

CITY OF LEEDS

ORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

In the Chair:

CLLR M IQBAL
(The Mayor)

at

The Civic Hall
Leeds

on

Wednesday 19th July 2006

VERBATIM TRANSCRIPT OF PROCEEDINGS

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MEETING OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

19th July 2006

PROCEEDINGS

THE MAYOR: Please sit down. Members of Council, members of public, good afternoon. On the instructions of myself we did well last time. If you have any items of mobile phones, anything electronic, can you please switch them off otherwise you will have to contribute to the Lord Mayor's charity. We did well last time, let's hope we can double that amount today.

Members, I have got a few announcements to make. First of all, you are all up front, if you wish to remove any items of clothing you may feel appropriate, jackets and ties. (Laughter) Some of you, for your comfort, but I will have to keep my jacket on to keep you in order.

Secondly, I am sure you will all know the death of the great Yorkshire and England cricketer, Freddie Trueman OBE, died on 1st July 2006. Our thoughts are with the family of this famous Yorkshireman. I call upon all present to stand in silence as a mark of respect for one minute, thank you.

(One minute's silence)

THE MAYOR: Thank you ladies and gentlemen.

Sadly you will, most of you will know that Councillor Denise Atkinson has been in hospital for the last two weeks. I am sure we all send her our best wishes for a speedy recovery. I went to see her last Thursday, same Denise, you know, she has still got her Council papers there, very active, keeping all the staff on toes. When I walked out and I said to the staff, "I am sure she will be calm for the night(?), I've had a good word with her". So we wish her a speedy recovery.

Finally, Bob Lake, our Civic Hall Warden, will be retiring on 31st of August after 20 years of service. I am sure we would like to extend our best wishes to Bob for a long and happy retirement. (Hear hear) (Applause) Sterling service Bob.

1 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 21ST JUNE 2006

Councillor Proctor.

CLLR J PROCTOR: Yes, thank you Lord Mayor, I move that the Minutes be received.

CLLR SELBY: I second Lord Mayor.

THE MAYOR: All in favour. Any against. Any abstentions. (Agreed)

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Can I announce that the list of written declarations submitted by Members is on display in the ante room and deposit in public galleries and has been circulated to each Member's place in the Chamber. Can I also invite any further individual declarations or corrections to those notified on the list.

CLLR CLEASBY: Lord Mayor, can I declare that my list is exactly as per the last Council Meeting, namely a Governor of Westbrook(?) Primary School, Governor at Bedford Park School, member of School (inaudible) Committee and a member of the Airport Consultative Committee. Thank you Lord Mayor, exactly as last month's list.

CLLR PRYKE: I would like to declare a personal and prejudicial interest in Item 5 please.

THE MAYOR: Councillor, are you in, sorry, since you are speaking.

CLLR CASTLE: A personal interest in Sporesmoor(?) Education Centre.

THE MAYOR: Thank you, sorry Councillor Shelbrooke.

CLLR SHELBRooke: A personal and prejudicial interest in Item 5 Lord Mayor.

THE MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Smith.

CLLR SMITH: Thank you Lord Mayor, Item 15 Lord Mayor, Director of South Leeds Primary Care Trust.

THE MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Fox.

CLLR FOX: Item 14, I am a Governor of Leeds College of Technology Lord Mayor.

THE MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Hollingsworth.

CLLR HOLLINGSWORTH: A prejudicial interest in agenda Item 5.

THE MAYOR: Okay. Councillor ...

CLLR FOX: Councillor Fox, 14, I am a Governor of Hunstandby(?) College, personal.

THE MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Finnigan.

CLLR FINNIGAN: Same Item, I am a Governor of Joseph Priestley College.

THE MAYOR: Thank you. Anybody else. Councillor Hussain.

CLLR HUSSAIN: I am a Governor at Park Lane College, Item number 14.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Minkin.

CLLR MINKIN: I think it is Item 5 and the receipt of additional allowance, if the report is agreed, on Lead Member allowances.

