have said, it was when I got the book out of the library and during tea break I don't know if anybody wants to just look through it, it is the connection with the Council, with the Lord Mayor at the time, and how he disposed his income to recruit the Leeds Pals, and for me that was very significant, that all these people had lost their lives but it was the connection with the Leeds City Council and that is what I was hoping to do, to make that connection.

So we have got an opportunity, I have discussed this with the Lord Mayor earlier. When I was invited up to the Remembrance Day service, I was also invited up on July 1st to lay a wreath in the Leeds Pals colours. Peter Lazonby from the Yorkshire Evening Post as well, he attended, and there was a real enthusiasm to re-enact that dedication because the plaque has been replaced and some minor works done, so we have got an opportunity and the Lord Mayor has agreed to go up on 28th September 1935, and that is when the original memorial was dedicated.

So I also want to thank Andrew Middlemass as well from the Parks & Countryside Department who has been very instrumental in working with Lord Swinton's estate to see what was needed doing.

So finally this White Paper I feel is the next step. We are sorting out the --- I'm sorry, I know it is the red light but it is just to say really that this is the next step. We have got the cairn at Colsterdale sorted out and we welcome this White Paper, and thank you very much, and I am really heartened to hear that the feelings and comments of family and friends will be taken into consideration. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Lancaster. I can't imagine why, but I hadn't noticed the red light.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Lord Mayor, as far as I am concerned, to get up to speak on this, it is the old West Yorkshire Regiment. How it was formed has been stated. Lord Kitchener used to be on a big recruiting poster, Lord Kitchener, and his eyes followed everybody round and his finger followed everybody round and it said, "Your Country Needs You", and why the country needed these young lads was because the amount of losses occurred in France. There was some General (?) Bieshalon said

there's an acceptable number of casualties that they could send and they are sending them over the top and over the top, and it's like being in a pub and running out of money. They finally found that they were running out of people to get killed on this battle front.

The conditions that they lived under was absolutely --- they drowned in mud in their own trenches, and it was later when they were drying out that the bodies started to come up. They lived on hard tack and bully beef. Of course, that is regular food that most of them get when you are up the line. But Lord Kitchener lost so many troops and his generals lost so many troops across here that he had to recruit right across the country, and in Leeds what it was, the West Yorkshire Regiments that were formed way before that but they had to form additional battalions, and I think it was the 15th Battalion, I just don't know, the 15th Battalion was the Leeds Pals, and what happened, they were sent for a few weeks' training and then sent over to join over the top.

The conditions were absolutely ridiculous. If it had been now they would have just simply said, "We are getting the boat home." Why I know some of the conditions is that my dad was wounded on the Somme but he served in an Irish Regiment and he was wounded on the Somme. He lost the use of his right hand, and they put them on troop ships, they were loaded up on troop ships, sent across and the first train that came along, hospital trains that came along, they sent them off to different cities. Most of the Leeds Pals, including my dad, were sent up to the hospital in Leeds, Chapel Allerton Hospital, which was a military hospital, sent up there in Leeds.

What happened is that all what Andrew said is quite right. All the streets, the back-to-backs, the big houses and all the lot, had all sent somebody but by that time the age was getting younger and younger. They sent all the 30 year olds, the 25 year olds, everybody else, they were getting younger. I mean, when I see my grandchildren that went to live in Spain for a year at 20 and I am thinking, "Will he be alright? Will he be doing this, and will he be doing that?" and you think of lads a lot younger than that and some of them had joined up at 15 years of age and a blind eye was turned to them. It was absolutely ludicrous was this war, but we're not on about that, we're on about why we should not forget them. Why we should not forget them is because the hard core of people at Leeds, irrespective of whether you were an officer or whether you were a private, you still had to go over that trench at the top and face these machine guns and barbed wire, etc. Ludicrous.

The people back home, the mothers, sweethearts, wives, etc., how they could tell the people were in the Leeds Pals, they used to have what they called sweetheart badges, and these badges were like you wear your battalion hat badge but these were made down to a brooch so that they could wear back home. In actual fact, it is only a few months ago that somebody brought me one to ask me what it was, and I

said, "That's a Leeds Pals sweetheart badge". They're not worth any money, only a bit of, you know, now as it is, see how sentimental they are.

There is a pub in Richmond Hill that used to have a little glass case and the mother had sent her son that was just 18 a parcel. This parcel arrived two days too late because he got killed two days beforehand. There was a pair of hand-knitted socks in it, five Woodbines and a sweet loaf for them to have, and that's the sort of thing that we do.

I am delighted that you put this White Paper down, Andrew. As far as I am concerned, when they came back from the front, as you said, what they said is that we will have a land fit for heroes to live in. Within a year most of them wounded people were selling matches on the corner, etc.. It was a disgrace was the war, it was a disgrace when they came back. I am pleased that all parties in this room recognise the suffering and the conflicts that everybody went through, and I support this White Paper. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR C. NASH: In 1914 John Doherty was living with his mother and step-father at 34 Cobden Road, Wortley. He had attended New Farnley Council School and he had played the fife in the New Farnley Fife and Drum Band, and in 1904 age 11 he had accompanied the carriage of the then newly installed Lord Mayor Robert Armitage after his installation ceremony at the Town Hall. In later years he captained Farnley Cricket Club second team and he was a member of Wortley Working Men's Club and also Farnley Parish Church. He was working as a clerk with Farnley Ironworks. He was a very ordinary man who got caught up in an unnecessary conflict.

When the Pals attacked (?)Sara on 1st July 1916, John and another family man were reported missing but it was 6 months before their families knew for certain that they were dead. The cost of that one day has never been fully accounted. There were 58,000 casualties at least and 20,000 men are thought to have died. The newly-trained Kitchener army was annihilated. The volunteers or the Pals almost ceased to exist.

The survivors of this and other battles came home after the war to no counselling, no compensation and often unemployment. We sleepwalked into conflict, said Councillor Carter. I very much hope we never do so again.

I very much welcome this proposal for a memorial to these people who died and I hope also that this particular memorial will form part of our new Council Peace Trail which has been designed to raise issues about war, peace, conflict, justice and peace-making, and I thank the Lord Mayor for having launched that trail in August. We are delighted that we can support this proposal for a memorial to the Leeds Pals.

COUNCILLOR A. CARTER: My Lord Mayor, I think there is little more to add, other than that it is amazing that when a debate like this takes place all sorts of information comes out. Councillor Lancaster has just shown me a cap badge from the Leeds Pals that she was presented with. Councillor Procter then said to me, "I've got one of those. My great uncle was in the Pals", and so local connections just reoccur all the time. It underlines, I think, the need to move ahead with this monument, whatever we ultimately decide, this commemoration of the Leeds Pals.

One thing Brenda did not have time to mention but it is information that she has given to me, is that there was in fact a small statue in Leeds Parish Church in the Lady Chapel which is missing or has gone and it would cost about £2,000 to replace that. Unless somebody jumps up and down I would suggest to Council that is one thing that we could talk to the Parish Church about straight away, and then we will bring a report to Executive on the matters that are laid out in the Executive Board paper.

I do thank Members of Council for their support. As a student of history for many years, starting when I was a young boy, I had the horrific stories told to me by our then next door neighbour who was one of the many young men who volunteered, as Mick indicated, under-age, lied about his age to get in for this glorious war to end all wars and found himself as a courier running between the trenches, found himself injured and lying for days almost buried in mud, and he never really recovered, certainly not emotionally, but it was the sort of thing that went on for very, very many people.

Ladies and gentlemen, we should not forget things like that in the hope that future generations might learn the lessons a little better than our generation has. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. (Applause)

(The motion was carried unanimously)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you very much indeed. We will now adjourn for tea. I hope that Officers and members of the public will join us in the Banquet Hall.

(Short adjournment)

ITEM 11 - WHITE PAPER MOTION - SUPERTRAM

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: My Lord Mayor, Council will remember that at the last Council Meeting I was passed a note by one of the Officers fairly late on in the day telling me that, much to our incredulity, the Under-Secretary of State at the Department for Transport had decided not to make a decision on Supertram before Parliament rose for the summer, and I think we received that news with incredulity

because we felt one way or the other we must surely have been at a point at which Westminster and Whitehall was in a position finally after 15 years to make its mind up.

It was then, I have to say, somewhat of a surprise but nevertheless very welcome to find out early the following week that Derek Twigg had sent a message to Keiron Preston asking that we go to London urgently to discuss with him how we were going to take the Supertram project forward, and we took that invitation at face value. It was clearly, from the very limited message we received, we took it as an invitation to go to a working meeting not a lobbying session. There was a handful of us, I think five of us. There were Les Carter, myself, the Chair of the Transport Authority, Keiron Preston, Paul Rogerson and a couple of other officers from Metro and, going down on the train, we were discussing what we thought we were going to, and we genuinely believed that we were either going to have to go into a meeting to be told the answer was "No", and we were preparing for a last ditch attempt to talk the Minister round, or we were going to be told "Yes" - maybe "Yes" with some caveats, and we prepared what we thought were the likely answers we would have to come up with on what we thought may be the caveats. Was there a funding gap? How could we bridge that gap from our resources in the City.

You will understand, therefore, that we were staggered, quite honestly, that within 5 minutes of getting into the meeting, after a very cursory discussion about Supertram, we were told that they wanted to change the entire discussion focus to a guided bus scheme, and although we attempted to reasonably dissuade the Minister and his advisers from this idea and explained that we were already past midnight with regard to Supertram, although we tried to turn it back upon this idea he was adamant that we had now to revisit - I say "revisit" because Metro have already done extensive work on guided bus schemes which they have as part of the Supertram bid in the first place, but we agreed with consultants appointed by the DFT we would urgently revisit the question of a guided bus, even though it seemed to us from before we even started the idea was flawed.

I say it was flawed specifically because with deregulation of buses, privatisation of buses, as we all know, we have absolutely no control outside of London over the public transport sector. We cannot determine fares. We cannot determine routes. We cannot determine regularity of service. It is entirely in the hands of the bus operators. I don't necessarily decry that, but when you are then talking about a multi-million pound infrastructure investment, let us say, in a guided bus system, we asked where would be our powers first of all to buy the land to run the track over, because our current CPO powers extend only to rail track, not to guided bus track, but we asked where would be our powers to compel the local bus operators to run a service similar to that of guided bus. To this we received no answer whatsoever, just that the re-examination had to take place.

We pressed the Minister on the issue of affordability. We said, "Tell us the price that the Treasury can afford. Tell us what you will spend in Leeds and if there is an affordability gap without any guarantees we will go back to Leeds, we will talk to the private sector partners, we will talk to our finance officers, we will see if there is a way we can bridge that gap." But he would not even tell us the figure that the DFT and the Treasury were prepared to spend on us, so it was almost like we had been metaphorically blindfolded and had our hands tied behind our backs and just sat there to be told, "These are the new rules".

But the most breath-taking aspect of the meeting was towards the end when I said, "Can we please try and set a date now for when we are going to come back and discuss with you what this last minute report concludes?" to which he said, "No, we won't set a date and I am not agreeing to meet you again to discuss this. Submit the report and we will take it from there."

Despite what people may think, I do not stand on ceremony. I am not a complete stuffed shirt. I don't think because I am temporarily the Leader of Council representing, as you know we all believe, this great City. I was not affronted because he sort of swatted me aside and I was the Leader of Leeds City Council. I was affronted that all of us there, who were genuinely doing our best to bat for Leeds, were just summarily dismissed, frankly, and told to go away as if our views and our input were completely invalid and irrelevant.

And so we are at a situation now - what is the date? I can't read my watch. Mid-September. We have no indication at all of what the Minister intends to do. I wrote to him following the meeting on 26th July. I wrote on 9th August raising these concerns, but saying that we would progress this urgent re-examination but raising our concerns and asking if he would address those, but I concluded by saying to him, rather maybe forthrightly, by saying that I was insisting that we must at least be given the chance, given the date on which, before the end of September when we could go back and discuss with him whatever the final findings of this new report were. My letter of 9th August has gone completely unanswered. Of course, we have had acknowledgement of receipt of letter but completely unanswered - not even the courtesy, and it would be a courtesy of saying, "Yes. This is so crucial to the future of this City, the City on which this Government builds its hopes for the entire growth of Yorkshire and Humber region, without what is due to happen in this City, growth in Yorkshire and Humber, the economic future of the sub-region, the region, the Leeds City region, its future -- well, the economic future of the region would be severely undermined, and a proper integrated public transport scheme is crucial to that. Not the decency, the courtesy of saying, "Yes, let's find a date so that we can get round the table and decide in the end whatever it is we must decide."

It is against that background that this White Paper is before us again. In my

mind, there is no question at all that we must once more - and all our partners in the City are lined up for this - we must once more, even if it is one minute to midnight, send a message back to London to say that we cannot be treated so dismissively, that they must come to the table and discuss this with us, and indeed we must have our preferred scheme, but at least give us the courtesy of discussing it. It is against that background that I move this White Paper. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (Applause)

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

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, you may not be surprised to hear that we in Morley will not be supporting this motion. Certainly there is a need for an early decision so that we can draw a line and move on. However, we will not lobby the Government for a positive decision on Supertram any more than we would lobby it for early proof positive of the existence of Father Christmas.

There is an air of desperation about Supertram supporters now. Some might accuse them of flogging a dead horse. Others might be reminded of the Fawley Towers sketch in which Basil thrashed his car with a tree branch because it wouldn't start. Certainly the lack of a decision is immensely damaging. My point when commenting formally on Supertram in 1993 in response to the Draft Leeds Unitary Development Plan was that it would cause planning blight by dragging on for years without getting anywhere. In reply, the author of the City Council's proof of evidence said, "The objector considers that it is unlikely that Supertram will be developed within the lifetime of the UDP." I do not agree with that assertion. The Leeds Supertram Act stipulates that a planning application must be approved within 5 years from July 1993 and that once approved the development must commence within 7 years. For those not so good with maths, that would have taken us up to July 2005 at the latest, though the powers have since been extended.

At one time I thought I had a friend in this matter outside Morley, and somebody has got to have a go at him because, you know, you lot will never get anywhere near him. In the Yorkshire Evening Post of 22nd October 1997 there was an article entitled, "Call to Scrap the Supertram. Time to re-think war on jams, says Tory". Unfortunately, that shaft of enlightenment seems to have gone only briefly upon the head of Councillor Andrew Carter. Councillors Harris and Carter should remember that they have pledged that the current Supertram bid, if it is still current, will be the last. We will hold them to account if they support another, or support what is claimed to be the same bid in which only the facts, figures, dates and names have been changed to protect the innocent, like some tale of the Old Wild West.

Under the thin shadow cast by the phantom of Supertram, Leeds has done well. It would do much better without it at all as that would concentrate minds and resources on public transport improvements which were affordable and achievable.

As one who uses public transport almost every day, I have a greater interest in that than most people in this chamber. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR J. LEWIS: Lord Mayor, I was interested to hear about Mark Harris's day out in London and his visit to the Minister, and all the great things he told the Minister about Supertram, but I think those of us on this side have some serious concerns about the actual depth of political support for Supertram that exists from the administration. We are aware that leaflets are going out dated 22nd July, 4 days before his meeting with the Minister, saying how pleased one of his backbenchers was that it doesn't look like Supertram is going to go ahead, and also he launches into the suggestion of a guided busway as a replacement for Supertram. Well, one of the Conservative backbenchers who ran for Parliament earlier this year put on his website a statement that a guided bus might be a better alternative for Supertram, so we do feel (Interruptions) ---

COUNCILLOR J. L. CARTER: We are a broad church, my friend.

COUNCILLOR J. LEWIS: Exactly, exactly, and it is becoming increasingly apparent at least that the standard Liberal Democrat modus operandi of having on any given issue more faces than a town hall clock applies to this one, just as it applies to many others, and I know that the leadership have got some big decisions still to make on the local contribution for Supertram, and it may one day before the Council and before the leadership have made these decisions whether casting round and saying other people have yet to make a decision is wise.

I understand that many in the business community and the political community and across the City presented a united face to the Minister that visited yesterday, David Miliband, and saying we need Supertram. However, in light of the fact that the administration does seem to have some political cracks and is not taking Supertram seriously, unfortunately my group cannot support this White Paper as it stands, and we hope (Interruptions) ---

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: Converts at last.

COUNCILLOR J. LEWIS: And we hope this will draw to a close soon. Thank you very much. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: My Lord Mayor, just to follow up on a point there from Councillor Lewis, in the recent Leeds North-West Campaign we fully backed the Supertram bid throughout, so I don't know who he was referring to with the leaflet but it certainly wasn't anyone in my ward or my constituency. Anyway, I will move on from that.

I don't know if anyone was watching "Look North" on July 26th when Councillor Harris and Carter went down to London. Those of you who did not will have seen me make my live TV début. Unlike Councillor Atha over there, I did not require an Equity card. I received a call saying I had 30 minutes to get to the BBC studio and I didn't even have time to ring my wife to tell her to put the video on. I was in Adel at the time and fortunately ---

COUNCILLOR LYONS: You looked very well. I don't know what you said.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Thank you. I will get to the point in a minute. Anyway, fortunately I had my suit on which isn't always the case. I arrived with 10 minutes to spare and they rushed me up to the studio where a waiting Christa Ackroyd asked me if it was my first time (Interruptions) ---

COUNCILLOR ATHA: What was the answer?

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: They were her words. I tried to keep a straight face. Anyway, as it was she said she would be kind and tell me the questions in advance. Five minutes to go and the nerves were settling. This was an interview about Supertram because I am the Chair of the Working Party on the PTA. Anyway, so she told me the questions. The first question came and went and I started to relax. Then she changed the script and asked me completely different questions, which I believe is not uncommon. Anyway, during that interview I stated the reason why the Government have been procrastinating over the Supertram decision was perhaps because they were awaiting the outcome of the Olympic bid.

Now, whilst I am pleased for London and very excited for the Olympics coming to our country, I wonder at what price. It would appear that our Supertram money has been diverted to improving transport systems in London and the Olympics. Well, I have got to ask the question that as soon as the Olympics were announced there was a Transport Commission set up for the Olympics, straight away, immediately, yet we wait 15 years for decisions.

Anyway, on that day a delegation from Leeds had a meeting with Derek Twigg and at the meeting he asked us to look at two things: Firstly, for technical details on the make-up of the local funding contribution and some aspects of risk, and secondly for further technical work to explore whether bus rapid transit would provide a lower-cost means of meeting the objectives on the Leeds Supertram.

Anyway, taking the second point first, yes, it would be cheaper but it would not meet the objectives of Supertram. I do not believe a rapid bus system is sexy enough to tempt people out of their cars. I accept it is a more flexible system but there also lies a weakness. I do not think people will make a life-changing decision to

move near the route. A stop or route could change with a bus. With Supertram it is fixed. It is a permanent route that will attract people to move into the areas it serves, places like the East of Leeds, you know, with the regeneration there. The perception is of a much more reliable service, too.

If you look at Sheffield, some say the tram network was built in the wrong place and the returns were initially poor, but as time has gone on people have gravitated towards the network and they are experiencing corridors of regeneration brought about by the tram.

Let's consider two other northern cities, Manchester and Liverpool. Supposedly Government money had been put aside for these projects, along with Leeds. Sadly, the first two have been unsuccessful in getting their Supertrams and ours at the moment is in abeyance, so where is the money for the other two projects? Already swallowed up by the Government and allocated to the Olympics, perhaps. But if not the money surely is available and we should be able to have our share of the money. There should be no problems now if there were three schemes and only one left to go forward.

The option we have left before us is to guarantee to the Government that it will cost no more than £355 million that they said was available for the scheme. This can be achieved and if everything can be put into place quickly enough, I believe it should force the Government's hand. They will either have to give us the money or explain to the people of Leeds why they do not want us to have modern transport systems that will not only see regeneration in the East of the City but ease the horrendous traffic delays on the A660, especially in Headingley, and to go back to my initial point, the Supertram has the full support of my local MP, the former Councillor for Headingley, and I will just digress slightly one more time to congratulate his successor James Monaghan over there and welcome him to these benches, and in doing so I would just like to mention that he is no Student Prince, recording an astonishing 58% of the vote when the students were at home for the summer.

Back to the message. As chair of Supertram I have had no notification from Officers that a decision from the Government is imminent. We have done everything that we have been asked by the Government. What message will it send to the people of Leeds if the Government ignores its public transport needs? (Applause)

COUNCILLOR D. BLACKBURN: Lord Mayor, and before Mick Lyons mentions it, I am the person that voted against Supertram,

COUNCILLOR LYONS: I wouldn't have said anything.

COUNCILLOR D. BLACKBURN: Well, you always do, Mick - though that was a long

time ago. The situation is, the only game in town is Supertram. I think it was some two, two and a half years ago when Councillor Wakefield had a discussion with the other party leaders regarding the situation regarding Supertram. The situation was then that it was needed from a City point of view for us all to sing from the same hymn sheet, for us all to press the Government for funding. We are not talking about something that is perfect, because I believe Supertram is far from perfect, but the fact is it is the only game that we are playing for, and for 15 years we have been mucked about by central government in its various forms, and I am not particularly necessarily going on about this one, but from both party governments we have been mucked about and pushed from pillar to post. We want a decision. We want something for Leeds. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Lord Mayor, Councillor Lewis has prompted me to make a few comments this evening. I hadn't realised when we started this discussion that we started talking about Supertram 15 years ago. Actually, it was slightly more than 15 years ago, as the more mature Members of the Council will recall. In fact, I suppose Councillor Lewis was probably in short trousers in those days and playing with a train set and not talking about one as we are at the moment!