THE MAYOR: Okay. I will make sure everybody hears me. Anybody else left for declarations of interest. Councillor Akhtar.

CLLR AKHTAR: Yes, can I declare an interest on the West Yorkshire Police Authority, Item 10.

THE MAYOR: Thank you. Anybody else? Thank you Members.

Can I invite Members by a show of hands to confirm that they have read the list, or the list as amended, and agreed its contents in so far as they relate to their own interests. All in favour. Any against. Abstentions. (Agreed)

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COMMUNICATIONS

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: There are no communications to report Lord Mayor.

EMERGENCY MOTION

THE MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Harris.

CLLR HARRIS: Yes Lord Mayor, could I move under Council Procedure Rule 22.1 that Council Procedure Rules 2.3 and 12.1 be suspended to allow the Council to debate the following Emergency Motion forthwith. I hand you a copy of that motion. (Handed)

The Motion reads, Lord Mayor, that, “The budget for the school clothing award scheme for 2006/7 be increased by £400,000, that the increase be met by (inaudible) from the Council’s contingency budget and that in the light of these determinations the Executive Board be requested to revoke the decision of the Director of Corporate Services” (Applause), “with respect to that scheme”. So, as I understand it at the moment, Lord Mayor, we are asking for suspension of Standing Orders so that we debate this matter.

THE MAYOR: Is it going to be seconded?

CLLR A CARTER: I second Lord Mayor.

THE MAYOR: Thank you Councillor Carter.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Just so that Members are clear, the motion to be put to the Council is that Council Procedure Rules should be suspended to allow the debating of an Emergency Motion in the terms that Councillor Harris read out, and just by way of a reminder, those are that the school clothing award scheme for this year be increased by £400,000, that that increased be met by (inaudible) from the contingency and that in the light of those determinations by the Council today the Executive Board be asked to revoke the decision of the Director of Corporate Services on the 27th of June, with respect to that same scheme. So at this stage it is whether Council is prepared to suspend Council Procedure Rules to allow that Motion to be put.

THE MAYOR: Can we have those in favour. Thank you. Any against. Abstentions. All agreed. (Agreed)

Councillor Harris.

CLLR HARRIS: Lord Mayor, in taking this extraordinary step today I think it is important that we debate and understand the reasoning from the administration. When I read out the Motion a few minutes ago the Labour benches shouted, “Hurray, a change of mind”. There is no point beating about the bush, that is absolutely correct, we have changed our minds. We have never been afraid to change our minds. We have never been afraid to listen to public opinion and other important groups and their representations in determining what should be the correct course of action for a responsible and caring administration.

The Labour group may laugh, but in all these considerations their rank hypocrisy has not been something that we have taken into consideration. In the course of the last week and a bit they have cried foul and screamed about the uncaring behaviour of this administration, but not once, not once have they been prepared to explain certain issues.

Firstly, they have not been prepared to address why they totally ignored this matter in the budget round in February. The matter was clearly in the Executive Board papers, the matter was clearly in the budget papers that came to full Council, but the Labour group ignored it. There can only be one of two explanations for that, either they didn't see it, in which case they are incompetent as an opposition, or alternatively they deliberately turned a blind eye in the hope that they could generate maximum publicity when the issue came to fruition.

In my opinion it was the latter, in other words you were prepared, rather than to step in earlier and have this debate you were prepared to let the matter go to the wire. You were prepared, in your words, to see people suffer, which is what you have been accusing us of, rather than debate the matter earlier. That says much of you.