I think the interesting thing, Lord Mayor, is the change in view on the Labour bench. Now, I can remember 16, 17 years ago being in discussions with the then leader of the Labour Group, who I think is now an MP, or he was at the last count, I haven't checked, and I think Andrew at the time and because we needed and it was vital that there would be unanimity among the Council on the proposals for Supertram. The case for Supertram was irrefutable. Its development potential for vast areas of the City was irrefutable and I have to say, even though Leeds has prospered in those years, I don't believe that the benefits of the Supertram, the financial benefits to the City, have diminished in any way.

Now we had political unanimity then. Councillor Blackburn says he voted against it. I am going back a little bit further than that, and we had long discussions. We did have long discussions and there was, I have to say, within council different views, and the famous guided bus. I have to say 16 years ago, before we even got into the Supertram business, we were discussing guided bus and various of the great and good on the Council travelled to various parts of the world where they had guided bus. Councillor Taggart certainly did. And, you know, an impressive system, but on balance it was decided by all the Council unanimously, nobody raised a hand against it.

Now, I have to say, and Andrew will forgive me on this, that I do think that the previous Government, those of you who can remember that far back, did do a bit of a filibuster on this one, I have to say. We did have problems with trying to persuade the then Minister to make a decision, and I think Andrew will admit that that was true.

They did have different financial priorities, but one thing that was always constant, I have to say, was the unanimity among the Council about what we do, and one of the things that always struck me was the guarantee, and I am looking over the wall at former Councillor Trickett's name there, who was saying to us, "Don't worry, come the General Election, when we get this lot out" - as he used to refer to them - "it won't be a problem because you will have Labour Government, you will have Labour Ministers and you will have Labour MPs batting for Leeds." (laughter)

Well, I have to say if it had been a Conservative Government or a Liberal Democrat Government and the Labour Party had been in control, they wouldn't have been saying, "I won't vote for this". In fact, they would have been leaping up to try and propose it.

Now, we have a choice. If you are saying to us, "Okay, we are not interested in Supertram, the Labour Group" - if you are saying that, that's fine, you can make that decision. Morley Independents have made it quite clear that they don't want Supertram, they have a different view. They are honest about that. They are absolutely straight and honest about that. I have to say, after what I have just heard from over here, I am not so sure about honesty over here. You know, either you support Supertram, in which case we all have to say "We support Supertram", come on, put your money where your mouth is or just say "No", and then we would know where we were, or you do what we have done here and say, "Oh no, we can't agree with that." So what you are really doing is saying -- or what you are doing if you vote against this is saying to us, "We don't believe in Supertram any more. We don't support Supertram any more. We will not put our hand up for Supertram any more", and at that point I have to say Ministers will say, "There isn't unanimity in Leeds any more. We don't have to do this. That's our back-out clause." (Applause)

COUNCILLOR ANDREW: My Lord Mayor, the mixed messages coming from Government on transport are really quite incredible. Over the last few months I have been working with other authorities in the West Yorkshire area developing the new Local Transport Plan, and to develop that plan for West Yorkshire and for Leeds in particular from the very outset we have had our hands tied behind our back by the Government. They have set four very strict criteria that they wanted us to meet within the Local Transport Plan, and included in those were accessibility, so there were jobs - people could get to jobs from all parts of the City - fair enough, and demand management. Personally, I think that was a clear sign that they wanted us to introduce road charging. But developing the Local Transport Plan has not been an easy task because meeting these criteria means that we need a decent public transport system, and plans for Supertram and other initiatives have been put forward but each time we get the same thing, knock back after knock back, delay after delay.

Already we have had the A64 quality bus corridor refused, and on Supertram,

which would help us meet much of these criteria, we have had no decision. What a sad state of affairs this is. Leeds is clearly the UK's favourite city, but clearly not in the eyes of this Government. Frankly, Lord Mayor, it is reminiscent of the famous scenes in Dickens' novel "Oliver", but instead of asking for more, all we are asking for is for our fair share, to develop a decent transport system for our first-class city or, at the very least, an answer. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Lord Mayor, I am going to carry on a theme which Councillor Campbell has started, because it was the reference to consistency from Councillor Lewis that actually made me put my name down on the paper. Councillor Campbell might not be aware since he was resting from his Council duties when this particular debate happened in the chamber, and I remember at the time because I addressed it to Councillor Lyons, who didn't look too pleased at the time, but I will remind the chamber that when it comes to consistency and when it comes to the campaign behind the Supertram, the Labour Party hasn't exactly been totally consistent themselves.

I am referring to Leeds North-West's recently departed MP, Harold Best, who, I will say, has been a very popular local politician, and this was referred to by the victorious Liberal Democrat MP, our own Gregg, in saying that he would wish to carry on that proud tradition that Harold Best had had within that constituency of being so popular and so well-trusted. I would, however, argue that one of the reasons why he was so very popular was because he did display those traits which Councillor Lewis tried to fix to the Liberal Democrats, which was that he tended to have a different face for whichever audience was in front of him. I refer with particular reference to the Supertram because after talking to residents in Cookridge who felt that they were being left out because the Supertram stopped at Boddington, he then called for the line to be extended to the airport, I seem to remember, to make sure that those people were taken into account. It hadn't been so long before that that a little bit further down the road at the Far Headingley village society meeting, who are a group of people who are very concerned about the local environment and conservation, he told them that he was fully behind their campaign to stop Supertram and that instead he was advocating a system of trolleybuses for the city.

He then went on to advocate this system of transport by recalling how in his days it was called the silent death because they tended to crawl up behind you without noticing because there wasn't any loud motor fumes or noises.

So it is just another example of how our MPs that Colin referred to Councillor Trickett talking about as the people who were going to be backing Leeds and making sure we got our fair share have turned out to be the most inadequate group of arbiters for any kind of investment the City has needed over the past 20 years, and hopefully now that they have a new member we might actually have a change of fortune, we

might actually have somebody to which they can actually look to for leadership, to actually get some results for the City. At that point, I think I had better sit down.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: You know, putting a White Paper down is supposed to be a serious business, and it is supposed to address the needs of the people of Leeds, not the fancy of a leader of a particular party. What you have all been speaking about about Supertram, nearly everyone I think barring John and the Independents across there, would say that, you know, we should have a Supertram, the Government should be giving us a Supertram. But he has changed from what he used to attack, has Mark Harris, the Government's decision. The last one you put up was the previous Government's decision not to give us any money, because I have been time and time and time again to meet both Tory and Labour Ministers asking for money for the Supertram, and at least with the Tories I got a cup of tea and they said, "Get a cup of tea, and will you shut the door on your way out, Mick".

But as far as people are concerned, we definitely need a Supertram. What we don't need is somebody attacking the Government while they are in the middle of negotiation. (Interruptions) Lord Mayor, you played hell with me on many occasions for me getting on to them. Will you please ask them to listen to what I am talking about without having to read it in the verbatim.

So time after time after time we have been and argued with all Governments regarding what we should do. At least we got offered £355 million. Overjoyed. But the amount that it came in at to do far exceeded that particular amount. So we all agreed, all parties agreed, that what we should be doing is looking at where we could bring this price down, and if we are talking about the next 20 years and all agencies involved in what the price is going to be, you are talking about all kinds of things that could happen - ASLEF could strike so, you know, fares could go up, etc.. Absolutely ridiculous.

I would think that what you should be doing, Mark and Andrew, is arguing, and I will support you, and I will say it out here and my Group knows that what I say I do, I will support you if the Government say "No". They have not said, "No" and you are in negotiations. Now, don't be looking like that because you know and I know that you have still got to speak, I think it is tomorrow you have a meeting, I'm not quite sure, that you have got to talk on what we have got. You haven't been told "No", the door has not been closed and we on this side are saying we don't accept this White Paper as it stands because all you are doing is saying we are attacking this particular Government.

We support the Leeds Supertram. We support most of the stuff that has been said. Let me tell you, we can all go back on what Trickett said, etc. What did Winlow say when he was the Leader of the Liberal Party about Supertram? You have

forgotten. He was sat over here at the time. "I don't know what you are wasting your time at, Mick, because Supertram is dead in the water". That was your Leader at the time. That's what he said from here so, you know, we can go on and on and on. I thought that we were all joined together, that we were all up and we were all fighting for the people of Leeds for a proper transport system. This White Paper does not do that.

I will support both Andrew Carter and you, Mark, in any way that you are going forward to get any funding for Supertram. I do not support this White Paper because it is not a truthful reflection of what has happened. The true reflection of what has happened is over the years we have managed to get it down to £355 million now and we should be going on and we should be getting the money. You are going to scupper it and you are going to scupper it for political reasons. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: My Lord Mayor, like many people I didn't know Councillor Campbell could be awoken by Councillor Lewis's comments, and I have to say if he is talking about Councillor Lewis's age, Councillor Campbell has got no better in the years that we have known him, and he hasn't changed a bit, as people say, and his comments today reflect that. Absolutely appalling.

At least Councillor Lobley had the grace to go red when he was caught red-handed and went out of the room. I mean, you need to dye your face as well as your hair after that, Matthew. (Interruptions) But at least you were honest enough to walk out.

But let me just remind the Liberals, just in case they forgot. James Monaghan - congratulations, James, on winning that. Another Student Prince, as Les Carter once said about the MP. The LibDem candidate in the by-election, he said, "Congestion on the A660 cannot be ignored any longer. I am pleased that some of the problems with Supertram will not now materialize, but the Government must show how it will commit funding to alternatives." If that isn't --- No, this fellow over here. No, you quoted the Student Prince before, Les, because let me just remind Stuart Golton. Do you remember that? (Interruptions) Let me just remind Stuart, Councillor Golton. He might well try --- In a minute, let me finish off, Mark, because I am on a time here. You wouldn't let me say anything to you, but let me remind Councillor Golton that he may try, Gregg, to be a Harold Best but let me tell you, Harold Best had principles as well, and he certainly stood by his word and he was controversial and he will never ever live in the same boots as Harold Best.

But let me go back to July 11th 2002 when Councillor Lyons and myself did go down to see Tony McNulty. We did it with your consultation and indeed support and Mark's, and, you know, Mick is absolutely right. This is a very serious issue and therefore the kind of leaflets that do go round do irritate you when you see people --- Matthew, we know you were desperate to get into Parliament but, you know, we are

trying to run a city as well, and Mick is absolutely right. No, actually we do it on an all-party --- On this issue we should be all-party, and we have always said that.

But when we went down to see the Minister, Tony McNulty, Mick is absolutely right, the figures were nearly double. He then said, "You have got to look at those figures again." I mean, the same story as we have had recently, so we are just as frustrated as you are. You need £355 million. That will be on the table, and see what you can do to bring down the cost of Supertram to that", and I have to congratulate the Officers who have worked extremely hard to make those costs stack up to the Government's case, and it is now at 355, and I don't care what anybody says about alternatives, including the current minister now, to look at alternatives. Our view is unequivocal, by the way, Colin. That's why I couldn't understand your contribution. It has been proven, all the alternatives do not bring about the benefits that Supertram does to transport in this system on an economic and social case. There is no difference in this room on that. It has been proven to us by professionals, and that is why there is no doubt that Supertram is needed in this City, and that is why I was pleased yesterday to hear that the Minister for Local Government, David Miliband, did get a united voice of Leeds, both for the business sector, the voluntary sector and the political sector, including myself, when I had the opportunity to talk about Supertram about the need for Supertram.

Now, the reason why I kind of regret this White Paper is not because we are not wholly supportive of Supertram. We are. But the wording and the comments are kind of political devices. I wish we could have got a form of words, if you want all party support, that we all agree, but let me assure Council, let me assure Opposition, this party, as Mick has said, is still committed to Supertram and believes, like Mick said, what a sensible -- let's have a look at the outcome. If we don't get what we want, I can assure you we will be in as much opposition to the answer as you will.

Lord Mayor, let's try and get us all back on this. I regret the wording of the White Paper. I regret I don't get invited or even consulted on trips to Supertram, but that doesn't alter what should be our principal position is that Supertram is needed for Leeds for the 21st century. I move, Lord Mayor. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR A. CARTER: My Lord Mayor, I don't think this debate has been enhanced at all by references to what people may or may not have said in years gone by. Quite frankly, when this Council decided, each of its major parties decided, as policy to support Supertram, a number of us made compromises. A number of us had misgivings about how they would construct the line in Headingley. A number of still have misgivings about how that line would be constructed, but when you are a candidate and when you are elected you suddenly have to come face to face with reality, in whatever party you are in, and the reality is that this City needs a transport system for the 21st century.

Now, I am delighted that finally the Leader of the Opposition decided to speak. I thought it had been left to, I'm sorry to use everybody else's parlance, but the juvenile lead. He, of course, what some Members may not know, is part of the new Gruen/Lewis axis, you know, the two running mates for Leader and Deputy of the Labour Group, so some of my friends on the other side tell me. Doesn't that fill you with fear? My goodness me, I can see my colleagues quaking now. Don't worry, Keith, not much to worry about there.

My Lord Mayor, I went on the last visit but one to see the Minister before the General Election. Keith Wakefield was there, all-party. The biggest thing preoccupying the Minister was having a go at the Yorkshire Evening Post, which he brandished at us at one stage, if you remember, saying, "I don't like criticism like this in the paper". When I challenged him and said it was pretty mild from how we were thinking he backed off slightly. He also went on to warn us, and I don't much like being warned or threatened, that we had better not say too much before the General Election because that would be very embarrassing.

Anyway, we came away, some of us with rose-coloured glasses on, the rest of us without rose-coloured glasses on, realising it had been a pretty awful meeting, that really we had no place to go but to wait until after the election; we would give them an excuse if we didn't. So, putting the future of the City first we thought, "Right, well, let's take them at face value. Let's trust them again. Let's see if they are prepared to take a decision after the General Election." The General Election came and went, no decision.

I think the Government think that there is no longer an offer on the table. I think they think they have said to us in any sort of language you want rather than actually straight out, there is no deal any more, and I think what they want us to do is to get tired and to forget it. Well, we are not going to take the decision for them. This Government, an elected government in its third term, should be big enough, should think itself right enough, to tell us a simple "No" if they don't think it stacks up. But, of course, they can't do that because now Metro have made it stack up. We are back to the figure that we started at, £355 million.

What really disappoints me, my Lord Mayor, is that the Opposition cannot vote with this resolution. There is nothing in here that hasn't been said in this chamber before, not a single word. You have condemned your own Government before for their sloth, for the wasting of time. Councillor Gruen, you work for the Department for Transport, don't you? Why don't you keep out of it. The Department for Transport should be called the Department for time-wasting because it is not just Supertram. We have not got a decision on the East Leeds Link yet. Somebody mentioned the A65 bus corridor. That was on the table, then it is off, now we don't know where it is.

You should be big enough to vote with this because the Government should be put under pressure by not only the business community, not only the administration, not only the citizens of Leeds but you as an Opposition as well. You have not only lost your way, you have lost your backbone. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Well, I will argue with Mick Lyons and I will argue with Keith Wakefield and I may not agree with the way you put things, but I will take you on over it, but I won't deal with that drivel that came for the back there. I am not going to deal with an infantile fool who addresses a serious matter like this by explaining that you won't support this issue with an infantile argument. It is sad. It is sad. Now ---

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: You are the Leader, rise above it.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Absolutely. I will. I will take responsibility ---

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen, you don't have to like what he says, you just have to listen to it. (Interruptions)

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: These are the facts. When we saw McNulty there was no mention of a re-examination of the scheme. The only issue was money. Nothing else. For months after that officers worked tirelessly answering literally hundreds of queries from the DFT about the Supertram project. We did everything to answer their queries on Supertram on affordability. No mention of buses, and then for three weeks there was silence. They didn't come back and say, "Look, we have rethought things", or anything else, and then the call to London to go and discuss what we were going to do about Supertram, and they changed their minds. That's the bottom line. They had changed their minds and we are still trying to persuade them that they have made a mistake, but they had changed their minds, and don't speak to me about £355 million. Les Carter was there. Paul Rogerson, who can't speak, was there. I said to him, "Tell us what you can afford. Give us the figure so we know what we are dealing with" and he refused. He refused to give us the figure. He refused to tell us what they could afford. All he wanted to talk about were buses, and then he dismissed, as I said earlier, all the legislative difficulty that would arise by trying to do it the bus route, and you understand about the CPO rules and about what powers we have got to force the bus operators; he just dismissed it, dismissed it, and now he won't speak to any of us. Do you understand that? He won't speak to any of us, not you, not him, not me. We don't count, and that is where they have put us.

If you think that that is acceptable for our great City, you are all deluded, and that's what this White Paper says. They will not make a decision despite the pleading of officers that we are past midnight. They will not speak to us about it. They will not agree to come back to the table and somebody has got to stand up and be counted. Now, we are standing up. The rest of Leeds is standing up. What is wrong with you

lot? And we get that rubbish about why you won't support this White Paper, that we are not committed to Supertram. It is an appalling insult that you dare even say it in here.

We are all committed to Supertram. We have always been committed to Supertram. I will not be driven away from the principle of supporting it and now, for the first time, you will send a message to London that there is political division. It is gutless. It is sad. It is awful.

THE LORD MAYOR: I call for the vote on the motion.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Lord Mayor in consultation, this is how important this is, the first sentence, if this helps, I ask leave of Council to withdraw the first sentence of my White Paper in order to get unanimity - in order to get political unanimity.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: That is our offer.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: I ask leave of Council then to do it. Do I have leave? I need somebody to second it.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Seconded, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: The Leader is asking permission of the Council to withdraw the first sentence of the White Paper. Is that agreed? (Agreed) So now I put to the vote the amended White Paper as described by Councillor Harris.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: Can I have a recorded vote on this, Lord Mayor?

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Seconded.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Would all Members ensure, please, that they are in their allocated seats. Would all Members please refer to their desk units and press the button marked "P". Please press the button marked "P" in order to activate the unit. Those Members in favour of the motion in the name of Councillor Harris as now amended by agreement of Council should press the "+" button. Those Members against the motion should press the "-" button and any Member wishing to abstain and have that abstention recorded should please press the "0" button.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I keep pressing my "+".

COUNCILLOR A. CARTER: Yours has stopped working. It is your age.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I enjoy pressing my "+".

MEMBER OF COUNCIL: Put it away, Bernard.

THE LORD MAYOR: Okay, Members of Council, we have a result. Of the 96 Members present, 89 have voted "Yes", 6 have voted "No" and there is one abstention. Therefore the White Paper is carried. Thank you.

ITEM 12 - WHITE PAPER MOTION - SHORT BREAKS AND HOLIDAYS

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I am pleased to say, Lord Mayor, this shouldn't --- Stop balking, Andrew, and pay attention; you might learn something. I am pleased to say that this shouldn't take too long because we are prepared to accept Peter's amendment in the light of, really, what we were seeking to do.

I do want to say a couple of things because I think Councillor Harris has said a couple of things. We are pretty well aware of the changes from universal provision to targeted and, you know, we have seen that in Social Services, and we know of cases, Mark, that we have had in our community that, as a consequence of not being in that eligible category, have dropped out, and it seems to us that when you start introducing the eligibility criteria there are two things wrong. I think you have to -- not two things wrong. I think you have to watch very carefully for two things.

The first thing is who draws up the eligibility criteria, and the second thing is if they are not in that eligibility criteria, where do they go? And this notion of sign-posting, we have all heard of it and we have all debated it and discussed it in here many times, and I am sure we will in the future, does have serious problems in a city like ours. You have to have the social enterprise, the capacity, the skills and the resources of the voluntary sector to take on those people who do not qualify, and I think that is something where we have had problems, and to go back to Mark's earlier point about this old woman of 90, for those folk who do watch TV on a Sunday morning I think it is called "Westminster North" on a Sunday morning, is that right? You will see the very case yourself and make your own judgment, but I can assure you of two things. One, her service was reduced from two weeks to a monthly cleaning. Secondly, she was offered Chinese meals - this is a woman of 90 - on the High Street and as a result of that, had there not been local intervention by Members, those services would not have been restored. I can assure you of that, and I know of many people on this side, and I am sure that side, that have actually intervened for people locally in order to restore those services.

Mark, I know you say there have been no cuts but I could quote you a 90 year old, a 93, a 69, all, you know, some blind, some with cancer and so on. I am not here

to do that. There are genuine problems when you change the criteria from universal to target and you use an eligibility criteria. Everybody knows they are not rumours and what we are in danger of doing with the short breaks is the same.

Let me read out the policy, and it says, "If a service-user is assessed as requiring a short term break from caring or being cared for as defined in the policy statement, they will be offered a range of services such as residential, day care, family placement or home-based service." Fine, if you qualify. "If a service-user is assessed as being below the line of eligibility, then they would be referred to the Carers Centre and specific charities who would allocate fundings within their own priority system."