The second issue that you have completely and totally failed to address is that in your last year of administration you cut £375,000 from the school clothing voucher scheme. You, you didn't move the money to other areas of Children's Services spending, as indeed we have - and my colleagues may wish to deal with that in due course - but you cut £375,000 out of the budget, and it is rank hypocrisy to have you now going around muling and puking and carrying on to the press that how, how wonderful you are and how dreadful we are. You have got blood up to your elbows, far worse than anything else we have done. (Hear hear)

Thirdly, you have made no attempt to explain why it was that you changed the eligibility criteria for those people who would receive the grant in 2003/4. You well know that faced with an increase in the budget of up to £3 million because of the way the eligibility was running, you took the decision, without consultation with anybody, to ensure that approaching 20,000 children would be excluded from that grant by changing their eligibility. Do not, do not come screaming and crying to us and crying foul to the press with a record like that.

Now, let us be absolutely clear, absolutely clear what we are doing. We are reinstating a budget greater than the one that we reallocated somewhere else, greater, £400,000, not the £350,000 that was reallocated to other areas of Children's Services. That £350,000 reallocation stays in place, so that money will still be spent on other vital areas of Children's Services. So we are effectively increasing spending on Children's Services today by £400,000, an indication of our clear commitment to the need of the children and families of this city. That is the sign of an administration that is prepared to listen to the relevant stakeholders, that is prepared to consider its actions and is prepared to make changes if, having listened to everything, we feel it is appropriate and relevant.

Not once, not once in my twenty years in opposition did I ever hear a Labour leader, or anybody from the Labour benches, do what we have done today. Not once did I hear you apologise for anything, nor say, "Okay, in this instance we have decided to make a change", and that is the essential difference between a listening and genuinely caring administration, and one that pays lip service to it.

Lord Mayor, what we have done today should be seen, I think by everybody, as what I have described it as, as an administration that is brave, that is prepared to stand up and be counted, and is prepared to face the music. You never did, you never will again. (Applause)

CLLR A CARTER: My Lord Mayor, I second and reserve with relish the right to speak.

THE MAYOR: Thank you Councillor Carter. Councillor Wakefield.

CLLR WAKEFIELD: Thank you Lord Mayor. I think what you have seen today is a complete climb down by the opposition in the interests of the people of Leeds and the children in particular, and I have to thank the YEP ...

CLLR A CARTER: What about the 20,000 kids Keith?

CLLR WAKEFIELD: And the 24,000 children that you were about to take money away from, 19,500. Now, if I can be allowed to speak Lord Mayor, and I hope this goes on, because we did want this debate and we wanted it urgently. One, because the way this decision was taken was done through what they call a major decision, which means no Member of this authority gets to know, you have to look on the intranet. So confident was he of this decision that they did it through the back door. Not one elected Member, not one elected Member, at Executive Board Council or anywhere else got to know about this, and I had many people in your party and there who were absolutely disgusted with the way this decision was taken, and rightly so.

The second thing was, we needed that, is because actually families about to be plunged into hardship by this decision. If you all notice shops are now urging families to buy school uniforms for next year, and here, without any notice, any consultation, you were prepared to take that decision.

Now I won't go into the history of why this clothes maintenance allowance was introduced, I will let Councillor Keith Parker tell you about that one day, in terms of the Miners strike in '84 and '85, using 1944 education legislation. What I will tell you is that when we gave those vouchers we consistently did, true we didn't add much value to it, and let me just address this criteria change that we did in 2003. In 2003 we changed the criteria, true, and the reason is because we got a Labour Government giving tax credits, child credits, to those families, and let me tell you this now, not one family was worse off as a result of the decision taken in 2003 because they got it through a different means and what we did, what we did, we protected the unemployed and we protected those on Job Seekers Allowance and Income Support. What you have got with these proposals, what they were going to do, is actually a lot worse off.