Now, I am delighted with Peter's amendment because it addresses that kind of problem, because we actually did some market testing. We actually phoned the Citizens Advice Bureaux, "Could you provide us alternatives?" This is true, Peter, and I will run through the cases with you. Citizens Advice Bureaux referred us to funder-finder, which is a website. We phoned. We phoned VAL, voluntary action Leeds. Guess what? They referred us to a funder-finder. We also referred to Age Concern, well-known charity in the City, "Could you refer us to an alternative?" "No, but if you look on the website of funder-finder you will find out." The one who actually did refer us to (?)DIAL was Caring Together, and they offered to fax us some stuff over about alternatives.

Now, I know there are many people on this side, some very good anoraks with computers, and there are some people like me who struggle still. I can still do basic things. It is our age. But can I just put into your minds this, and that is why I am pleased we are where we are with this. If you want to use the website for funder-finder as an old person, there's two places in this City. One is in Hunslet and the other one is in Chapeltown. You have to book. You have to wait, and then you have to be supervised, and I think Peter, to his credit, recognises that that alternative, that capacity, that ability to deliver alternatives is not there in the system, and that is why I am happy to accept the amendment. I think the White Paper now gives us chance to reflect, to look and to wait until those alternatives have built up before we adopt this policy, because there is something good about this policy, and that is giving individual people a choice through cash payment. I think some people doubt the notion of choice and I do question it sometimes, but I think in principle we should support it, but we should not rush headlong into a policy where there is no alternative provision yet, and the only thing old people get are website references.

I think, as I said, we have got a reputation in this City which I am proud to say for being generous with holidays, day care, BREECE and all that. It is hard to sustain that, but I think before we move to any criteria like that let's have a long hard look at the alternatives in our system before we put our old people in a position where there is

no real choice. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

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

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: Lord Mayor, before I say what I was going to say, I will just deal with one or two things that Keith brought up. The idea that we have introduced eligibility criteria is just not true. Eligibility criteria existed under your regime and thousands of people failed to meet your eligibility criteria, and you must explain to us some time what you were going to do with them if they had failed to do it. Where were you going to refer them? To the same websites that you are talking about?

It is a different line, I accept that, and I will defend that. The previous line was totally unaffordable, but if you think eligibility criteria is something new it simply isn't.

I also don't think that market testing can be confined to ringing up the Citizens Advice Bureaux, VAL, Age Concern and listening to what they say over the telephone. We have a much more efficient market testing system. We have a whole network of social workers across the City and they have done the market testing. They know the local areas. They know the people to recommend them to and they are first-class at exactly that job.

I like the idea of "Don't rush headlong into a policy". We have never had a policy. There has never been a policy on short breaks in this City for quarter of a century, and before that we weren't giving any, so how do you "Don't rush headlong into it" after 25 years perhaps needs a little bit of review.

We are moving this amendment because the original White Paper seemed to imply that we are not doing something that we are doing. The market testing that this paper refers to about short breaks and holidays has been taking place through the summer and there is no need for any more delays. 25 years delay is enough.

Until we brought this policy in people all over the City were receiving Council Taxpayers' funds, these benefits, haphazard, unsystematic fashion, partly based on who shouted loudest and how they knew their way round the Social Services world. I won't say it is who they knew but, my goodness, that was almost a factor. The system we have introduced now will be consistent across the City, targeted where our money will do most good and not based on anything else at all.

The experience so far is that the main beneficiaries of this revision are people with learning difficulties and people who are disabled. Previously their voices were not heard. People did not know about this. There was an expertise in working the system that paid off. We have tried to eliminate that.

You might like to know that in 2003/4 20,000 short breaks were organised. In the last financial year it was 30,000. This year we are on track to do 35,000. This is a major commitment of Council Taxpayers' money and we have a duty to use it properly. Officers assure me that no service-user or potential service-user has suffered from the implementation of this short breaks policy. Our relationship with the independent and voluntary sector are more ordered and rational and reasonable than they have ever been and there is no justification for any more delays for introducing the policy. Lord Mayor, I move the amendment.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: A cut, as far as I am concerned, is where you physically remove a range of services. We have not removed a range of services. As we have said time and time again, it is the eligibility criteria that has been amended for the eligibility criteria that you were using that served some people and not others in order to try and produce a more equitable system. What you consistently refuse to accept is the financial position you left Social Services in and that we inherited, and it is here. It is in the report, the KPMG report, which perhaps is on Richard Lewis's knee at the moment. It is on page 8 that says in Month 3, when we took over the administration, Social Services was at that juncture overspent by £18.8 million. That was the budget we inherited from you, and that was the system that we inherited from you, so 10 weeks into the year it was £18.8 million overspent and the deficit was accelerating at £1 million a week. That means the system, your system that you bequeathed to us, was heading for a £60 million deficit.

Now, by any stretch of any imagination - it is not just a case of it is not sustainable, Social Services was heading literally for collapse in that situation. It could not continue.

Now, our response was to say to Social Services "You have got to stop the acceleration, but we will fund the deficit that is there now." Now, in the end social Services pegged it back to just over £14 million, but we didn't cut services. We injected an extra £14 million over and above the budget you had set. That is not a cut. And then in this financial year in our first budget of our own we injected a further £18 million to Social Services. That is not a cut. It is substantial additional funding, £32 million we have injected in the space of 14 months over and above what you were prepared to spend on Social Services.

It is just absurd that you continue to peddle this suggestion that we are cutting. We are not cutting. We are substantially upping the funding but simultaneously saying the old way of delivering was completely flawed. It was failing thousands and thousands of people. It was failing virtually everybody in the last quarter of every financial year because budgets were completely exhausted because they were underfunded in the first place. We have tackled that. There is nothing crueller than to say to a person, "We will give you this", but not have it available to them when they need

it. At least what we are saying is, "We will give you this and it will be available when you need it according to criteria" - not our criteria; criteria of professional Officers.

And I just reiterate, however you look at it, it is not we who reinstigated, if that's the case, or increased the facility for the lady in Kippax, it is the eligibility criteria as assessed by officers independently that have delivered for her this hugely increased service from anything you were giving her. Those are not cuts. We are serving the people of this City faithfully and we are going to continue to do it. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I noticed Mark's words changing. Can I read you a little case problem out to illustrate the point of what we believe is a cut, because I think it is worth it. I didn't want to go here but Mark is refusing and refusing and refusing to listen to what is a fact.

Here we have an 85 year old, Mrs. R., lives alone, suffers form breathlessness, has a serious heart problem, suffers from falls, has had treatment recently for an ulcerous leg. She appears confused and forgetful, possible dementia. She has support from the warden in the sheltered housing where she lives and from some voluntary sector, with some input from her family. Her daughter contacted us to let us know that Mrs. R. had had her fortnightly cleaning withdrawn ---

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: Can I ask what this has to do with short breaks and holidays.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Sorry, Peter?

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: This is about short breaks and holidays.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: It is, but don't forget, yours was, Councillor Harris went back to the same old record that he goes back to denying that there has been changes and people not having services, and the simple fact is this, as we all know, when you change eligibility 3,000 drop out, they drop out into a voluntary sector that isn't there yet. It is very variable, and therefore some are not getting the cover and support they need.

The KPMG report we have been over again and I think Councillor Lewis has dealt with that in terms of action taken well before you got in, Councillor Harris, to address what were serious budget pressures on the Social Services and has been for some time.

But let me go back to the short breaks policy, Peter, because I think you have raised some interesting points. I don't know exactly what you mean by market testing. What I do know is that we put ourselves in the position of somebody looking

for a short break, and we know of no other residential like BREECE. In actual fact, Saga sent me a brochure. I don't know whether referring to me or two of us, but I couldn't afford Saga. Five days I think was about 500 quid. Now, you know, when you say "market testing", let's have a look at what alternatives there are because it is our contention it is not there yet and I believe you support that, and that is exactly why this amendment is put in, which I understand I need consensus of Council to integrate it into our White Paper.

I want to come back to this policy, you know, because whether it is a government or whether it is local government, anybody who knows about Social Services will know that the previous practice was this, Peter, that a social worker would make the assessment in their professional judgment.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: Inconsistent and subjective.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Well, I am going to come back to that point in a minute. Therefore what happened is that the power or the decision-making has been taken away from social workers, who are professionally trained and qualified, and it has been subject to a criteria. Now, I look --- (Interruption) Sorry, are we having an exchange or can I carry on, because I want to try and wrap this up very soon, because I would still say this to you, that anybody drawing a criteria up still has to do it on a subjective basis, and there still can be mistakes made on the interpretation and the application of any criteria. So I don't think we replaced the system with social workers with some objective, scientific criteria that can never make mistakes, never be wrong. I think that is highly dangerous and it needs monitoring.

What I would say is that if I seek, and I understand if we can get the amendment into the White Paper what we have got is a sensible position where we can take a longer look at the alternatives and look, just place it as the individual seeking that respite, seeking that care, because we all know that is important to some of our elderly who need a break, who don't have family, who need a holiday, and I think it is important that we pause for thought and breath and further research, and I look forward to seeing the paper soon just setting out what alternatives are available to our elderly in the City. I move, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Before we actually take the vote, we need to have consent of Council to agree to the acceptance of Councillor Harrand's amendment by Councillor Wakefield. Those in favour?

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: My Lord Mayor, is there any way I can decline to accept it? I don't want it accepted.

THE LORD MAYOR: Yes. Well, I am advised, and we have gone into this in a lot

of detail, believe me, is that the wording which can now be applied is that Councillor Wakefield's motion as altered is put to the vote, as altered by your amendment indeed. Councillor Wakefield's motion as altered.

(The motion was carried)

THE LORD MAYOR: I think we have gone down an unusual route in arriving at this decision but there we are, we have got there in the end. Thank you for that.

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: Lord Mayor, under Council Procedure rule 22.1, can I move that Procedure Rule 3.2 be suspended to allow all of the White Papers remaining to be heard.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Second, Lord Mayor.

(The motion was carried)

ITEM 13 - WHITE PAPER MOTION - SMOKING IN PUBLIC PLACES

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, I think I will follow the example of Councillor Wakefield and I am going to be very brief with this particular White Paper. It falls into two particular segments, the first paragraph about the damaging effects of passive smoking and the second paragraph about the City Council acting as an exemplar to others in the City.

I would like to refer to ---

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen, can we just be clear on exactly what you are saying there. You are accepting the amendment, are you?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: No. No, I haven't spoken on the amendment yet. I am talking about the two paragraphs of my resolution.

THE LORD MAYOR: Alright. Okay, carry on.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: You couldn't hear. Okay, I was saying that the White Paper in my name is in two parts. The first part is about the damage of passive smoking, paragraph 1. Paragraph 2 is about the City Council acting as an exemplar and encouraging and influencing others across the City and the region.

I want to refer to a circular sent out by Rosemary Archer, the Director of Social Services, on 4th March this year, which she says she wrote with the full support of Councillor Harrand, the lead Member for Health and Social Care.

"Smoking and the effects of tobacco smoke are the single greatest avoidable cause of premature death in the United Kingdom. They also contribute strongly to health inequalities. The 9th of March is National No Smoking Day for 2000 and the Council's Corporate Management Team" - very important body that - "will very shortly be considering proposals to update the Council's smoking and tobacco policies in line with the White Paper, 'Choosing health'."

Perhaps Councillor Carter, when he moves the amendment, will tell us where we are with the update of the Council's smoking and tobacco policy.

MEMBER OF COUNCIL: We can't hear you.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Okay. Thank you for telling me.

The Healthy Leeds Partnership is Leeds and Health and Wellbeing for Leeds Initiative supports a joint tobacco action group and they will launch a new strategy at the end of May. Again, perhaps Councillor Carter, when he moves the amendment --
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COUNCILLOR J. L. CARTER: What are we doing now?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Just a second. I am speaking on this. I am asking you ---
(Interruptions)

THE LORD MAYOR: Let him finish, Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Local authorities were seen as key partners in action on public health and therefore Rosemary Archer asked all councillors to be active and supportive of the move towards a smoke-free Leeds. A policy of creating smoke-free workplaces and public places would yield an overall net benefit to society of more than £2.3 billion. So says the Chief Medical Officer in his report in 2003.

Smoke-free would have enormous public health benefits, and research has also shown that far fewer young people would even take up cigarette smoking if it was banned in the workplace in the first instance.

I am grateful to Councillor Pauline Graham for sharing with me the report of the Health Scrutiny Board, "Smoking in Public Places Inquiry" published in May of this year, and again the hard work done by that particular Scrutiny Board came to the conclusion, their working group, that there was an identified need for the Council to put in place an effective communication strategy to ensure that all staff are made fully aware of the implications of the Council's smoking policy once fully implemented.

MEMBER OF COUNCIL: What smoking policy?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: It is interesting. "What smoking policy?" Very, very good prompt. When I saw Councillor Carter's amendment, I wondered why it had fallen to Les to be the harbinger of that good news, and I thought it must be obviously a reformed smoker. That must be it, but then I thought, no, no; we know the amount of detail that Les likes to go into. He reads up all these different volumes and volumes of stuff, you see, and so when I asked for a briefing from my colleagues on the Leeds City Council Smoking Policy, what is it and what is the briefing? This is what I got. This is what I got, and therefore I now know why it is Councillor Carter moving the amendment, because I don't know if he knows, but there is a Leeds City Council Smoking Policy, but you will see (Interruptions) ---

COUNCILLOR J. L. CARTER: Mine is bigger than yours, Peter.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I have been accused that yours is bigger than this, but there we are.

I have to say on this occasion, like we should do more often in this Council, I am willing to be persuaded about the amendment depending on what Councillor Carter says, and particular what Councillor Brett, who I know has very strong feelings about this, what he says in seconding this.

I am particularly concerned about the Council not being out of sync with what the White Paper says and what we want others to do in this City. We cannot really go round - and I take on board some of the comments made by Councillor Harris earlier on - we cannot go round exhorting others to do things if we ourselves have not put our own house properly in order, and that is the main --- I am not talking about individual people. You might try and tempt me. You might try and tempt me, but whether Councillor Harker continues to smoke or whether Councillor Blackburn continues to smoke, I wish them good luck to whoever they pray and hope for the best.

My Lord Mayor, I move the White Paper as is stated in the order paper.

COUNCILLOR BRUCE: I second and reserve the right to speak.

COUNCILLOR J. L. CARTER: Did somebody second that, my Lord Mayor? I missed it. I missed it.

THE LORD MAYOR: It was seconded, Councillor Carter, you just weren't listening.

COUNCILLOR J. L. CARTER: Alright, my Lord Mayor. I don't know what Peter was

talking about, actually. None of my group do over here. I think it is because they couldn't hear you, Peter. You must really start looking to that corner when you are speaking, then your voice will carry right across.

Can I just go on one or two points, actually, first of all. Can I first of all talk to my friends who do smoke, because that is quite important. A lot of people round here get on about people who don't smoke. Now, I used to be a smoker. I am not one of these reformed smokers who think that everybody else is leading a life of sin. I believe they have rights and they have privileges and we should also consider those, and these are people that you will see on the steps of the Civic Hall. You will see them in certain parts. The interesting part in the Members Club is I remember when I was a smoker and used to go into the part which was the Members' smoking area and all the non-smokers came in. I used to say, "What are you doing here?" and they used to say, "Oh, the other lot are boring". And then, obviously, just outside the Banqueting Suite.

However, they may think today I have actually left them behind, and I probably have. What I do get cross with, though, is on the people who are anti-smoking, real anti, the extremists, because I don't think they understand smoking. When I was stopping smoking - I have nearly stopped 2 years now, not 2 years yet - every time they put one of these silly stupid ads on the television I fancied a cig, and this was one to stop me smoking, because it was designed by people who don't know what it means to smoke, what the difficulties of giving up smoking are. Now, there is a doctor over here. They put a vein on full of fat. I promise you, that bloke is dead. He ain't smoking, he is completely dead. So, you know, then you look at other things.

I have got in my pocket --- By the way, I haven't started smoking again. I borrowed this off Suzy. This is an empty packet of cigarettes. There's no cigarettes in it but, again, all these wonderful people who know all about stopping smoking, said, "Oh, we have got to put all sorts of things on here." Well, I bet if I say to Suzy without looking at the packet, what does it say? She will say, "I haven't got a clue", because they don't read it. It was meaningless. They are meaningless gestures. They don't help whatsoever.

They are also now, I understand, £5 a pack. £5 for a packet of cigarettes. These same people who then will go to the doctor with an ingrowing toenail and told they can't have an operation because they smoke and that caused it, and that's what you are getting. It is a nonsense, complete and utter nonsense. The people who actually buy these things have paid sufficient tax to have gold-plated beds when they go into the NHS, but they don't get it.

However, my Lord Mayor, I have got to go on. You will all remember, or you may not all remember because you have not been here long enough, when this place, apart from the Council Chamber - nobody was ever allowed to smoke in the Council

Chamber - when you could smoke in committees, and we literally did have corridors full of -- smoke-filled corridors where power was supposed to have been done. And I don't think even a smoker could say that it is not a lot nicer without it. It is far nicer, far more pleasant to be in those committee rooms without cigarette smoke all over the place, and I don't think we would say that ---

The other thing is the world is changing. Smoking is not as acceptable. It is not seen as a social outcast but it is becoming less and less acceptable to people, and when you talk about your employees, you have got to think about your employees. You have responsibilities to employees of where those employees work and the situation they are working in and what conditions they are working in, and you have to protect their health as well. So I think the days of us just being able to have smoking rooms and go to different places are coming to an end.

The only point I make to you, and I say this to everybody around this room, if anybody proposes that some man who fought in the war, in the last World War, who wants their cig in some home somewhere is going to be banned, then it will be over my dead body because I won't support anybody who does that. We are talking about employees and we are talking about certain areas, and that I will support.

I should be more anti-smoking than anyone else in this place because my wife has COPD and that is caused through smoking, and it is a disease which never can be cured. It gets worse, it gets worse as time goes on. It can never be cured. All you can do is try and relieve the symptoms, and the unfortunate thing is, and I think this is something you should take on board, it is nearly - not got there yet - but it will overtake the deaths of women caused through breast cancer. In other words, there will be more deaths from COPD than through breast cancer, and that is quite frightening, and there is nothing you can do about it because once you start smoking, nothing happens with your first cigarette, nothing happens with your first ten cigarettes, nothing happens with your first 100 cigarettes. It is there and it is working its way, it is working its evil way. It did it to my wife over 20-odd years ago and now she is suffering, so we have to move on. We have to learn what we learn.

What I would say is whatever we do we must help staff to stop. If they want help, it must be there. It must be good help and it must be practical help and it also must be help that people understand. If you are going to try and stop people smoking, it is no good just saying, "Oh, it is easy". If you don't know anything about it, then it is easy. Do this, do that and you will stop smoking. If you don't know it, don't join in the conversation because it is the most difficult -- very, very difficult for people and they are not idiots and they want to be helped in doing that and I would, you know, do anything to help them.

But my amendment does this, it actually goes back. If I can just go back.

Peter you said there was no smoking at work policy. Well, there is, Peter. Your people brought it in in '93 and partially did it. Partially did it and then stopped.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: And you are doing it now?

COUNCILLOR J. L. CARTER: And we are looking to go further, Peter, I accept that. And we know why it stopped. We had a Chief Executive who smoked cigarettes and we had a Leader of Council who smoked a pipe. It wasn't going very far with those two, was it? And it didn't go very far with those two, so we have got to look at it and take it forward, but when we take it forward there has got to be sensitivity. It has got to be reasoned, it has got to be thought. You must not take simple solutions to things, to items. Most offices in Leeds now have no smoking and the staff go out on the street to smoke, and when it rains they go into our bus shelters, so people who don't smoke and don't want to be in smoke stand outside in the rain while the smokers stand in the bus shelters. So you have got to be careful how you do these things. You have got to think these things through in the way we do them.

Anyhow, I don't want to go on too long. The night is going on. I think there is a lot of agreement round the chamber. I hope I haven't fallen out with all my smoking friends, but I ask you to support my amendment. Thank you, my Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: My Lord Mayor, I am seconding the amendment in Councillor Carter's name and, in so doing, I think he and I would recognise that we approach this matter from slightly different standpoints.

In 1991 the then councillor Paul Truswell - what happened to him, Les? Do you remember him? - speaking in this chamber told my far-sighted friend, Councillor Campbell, that he was a Stalinist because he wanted no smoking at all in the Civic Hall. It is interesting that New Labour was alive and well in 1991 because for ambitious councillors in the Socialist Party Stalinist by then was a term of abuse. Times change. Indeed in 1991 I could well have voted against this motion using classic Liberal freedom of the individual arguments. By 1993, as we have heard, a smoking policy was introduced to the Civic Hall but sadly has never been fully implemented. In 2003 the whole picture on passive smoking in this country, and I believe in many other places, changed fundamentally when Liam Donaldson, the Government's Chief Medical Officer, announced that there is now very clear evidence that passive smoking kills.

There is no longer any argument that this is not about a freedom of an individual to smoke. For us, I believe, this is now a health and safety at work argument. We could argue about how many people this affects. Were we able at a stroke, and I recognise that it is not easy, to be able to have a smoke-free Leeds, I believe 500 people a year may live and not die. It is that important.

We have reached a point where the City Council must give a lead to our great City. We must pass this amendment which makes a move forward, not as big a move forward as perhaps Peter or I would like, but a move forward that I hope we can all agree. This amendment says to Councillor Campbell, "For 14 years you were right." I therefore urge you all to support the amendment and make this building a significantly safer place for us all to work. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Lord Mayor, as someone whose health has suffered in the past from the effects of passive smoking, I would support the White Paper and indeed the amendment. In fact, I am strongly in favour of ensuring that no-one has to suffer from passive smoking. However, as the amendment reads it is an existing policy of this Council voted on long before I became a Councillor, so it is simply a case of implementing what is already there. In fact, it is a shame it has not already occurred.

the threat is a very real one. In my younger days, and I remember them as if they were only yesterday, my parents went to Australia to visit my sister. At first I thought they had moved but after a month or so I decided it was safe to invite some friends round for a long Bank Holiday weekend. Sadly, two of them were very heavy smokers. One friend seemed to smoke around 100 a day. Tragically he died last year. Anyway, during the weekend I started to feel a bit nauseous - very unlike me - developed a sore throat and a smoker's cough. When they had all left it was so bad that I had to take the next week off work to recover. This was entirely put down to passive smoking as I was coughing and wheezing for some time after.

In the job that I was in, to follow the one that I was in at the time, also I was in a smoking environment and developed a cough and eventually had to leave that job due to ill health. Anyway, these days I try to avoid smokey environments, and pubs in particular, but I am not against smokers. My wife smokes around 10 a day - not many - but she has always smoked from the day I met her and that is her choice and her right, but by her own volition she has declared our house a no-smoking zone to protect our three daughters and myself, and so she and any guests always smoke outside the front door, even in the depths of winter. There is a covered porch.

I regard it as everyone's right to breathe clean air, well, certainly smoke-free air, at work and in public places. If you need further evidence of the harm that passive smoking can do, look at Roy Castle. He died from passive smoking which he encountered whilst performing in the smoke-filled pubs and clubs.

This Council should take its responsibility seriously to ensure that none of its employees suffer ill health due to passive smoking. (Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dr. Kirkland.

COUNCILLOR KIRKLAND: Thank you for the additional information, Lord Mayor. Can I make it absolutely clear that this is a really important issue. Some people think it is some sort of a joke. Well, it isn't. It is literally for some people the difference between life and death.

I think here there are two issues. The first issue is that this is and has been for some time Council policy and yet somehow, over the course of years, the Council or people in the Council seem to have subverted the Council policy so that what was intended years ago never actually happened fully, and it should have done, and I hope that the report to the Executive Board tells us how that happened because if it can happen to smoking it can happen to other issues.

The second thing is passive smoking is what we are talking about. If you are an adult and you smoke, you know the risks. You might pretend you don't know but you really do know that it could kill you, and that is your decision. But don't inflict the smoke on other people, and we are not talking necessarily of other adults. Don't forget, babies do come into the Civic Hall and other public buildings, they are also at home, and they are much more affected by smoke than adults. So you might get a child that is what we would call a bit chesty but it could become really quite seriously ill if the air it breathes is contaminated with smoke.

Do any of you remember going upstairs on a bus in the days where they allowed you to smoke on a bus? You could cut the air with a knife. Well, in some households that still pertains and the kid is in a cot in the corner and it has no choice but to breathe that air. It is actually quite dangerous, and there is not much difference in reality between nearly being killed by smoke and actually being killed by smoke. The trouble is once you are dead you are dead and you can't come back again.

Also, don't forget that tar in cigarette smoke potentially causes lung cancer. It also affects your gut so that when you stop smoking you put on a lot of weight, and that is not necessarily an indication that stopping smoking makes you put weight on, it is the fact that you didn't eat properly when you were smoking and when you stop smoking your gut improves and you can eat what you always wanted to eat.

Smoke also contains nicotine. Now, in its pure form nicotine is more poisonous than cyanide. Even in the tiny quantities that you get in cigarette smoke, it does affect your heart, so an awful lot of middle-aged adults - most of you are middle-aged adults here - if you get a heart problem that causes your heart to beat irregularly then nicotine can make it beat very irregularly or can even cause it to go into fibrillation, and that is a fairly good way of killing yourself. So a lot of premature cardiac deaths are related to cigarette smoking. So it is not just tar, you are talking about nicotine as well. So I think the sooner that this policy we have is put into effect

the better. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: Lord Mayor, it is difficult to hear a word.

THE LORD MAYOR: Yes, I understand what you are saying, Councillor Illingworth. I had a similar problem and I wasn't surrounded by natterers as you were, so it must have been extremely difficult at the back of the chamber.

COUNCILLOR BRUCE: Lord Mayor, it would be easy to stand here and bombard you with figures and medical evidence about the dangers of second-hand smoke, but I am not going to do that. However, I am going to start off with a little bit of research. There was a recent study by Yale University because one of the great mysteries on this subject, for me at least, is the ferocity and lack of logic with which many smokers defend their habit and, of course, their right to inflict it on others. It appears, according to Yale researchers, that this mystery may now be solved. It is all down to the nicotine. Most smokers start young and, according to the Yale research, the cerebral power of people who start lighting up at an early age receive a severe blow that reduces their speed and accuracy of grasping information and retaining it in their minds. Perhaps some of the opponents of the White Paper today could let us know when they began to smoke.

You have to hand it to the tobacco companies, don't you? You might think it difficult to flog a product that will kill half the people who use it over the whole of their adult lives. On the face of it it is as appealing as promoting a game of Russian roulette. The nicotine solves that problem very nicely. First of all, it makes you an addict. Nicotine is as addictive as heroin. Then it leaves you in a state of dumber denial. I think the American researchers called it the Fox News effect.

How else are we going to explain some of the arguments which defenders of smoking use? For example, there is a classic in a letter from The Times. "I object", said the writer, "to the pious claims of the anti-smoking brigade that they are saving lives. Everybody dies at the end. All they are doing is postponing death." Well, it is true it would be too far to claim eternal life but the writer still seems a little bit too negative to me. I am sure that the hard-working doctors and nurses would be a little disappointed to be told that they are simply in the business of postponing death, or the Fire Officer who drags you from the wreckage of your burning car to save your life, "Thanks for postponing my death" - it doesn't really have the same cheery ring, does it?

And why does this matter so much to me? Well, I represent a ward that has massive health inequalities. If you live in Middleton or Belle Isle you are likely to die 8 years earlier than somebody that lives in Roundhay.

Of course, we have always understood the close alliance between the tobacco trade and the Grim Reaper, despite the determined efforts of the tobacco trade to cover it up. Across the world more than 5 million people a year die from smoking. A large tobacco manufacturer could fairly claim a role of the fifth horseman of the Apocalypse. Let's take British American Tobacco; they have got an impressive 15% share of the global market, so statistically speaking that is - what? - three-quarters of a million a year. The previous Chairman of BAT was there for almost 10 years so he presided over about 7.5 million deaths - a remarkable achievement - and for his services he was paid £2.5 million a year. You are getting ahead of me. As (?)ASH has pointed out, it is about £3 per stiff. At the last BAT AGM he presented the company's very slick report on corporate social responsibility and he was ably assisted by the director responsible for corporate social responsibility, somebody that is probably familiar to some of you, the Right Honourable Ken Clark, MP.

Many of you will have received glossy mailings from the impressively monikered Freedom Organisation for the right to Enjoy Smoking Tobacco. Lots of persuasive arguments about why you should vote against this White Paper. What it doesn't shout so loudly about is that it gets virtually all of its money from the tobacco trade. Thanks to litigation in the USA you can now read many of the tobacco industry's secret internal documents. One of these shows that FOREST was set up by the Tobacco Advisory Council, the then trade group for the tobacco industry in the UK. So what is the main aim of the tobacco trade and its front groups in the UK today? Simple. It is to prevent any action to restrict smoking in public places and the workplace. Why? Because it is well-known that such action will reduce the number of smokers. About 1 in 4 adults in this country smoke. With other measures, such as better support for people giving up, it might be possible to end smoking in all workplaces and enclosed public places to cut the number of smokers to more like 1 in 5. Good news for health and bad news for the tobacco trade's bank account.

Just before I sum up, I have got a little bit of hearsay. I am going to read something from Manchester City Council, and this might appeal to Les Carter since he is very concerned about is £5 for a packet of cigs. "Financial consequences for the revenue budget of tobacco control. If smoking reduction amongst employees occurs, savings achieved from reduced sickness absence." That's right, this Council will save money if we implement this policy. This City will be better off as a result. Please vote for this motion tonight. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I just want to inject a note of reason into the debate which has been absent up till now. First of all, I think only an idiot would say that smoking isn't harmful and we should do everything in our power to stop young people starting and older people to stop. We all agree with that.

Secondly, I think we all now have to accept that passive smoking is a very real danger to the health of others, and we have no right to impose that on other people. What I am saying, though, in respect to this resolution, and it is quite important: We employ - what? - 37,000, 33,000 people - it varies according to whose figures you accept - and I think we have a responsibility to some of those people who will want to smoke and therefore we should make provision for them. Now, in some airports the smoke room is such a closely confined room that you go in there at your peril because after 3 minutes you are asphyxiated. Now, it may be their subtle way of stopping people smoking.

I declare an interest. I smoke a pipe, but I find it not difficult at all to smoke during the day at all. I don't need to go into the smoke room to smoke because I don't need to smoke. I smoke because I enjoy a pipe and I enjoy it in the fresh air or at home or anywhere else I can smoke it when I feel like it, but it is not a problem, so I am not an addict. But I want to be fair to those people who are addicted. Les said something very, very important. He said he will not accept the fact that some poor old boy or old girl in an old people's home is suddenly told, "Right, from tomorrow no smokes." That won't do. It won't do. You have got to make provision for them because if they have been smoking all this time, you get to 60 and 70 and 80 and even the age of some of my colleagues across there, then it is unreasonable to expect a person of that age to give up, and yet it is a place of work. It is a place of work, and so if we have an overall thing banning it in a place of work, then it will have to apply. So I hope we shall be sensible.

The only thing I don't know is quite what Les Carter's amendment means in effect.

COUNCILLOR J. L. CARTER: No, I don't.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I think we have this same problem, Les, which isn't the first time lack of comprehension of each other's ideas. Do you enforce the Council's current smoking policy at work? Well, that would allow a smoking room as there is now. It doesn't? Well, that's what I say, I don't know what it means. If it means banning everywhere in the building, then I would put my reservation.

COUNCILLOR A. CARTER: You voted for it. This is your policy.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I didn't know I had produced a policy. My God, you have no need to run like that. It doesn't suit him. Look, this is signed by a chap called Smith. It could be anybody, anybody at all, and it is "Miss" anyway. It says at the bottom, "115 Miss". So this is not my policy. The policy I would advocate is the sensible one of trying to persuade everyone to stop smoking because the purpose of that is completely clear; not put anyone at risk of passive smoking but to allow those people

who smoke the opportunity to do so if they are unable to give up in a way that does not impinge on anybody else.

Quite frankly, if we don't do that we are making a distinction for tobacco and I take all your arguments, Councillor Bruce, about the tobacco industry and so on and how they have been immoral in developing addiction. What I would say is this; that if you want to take that strict line that some people are advocating, you had better do it for alcohol because alcohol causes far more problem in the family and the home in violence, abuse, in the streets, and I like a drink, so I would declare an interest. It also causes an enormous amount of disease and so if you are going to say, right, stop all smoking, like a law that forbids it, or like prohibiting tobacco, you should do the same for alcohol. I think there comes a point where we fail if we are not seen to be reasonable. All I ask is a bit of reasonableness. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR C. NASH: I would like to thank Councillor Bruce for raising the issue of tobacco companies and, whilst we are on the subject of staff suffering as a result of smoking, point out that many of our staff and probably some Members here are members of the West Yorkshire Superannuation Fund which invests millions of pounds in shares in tobacco companies.

MEMBER OF COUNCIL: Is that for or against the amendment?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: My Lord Mayor, I would like to thank everyone ---

THE LORD MAYOR: Sorry, can you just listen to him for a minute or two, please.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I will try a third time. I would like to thank everyone who participated in this debate, wide-ranging and interesting. I thought we were all of one mind until Bernard spoke, but he was very helpful, as ever.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Flatterer.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Like Les, we didn't really understand what the amendment meant to say, but councillor Brett was unequivocal in his seconding of that resolution and we detect clearly that there is a little bit more oomph behind this from the LibDems than there might be from the Tory ranks.

The important issue, and I look to the LibDems in the coalition on this, is that there is a report called for for the next Executive Board, because I do detect a lot of inertia when I have corresponded for 6 months now with a number of officers about this. I have not yet got to the e-mails at 3 or 4 in the morning of some of my colleagues, but I have e-mailed people regularly about, "What are you doing about the smoking room and the smoking policy? And how can you have a Director for Social

Services and the lead member for Social Services exhorting us to do things and the rest of you just don't do anything?" And when I talk to Mr. Rogerson or Miss Jackson, they all say, "Well, I don't know why we are not getting on with it. It seems very sensible. We should be doing something", and then I talk to Mr. De La Tasse and he says, "Well, yes, something should be being done. It is that fellow Kearsley over there. He hasn't done anything yet", so I talk to that fellow Kearsley. He says, "It's not me, it is Davenport. He hasn't done anything yet", but, you know, it is all going to happen fairly soon. There is this big refurbishment plan and you are going to get kitchens and this and all sorts of stuff and it is all going to happen. But that is 6 months ago and actually nothing has happened.

Colleagues around the chamber have clearly empathised with the fact that passive smoking is a worry. I take the point that Les Carter made about old people's homes, which is the same point Bernard took up, and I think on balance we have decided, because this is a matter for individuals, that we are not going to whip colleagues into a vote. We had hoped, we had very much hoped, that the coalition would be equally broadminded on this issue and let those LibDems who really feel strongly about this issue vote according to their - I almost said "conscience" but that might not be something that is understood - but I understand you are going to be whipped on this. (Interruption) If the Councillor is giving leave to do so, I will accept the amendment and people on this side of the house can still vote according to their own principles in a free vote at the end of that, but I think the words from Councillor Brett that we must make some progress, some of us will not make all the progress we had hoped for at this stage, but if we can take a significant step forward and influence the report that comes to Executive Board and action follows thereon, then I think tomorrow will be better than yesterday. (Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Before we proceed to the vote, there has been a question about interpretation of part of the amendment which the movers of the amendment are not now allowed to comment upon because we have gone past that point, so I am going to call on the Chief Executive just to clarify the issue so that there is no misunderstanding when people vote.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: I think it was simply to make clear the point in response to Councillor Gruen's observation that what the amendment called for was a report to the next meeting of the Executive Board. That is not the wording of the amendment. It calls for action to be taken by the Chief Executive, but following a report to the Executive Board, and there is not that commitment to that being done post haste.

(The amendment was carried)

(The substantive motion was carried)

THE LORD MAYOR: Now, Members of Council, I have been asked for a short adjournment, a comfort break has been requested, and in the interests of those of us who are otherwise not allowed to move around, I am proposing that we take a very short break of 10 minutes just so that we can stretch our legs. Thank you.

(Short adjournment)

ITEM 14 - WHITE PAPER MOTION - LICENSING ACT 2003

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, perhaps I should begin by saying that I have decided to accept Councillor Campbell's amendment. As I told him last week, my objections to it were to do with artistic impression rather than technical merit! In my view at least, the shorter the motion the better. A long one can look a bit like an extract from a manifesto, though I did agree with what his amendment said.

Now I shall give some background. Like many others, we in Morley have watched the new Licensing Act closely and commented on some of the applications. On 8th July I went to speak at a hearing and no difficulty was raised. On 1st August I came to the Civic Hall for another hearing and before going in I was waylaid by a Legal Services Officer who said that there was new advice which stopped Councillors speaking at licensing hearings unless they lived very close to the premises or had been asked to speak on behalf of someone who did. As I was here already, I went into the hearing and asked the officer to repeat the new advice so that everyone, including the applicants, knew about it. Then I gave the Panel an outline of what I had intended to say and Members were good enough to hear me out, though obviously they couldn't take into account what I had said!

Later that day I did two things. Firstly, it struck me that Town and Parish Councils, because they were public bodies and not individuals, would be able to make submissions on licensing matters. Legal Services confirmed that this was so. Since then we have set up systems whereby Morley Town Council and Gildersome and Drighlington Parish Councils field licensing applications across our City Council wards, except for a small part of Morley south which is beyond the reach of the Town Council. This may be of help to others with town or parish councils but obviously not to those in parts which are unparished.

Secondly, I put together a motion for full council which deplored the position described in the new advice and the confusion which surrounded it. Later, Mr. (?)Turnock of Legal Services suggested a firmer wording. He had cross-checked with others outside the City Council and assured me that there was no confusion or uncertainty. All legal opinion agreed that the new advice was firm and clear, so with Mr. Turnock's advice the motion was amended before it was even submitted officially,

in a sense.

Everyone should be aware that part of the job of a Councillor is to know how consultation systems work and to know what is passing through them. It cannot be assumed that members of the public always know the ropes well enough to be able to cope with those systems and to work the system especially against tight legal deadlines.

We should take licensing as a warning. There is no difference in principle between a licensing application and a planning application. Before long ward councillors may be barred from making planning representations on the grounds that they have no business to be interfering if they do not live near the application premises or that the system would be more streamlined if ward councillors were cut out of the loop. Certainly in planning and probably in licensing most applications are perfectly acceptable. In both fields it is essential that councillors should be able to deal unhindered with those few applications which need to be thrown out or altered.

My Lord Mayor, I move the motion as amended by Councillor Campbell.

COUNCILLOR ELLIOTT: My Lord Mayor, I would like to second the motion proposed by Councillor Leadley.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: My Lord Mayor, we all know that the licensing laws in this country stem from problems the Government faced in 1914/1918. We touched on it earlier on, and without a doubt I don't think anybody would disagree with the principle that they needed reformation, they needed being reformed. Indeed, as a fully paid-up member of the Campaign for Real Ale, I have been involved in an organisation that has been campaigning for changes in the licensing law for some considerable time.

I have to say, though, that with this the Government may have got what it described as a good idea but implemented it wrongly, and I think that is part of the basis of Tom and I's comments, and it doesn't relate to the idea that we should change the licensing laws, because we agree with that. It is really about the way that it has happened. Just briefly, I mean, the idea that, for example, it is easier to apply for the license later in the process than earlier has caused considerable problems for the Licensing Panel because they have had to receive and deal with applications very late in the day. The advertising process seems to me basically flawed in that if you don't happen to be in the right place at the right time and happen to see the blue notice, if you don't happen to have gone in that particular pub, you probably don't know that they have applied for a change in license whatsoever. There seems to be no provision other than the blue notice for informing the public of applications. Okay, occasionally the local press did carry lists of applications but, as we know from our own experience, the sheer volume of those applications that were coming through towards the end of the period up to the beginning of August meant that it was very

difficult for our own Licensing Department to keep up with a list, never mind the local press keeping up with it as well.

So in fact it was vital, as Tom has pointed out, that people like ourselves, who did perhaps have a slightly better ability to get that information, were able to find that information and as representatives of communities make a comment.

I think the point that we are trying to make with this particular resolution is, okay, we are perhaps having a slight dig at the Government but not so much that we would accept the Labour amendment, which really, you know, I can see your point, you are trying to make the best of a bad job, but it really is a bad job and the amendment is at best --- Well, it is a pleasant little amendment but it really doesn't do something. I mean, to say, "We broadly welcome it" and "We have got a little bit of influence", that is not really what it is about. What we are really saying in my amendment is that we are saying to the Government, "Look, okay, it is a good idea. We don't have a problem with that. It is the way you have worked it out." It is about going back and looking at your processes and changing those processes to reflect the problems that we have seen, and the problems are about notification. The problems are about advertising and the problems in particular are about how people can comment.

The idea that it is a panel of councillors who make the decision I think is fine. It does bring it into a democratic process. But if nobody knows about it, then it ceases to be a democratic process, and so my amendment simply says that the Government, we are asking them to look at this again and with hindsight and say right, from now on we will amend the legislation, because we need to amend the legislation, and make sure that all the points we have raised about public consultation and about the ability of individuals, not just Councillors, to respond to applications are taken into account so we actually do get a democratic process which allows the Panel to make a decision based on evidence not just from one or two individuals but from a community. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR LOBLEY: My Lord Mayor, now I used to enjoy going out on a Friday night to Chapel Allerton for a couple of drinks, but then what I found was that I kept bumping into Keith Wakefield, and it was getting very tedious because he kept going on about Supertram and hair dyeing and (laughter) so in the end I had to find somewhere else to go, somewhere where I thought might be a bit too far afield, so I quite enjoy going out on a Friday night for a drink in Harrogate, and I quite often go to a pub in the centre of Harrogate town called the Coach & Horses when my friend and I both have a pass out from our girlfriends for the evening, and we enjoy a few pints and basically a really satisfying moan after a hard week at work. But it turns 11 o'clock and the bell goes and you realise, well, you have got two choices. You can either go home - not a lot of fun - or you can go to a nightclub. You get charged 5

quid to go in and the quality of the drinks is absolutely abysmal and, ooh, it is so loud you can't even hear yourself think.