Just to remind you, they were only going to give one child £27 for reception, through primary, that was it, and £37 for the secondary child. For a family of three that would have meant £195 during their school period. Under our system it was £870. Now I tell you, anybody doing their arithmetic will tell you, what this lot were proposing to do was to take away £675 from the poorest families, the poorest children in this city, and don't be kidded by the hardship fund, don't be kidded by that, because it actually, the only people who are eligible were 4,500 children meaning 19,500 children, 19,500 children were excluded and they were going to bid for this new fund, hardship fund. You know how much is in that hardship fund? How much is in that hardship fund? You have sent me a few e-mails and everything, £10,000, which would have meant 51p for each child excluded from the new criteria. That is something people ought to be ashamed of, and let me tell you something else, that Councillor Harris now talks about how he has listened. Well what was he doing then when he said in the Evening Post, he said, "While we are determined to continue with the clothing scheme we also need to support the other significant investments", he has just said that, "we

are making, for example a brand new Children's Services team to champion", so he has taken away from the poorest families, the poorest children, to give to Officers. Now I tell you, we were about to merge back into the days when children were embarrassed, humiliated and so on.

I think it is right that they have changed their minds. I think we ought to congratulate all those parents whose children, the YEP and everybody else who opposed it, and we should be vigilant about any decision that takes us back to the days when children have to walk in and be stigmatised because of poverty. We will not allow it on this side of the Council. Thank you Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Akhtar.

CLLR AKHTAR: Lord Mayor, I am just trying to take the heat away. Can I just ask, the question about switching the mobile phones, does that apply to the Lord Mayor as well, does that apply to the Lord Mayor as well when you switch the phones off.

THE MAYOR: I thought you were contributing to the debate Councillor Akhtar. You have made your point, you have delayed a couple of minutes Councillor Akhtar. Councillor Harker.

CLLR HARKER: Thank you Lord Mayor. I want to bring Council's attention to the increased spending on children within the area of education that this administration has undertaken in the last two and a bit years.

This administration, the moment it came into power, entered into an ambitious programme to transform all of our schools for every child. At the core of our aim is to promote better schools that will transform the lives of all young people. We have invested millions of new monies into the learning sector in the last two years. We have provided extra funding so that head teachers, their management teams, governors and staff can use this money to promote safer and healthier schools where our young people can achieve and be free from the effects of poverty.

These improvements are now nationally recognised. We only have to refer to the Ofsted inspections and the fact that the DFES gave us back education into the control of this Council. We have seen attendance in our schools rise markedly. Permanent and fixed exclusions are down, not just down slightly but down massively. There has been a national drop of 4% in permanent exclusions, in this city the drop is 28%. In fixed term exclusions the figure went up nationally, but in this city came down.

We have less schools in special measures, believe it or not, than we had under Labour. We had healthier schools(Interruption)

CLLR ATHA: My Lord Mayor, on a point of order, can I ask what relevance this has to the ...

CLLR HARKER: You don't want to listen, if you listen Bernard you might learn something. (Uproar)

Last week ...

CLLR ATHA: We haven't had a ruling yet so would you...(Uproar)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Harker, if you could continue and focus on the spending on children.

CLLR HARKER: Will I get the extra time I've lost due to - or can I start again even. No I won't.

The examples I was giving to the Council, and the healthier schools programme of last week which involved thousands of children - and I will come back to healthier schools in a moment, because I've an important point to make - much of this has been due to the programmes that the head teachers, the governors and the staff have been able to put into place in our schools with the extra funding that we, this administration, have provided.

Let us talk about transforming the school stock. That too has called for extra money, millions of extra money. The affordability on PFI as the other side will know can be a major factor in getting the best possible schools that do the best possible job. We want schools that have been planned for the future, that don't just take notice of Department for Education and Science building programmes, building specifications, but are there for the future with the technology they need, and I would point out, and this is the point I am going to make (Uproar) - I can shout louder than you - that Lawnswood High School today had to be closed down because of mistakes made at the planning stage by the authority, by the party opposite who were in charge. We don't intend that to happen. We have invested millions of extra Council money in children in this city. Thank you my Lord Mayor. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan.

CLLR FINNIGAN: Thank you Lord Mayor, it is clearly going to be a long and somewhat labourious day.

I will try and be brief on this particular one. We have had significant concerns about what was happening with the school clothing grant situation, we have raised those concerns with Officers, we do believe that the administration deserve credit for having changed on this particular one, it is a courageous decision but it is a right decision and it has our full support. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Brett.

CLLR BRETT: We have been accused of not doing enough for vulnerable young people, vulnerable children and young people. In a situation where the Government's Every Child Matters agenda is bringing about an enormous amount of change. You might have hoped with the changes that we are having to face that the Government would give us just a few resources to start doing that, and in fact we haven't any resources at all. It is therefore not surprising that we have an accusation that somehow we take money away from vulnerable children and give it to Officer's salaries. There is one - if you listen I will explain what has happened, I think you probably already know only too well. Only one Officer has been extra in the new arrangements, all the other Officers in the DCS unit have been seconded from elsewhere in the Council.

I am going to say a few things, despite I suspect being barracked, about ways in which this administration has recently spent more on vulnerable children and young people. Both this year and last year what we used to call the new administration but increasingly it is the only possible administration that is doing things, (Applause) we have voted for £1,000 to every children's residential home to spend on something for the young people that they could not purchase out of existing budgets. That is new. It is being spent on all sorts of things, from trips to London, outdoor barbeque equipment so that young people can entertain their friends, photographic equipment, improving play areas. We have spent, in this year's budget, £750,000 extra in payment for skills to

recognise training for our foster carers. This means that young people in foster care benefit from being cared for in families whose parents receive specific training in issues around caring for looked after children.

This month, the Executive Board approved the corporate parenting guarantee, which includes a £30,000 investment to train Councillors, to train Councillors who will take a lead in corporate parenting. The training will be delivered by young people themselves supported by the Children's Rights Organisation.

Council as a whole has increased its contribution to the safeguarding board from £20,000 a year to £70,000 a year. This is the independent organisation that looks after the interests of Leeds most vulnerable children. Now in the DCS unit we have a very small team, but a very talented team. I believe some of the Council's best brains are working to make every child in Leeds, healthy, safe, happy and free from the effects of poverty. Thank you Lord Mayor. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Gruen.

CLLR GRUEN: My Lord Mayor, that was interesting from Councillor Harris's first moment of his speech onwards. He at least addressed his emergency resolution. Every other speaker since then has been busy talking about everything else they could think of apart from clothing vouchers and children.

Councillor Harker, I challenge you to produce for this Council, for the next Council meeting, a balance sheet of where you have spent extra Leeds City Council resources, or where you have spent, and continue to spend, ever increasing Government funding for education. If you can differentiate the two let us see the figures.

Now Councillor Brett, last Council meeting, your first Council meeting in your new post, you told us, "I have the ultimate political responsibility for all that goes on in Children's Services", your quote, and in your e-mails whence this decision has been taken you were very busy abdicating that responsibility and telling people it wasn't you at all, you didn't know and nobody else knew, but only Officers did it on your behalf.

Now would it surprise you that one extra Officer you tell us that you have appointed for Children's Services, the Director has not been consulted, her views have not been sought about this particular decision that has been taken. What a shambles of a department you run. You don't even take advice from the one Officer whom you say you have appointed to give you advice, you totally ignore that one strategic person whom you've appointed. I would like to know - actually, I think I know what happened here, a decision was taken by the leaders and they couldn't get it through their own group meetings. I hope that some of you rebelled and actually said, "We are going to put children's interests first", and it is important to have these clothing allowances.

This sudden conversion is very interesting isn't it. It didn't happen the day of Councillor Harris's quote in the Yorkshire Evening Post. It didn't happen the following day, or the following day when other lead Members were still being quoted on the e-mails defending this decision being made by the administration. It happened when you realised our emergency resolution came in, that you were going to be held to account by Councillor Wakefield and the Labour group for what you were doing. That is when suddenly, that's when suddenly you changed your mind. Councillor Harris, by the way, I didn't hear you apologise. You said you had changed your mind but if you wish one further time, on behalf of your administration, I think the fourth of fifth time now probably,

to apologise for the shambles that you are causing, then let's hear you say so when you actually sum up.