As some of you may be shocked to hear, I turned 30 last week so (Interruptions) -- so the chances of me dragging myself out to a nightclub are getting less and less likely. And in this modern day and age it does seem mad to me that a pub in the centre of town that might want to extend its licensing hours cannot do, and it shows that the archaic licensing laws that we have from many decades ago were not up to the job. So, yes, I am in favour in some instances of extending some licensing hours. However, I am not in favour of the way in which the Government has gone about it.

Now, in my line of work basically we solve problems and manage change, and whether you are working in the world of IT or you are working in politics, it is pretty much the same sort of way in which you go about something. First of all, you go out and you identify what your problem is, and you understand that problem. That is No. 1. No. 2, you design a solution. No. 3, you pilot your solution, No. 4, you make changes to your solution from the knowledge you have gained from your pilot and, No. 5, you roll it out.

So how have the Government dealt with this change in licensing? Well, No. 1, understanding the problem. Well, they have not really done that, have they? They have decided that they are going to extend the licensing hours but they have not really taken into account some of the problems that they really need to address, such as alcohol-fuelled violence and anti-social behaviour.

So, No. 2, designing a workable solution. Well, one of my sins is that occasionally I read the Daily Mail. I'm sorry. I'm sorry. And I was reading it on Saturday, 3rd September and there was an article saying that the people who had come up with the policy were actually people from these big national chain breweries and chain pubs - shocking - rather than the Government. So they failed on No. 2, they haven't designed a workable solution.

No. 3, the pilot. Well, I don't recall a pilot in Leeds and, to be honest, I don't think I have heard about a successful pilot anywhere else in the country.

No. 4, you amend your solution after you have done your pilot. Well, no pilot so no amendments.

And finally you roll out your solution, which is what the Government have done. So basically they have skipped right to the end of it and they have just pushed it through. So what are your options if you roll out a change in Government policy which is going to cost a city like Leeds £780,000 in lost licensing revenues, is widely

unpopular with the general public and is leading to wide-scale anxiety, you already have serious problems with the current licensing hours and your Prime Minister says you have not yet done enough to curb anti-social behaviour, and you don't even have the support of the Police Forces across the country?

Well, I know what I would do. Margaret Thatcher may not have been for turning but if I was Hazel Blears I would be well up for a U-turn, and she has recently hinted that she is implying that if it doesn't work in this national roll-out she might look at it again. Well, if she had had a decent pilot she could have turned that back, if that wasn't working. And, frankly, if I rolled out an IT system which was unfit for use and wasn't tested and wasn't piloted, then I would lose my job and my company would get sued, so what is going to happen to Hazel Blears? I can imagine it can only be one fate, which will probably be promotion.

So what do I find so objectionable about this policy? Well, I have already stated I am in favour of reviewing the licensing hours and in some places extending them, where it is acceptable, but the problem is three-fold. As this is an unpopular piece of legislation, the Government have made sure that the advertising of the variation orders has been very poor, and even if people do get to see this little blue notice then the chances are that they will be too late to object to it. I see the yellow light is on so I am going to skip basically a little bit to the end, but this undermines local democracy, it goes to great lengths and even devious ones to push through unpopular policy and it fails to understand the problem which the Government are trying to address. So I would like to urge the Government to halt this policy and look in some serious depth before making changes which have the potential to ---

THE LORD MAYOR: That's it, Councillor Lobley. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR DUNN: Lord Mayor, the Licensing Act 2003 is the biggest change for nearly 100 years and it has got to be implemented by this City absolutely right. We went out to consultation to the communities and that consultation was first-class. The communities responded first-class, but those communities in my opinion are now being let down by the lack of representation by their Ward Members, and we need to look at that most stringently and with some urgency.

Members at this moment in time can make representation and if they are keen to do so we have a system now in place where Licensing Officers are sending out information on licensing applications to every Ward Member, and every Ward Member can let their constituents know and make representations if they feel that they need to do so by those constituents' comments. But I have to say, and I pay great tribute and make no hesitation in making great tribute to these Licensing Officers who have worked tirelessly to give us this information and also to make the transition of this Licensing Act smooth, and they have worked tirelessly and they should be -- actually

it should be rewarded for it.

When we deal with these licensing applications the thing that is coming through most loud and clear is the lack of interested parties representations for objection, and that can only mean one thing, that the information is not getting through to these communities in the way it should, and this gives more leverage for Ward Members to be involved, as with Planning. Adjacent to licensed premises where it appears that only people living in the vicinity of premises can object, you might get people who are blind, you might get people who are infirm, who very rarely go out of the house. They are expected to see in a pub window a blue notice giving details of this variation. That is not acceptable and we would support the way forward in changing that. But I have to say that we must accept also that at this moment in time we get no consultation from magistrates. If there is any alteration to licensing hours now we never get informed. At least we have got now that information in the hands of Ward Members and we should embrace that along with the rough parts of this Act.

I also feel that we should be looking now to seek in unity on this Council the way forward by involving our eight City MPs and getting those involved from this Council and also to contact the Minister of Sport & Culture and this way we should move with some urgency to getting this representation of Ward Members rescinded. Thank you. (Applause)

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

COUNCILLOR McARDLE: My Lord Mayor, two things that have been subject to lots of national debate over this summer: One is a series of - five games of - cricket, with the prize as the Ashes with Eric Morecambe's little mate, Little Ern or a little urn, and the other is the Licensing Act 2003. I think it has been well debated in this chamber that it is bad legislation.

In terms of the general tenet of Councillor Leadley's original motion, I resent the fact that the 3,400 plus voters who voted for me last June do not regard me as an interested party. I think I am. I am also on Plans Panel East and I treat everything in a quasi-judicial role, and I take that role very seriously, and I cannot see any reason why I cannot make any representation. Irrespective of the legislation and the guidance, I cannot see why I cannot make any representations on any licensing application in my ward, and I use the word "representation" because I have supported some of these applications and I think it is fundamentally wrong. Ward Members should be able to make representations.

I think the general tenet of the legislation is right but the standard thing that is quoted is we don't want throwing out time at 2 o'clock where everybody poles out on the street, but the way the applications are going you are going to get sort of two or

three times. You are going to get 12 o'clock, midnight, where everybody comes out at half past 12 or 1 o'clock and then you get 2 o'clock or 3 o'clock when everybody comes out, and it is still the same. Nothing has changed. It is just that we can't make representations.

The general principle of Ward Members overseeing this legislation is right. I think the Licensing sub-committees have worked tremendously hard, along with the Officers, and I think the three Members of the Licensing sub-committees, Councillors Wilson, Armitage and Feldman have worked tremendously hard being super subs and I think that also has to be recognised. Nevertheless it is still bad legislation. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR WILSON: Lord Mayor, "Councillors Protest at Pub Gagging". Right, I took the trouble of getting the legal department to spell it out so I will read it out in its entirety so you know exactly where you all stand.

Councillors can make written representation if they live in the vicinity of the premises concerned or residents of local businesses ask them to make representation on their behalf. Councillors may not make representation on their own behalf as a councillor simply on the basis that they are elected to represent their ward. This is because the Licensing Act defines "interested parties", that is those who can make representation, as residents living in the vicinity or a body representing such residents. Councillors do not neatly fall into the legal definition of a body. Therefore we can look to what Parliament intended when using that phrase. Parliamentary debates make it clear that the Government intended to make sure that councillors could only make representations where specially specifically asked to do so.

So to some extent, Tom, you are quite right, there is restrictions being put on you. That is the --- If any Member wants a copy of it, I will make sure they get it. That is our Legal Department's interpretation of the 2003 Act on what you can do.

Now, I can tell you, on the occasions when I have been sitting and any councillor has turned up to represent his constituents, they have always spoken. There has been no problem. In fact, I have actively invited them to speak. In fact, about 6 or 7 weeks back I was fortunate insomuch that the MP turned up, a local MP. Now, this chap was supporting his constituents because they were objecting to an hour and a half going on their local pub. Now, this chap had actually voted three times in Westminster for the 2003 Act, and yet he is there supporting his constituents in their objections to an hour and a half on the local pub. Anyway, we did actually resolve that one, so me being a little bit mischievous thought it would be a very good idea to get this chap to say a few words. So I invited the MP, and I won't say which one it was (Interruptions) No, I won't say which one. He did refuse to speak. Now, me being a comparatively new councillor and naïve to boot, I did have a word with

one of my Labour colleagues with more experience. I said, "Well, your chap, he voted for it in Parliament and he is turning up with his constituents and supporting them when they are objecting to an hour and a half", and he says, "That's politics, Donald, so now you know."

Right, I can tell all Members, if you turn up you will speak, and we do actively invite the public. Many a time the public will turn up and are reluctant to speak, but we generally get them to sit near the table and make a presentation.

Now, I can tell you the existing position is that we have received in excess of 2,000 applications and of those 2,000 applications 55% of them have applied for a variation, so that is something in excess of 1,100 pubs, clubs, off-licences, you name it, have asked for extended hours, so that is the present position as of today.

I must admit that the Yorkshire Post --- No, he hasn't. He has gone home. The Yorkshire Post has been doing some excellent coverage on the Liquor Licensing Act and they have been doing quite a few good articles on binge-drinking and yob culture. Now it says, "Ignore Drink Warning at your Peril", and I will just read the first paragraph because it is typical of most of what they are putting in: "For too long the Government has turned a deaf ear to all and sundry who have concerns over the policy to allow 24-hour drinking." I can't see in this light. (Interruption)

MEMBER OF COUNCIL: You should have gone to Specsavers.

COUNCILLOR WILSON: You are probably right. "What will it take for the Minister to refuse this very bad legislation? Today they stand accused of being dead to the critics and ignoring the world's leading experts and are being in thrall to the alcohol industry."

Now, the only other nation on earth --- I beg your pardon, there was just one point. They have been running all these excellent articles about yob culture and binge-drinking and then ---

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wilson, can you wind up now, please.

COUNCILLOR WILSON: The following week the Yorkshire Post put in a token for Buy One Get One Free.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Lord Mayor, I was privileged to share the first ever Liquor Licensing Sub-committee on Leeds City Council, mainly due to the fact that "D" comes early in the alphabet, sometimes a blessing, sometimes a curse. The first session was well attended by officers and councillors interested to see how things would work. It was a baptism by fire and a rapid learning curve quickly ensued. The solicitor who

presented the case on behalf of the applicant had clearly done his homework and was well versed in the Act. It stretched our legal team and the Panel to make sure we got everything right.

Anyway, I would like to take this opportunity, and I am sure on behalf of all my colleagues on the Licensing Panel, to thank the Officers for all their hard work and support so far, not to mention training us councillors in what has been very difficult and trying times, not to mention chaotic and hectic. They have been excellent, arranging five sub-committees to meet in tandem sittings three times a week. Things are starting to get out of hand now and we need additional meetings. The week after next I shall be here three days out of four in Panels. Without the officers' efforts the whole process could have failed. As it is, we are close to melt-down now. That first hearing, by the way, took nearly 3 hours. Thankfully, they are not all that long as we get more used to them and the procedures.

One procedure, though, I am not happy with is the one regarding councillors not being able to carry out the duties to which they are elected. We are elected to represent our residents. The legislation dictates that we cannot do so unless we personally live within 100 yards of the pub and then we have to object as a resident and, seeing today's ruling, if we live next door we then have a prejudicial interest and then cannot represent on that ground, or we have been specifically asked to speak on behalf of our resident, and this is the only way that we can by the legislation speak, to get a resident to ask us to speak on their behalf, or the other way round, the resident has to ask us to speak.

I sympathise totally with Councillor Leadley. That Panel he appeared before I was one of the committee members of, and the legal advice was that under the legislation we could not listen to his objections. He still made them eloquently but we were forced to ignore them. I know a couple of other councillors who have not been allowed to speak, and I feel this is totally wrong. What about areas where there are very few residents, and what about if the residents missed the notice? Very concerning.

The legislation itself does seem rushed and, as I said, we are at melting point and everyone is doing their best but there is still a dry Christmas in prospect for many pubs since there was no incentive in the legislation to apply early and, despite voicing our concerns about this in a request for an extension to the deadlines and implementation date, the Government has not moved an inch.

It is not a satisfactory situation. Clearly the legislation is at odds with the Council's constitution and I believe it falls upon the Government to restore our rights as councillors to represent our communities. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR A. CARTER: My Lord Mayor, I should warn Members that if we don't hurry up with this and the next debate Councillor Blackburn and I will be moving the guillotine as our locals will have been closed and we shall not be able to get our customary pint. Change the licensing laws. And, of course, there is no argument, as Councillor Campbell and Councillor Loblely so very well put it, that the licensing laws needed review. However, the current legislation is, as has already been said, very anti-democratic in terms of the exclusion of local councillors, and that in itself is causing a major problem.

But there is an opportunity, and some Licensing Members don't seem to be aware of this, but there is an opportunity still to put a stop to this nonsense. No live date was initially given by the Government for when the deadline would be. However, last month the Government laid down the statutory order which plainly stated that new licensing would go ahead regardless of opposition on November 24th. Members of Parliament have until that time to table amending legislation, which would give the Government an opportunity to think again. We should be calling on our eight Members of Parliament to make sure that happens.

It is a ludicrous situation that, faced with criticism from the judiciary, chiefs of police forces all around the country, local residents, councillors, the LGA, and any other body with any commonsense, the Government still refuses to budge on what was a reasonable idea but in the drafting and the implementing of the legislation as turned out to be a nightmare.

Now, like Councillor Wilson, I have a little story about a Member of Parliament, and I am not going to tell you which one, but you will find out soon enough, who voted --- Actually, they have had six opportunities to vote on this Bill, our seven Labour Members of Parliament, and all of them have voted in favour on every occasion they have been at the House of Commons. The only times they have missed, any of them, is when they have been absent, every one of them.

One of them rang up our Licensing Department to ask how he went about objecting to a licence. He didn't even know how to object on a piece of legislation he had voted for. That is how clever the Members of Parliament for this City have been yet again.

What happens, my Lord Mayor, in an area where there is a pub in a not very salubrious area, where residents would like to object but don't want to put their name to that objection? That sometimes happens with planning matters. It is different because a Member of Council, a Ward Councillor, can object. What happens in the case of a public house? You know, no formal objection to the local councillor, no chance for the Councillor to represent his constituents, and I can tell you that that is happening around the City.

One other area I would urge Members of the Licensing Committee to watch, because I know for a fact on one occasion they have allowed this to happen, and that is in villages where all the public houses will submit for a licence revision of some sort to allow one to have longer licensing hours than the others. Imagine what will happen there. You know, everybody will decamp at whatever time to get an extra bit of time elsewhere in the village. Imagine the rumpus that will cause around the people who live there, and I regret to say our Licensing Committee has let that happen on one occasion. I am sorry, Councillor Feldman, has let that happen on one occasion to my certain knowledge, so we do need to be very, very careful, and the starting point should be the Government taking the opportunity to revisit the legislation, and our Members of Parliament should ensure that happens by supporting any amendment that is put down to the 24th November. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR ARMITAGE: Let's get one or two things sorted about this licensing. Some of you can't read, don't read or don't understand what the legislation says. You all can object. Each and every one of you can object. All you need to do is put pen to paper and write out to your residents informing them of what time the pub is open till now and what time the proposed hours are. Now, if you are good Councillors, that's what you should be doing, because I damn well do, and a lot of my colleagues on this side do, so it is up to you to inform your electorate. (Interruptions) No, you are not. Some of you don't even understand. Some of you do, some of you don't.

When it comes to Members coming to the Licensing Committee, yes, you can put an objection in. What you cannot do is put a general objection in without consulting the residents and in many cases residents don't live near some of the pubs, so you cannot put a blanket objection in for certain areas of this City. Can you, Mr. Leadley? No, you can't.

As for the MPs, yes, the MPs did vote in Parliament, and some of them did vote three times for the legislation, but they now understand (Interruptions) --- Wait a minute. Like every piece of legislation from time immemorial, once it is put in, they find a slight one or two problems, and this has been highlighted, you will be glad to know, to each and everyone of our MPs, and in fact I have been writing to one this very week explaining the problems that the legislation has caused, and I am assured by him that he will take it to the Minister who quite clearly hasn't got it quite right just yet.

It is frustrating. It is very angry and I can understand that, but we have got to be realistic. It is a new law. It has got to bed in. There are major problems which we have to get sorted out but we can also do a lot for our residents in informing them the times and dates when the application has to be in, what we cannot do is go out and canvass. You cannot say, "Yae" or "Nay", but you can inform your residents, you

can ask your residents. Surely we all know residents will tell us to object on their behalf anyway, so there are ways and means of getting round this Act. Yes, it needs sorting. I don't, you know, dispute that at all, but we cannot go round putting blanket bans here, there and everywhere and, Andrew, when it comes to villages --- Andrew, are you listening?

COUNCILLOR A. CARTER: I always listen to you.

COUNCILLOR ARMITAGE: Thank you. When it comes to villages and you are sat there on the licensing committee, may I point out that every application has to be taken on their merit. We cannot do, "You can stay open till this time. You can stay open till that time and you can stay open to the other". It is on the individual and how they put it forward that we have to do it, so don't be blaming us or Ronnie or Don or any of us on the Licensing Committee. We are flogging our guts out, may I add, working very hard for very, very little money - for very little money - and I think all of you should appreciate what a jolly good job we are doing along with the bloody Officers, and pay us appropriately. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: I wasn't going to say anything until I heard Suzy Armitage say that every single one of I presume the seven Labour MPs have had this explained to them, so they are all in line and they know what is going on. Well, I found that very curious because either you have explained something else to them or perhaps they are seriously dense, because when I met them on Friday the 9th, that's - what? - not a week ago, none of them --- Well, that's not true. Paul Truswell was up to speed but three others - I won't name names - three others didn't have a clue. They were completely at sea with it, and they have asked us to get officers to prepare a briefing note to bring them up to speed with what this is all about. Well, what are you nodding for? Two minutes ago you told me they had all been completely brought up to date and they were all in line and they knew what the score was ---

COUNCILLOR ARMITAGE: We are informing them. They are the ones ---

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: No. No.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Armitage, is this a point of personal explanation?

COUNCILLOR ARMITAGE: Yes.

THE LORD MAYOR: Under Standing Order 14.16.

COUNCILLOR ARMITAGE: Thank you very much. Look, I didn't say that. You are doing it again, putting words in my mouth. Now, they are the ones that made the legislation, are they not? They vote for it but they are not the ones sat on the

committees dealing with it, are they? So how do they know what it is like until somebody tells them where it is going wrong, so that is what we are doing, informing them, "Look, this is where it is going wrong and get back to the Minister and tell the Minister", so that's what we are doing. Got it?

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: So what you now mean is that you are going to tell them what the score is.

COUNCILLOR ARMITAGE: Which part of the question didn't you understand?

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: I will tell you what. We will wait for the verbatim minutes and then we will see what it was you said originally. Well, I think what you said was that they have already been informed, but they haven't, that they aren't doing anything, that they don't know.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: Sum that up then! Well, first of all, I would say that I have never asked for a blanket ban on some opening hour in Morley. All I have ever done is to put representations in on a few applications which seem to be completely over the top, including one pub that wanted to be open from 10 o'clock in the morning until 3 o'clock the next morning, seven days a week, which seems to be rather unreasonable, but I certainly don't object -- when we thought we could object to them, I certainly didn't object to every one of them.

It is bad legislation it is costing a lot of money. If Councillor Finnigan had still been here - he has had to take one of his daughters out because it was her birthday and he has got three of them so it costs him quite a bit around the year - but he would have told you that he exchanged quite a bit of correspondence both privately and in the press with a certain Member of Parliament who represents Morley, and that Member of Parliament assured Councillor Finnigan both in letters and in the press that this legislation would be cost neutral as far as the City Council is concerned, and now we hear it is probably going to cost £650,000 a year, or whatever.

Where we seem to be is in a position where we do have to make the best of a bad job, nobody is disputing the fact that the Licensing Committees and the Licensing Officers are working extremely hard and, you know, they certainly are. They are making the best of a bad job. We have made the best of a bad job in Morley. We have found a way round the legislation that covers most of our two wards, as I explained earlier. The only bit that we have not quite covered by finding a way around is the bit of Morley south which is outside the Town Council parish, but fortunately there are only a handful of licensed premises there, so we can probably take care of that by other means.

What very often seems to happen when people enact poor legislation, whether

it is fundamentally bad or it is ill-drafted or whatever, is that they will not change because they do not want to lose face, whether it is the legislators who have actually written the legislation or the politicians who passed it. We have seen it before with the Dangerous Dogs Act. That just seemed to fall into disuse. We have seen it with the Poll Tax. Now, if this legislation has generated massive amounts of extra work for officers, I am sure that those Officers who were here at the time can remember the Poll Tax generating infinitely more extra work. I can remember one way in which it affected me, that when Poll Tax first came in you had a transitional arrangement and you got a sort of a transitional rebate, and they had miscalculated mine and I think it turned out that I owed them 60p, which normally would have been written off. If it had been rates it would have been written off but somebody had been very clever enough to put into the Poll Tax legislation that Poll Tax debt couldn't be written off, so the council very apologetically had to pursue this 60p, even though it obviously cost them more than 60p in administration costs to collect it. So that shows how entrenched politicians can become when it comes to defending badly drafted legislation, and this is exactly what is happening here.