The budget papers, I will take that particular point, it is an interesting point, but you run the Council and you run everything that goes with it. It is not up to us to say to you what you should do in the budget, we will tell you - we will tell you our programme when we take control next May. Then you will have our programme. In the meantime, you have turned turtle, we are grateful and appreciate that you have turned turtle, but the reason is strong opinion and the huge embarrassment which you know you would have felt for months and months and months, and isn't it interesting, Andrew, that in the week when your boss comes to this city you had better keep a clear field, take everything, all decisions away that might embarrass poor little Dave when he comes along, and so therefore another changed decision. Isn't it wonderful. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Carter.

CLLR A CARTER: Thank you Lord Mayor. Well I suppose the one thing you can forgive Councillor Gruen for is ignorance. I mean they say it's no defence under the law but it seems to me that he is pleading the fact that he and his leader failed to read the budget papers, failed to brief their Members, all their Members failed to read them for six months, and six months after it was here in black and white for people to see, now they say it's wrong. Ignorance is no defence Peter, and talking of apologies, we still await the apology from you for being one of the Members responsible for us losing the education responsibilities in this Council. (Applause) Never a word, never a word of apology, but then there was never a word of apology from any of them over anything. Not when they took the allowances, the pitifully low allowances away from disabled trainees in our adult training centres, not when they imposed local means testing on elderly people receiving care, not when - not when, not when they tried three times to close adult day centres, and not even now when it is revealed that in Keith Wakefield's single year as Leader he changed the criteria upon which these vouchers were given which took 20,000 children out of the list, and then went on to reduce the total.

My Lord Mayor, what we have seen, Councillor Harris - and I have to say, having listened to what Keith Wakefield and Peter Gruen have said, what we have seen is chronic incompetence which is why, which is why, my Lord Mayor, which is why even the Yorkshire Evening Post points out to you in the editorial, that you play petty politics. We inherited the mess you left, (Applause) and that, ladies and gentlemen, is the case in whatever department you want to look, millions of pounds, millions of pounds. What we said on day one of this administration was that if we felt we had made a mistake we would reconsider. You never, ever reconsidered anything in 24 years. We will always reconsider.

Councillor Harris, Councillor Blackburn and myself, and everybody on these benches, we are of the same view, and that is that it may well be a mistake because your Government may well be wrong when it tells us, this is the way to go forward, it's now all paid for centrally by good old Gordon. When you start to see some of the cases it may be that that is not the case and we are not going to impose added hardship on families who are already suffering hardship under your Government where the gap between rich and poor has not go smaller but wider. That is the legacy of this lot, and we will take no lectures from any of them about adult care, handicap care, or care of young people because we are doing more in all three areas than they ever did. As someone said to me, putting Peter Gruen in charge of children and young people is like putting King Herod in charge of the play school. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor McKenna.

CLLR MCKENNA: Thank you Lord Mayor. I first would like to say that reversing and backtracking is good to see because there are lots of needy people in this city who haven't got a voice and depend on us. Richard is a (inaudible), I did send him an e-mail saying that his Ward and my Ward would suffer disproportionately.

Let me tell you a quick story Lord Mayor. I am the oldest of eleven children and at one time my parents, who were rather poor, but managed to send us to good schools, had eight children in convent and Christian brother schools, all of them were uniform schools. No support was available for us at that time. To actually not be ridiculed, bullied and set out, what we had to do was contribute to the family income. I had two paper rounds and I helped the milkman most mornings and I collected on Friday night, as did my brother who is a year older than me. My sister worked in a shop and my younger brother at the time, who was eleven, also had a paper round. Not, Lord Mayor, as kids do today, to buy Ipod's, records, clothes and designer labels, we had to buy our own uniforms because my parents couldn't afford to. Dublin City Council at the time offered no support, to my shame, and it has changed today but that was the situation.