When I forecast when I walked out of the meeting when the advice changed that the Government would change its policy within 6 months, and I still think that it will change its policy within 6 months of that date which was 1st August, but obviously we have got to keep the pressure on to make sure that they do. If they think that they are getting a bit of respite, if they think people have got fed up of complaining they will allow it to run on, and in my opinion the crunch will probably come over the Christmas season where as people have alluded already, you will get some premises that will run out of licences and you will get other premises which will be open for almost 24 hours a day and the police, the hospital accident & emergency departments and the community at large will have to pick up the cost of all that extra drinking.

So subject to the amendment put forward by Councillor Campbell being accepted by Council, I move that the motion as amended should be accepted. Thank you, my Lord Mayor.

(Councillor Campbell's amendment was carried)

(Councillor Dunn's amendment was defeated)

(The substantive motion was carried)

ITEM 15 - WHITE PAPER MOTION - OTLEY CHEVIN RANGER SERVICE

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: My Lord Mayor, last year I was talking to a journalist from China who knew I had been Chair of Recreation Services in Leeds some years ago who wanted to do a piece on parks and open spaces and had heard that Leeds was

allegedly the greenest city in Europe. I said, "Well, there's Templenewsam, that's fantastic. You could go to Lotherton", I said, "but a personal favourite of mine, actually, is Otley Chevin. It is a real delight." The journalist went and wrote this story which got published in Beijing, and the headline was - it was in mandarin, of course, but translated it said - "A paradise on earth, Otley and its Chevin". Lovely piece, and it is interesting that a journalist from a foreign country on a single visit was so struck by the singular and unique nature of Otley Chevin.

The changes to the Ranger Service for Otley Chevin which have been implemented Monday of this week, just two days ago, have been roundly condemned by residents, by volunteer rangers and Councillors from all parties in this City, as well as by the local Liberal Democrat Member of Parliament, Gregg Mulholland. In fact, there has been quite a lot in the newspapers; you may have seen some of the cuttings, which shows that there is a great deal of interest locally, particularly in the Greater Otley area. For example, here is a Member of Leeds City Council, leading Councillor, who is quoted in the Wharfe Valley Times as doubting that the changes would lead to an improvement to the service. This particular Councillor said, and I quote, "People expect there to be a presence in Otley Chevin. Regular users have a rapport with the rangers, who understand what is going on and have a great deal of local knowledge." Absolutely spot on. Absolutely true. Well done, Councillor Clive Fox, Conservative Member for Adel and Wharfedale, and a member of the ruling coalition. Absolutely well said.

He is not alone. Here is another one, Wharfedale and Airedale Observer. This is another local councillor who said, and it is quoted so it must be true, "I think the Chevin is the jewel in Leeds' crown, and I think it would be wrong for there to be a diminishing of the service we have up there. At the first available meeting with the Town Council we will make it clear that this is not open to negotiation." A stern statement, absolutely spot on the line. You certainly know where you are, Members of Council, with Councillor Colin Campbell, Member of Leeds City Council, Liberal Democrat Member, of course, for Otley and Yeadon and a member of the ruling coalition currently running the Council.

I mentioned Mr. Mulholland. He has been doing his best to make his mark. He has got involved as well and in fact he has got his own website. It is called "Greggmulholland.org". Some very interesting points on Otley Chevin. I am obviously not going to read out everything, it is page after page, but basically his line is, "Don't cheat on the Chevin". Again, Mr. Mulholland, recently Councillor Mulholland, makes it absolutely plain where he stands on this. For example, I quote partly what the MP says, "The current management" - this is Yorkshire Evening Post, by the way - "The current management and promotion of the Chevin by Leeds City Council compared to the management of council-owned country and forest parks in other areas of the country is sadly lacking. Instead of looking at ways of streamlining

warden services, the Council should now look at finally making the most of the Chevin and providing the appropriate resources." Seems to me he is doing an excellent job on behalf of his constituents.

He also went on to say, and again I quote Mr. Mulholland, this time it is back to the Wharfedale & Airedale Observer, "You wouldn't have a school without a caretaker and in the same way the Chevin needs a warden. This fragile environment deserves better, and so do the people who care passionately about the Chevin's long-term survival. I hope the warden will stay and I hope the City Council will reconsider its decision", and I hope today when we come to vote in a few minutes time all Members of Council, particularly Mr. Mulholland's party, will feel able to support the Labour Party in its proposal today.

Of course, not everybody agrees with the Member of Parliament. Again this is Wharfedale & Airedale Observer. Councillor Les Carter enters the fray.

(Interruptions) No, he is entitled to. We live in a democracy and his ward does border the Chevin. He writes to Mr. Mulholland, and I quote verbatim from what Les has said, "I am alarmed at your suggestion to turn the Chevin into an open air Disney-type attraction." By the way, I mean I obviously wouldn't vote

-- I am a member of the Labour Party, you know, in an election I would have voted for Judith. I am sorry she didn't win, but I have read and reread what Mr. Mulholland has said and there is nothing about Disney or Disneyworld in there. That really is a gross distortion of what he was wanting. Absolutely. Les, you should know better. You are meant to be in the same political bed with these other political parties. You can't go round treating your erstwhile colleagues like that. It is very rude, and I am sure Mr. Mulholland will be very upset.

Les goes on to say, "This land has sensitive needs and requirements. We must do all we can to protect the land from over-use for the benefit of the people of Otley and Wharfedale." Again, I have reread it. There is nothing in what Mr. Mulholland has said that goes on for any of that, you see. He goes on to accuse Mr. Mulholland of failing to mention the Chevin during his time on Leeds City Council" - I don't think you could do that. It is not fair. He was only a councillor for five minutes before he got elevated so he didn't really have a chance - "and of not first talking to his Liberal Democrat colleagues about plans for the Chevin."

Mr. Mulholland says, and I quote, and it must be true because it is in the paper, "I find Councillor Carter's response really pathetic." It is not me saying this. He is a Member of Parliament. "This has made Councillor Carter look foolish and out of touch." Now, who would have thought that was possible? Who would have thought that was ever possible?

Otley Town Council have discussed it as well. In fact, Otley Town Council

from a sub-committee approved a motion that is almost word for word what I am proposing here today, and the good news, Members of Council, is that Otley Town Council at its meeting, the motion was supported by Councillor Colin Campbell - well done, Colin - Councillor Grahame Kirkland - well done, Grahame - and those two very likeable Conservatives in a party that doesn't have many likeable members, but these two are very likeable, Gerard Francis and Nigel Francis. We miss them dearly. They got defeated by the Liberal Democrats, so ungrateful, but they still voted for this motion in the Town Council Meeting.

And the one I have not mentioned so far is Councillor Rick Downes, who also represents Otley and Yeadon for the Liberal Democrats and is obviously a member of the ruling coalition as well, but here he is on the front page of a newspaper in the Chevin with his MP, side by side, and Rick was with him. There is the photograph. Well done, Rick, showing his support, as you would expect because Rick was his agent and is his agent and you would expect them to be as one on an issue like this. Well done, all of you.

The effect on what has happened at Otley has a major impact upon the volunteer service, because it is not just about rangers, it is also about volunteers working in partnership, particularly at weekends. This is another press comment here. This is a Mr. Paul Roberts, who is one of the volunteers on the Chevin, he has been a volunteer for 10 years and I quote what he said, "We work under the close supervision of one or two full-time rangers doing such jobs as clearing streams, repairing footpaths and fences and planting trees. This has all now stopped. The review has resulted in the ranger service being withdrawn at weekends as the Council endeavours to make savings." Mr. Roberts, who lives in Otley, said, "Without the expertise of the rangers it was impossible for the volunteers to carry on", and then he went on again to say, I quote, "Indeed what Leeds City Council saves in enhanced wages it loses many times over in the loss of time and effort and goodwill of this group."

When I got here today, Lord Mayor, I saw that Councillor Procter had submitted an amendment which seems to imply that all is well because, although we have lost the dedicated ranger who is going to go to the pool of rangers in Redhall, there will be something called the new post of the Otley Chevin Estate Officer, so my immediate thought, "Well, is this all costed and how much is it going to cost?", so I hope when Councillor Procter speaks he will give me more information than I was able to glean from the Learning and Leisure Department this afternoon.

The ranger post that has been centralised is Scale 4/5, so it is hardly a huge amount of money. No-one in the department, John, that you are responsible for could tell me what the salary scale would be of this new officer, and that no final decision had been taken and that all members of senior management were currently

away on a conference, and I said I would like to have the information. So this does not seem to be as clear, Members of Council, as a replacement officer as the amendment implies.

What is required is actually not an Estate Officer, because the implication there is someone who is probably likely to be more desk bound. What you want is someone who is hands-on on the ground. The ranger knows every inch, knows all the issues that go on and what needs to be done and has a fantastic working relationship with local volunteers. All that has been spoilt, it seems to me, because somebody somewhere thinks, "Oh, we will bring everyone to Redhall." Leeds is a big city but Redhall is an awful long way from Otley Chevin, and even if we are told that the ranger will regularly go back, we are going to have to start off in the morning at Redhall. It is an absolute, total nonsense. Nobody wants it. There is all-party opposition, including from Members of the Liberal Democrat Party and also from the Member of Parliament. I think this is a bad decision and it is one that the Council should feel able to vote for today. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you very much.

COUNCILLOR E. NASH: My Lord Mayor, I second and I do reserve the right to speak.

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: My Lord Mayor, does anyone in this council chamber think that everything is okay and alright on Otley Chevin?

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Why? Do we get a prize?

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: No, is that your --- Well, Neil, it is your usual trick, isn't it, to present a serious subject that is really nothing to do with you ostensibly and then make a joke of those who are trying to address it. Do you honestly think that everything is great on Otley Chevin? Neil, do you? Do you?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Taggart, they did listen to you. Would you mind listening to them. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: Clearly you do and your group presumably thinks everything is fine on Otley Chevin, everything is great on the Chevin and that there are no problems there. Well, I have to say that you may be ignorant to the work of (?Cape Space) and the recent Green Flag Awards that we have been very successful in in a number of our parks and open spaces. Indeed, I was very hopeful that the Chevin also, which we entered this year, would also attain Green Flag status, but it didn't. It didn't. We were found wanting by the only organisation that audits our green spaces, our open areas for public use.

Now, frankly, I would like to put an awful lot more trust in what Cape Space say

than what Neil Taggart's view is. They are the people who are nationally recognised in what they do. The Green Flag Awards, when they have been made, and Members opposite have come along and they are all very eager to hold a corner of the green flat that they have won and isn't it all great for our area? You want to do that then but when it is in someone else's ward for some strange reason you want to deny them the chance of actually attaining Green Flag status.

I am determined that the Chevin will attain Green Flag status, that the Chevin will be able to fly the Green Flag with pride and all of the people visiting the Chevin will be able to know and understand very clearly what facilities are there, what the standard and level of facilities are. I don't think that is too much to ask and I think that is wholly appropriate that we should be able to deliver on Otley Chevin as we have been able to deliver in a number of our other parks and open spaces. Unfortunately - unfortunately - there is an awful lot of rumour that has been going on about this particular issue, I might say not necessarily helped by the Member of Parliament for North-West Leeds. (Interruptions) I have to say, though, he has seen the error of his ways. He has written to me and he has asked to come and see me so we can talk through the issues surrounding the Chevin so he can better understand the provision that is going to be made there, and that is something that I welcome.

Before I came to this Council meeting I took a telephone call from a reporter on the local paper, on the Wharfedale & Airedale Observer, who after I had spoken to her for I think about 10 or 15 minutes or so she said, "Well, I can't understand what all the fuss is about then, frankly, because what you are clearly doing is improving the service and facilities to the users of the Chevin. I can't really understand why there has been all this commotion." Well, I can because, you know, Councillor Taggart - and she did mention that Councillor Taggart had put a motion down before Council - likes to stir all this up and get it all going and try and make out we are doing all kinds of nasty things, and what have they been saying all day long? Keith Wakefield's usual mantra, "Well, it is cuts, cuts, cuts from the controlling group". But the truth of the matter, and again it really sticks in your throat, doesn't it, the cuts that you talk about never occurred. It was just like the events budget. We cut all the events budget. Keith Wakefield in the papers saying we have made all these cuts and all the rest of it. What an absolute load of nonsense. We stopped spending money on things that people didn't want. We have reprovided spending. We have reprovided spending elsewhere. Keith Wakefield was the only person who wrote to the Yorkshire Post complaining about (inaudible) of the City. No-one else did. No-one else even knew that it hadn't happened, for goodness sake, until one of his cronies in the Labour Group office said, "Oh, I haven't seen this happening", and then when he complained he was actually two months too late. It was actually after the event that he raises the issue. But anyway, back to the Chevin, Lord Mayor.

Let's get things clear, let's set the record straight. Neil Taggart didn't ring the

department today to find out the situation in terms of staffing. Their group office rang very late in the day, I might add, to try and find out some information and ask two specific questions: What is the grade of the rangers and what would the grade be of the new post created? Regrettably - regrettably - Officers do do other things than wait around for telephone calls, certainly under this administration, from the Labour Group, and so the Officers of a level who were dealing with this matter were not available, and so not all of the information that Councillor Taggart via the Labour Group was seeking was provided. The Officers did make that clear, I have to say. They did make that clear, though.

I am happy to be able to give him the information now, though. The first point to make: There will always be a ranger presence on Otley Chevin.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: Say that again, John.

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: Councillor Harrand urged me to repeat that five times and sit down. There will always be a ranger presence on the Otley Chevin Forest Park. I should actually read my notes better. That is clear. Clear, yes? Neil understands that as well. (Interruptions) External funding has already been secured to appoint an Estate Officer who will co-ordinate the strategic operational activities on Otley Chevin, and I find it remarkable that the focus is on rangers - rangers. We have loads of people working on the Chevin, all the way through the year. What about the Public Rights of Way Officers who are there? What about the foresters who are there? How many foresters do we employ there full-time? No idea. Not a clue. Doesn't know.

COUNCILLOR J. L. CARTER: He doesn't even know where it is.

COUNCILLOR PROCTER: This is the level to which, you know, they don't understand. They simply look at one particular issue and think, "Oh we can stir up a bit of trouble between the two parties here. We can get a bit of aggro going between them". What nonsense. We employ many, many people within the Chevin Forest Park. The idea of having an Estate Officer - which I might add is not a new idea. I wish I could say that this administration had created it overnight. We didn't do. It is something that the Officers within the department have recognised as being required for quite some time. They have been working slowly but surely to establish that post and they will shortly be recruiting into that post as well. I am pleased that that is going to happen because they will co-ordinate the activities of all of those who work upon the Chevin.

I am sure colleagues who represent Roundhay where they have an Estate Manager will explain to Councillor Taggart the benefits of that, the close working relationship and the easy point of contact for Elected Members and, indeed, members

of the public, to make representations if they have particular issues.

One of the points that I picked up in the amendment and Councillor Taggart just simply ignores and brushes to one side; it simply is not appropriate any more, because of health & safety considerations amongst other things, to have people simply pitching up on their own and saying, "Right, I am here for work. I will go about and do some work now and then just go, okay, I'm off home now and I'll go home." There are serious issues surrounding lone workers, particularly lone workers who are working on behalf of the authority outdoors. If people fall, trip, a ranger could be unconscious for all we know, what are we to say as an authority, "Oh well, we are not really bothered. You know, they just pitch up, do a bit and disappear off." That clearly is not the way.

I might say it is precisely all of these issues that Cape Space recognised. It is all of these issues. This is the reason we could not attain the Green Flag status. It was these very issues that we are seeking to address to deliver a better service upon Otley Chevin, not just for the people of Otley but to people all across the City and beyond, because we do recognise the value of the Chevin Forest Park. We do want to ensure that it gets Green Flag status for everybody in this City and beyond. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Lord Mayor, in seconding this amendment I would like to thank Neil for referring to Otley as Greater Otley. It is a wonderful compliment to it.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: It means Otley and the area around it.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Yes, that's fine ---

COUNCILLOR J. L. CARTER: That is my ward round it, just be careful. (Laughter)

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: I would like to ask him about that newspaper clipping that he has got with my photo on it. My recollection was that it was within the paper, but it may well have been the front. I don't pay too much attention in that sense, but I did notice one thing on it. Do you have any comment from me on it?

THE LORD MAYOR: No doubt Councillor Taggart will include that in his winding up but he can't come back at this stage.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Okay. The other thing that I would just pose to him then is that you will find that underneath the photo the caption reads that I am Otley Town Councillor, Rick Downes. I am not an Otley Town Councillor, sadly. Therefore you say you should believe everything you read in the paper. I just point out that that about me as incorrect. I am not a town councillor.

Anyway, I have been concerned since I heard that the permanent ranger

service for Otley Chevin was being withdrawn. I took to go up to the Chevin and look at what the rangers have achieved since the war. Apparently after the war there were only a handful of trees left on the Chevin after the Army had finished their tank manoeuvres there, and so it is a tribute to these rangers that the Chevin is the jewel in the crown of Leeds parklands.

I read a few years back that Leeds is second only to Vienna in terms of parkland space of all the cities in Europe. I find that an amazing statistic and one that we can all enjoy, but to do so we must manage our parklands in the best way possible. The centralisation of the ranger service is key to that objective, but I feel that Otley Chevin is a special case. In fact, both of my ward colleagues do. I therefore pushed, with my ward colleagues who are on Otley Town Council, for a better solution for the Chevin. I have also seen proposals for a new eco-centre to be sited on the Chevin and I am very excited about this for the future. A site that runs on solar power would, I believe, be an asset without, Les, turning it into a theme park. However, it would be a sensitive development, but that is for the future.

I am also pleased to support the amendment which shows a clear direction and future for the Chevin. It is an area of outstanding beauty and the views across the valley are breathtaking. By appointing an Estate Officer I hope they will be able to encourage more children to come from our schools to enjoy outdoor activities there. As a former top orienteer who travelled to Scandinavia with map and compass - well, I broke my compass and had to make do with just the map - I am pleased to see that there is a permanent course at the Chevin and that the local club holds events there on the Chevin. One day I must dust off my orienteering shoes and have a go, but these days I have to make do with the London marathon and the Great North run, which I am running next week for National Children's Homes, along with David and Brenda. Sponsorship forms are available, but I digress.

The amendment says it all and clearly focuses in on Otley Chevin as a very special area within Leeds. That the Chevin failed to be awarded Green flag status was a disappointment and an Estate Officer, supported by the ranger and forestry services, will improve the Chevin for all and should enable the Chevin to regain Green Flag status. This clearly is a better deal for the Chevin and I urge you all to support the amendment to provide the best future for the Chevin. (Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: I now call Councillor Kirkland. Could I ask, please, that we give him a chance to be heard. The last time he spoke I think somebody on the left-hand side couldn't hear him, so if he can speak in silence it will help.

COUNCILLOR KIRKLAND: My Lord Mayor, it has already been said in this debate that Otley is the jewel in the crown and the Chevin is the sparkle in the jewel in the crown, and it is run from the white house on Otley Chevin and it is run more efficiently

than some other white houses I can think of.

I am sure that running it from Redhall would be considerably less effective. You wouldn't run Leeds from London, although some people try. I think that it is a very vulnerable environment. This year with it being a relatively dry summer, there are hundreds of hectares that are tinder dry and obviously an efficient ranger service is essential. If you get a fire in that sort of environment it can be virtually impossible to put out, and it is also, like an awful lot of other sites in Leeds which other Members of the Council will realise, liable to dumping. There are a lot of car parks. Some of them leave a lot to be desired. Obviously on the spot supervision by somebody who knows what he is doing and has a rapport with local residents and local users of the Chevin is absolutely essential, so make sure that this great asset is adequately supervised, adequately publicised and it goes from strength to strength.

COUNCILLOR J. L. CARTER: My Lord Mayor, just one or two points. I think Councillor Taggart is being very selective in various quotes he is making. I wouldn't expect anything different. I am also sad that our young MP has failed to even respond to the letter which I wrote him, other than making comments through the paper. If Councillor Taggart had taken notice of the whole of what the Student Prince wrote, he wrote a letter and he also had about three or four sheets of paper with it, and one of those, in it he said he wished to market - market - I will use his words - market the Chevin. Now, that can mean all sorts of things, Neil. It could mean, as my colleague says, he wants to sell it. It could mean that he wants to put a dry ski slope down it. He might want shooting. He might want anything.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: He might want shooting alright. (Laughter)

COUNCILLOR J. L. CARTER: I shall not be tempted to reply. I shall not be tempted to reply, but he said he wanted to market it. I don't know what you are looking at, Neil. That's why I think you are being selective because you are just reading a little bit in the newspaper, but marketing can mean anything as far as the Chevin is concerned.

What I tried to point out to him - and, first of all, I might add, which I think is a little bit disingenuous of this man, I actually congratulated him on his new appointment. I know it is a bit pathetic, front bench spokesman for --- Oh, no, I will withdraw that. I congratulated him on his appointment and I am sad that he has not responded back to me, but all I said to him is, "The Chevin is very, very sensitive and it is not just Otley. One of my electors sat here lives on the Chevin, just about, and she doesn't live in Otley.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: She doesn't vote for you either, Les.