I know of another Councillor, Gerry Harper(?), who had four of his siblings in a situation where they would have been in the same situation had not Leeds City Council also contributed to this. So to actually even talk about taking a benefit away to people in that situation is disgraceful and I hope that maybe some of my words will give you something to think about, in other words I hope, Andrew, when you are looking for savings next year, and you have already confessed that you had it in your budget, you too, you too Councillor Harris, you knew about it and you planned it and you backtracked. It is right that you backtracked. It is no good slagging off Peter on this side or Keith for saying we didn't pick it up. You slyly had it in your budget and when you knew that there was going to be an outcry you backed off. You had it in your budget, you planned to make the cuts and you couldn't achieve those cuts. No excuses, it was in your budget, you knew what you were doing, hitting the hardest in our society and you should apologise for it. (Applause)

I hope, Richard, that you are a successful champion(?). I hope that we are never in a situation again where we are trying to rob the poorest in our society, I hope this never comes back. I hope that my party, and your party, Richard, well I am not sure about them, and the rest of you, never, never have to put something like this on a political leaflet to gain maybe one or two seats across the city, because if that's the type of politics we are in then, you know, we are shaming our city. Never, ever again must we do that, Lord Mayor, and that's all I would like to say, thank you. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Cleasby.

CLLR CLEASBY: Thank you Lord Mayor. For the operator I am sitting in seat 97. Thank you.

Lord Mayor, what hypocrisy. I sat here in February, partly maligned by Councillor Wakefield in his budget speech, when he went on and on and on before delivering the Labour budget. We all remember that. That Labour budget, following on from their aspersions in the press that this side had been performing cut after cut after cut, did nothing in that budget to restore those imaginary cuts. Even worse, Councillor Wakefield eventually delivered a budget that was 0.25% less than the administration's, and so here we have it now, Councillor Carter explaining that the budget papers in front of him had this information in, he didn't even see it, in fact took a reverse action, he could easily have made that money available then, but no, sit upon it until it becomes a delegated decision.

Now this is the real point I want to make, Lord Mayor, it is my opinion that every major delegated decision is made available on the intranet to every Member of Overview and Scrutiny

Committee, of which there are Members from every party on that Overview and Scrutiny Committee, so all of us are made aware when that delegated decision was made.

Councillor Wakefield, you told Council that Members aren't made aware. Well I am sorry, your Members on Overview and Scrutiny were and could have made you aware in time to have done something about it. Thank you Lord Mayor. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Harris.

CLLR HARRIS: Well let me just address a few of the issues that have been raised. First of all the attack on Richard Brett, and indeed the comment about the current Director of Children's Services.

When this decision was made in February 2006, and that is when the decision was made, and we will come to the proof in a second, Richard Brett was not the Member responsible for Children's Services and the Director was not in post, so you can't start pointing the finger, that those two are somehow culpable or weren't consulted. In actual fact it had nothing to do with either of them, so let's just treat that as an utter red herring.

Let us turn to the question of the budget, and the Executive Board papers. Keith Wakefield said that this matter was hidden - those were his words - he said the matter was hidden from opposition Members and there was no opportunity to discuss it. I have in front of me the report that went to Executive Board on the 28th of February 2006. This is the Council budget paper. You and Councillor Blake were at that meeting. There is no question about it, on page 106, at the top of the page, it is a paragraph not hidden, it is whole paragraph, "Pupil support". We quite clearly, openly, set out what we were doing. It was there for you to see, here are the papers, it is incontrovertible proof.

CLLR WAKEFIELD: Feeble, very feeble.

CLLR HARRIS: That is laughable. You are supposedly the leader of the opposition and you cannot see the budget papers put in front of you.

CLLR WAKEFIELD: Feeble, why didn't you discuss it here?