COUNCILLOR J. L. CARTER: She does. You don't know that, what goes on in the

secret of the ballot. Oh, don't you get up. All I can say --- Be quiet now. I have got to sit down. I want to go home. I need to go for a pint ---

COUNCILLOR LYONS: You will have to wait while I ---

COUNCILLOR J. L. CARTER: So can I just say I support the amendment but let's treat the Chevin very, very sensitively. I do worry if somebody starts talking about marketing men on that Chevin. You know what happens across country parks of our country where too much use is made of it. The Chevin is there in the main for people in Otley but also for the people in my ward to use, and I will fight to protect it. Thank you, my Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR E. NASH: My Lord Mayor, we heard a lot earlier this evening about how important it is to remember the Leeds pals, and so it is, and the Labour Group gave whole-hearted support to that White Paper, but what about remembering the men and boys of Otley who gave their lives so that we may all be free? Major Horton-Fawkes of Farnley Hall in 1945 gave that part of Otley Chevin, known as Danefield Park, to the people of Otley in memory of those who had lost their lives fighting for their country. The Deed of Gift stated that the land must be maintained at all times as an open space for the benefit of the members of the public.

Originally, the foresters employed by Otley Urban District Council carried out that maintenance work. However, when I chaired the Leisure Services Committee during the 1980s this Labour Council, with support of the Countryside Commission, bought additional land to make this a magnificent and extensive country forest park. It was obvious then, because of its size and vulnerability, that a permanent resident ranger service was needed and the Leeds Labour Council provided it.

Our Labour Council recognised that it had a wonderful asset to be enjoyed by many, many visitors. We improved the facilities at the white house, making it into a visitor centre, opened a seasonal café and built a toilet block. I climb Otley Chevin at least once a week and have been dismayed to see that this visitor centre is closed and shuttered up. No refreshments are available to the thousands of visitors who may have travelled some distance. That is why no Green Flag was awarded.

Despite the lack of facilities, visitors continue to come, and this is not without danger to themselves and to the forest environment. We have just had a dry summer. One has only to think of the forest fires in Portugal to realise how vulnerable this unique country park is. It needs permanent patrols to see that those minorities of visitors treat the Chevin with respect, so that it is not destroyed for us all.

To help the full-time ranger there is an assistant ranger and a little army of volunteer wardens working under his direction, patrolling the Chevin, doing minor

repairs, building dry stone walls, repairing fences, maintaining footpaths and generally being on hand in case a member of the public has had an accident, as some parts of the Chevin are dangerous.

We are now left with the one assistant who is now to work from Redhall and the volunteer wardens will not work without the support and direction of the senior permanent ranger. There is now to be no ranger or warden employed at weekends unless a group makes a booking.

My Lord Mayor, the Chevin is not like a town park where, without any disrespect to those parks or those wards in which they are situated, the grass is cut, hopefully, and the flower-beds weeded. It is a fragile forest environment that needs a great deal of care and full-time protection. It is a nonsense to run a warden service from Redhall, which is several miles away, allowing a ranger to pop to the Chevin every so often, but that is lost on those over there. All they think about is how they can save money, and it gets worse. And it gets worse.

I live on the doorstep of Kirkstall Abbey and that has just received a big Lottery grant for its restoration. A condition of the grant was that full-time security be employed. No additional wardens have been appointed. All that has happened is that the jam has been spread more thinly. This is the worst case of robbing Peter to pay Paul.

This idea of a new Estate Manager is a proposal made in panic. We do not need a desk bureaucrat. We need a hands-on person. The War Memorial stone on Otley Chevin that was unveiled by the then Lord Mayor, Bill Hudson ---

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Nash. Can you wind up, please.

COUNCILLOR E. NASH: -- ends with (interruptions) --- Please, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Let her finish.

COUNCILLOR E. NASH: -- "lest we forget". Well, that side has forgotten but we Labour Members will not forget the Chevin, nor the people of Otley. We make a pledge ---

THE LORD MAYOR: I am sorry, Councillor Nash, you have run out of time. Will you please sit down, Councillor Nash. Thank you. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: My Lord Mayor, I am assuming that Councillor Taggart feels slightly embarrassed after that last interjection from Councillor Nash because --- Well, we have had a bit of fun on this debate, haven't we? We are in need of a pixie for the Chevin. We have got a volunteer. Look, we have had two parts to this

debate. We have had a bit of fun from Neil but Neil was quoting a number of things, including me. He quoted the press, he quoted me accurately. I mean, my good friend was somewhat inaccurately quoted but he did quote a number of concerns that local residents have had, and that is fair, and I don't have a problem with Neil's comments.

I do have a problem, though, because unfortunately Neil has been persuaded into this resolution by some associates of his in the Labour Party in Otley who unfortunately haven't told him all the truth. Now, it is patently obvious that we are all interested in maintaining the Council's presence on the Chevin. Now, we call it a warden, we are talking about a warden. What Councillor Procter has discussed with us, and if you have been listening to him, actually he told you the truth about what is exactly happening. We are not, Councillor Nash - and this is part of my problem with the Labour party because we are on this -- we will not tell you all the truth, we will tell you what we think we might get a bit of (inaudible) -- these wardens who might pop out onto the Chevin, there are going to be wardens on the Chevin all the time. Well, not at midnight hopefully, but all the time, but there may well be at midnight the motorcycle patrols. Right? There may well be.

As Councillor Procter points out, we do employ a lot of other people who work on the Chevin. Now, it seems to me that if you have at the moment a full-time permanent and a part-time permanent, plus your foresters, plus your footpaths officer working on the Chevin, if we have also got another post being created, an estate officer, we are actually getting more people up there working on the Chevin, maintaining the Chevin, improving the Chevin and working with the community, so the comments about, you know, popping out from Redhall for half an hour are absolute nonsense. The comment that there won't be anybody there at the weekend is absolute nonsense, because there will be somebody there.

Now, I know I keep saying this. "It is to save money", that was another one. "It is going to save money". How can employing another person save money? Let's face it, that is probably the most expensive thing you can ever do. Right?

The nonsense about the white house visitor centre. The visitor centre café was closed 5 years ago. Now, I don't know who had Councillor Procter's job 5 years ago. Nobody is putting their hand up to that, so I am assuming whoever it was is no longer with us but, you know come on, Councillor Nash. Come on, Councillor Nash. Alright.

We as an authority, we as local Ward Members, when we heard there may be some changes to the warden service were justifiably concerned. Unfortunately, and I think it is unfortunately, there has been so much misinformation given out and perpetuated this evening, particularly over there in that corner, that the residents of

Otley and other individuals have mistaken what is going to happen.

Now, I have been told what is happening. Councillor Procter has explained it to everybody here. I think the Ward Members are now happy. Why are we happy? Because we are getting more, and we are back on what we were talking earlier on, Andrew, aren't we, about outer areas getting more?

COUNCILLOR A. CARTER: Absolutely.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: And this is part of the problem, it is outer areas -- it is another one of these outer areas getting more, you know. We didn't do that in the past. We don't do that. We don't give the outer areas money.

Right, to wind up, Lord Mayor, and you will be pleased to hear this, I as a local Ward Member will be supporting Councillor Procter's amendment for the simple reason that it improves the service on the Chevin, it improves the service for the people of Otley and, more importantly, it improves the Chevin for the people of Leeds, for all the people of Leeds. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Lord Mayor, another letter from the Yorkshire Evening Post from Roger Tattersall - I am speaking quickly because I have only got 5 minutes. Roger Tattersall from Yeadon, who quotes in response to a letter from Councillor Procter and he says, "When Councillor Procter defends the commitment of Leeds City Council to the Chevin by drawing attention to the fact that it "recently entered it into the prestigious Green Flag Awards" he neglected to mention that while the Chevin did indeed gain Green Flag status in 2003 it failed to regain it in 2004." We talked about that earlier on. "Now that the volunteers are no longer able to assist the ranger in essential path and fence maintenance work and the only full-time ranger on the Chevin is to be transferred to Redhall, it is hard to see how the Chevin will be able to regain Green Flag status in the future."

There is a follow-up letter from a Cynthia Ruston who lives in Meanwood, and she says, "I agree with every word in Mr. Tattersall's letter. However, I must add that the vast reduction in ranger amenities is not only affecting the Chevin but is a City-wide cut-back. Sympathies must go out to rangers across Leeds who have worked hard, in some places for years, to build up groups of volunteers, seeing them achieving skills through their guidance and expertise and then for all to be lost at a stroke. Someone must find the appropriate language to inform our City fathers that all this was at no cost to our City purse and that there are many volunteers who are unable to give up their time during weekdays."

What a bunch, Members of Council, are the Liberal Democrats. I quoted honestly something that their MP said, someone I don't support politically. He is

rubbished again by Councillor Carter who knows that I have only got 5 minutes but if anybody bothers to read thee is nothing there about Disneyworld or anything like it. He is entitled to say what he wants. He is a good knock-about politician and I actually like Les, we are actually friends on a personal basis, but there is not one of the 26 shower of the Liberal Democrats who thought, "Oh, we had better get up and say something. We can't have them attacking the MP". You just sat there, docilely. What did you say? Something to save your own skins. Councillor Downes, "What's in the paper? Yes, my picture is there but did I say anything? And I'm not an Otley Town Councillor". Is that the best you can do, Councillor Downes? The people who elected you think that you are behind the campaign because the newspaper says, "Keep the Chevin rangers", and Councillor Downes is happy to be there with a former ranger and with a Member of Parliament as if he is with them. Well, you are not, are you? You are a coward.

And as for you Councillor Campbell - Councillor Campbell who is now apparently happy to support the Procter amendment - this is what he said, and it is in print so let's have it again for the second time. This is what he said, "I think the Chevin is a jewel in the Leeds crown and I think it would be wrong for there to be diminishing of the service we have up there. At the first available meeting with the Town Council we will make it clear that this is not open to negotiation." You negotiated everything away. Colin, there is 26 of you. There is only 24 of them. The whole City knows who is really running the Council? Carter and Carter. They take you for granted. You think you can get away in your local newspapers, "Oh we fight for local people and their needs." No-one is ever going to believe a word you ever say again. You are exposed. You are the bedfellows of the Conservatives. At least we don't like what they do but people like Carter and Carter say what they believe, they don't tell lies. We will fight them politically and we will fight you politically, because the residents of Yeadon and Otley and places like that will sweep you out of office at the next opportunity. (Applause and Interruptions)

THE LORD MAYOR: We have a request for a recorded vote. I will wait for a minute or so until everybody gets back into their seats.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Would all Members ensure, please, they are in their allocated seats. All Members please refer to their desk unit and press the button marked "P" to activate the unit. Those Members in favour of the amendment in the name of Councillor Procter should please press the "+" button, those Members against that motion the "-" button and any Member wishing o abstain and have their abstention recorded please press the "0" button.

THE LORD MAYOR: Okay, we have a result, Members of Council. Present 88 members, voting "Yes" 52, abstaining nil and voting "No" 36. The amendment is therefore carried and now becomes the substantive motion.

(The substantive motion was carried)

ITEM 16 - WHITE PAPER MOTION -
ADMISSION LEVELS AT TEMPLE MOOR HIGH SCHOOL

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Well, I am a retired engine-driver so I am used to the graveyard shifts. It has been very, very interesting this afternoon so I have decided to wait to put to you what we are talking about.

I move that this Council urges Education Leeds to undertake an immediate review of admission levels at Temple Moor High School. Council also note the urgent need for immediate additional support and intervention by Education Leeds to address the standards of attainment in the East Leeds area.

I thought we were doing marvellous when they announced from the Government that they were giving us money, we were getting millions of pounds into Leeds, and rightly so, the administration said they had done well with applying for the money and getting the money. I thought, "Wonderful. We will get our schools -- we will get new schools and we will get our schools done up."

Then I was at a Plans East Panel and lo and behold I looked at what they were going to do at Temple Moor School. Temple Moor School is up Selby Road in the Templenewsam Ward, as you will know very well, Lord Mayor, and what they are going to do is knock a lot of the school down - not it all - they will refurbish it but knock a lot of the school down and in actual fact the admission numbers, when the admission numbers come in, it will be less than it is now, so if you take into account that we are getting millions of pounds financing --- We are not arguing, for once we are not arguing about the money. We have got the money to put the things right, to put the school right, so we have looked at Temple Moor and what they are going to do is build a school that takes less pupils than it has got now. That would seem great if the school were a failing school or indeed if it didn't have a lot of pupils.

I have got to inform Council that every year, not this year, every year for quite some time there has been at least 100 appeals against admission -- they wanted admitting to Temple Moor High School, and these are not from Otley or Otley Chevin, these are children from the adjoining streets where David lives, where I live and where you live, Lord Mayor. The people there, the tales that they come and tell us are saying, "We can't get the children in" and they are saying, "All we can do is argue to get the school bigger." We get a chance. We get a chance to get the school built in accordance to what is needed in the area, and what do they do, and what is Education Leeds going to do? They are going to blow it so for years and years and years to come the children that are round Templenewsam Ward will not be able to

attend that particular school.

I have got names and addresses of people that has been in touch with me regarding appeals, the local people that can't get into Temple Moor School. So what are we talking about what Education Leeds is doing? I questioned. I said to them, "What are we doing? You have a chance here and we are not arguing about finance.

Forget that we are taking money out or we are going to put rates up or owt daft like that. We have got the money." Education Leeds says, and if you remember Councillor Fox, they said finance is not an object at all. We haven't to bother about finance, so why are we bothering? Why can't we build a school to take the kids that are necessary for that particular area?

It seems to me that the whole of East Leeds seems to have been forgotten when it comes to how the kids are performing across that particular way. We have got children now that live near me and the other two councillors that are having to get up and travel to other schools and I am not decrying any other school, I am talking about schools in my patch that what we can say is that as far as we are concerned why? Why can't we build? Why can't we build a school that will be big enough to take the children that want to go there? Why? And I just can't understand. We have got the money. We have got the land. We have got money, we have got land, all we haven't got is Education Leeds playing about with where they are going to put our children.

That is why I have come at this particular time at night to put this, Lord Mayor. It is absolutely ludicrous. It is ludicrous that they can tell us we will build a shiny new school but it won't be for the kids in the area. You can't go, Mrs. Smith, because there isn't room, and there won't be room from day one, when the new school opens, it can't take the children.

So why don't we tell them, as councillors, because it happens in other places but that's up to you to look after. I have all on looking after my own patch. Why don't we tell them, "Eh, listen, Education Leeds. Do what you are getting bloody paid for. Get our kids a place in our school because you have got the grants, you have got the money, you have got the land. All you haven't got is the will or the guts to build a school to take local children", and this is what is happening. This is what goes on throughout the land. People and Officers make decisions that for years the politicians are trying to sort out. Once they do it, it is no good me standing up here and saying, "We should increase the size of the school" because we won't have any money. Now is the time when they have got money to do it.

So I would urge Council to look again at what is happening and I would urge them to look at also the attainment of the children in the particular area. I have no question about any other school barring Temple Moor School. It is a good school but

what is the use of a good school if you can't get your kids into it? You go talk to them. I expect you have talked to them, Lord Mayor. Have you ever had to deal at a surgery with people that can't get their children at 11 into school? (Interruptions) That's it. Now we have a chance of putting it right. We have a chance of putting it right. Wouldn't it be good to say, "Don't worry, I have told Education Leeds and all them people that's in charge now, they call them Leeds City Councillors, they are going to see the error of Education Leeds' way and urge them to think again on what they are doing."

Thank you very much and I urge you to vote for this and, as far as I am concerned, I am amazed that some have gone down -- Richard has put an amendment in. Richard, don't play about with the kids of this City. All I am asking as a Ward Councillor, you have got the money. For years and years we didn't have the money. You have got the money. You have got the money now. Build a school big enough to take the intake of what is needed there. Simple, straightforward. Get it done. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I formally second and reserve our right to speak.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: I just really, I think, colleagues, you will wonder why the front bench of the Labour Party applauded that speech from Councillor Lyons. My Lord Mayor, Councillor Lyons, like Rumpelstiltskin, has just woken up. In 2003 and 2004 you warned the last administration in this very chamber that they were making a mistake on the BSF plans that they were approving. 2003/2004 in this very chamber. The Lord Mayor warned us, Mick, that there was a possibility that under BSF Temple Moor might be too small, and there isn't the money to make Temple Moor bigger because you didn't listen -- you don't listen, Mick.

I had to announce in this chamber in the very first few months that I was in this post that the Labour Government had reduced the amount of money it was giving to this City for BSF by over £50million and that we were having to rescope the whole of the BSF programme. It had to be rescoped. We were going to build more schools than we are. Instead of building I think it was 6 new high schools and refurbishing -- sorry, 10 new high schools and refurbishing 4, we now have to refurbish 10 and rebuild 4, and that is because the money we are getting under BSF has reduced. There is not money sloshing around suddenly to change direction on the plans that were set by your administration before I took over the BSF programme and the plan was set in stone, and I was by your side. We have been fighting, since we have been in administration, with your Government to rescue the BSF programme so that 14 of our high schools in this City will be put right, 14 of the high schools that have been neglected for years and years and years on maintenance. It isn't.

The number of students being admitted to Temple Moor this year was fixed by your administration. It takes 2 years. It was fixed under the last administration. I

didn't fix the admission limits for Temple Moor this year, and they have to be fixed there because you are quite right, the number of children who are going to go into the new school has to fit. A high school cannot suddenly take extra children because it does not have the specialist classrooms it needs to perform.

But, Council, I am more worried by the tag end of Councillor Lyons' speech -- sorry, motion. He asks that more resources be put into East Leeds in the --- I have forgotten what you said, Mick, I will just have to check the words. Can somebody tell me what the last sentence is? I don't have it to hand. Right, more standards of attainment. Oh, and by the way, before we leave admissions, the admissions policy, because Mick got me so cross I had forgotten part of my speech.

Let us be absolutely certain about the admissions policy in this City which we have to own as a Council. Work was done on the admissions policy at the request of the Admissions Forum and Scrutiny, and Education Leeds went away and they tested our policy against 6 others using the University of Leeds computer and our policy came out best, and in fact the Admissions Forum, with one caveat on BME students, and the Scrutiny Board accepted the recommendations of that piece of research. That piece of research came to Executive Board recently and we accepted the report and so did the Labour Group at that meeting. Councillor Wakefield voted for it. So we do have an admissions policy which delivers; 92.5% of young people got their first choice in this City. We are never going to reach 100%. We would be fooling ourselves if we thought we could, and 98.1% got at least one of their first three choices.

Now, my grandmother was a very wise old woman. She said, look at the postscript of a motion that is put up, "Notes the urgent and immediate additional support by Education Leeds to address the attainment standards of attainment in the East Leeds area". Please, Councillor Lyons, will you specify where. If you want us to put more resources in, wouldn't it have been honest of you tonight to tell us where you want to put this. There are 8 high schools in East Leeds and an academy about to come in, so which schools or school do you want us to put these extra resources in?

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Temple Moor. He has just said - Temple Moor. (Interruptions)

COUNCILLOR HARKER: No. I am talking but raising attainment. You are telling me that Temple Moor is a failing school? Is that what you are now saying, Mick? I am talking about this request for extra resources to raise attainment, so which schools are you saying? I note that 4 of the schools in East Leeds out of the 8 didn't meet their A-C estimates in their Educational Development Plan. Are you talking about those? Are you talking about those or not? Please let me know.

THE LORD MAYOR: I am sorry, you can't ask those sort of questions, Councillor Harker. It is just encouraging the Opposition. If you want to be heard, I think really it would be better to make it a statement rather than ask a question. Could I ask the Opposition, please, to listen. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: This administration has increased the amount of money that has gone into closing the gap in our high schools in part of the programme for Every Child Matters, actually about £1.5 million. Also East Leeds has had a share in the £2 million Government money on the 6 schools compact, and 2 schools at least in East Leeds have had that.

Under Every Child Matters the performance of our high schools are monitored every month by Education Leeds, and I do take exception tonight to the statement that Education Leeds decided on the size of Temple Moor. This Council, under your administration, decided. Education Leeds doesn't have the power to decide. This seems to be an urban myth put around after we had to bring Education Leeds in to deliver the services because otherwise Councillors interfered in Council delivery of education. We all remember that, but Education Leeds do not have the power to make policy on education in this City, and that is a fact. We set the agenda and we set the budget and Executive Board has to make the final decision on all these things.

Now, I am going to turn to Councillor Gruen because we do have a problem in East Leeds. We do have a problem in East Leeds. I have not been told officially because I don't have to be told, but Councillor Gruen is a governor at the new academy. I have just been told that the new academy has approached the Chief Education Officer in this City to ask if for the first 2 years -- to propose to SOC that in the first 2 years the new academy will not have to take hard to place children. They want to get their results up quickly. It will be interesting to know from Councillor Gruen at some point, and the Labour Party generally, where in East Leeds we are not putting in the resources. I think this is a despicable end to a motion, this questioning of support. It is suggesting that somewhere in East Leeds there is a failing school or schools but you have not got the guts to name them.

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

COUNCILLOR BRETT: My Lord Mayor, Councillor Mick Lyons is a pleasure to watch in operation. Unfortunately, I disagree with everything he says. He has always had firm, robust views and has announced them to all and sundry in an ebullient style. However, he is a Populist, rarely if ever choosing an unpopular principled line.

The Labour Group have always found it difficult to control him but had to send

him to the Passenger Transport Executive when they were in control. Now in opposition, Mick, you have got your way. I have to say that in 24 years of power, Councillor Murray, Councillor Driver and all the other Education Chairs never played the Populist card with school admissions. Now in opposition they seem to have lost their principles and their will to fight. Congratulations, Mick, you are the spokesman for Labour's Education policy.

Now, we can't just increase admission numbers at a stroke. We can put more temporary buildings in. We can find some teachers, but it does not solve the problems. 30 years as a science teacher in secondary education, and for those of you who are not aware, Temple Moor is a specialist science college, makes it clear to me that school admissions needs more care. You cannot change rapidly the size of corridors or provide extra dining rooms or provide crucially students social areas. To mis-quote John Dunne, "No school is an island". Letting more students go to one popular school has very serious effects on neighbouring schools.

I urge Labour's Education brains to get back in gear, to realise that Mick's motion is short-sighted and misguided. Please support Councillor Harker's motion. Thank you. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Lord Mayor, some of you will know the problems that we have experienced in Morley with school places, particularly at Newlands School. I am aware of the hour and I am also aware that it is not right to play politics with children's education and I would not wish to do so. However, I notice that the amendment makes reference to pertinent legislation which will allow a greater influence for councillors in setting the school place numbers. I am aware that legislation exists which will allow the introduction of catchment areas for schools. That is something that, before I was elected to this Council, I assisted parents in Morley with, and you will be aware who was the administration then who were not particularly amicable to the suggestions which we made.

There is a fundamental problem in some areas of Leeds and I think those problems need to be addressed not only for Councillor Lyons' school area. There are other areas in Leeds. We are elected to serve the people of Leeds, not just those people in our back yard. If we are going to look at this, we should be looking at it across the board in Leeds, not just to suit one Elected Member.

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: Lord Mayor, I want to say I hope I don't embarrass you too much but I don't mean to, I just want to quote an incident.

Councillor Brett, I think you have been terribly, terribly unfair to Councillor Lyons.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: I agree, yes.

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: Anybody who represents a ward won't easily see kids living in their area being bussed out to their local schools. I have always fought that. I fought when I lived in Morley when people were coming in and my kids couldn't get into Woodkirk and Bruntcliffe, and I think every Councillor here should do it. I stood up against the Chief Legal Officer when we were told at one time that we were not to go along to appeals to get our local kids in, and I was right to do so, and it is very much in line with the argument we have had regarding the licensing.

Now, I would like to support, because there is a principle and there is a policy behind what Richard says. I would like to support his amendment but he never spoke on the amendment. He spent all his time slagging off a hard-working Councillor who looks after his ward. That is what he is here for. I suspect there are other people who live in that ward who might feel the same way.

In 1984, Richard, you will recall when I was Chair of Lifelong Learning & Leisure, the Chief Education Officer took a proposal to that Scrutiny Board to increase the numbers of Temple Moor by 25. Right. You will recall, Richard, that you called it in. You called it in, and in fact the Lord Mayor and myself were two voices crying out in the wilderness. I was defeated by the Chair. The Lord Mayor was defeated by a local Member and Richard and two other Councillors threw it out. They said you cannot --- Yes, it was the spring of -- sorry, 2004. 2004, sorry. It was kicked out. It was kicked out. You sent it back. You would not let that school have those extra 25 kids. There was room to do it. The government body wanted it. The local parents wanted it. They were bussed out to schools outside their area. You kicked it out, and what did the Chief Education Officer do? Quite rightly, Richard, not Education Leeds, the policy was made by Keith Burton. We know that.

He considered what my Scrutiny Board did when they defeated us 3-2 and he decided that -- he heard what we said. He listened to the arguments but he was going to introduce that policy that increased the school by 25 extra places. Quite right. Quite right, because if any of you allow your kids who live in that area, 100 kids, to be bussed out, the school should be bigger. Everybody should have at least a place in their local school. I fought for it in Morley. People will know I fought for it in Armley. I stood up against the Chief Legal Officer to go to appeals, and you all should be doing it.

Now, you slagged off --- Richard, I hope you are listening. You slagged off Labour Chairs. Well, you have absolutely no right to talk to Mick Lyons like that without producing any evidence that your nonsense amendment is better than his, and I suspect there are a lot of people, not necessarily in your Party, Richard, but there are, you know, some like - right-minded Conservatives who I won't name who

probably agree whole-heartedly with Councillor Lyons. Hypocrisy, Richard. Absolute hypocrisy, that's all I can say. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I am just going to underline specifically what my colleague has said, but first of all I would point out this is the second time Councillor Finnigan has been down to speak and has absented himself from the meeting. Now, in fact, what we should do now is go to the Evening Post and call for his resignation. It just shows you how unreasonable and unfair our previous discussion was.

But coming back to the item before us, Councillor Harker is in the position quite starkly of having this choice. You could intervene and make sure that a new school being built with public money would accommodate the children who want to go there from that particular area. If you are not able to take on that responsibility, resign and hand it on to someone else. It is a simple stark position you are in and you are trying to footloose your way round it, dodge round like a boxer on his heels but, quite frankly, you are failing. You are seen to have failed. You either take it on or you should not hold that post.

My honest hope is this, and I hate saying it because I think we should be over there and you should be over here, but this has to go, I think, to the Executive Board. On the Executive Board there are a number of men and women who in fact are prepared in cases like this to exercise their own judgment. They have done it on one or two occasions on which I have given them strong and open and public support and applause. In this case, this is exactly the position that requires that degree of force and intelligence, because not one of us would say we will have the school built in our area for our children which we know is too small to accommodate them and so children living close to the school are being bussed or having to take busses quite some distance away, sometime to a school with which they have no cultural affinity. That is the position, and you know it is the position and you are trying to, for some reason, avoid it, and if your argument is we, the Labour Party, made those decisions and it was a mistake, if that's what you are saying, you should be saying now "It was a mistake and we are going to put it right and it is in our power to do so", and when you don't do that you commit yourself.

Quite frankly you are beginning to lose the respect that some of us thought you were engendering in us. You have got to face the challenge. You can't be a soft pudding all the time. You have got sometimes to have some of that backbone.

COUNCILLOR SCHOFIELD: Lord Mayor, you and I, Lord Mayor, know that there is one Member in this Chamber who spent many, many years as a strong advocate of the parents and the pupils at Temple Moor School. You and I know, the people of Halton know, the parents of many children past and present at Temple Moor School know, that you have got a long record as a governor, as a Ward Councillor in fighting for more places at Temple Moor School over many, many years without any sympathy at

all from the people who were running this City over the 1980s and the 1990s.

It has long been Conservative Party policy to expand successful schools. We have got a consistent record of supporting schools which are making a success for their pupils, not only in exam results but in helping them in every other way. I think it is rather late in the day but we all understand why Councillor Lyons, now that he is part of the amalgamated ward, we understand now why Councillor Lyons has to take an interest in the future of successful schools for the first time, and the fact that we would like them to be as large as possible. We have always thought that for many, many years. The Lord Mayor and myself are on record of helping or trying to help many parents. As Councillor McKenna said, generously paying tribute to you, Lord Mayor, the role you played in trying to do your best, going to all sorts of appeals, the Ombudsman and so on over recent years.

I mean, one wonders what Labour candidates are going to come up with next. We have got presumably a Labour candidate standing in Templenewsam next year calling for expansion of successful schools. Is the Labour candidate in Moortown going to call for local income tax? The Labour Councillor in Farnley & Wortley calling for more wheelie bins? The Labour candidates in Morley South --- Well, it won't make any difference what they say in Morley South because they have no chance at all. (Laughter)

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Does that mean you have got no a chance either, your Party, in Morley South?

COUNCILLOR SCHOFIELD: I said whatever the Labour Party say, I am sure our candidate will have lots of attractive things to say which will appeal to many voters not only in Morley South but in many other parts of the City. I might say that I am hopeful that our candidate in Templenewsam will have many attractive and hopeful things to say which will persuade the voter to give us a clean sweep of the Templenewsam Ward.

We don't want to play party politics too much but trying to pin the blame on particular councillors I think is not all that useful, but I understand from recollection that Councillor Driver played a role not too long ago in --- (Interruption) Right, my recollection is good, then. So Councillor Driver is prepared to shoulder blame as well. I think that is generous of him and good to hear.

All I can say is that I am sure Members on this side are trying to be positive in this difficult situation. Councillor Harker has explained the constitutional position, the fact that we wouldn't be starting from here if it hadn't been for the Party over there interfering politically, nailed by their own Government for spoiling the chances of many children in Leeds schools by their political interference and incompetence over many,

many years, and in fact going back, Councillor Driver, some of us remember the poor Prisoner of Zenda, Mr. Johnson, as he was called in the real world. We always wondered which were his signatures. He was such a prisoner that someone else used to sign the letters for him. There were three or four versions of R. S. Johnson in those days. That was in the 1990s. If that wasn't political interference taken to a fine degree I don't know what was.

The name of Terry Briggs comes to mind from that dark era as well.
(Interruptions) Goodness me, I remember one exciting evening at East Garforth Primary School when the parents were so upset with Terry he asked for refreshment from the headmistress. She showed him the medicinal cupboard, luckily there was brandy handy. By the end of the evening the parents didn't get the new roof they were asking for; they blooming well got a new school out of Terry.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: But this wasn't 20 years ago.

COUNCILLOR SCHOFIELD: Garforth was a marginal ward in those days, as it is again now. I am looking for benefits for having a Councillor, but that was how the education service was run. It was off the cuff, on the night, people like Terry used to do things under pressure which no sane person would have agreed to.
(Interruptions) To be fair, I poured him the second drink, actually, to get him in a good mood and, as you say, we did get the new school at East Garforth.

To conclude, all I can say is that in a way we are glad that Councillor Lyons is a convert to our long-standing policy. We will do our best to make Temple Moor as large as possible, and I shall certainly support and continue to support the school, and I am sure the Lord Mayor will as well when he is free, back for other duties.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: You may well think that, but I couldn't possibly comment.

COUNCILLOR ELLIOTT: Lord Mayor, I hope you will allow me to say what I am going to say in a moment. You might not agree that it is perhaps pertinent to this amendment or what has been happening, but what I want to say is that I feel I must defend Councillor Finnigan at this time. I am surprised by Councillor Atha's comments - the absence of Councillor Finnigan at this moment and not speaking when he has been put down to speak. It is no way in any way like the absence of the Labour Party from the South Area Management Committee, which was absolutely appalling, and I am so surprised with Councillor Atha bringing this up this evening. (Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: I have two members have indicated their right to speak. Can we just check whether either of them want to exercise it? Councillor Shelbrooke.

COUNCILLOR SHELBRooke: No, thank you, Lord Mayor. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I do want to speak, yes. I find it interesting, Lord Mayor, that we have had a number of contributions from the coalition. They have all commented, rightly, on Councillor Lyons' resolution. Councillor Brett says to us, "You must support Councillor Harker's amendment" and up to now not a single person has spoken to that amendment. What on earth does it mean? Nobody understands what the amendment means, so that is why Councillor Harker didn't speak to it. It has been written for him probably by either Chris Edwards or Keith Burton, neither of whom are here, both of whom have been released to go home by Councillor Harker, such is his respect and their respect for an important education debate in East Leeds. In our days, officers used to listen to those debates and actually go away and pick up some of the action points from those.

Councillor Harker, you talk about anguish being suffered by parents. How have you answered that anguish? You have trotted out some statistics which I know well but you haven't actually said how you are going to deal with the 100+ appeals at that particular school year in, year out. You talk about a genuine community resource. You haven't uttered one single word about a genuine community resource. Pious words not even spoken to.

At the end of July some colleagues in this chamber attended the Admissions Forum and they did participate in that and they did vote in that, and I am sure you will have had feedback about that Admissions Forum. You didn't refer to it. You referred to a policy that has been evolved. You didn't refer to a special meeting that was held about East Leeds admissions, the concerns that were felt by all the members of the Admissions Forum, Diocese representatives, councillors, headteachers and other interested groups. You didn't refer to that, but there was a view almost unanimous - almost unanimous - and the resolution which was passed is to ask Education Leeds to urgently carry out a further review about the East Leeds admission issues. It was left particularly global in East Leeds so as not to narrow it down to one specific school, but there wasn't a person in that room with detailed admission and education knowledge who could not see that there were issues which had to be addressed.

Councillor Harker, you have failed to do your job. You have not taken that on board. You have not insisted that Education Leeds carry out that review. That was meant to be a helpful resolution to actually allow you to go in and look at the situation. Why is it important? Because we are at the point of spending money, more money than was ever given to any Council. You are talking about £200 million worth of credits, I believe, and you have the audacity to stand up here and tell us about the eighties and the nineties when you couldn't scrape tuppence hapenny together for anything to be done. No wonder maintenance wasn't being done, and we know who was in power then.

So the admissions policy is okay but you have to look --- Les, I will tell you something; when you have articulate lawyers in your ward then in Bramhope who come forward and who argue the case about their admissions into their local high school, what happens? Immediately the admissions policy is changed and those parents get their kids into the school that they want. You will remember that and certainly Cliffe Fox will remember it. If you are rich, if you are articulate, if you live in the right ward, they do the changes for you. If you are in East Leeds and you can't fend for yourself, then, no, you get ignored and that won't do as a policy, and you have been in power now for 18 months. You can no longer fob it off to anybody else. You have been holding the pot for 18 months ---

COUNCILLOR A. CARTER: You were 24 years.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Early on when it suited you you said don't go back on the tram, don't think back what people said a few years ago. Now it doesn't suit, you go back 24 years. Sheer hypocrisy. East Leeds is being neglected by you. The Family Learning Centre is being neglected by you. The lack of investment is being neglected by you. You are not doing your job for East Leeds, and Councillor Lyons is absolutely right to draw it to your attention and to campaign on that particular theme. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: First of all (Interruptions) -- I dare say it is unkind. It is going to get very unkind for you in a minute, but the amendment does actually call upon me to do something, so let's listen and see what I come up with.

I have great concern about the ability of certain people on that side of the chamber. I mean, we could count down through the months of how long we have been in control, but it is 14 months, not 18, Peter, and your colleague to your left seems to get confused between 20 and 2 years, so, well, we won't talk about people's education and numeracy.

I want to talk about Roundhay School, if I may - a school which was designed and planned under the first batch of PFI by your administration. Can I ask why you didn't build the school big enough to take I believe it is 1300 children over and above its current admission level that apply each year to get into that school because it is a fantastic achieving school? Why didn't you build it big enough to take those 1300 kids? Answer, because once you go down that road you have got chaos and the entire system will collapse, and here is the problem. (Interruption) Hang on a sec. Well, local choice for those 1300 kids, give them local choice and see what happens. You will have every school within a radius of 5 miles collapsing. Temple Moor won't survive. I will tell you, because the parents will be --- Temple Moor is a good school but they will think, "Well, let's get the kids into Roundhay, the 20th best high school in

the country. That's where we want our kids to go to." There comes a point at which you can't have just open-ended freedom of choice because you get anarchy.

We hear now meeting after meeting you saying, "All schools have got to stay open. There can't be any closures. There must be open-ended parental choice at any school." If any school is successful, of course we should be applauding success and supporting success, but there has got to be some semblance of control and reason to all of this and that is the problem. I accept it is difficult in control. You are relieved of that great burden now. We accept the burden, but in Opposition you are in Education policy now consistently being completely irresponsible. We cannot keep open every school in the City. We cannot just allow open-ended freedom of choice. We cannot just build a new school everywhere you want it.

Yes, the Government has given us a small fortune but we need a quintuple small fortune to achieve the sort of building that you are now talking of. There comes a point at which you cannot deliver everything. That is the difficulty we have. That is the responsibility that we have taken on, but you are not long out of control. These were all the issues that you faced in control. You understand. You were there. You grappled with the same problems. You tell us to be honest. You be honest and don't just pander simply to a Populist line, all schools open, numbers open-ended. Be honest and say if the system is to be stable, if it is not to completely collapse and become anarchical, there have got to be rules which have to be adhered to and that is the point of this amendment. Yes, we could try and ask to lessen some of the controls that are on us, but in the end it is going to be tinkering round the ages, if you want a stable, prospering education system in this City. (Applause)

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Lord Mayor, I didn't think I had caused as much controversy. I mean, what you have brought up, all I have asked for is that you have got the money and I was there and I will ask the Conservatives over there, I asked the question of Education Leeds, "Is finance the problem?" answer back, "No, it's not a matter of money at all." Listen, when I go to meetings, we take notice, whether you like what I am saying or not. That is what has happened and that is what should show in the minutes. So I am not arguing to take the money from anywhere else. Education Leeds said there was money there, if we wanted it, to build that school. That's what they said when they came to East Plans, so what I am asking for as a Ward Member - hard-working Ward Member - part of this Ward I didn't represent. I have only represented it for how long? 14 months or whatever it is. It seems a lot longer because it was a lot better at Halton Moor, like, you know, because they knew all about education and knew when somebody was trying to put it over on them.

And regarding the bottom end, I can't be controlled by the Labour Group. I have news for you, I can't be controlled by anyone. If I think that summat is right I will get up and I will say it. All I have asked for and all I have said is we have got the

money. Education Leeds said so. We have got the money. Councillor Fox can back up what I have said, if you are worried about it. We have got the space. All we are short about is Education Leeds and you coming along. I have not attacked any other school or any other ward in this City and I will not do so. I am there and was elected, same as the other two Ward Councillors. I have been at it 14 months up there and there is a lot to do, I might add. There is a lot to do, but we will put it right when we get somebody else in (inaudible) apart from the joke.

What I have been accused of all the way round, I have been accused of all sorts. You know, I will have to tell Marlene when I get home, you know, I could be really hurt about these things that's been said. (Laughter)

Listen, Les, we are here and you are all here for our patches. I am not here to destroy any other school. I am not here to knock his little empire down. I am here to look after the people that elected me in Templenewsam and that's what we should be doing. So you dragging all sorts in and I didn't speak when you were speaking, so shut up. Let me all talk to you if you keep telling us that "It's not our fault, guv. We haven't been in long enough to alter something." Now is your chance. Now is your chance. As far as we are concerned, we are saying - and this group is going to vote - we are saying right, we will vote for money that has come from the Government to be put into a school that badly needs it, where there is money for it, there is room for it, there is just not the will for it.

What did people say about me? Well, what David Schofield said is that "He's been a hard-working Councillor." I'm not going to argue about that. We are just going to shift him when the time is right. (Laughter) You know, but as far as I am concerned I don't need somebody that has been a Councillor for a very short while across in Richmond Hill, he should be worried and in tears at what is happening across in Richmond Hill, not attacking me for what I am doing in my patch. We should all be looking after what we got elected to do. I have not gone against any policy at all, and that has not gone against any policy whatsoever. What we've got is he has frightened you to death that somebody dare come up and say "Alright, we want money that's been put into Leeds spending in areas where you've a hundred kids get turned down every year." Hundred kids, you talk and in tears about people that are so disappointed, you can put it right in this instance. What you are speaking for, you are refusing to do so. Do so at your peril. You have got the chance, you will be saying "Oh, it were Richard Harker back in --" where are we, 2005 are we now, 2005 - "He made a right balls of the job", and that is what you are going to do (Laughter). Education Leeds, you want to tell them, and tell them right. We are Councillors of this City, we should be telling them and saying without taking money off of any of you lot - you won't let me, I know that - without taking money of anybody or --
- (Interruption)

No, you won't, you won't take any money off hers. You'll suffer the consequences if you do. You are in power. You have got to treat what you have got. You have got the ability now to put it right. Well put it right, and never mind, you can shout at me all you like, but I have not done anything wrong, I haven't broke any policies, I haven't gone against any of our Labour Party policies whatsoever.

We're not in charge. We have just to plead with you, and that's what I am, a good pleader (Laughter). So, you know, as far as I am concerned we always argue, the golden opportunity. "We haven't got the money, we haven't got the land, we haven't got planning, we haven't got this." We have got the money, we have got land, and when you talk about intent. Intent, you have got another 18 months before we - after it is built sorting out where it is. And they are going to knock buildings down so they can make corridors wider. I'll give you a tape measure and we can go up and measure some time, Richard, to sort out things of where we go. If you don't know, when they are building nearly a new school, they make it wider and they make it for the number of kids that they have got on the books, and that is what they should do. I don't want any more tears from people in Templenewsam area saying that they couldn't get in at Temple Moor school because you lot didn't vote for it. Well, I am asking you now, now is your chance, you have got money, you have got the will and everything. We are not in power, you are in power so use that power, and use it wisely, I might add. Thank you very much. (Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: A request for a recorded vote. Can we ask Members to return to their seats, please.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: If all Members are in their allocated seats, would they please refer to their desk unit and press the button marked "P". Those Members in favour of the amendment in the name of Councillor Harker please press the "+" button - it is getting late - those Members against that motion please press the "-" button, any Member wishing to abstain and have the abstention recorded please press the "0" button.

THE LORD MAYOR: We have a result. Of those present, 89, 51 voted in favour, there was one abstention and 37 voted against. The amendment is therefore carried. That now becomes the substantive motion.

(The substantive motion was carried)

THE LORD MAYOR: That concludes the business of the Council. Thank you.

(Council rose at 10.40 p.m.)