CLLR HARRIS: We are discussing it here, we are discussing it today, at the first opportunity to discuss it, after the point at which it should have been discussed. You had the opportunity to table an amendment in your budget, you did not. You had the opportunity to discuss it at Exec Board, you did not. (Uproar)

Excuse me, we - well, let's put this to bed, and there is no doubt about it, we voted for the budget - I am not apologising for that - it was our budget, we put it, we voted for it, I am not hiding from it. (Uproar)

Well that is very interesting. That is a very interesting technical point because you table an amendment, it was your opportunity to adjust what you did not agree with. You did not table an amendment to this item. It is therefore axiomatic that that was not an item with which you disagreed. Now you cannot have it both ways, you either knew and deliberately ignored it, allowing people to walk into the difficulty they are now in, or you are so incompetent you didn't see it.

Now, we are going to finish, we are going to finish with a variation on Prime Minister's question time, and I am going to ask Members of Council, I am going to test Members of Council on their knowledge of what Prime Ministers said.

Now, Members of Council, boys and girls, who said, "Let us be frank about it, most of our people have never had it so good"? Harold Macmillan, a point to that person, well done.

Which Prime Minister said, "What is our task, to make Britain a fit country for heroes to live in", who said that? Lloyd George, well done, Councillor Golton.

Which(Laughter) ... which Prime Minister, which Prime Minister said that, "Britain, it is going to be forged in the white heat of the revolution", I haven't even had chance to finish, yes, it was Harold.

Which Prime Minister said, "I very much hope that we continue to give support to the Children's Tax Credit, in our judgement that is the right way to help some people of the poorest families to cope with their difficulties", which Prime Minister said that? Tony Blair, and what was it in answer to, it was in answer to a question, "Would the Labour Government make school uniform grants compulsory?", in other words, "No, this Government didn't think that was the right thing to do". That is your party. That is your party that does not think there should be uniform clothing grants. Instead, instead, your party thinks the tax system is the way to deal with it.

I was asked to apologise, I apologised the moment I got up. Andrew Carter has apologised. Is everybody listening? I apologise to those people of Leeds for whom we have caused anguish and harm. I apologise to them. We were wrong, we have been courageous enough to reverse it, but you will never, ever get away from the fact - you may be, you may be think you are good at clever politics, it is clever politics to try and make the points you do, but you cannot explain why you missed it in the budget and you cannot explain why you cut, cut £375,000 from this scheme and did not put it back. You did not have the guts or the courage to do it, we do. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Calling for a vote. All in favour of the Motion of Councillor Harris, in the name of Councillor Harris. Any against. Any abstentions. (CARRIED)

4 DEPUTATIONS

We will move on to the next item on the agenda, deputations. I will hand over to the Chief Executive.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you Lord Mayor. There are four deputations as detailed in the order paper. The first in respect to Miles Hill Primary School, the second the South East Sports Centre, the third the former Blackgates School at Tingley, and the last, land at Drighlington Old School. So the first deputation, Lord Mayor, is the Miles Hill Primary School.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Proctor.

CLLR J PROCTOR: Yes, thank you Lord Mayor, I move that all the deputations be received.

CLLR SELBY: Second Lord Mayor.

THE MAYOR: All in favour. Sorry, Councillor Shelbrooke.

CLLR SHELBRooke: A personal and prejudicial interest Lord Mayor, Schools Organisation Committee.

CLLR RUSSELL: Lord Mayor, same again.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Same again Lord Mayor, Schools Organisation Committee.

THE MAYOR: Thank you Members, I don't think there's any debate on this matter so it may not be essential to declare interests. Calling for a vote, all in favour. Any against. Abstentions. (Agreed)

Okay, first deputation. Good afternoon, can I first of all apologise for keeping you waiting, we had an urgent item to discuss before we took on the deputations, so I would like to welcome you today to this Council's meeting. Please now make your speech to Council which must not be longer than five minutes and please begin by introducing your deputation. Thank you.

ANGELA HUGHES: Good afternoon Lord Mayor, good afternoon Councillors. I have come to speak on behalf of the school community at Miles Hill Primary School. My name is Angela Hughes, I am a community governor of the school and Minister of the local church.

At the Executive Board meeting on the 14th of June 2006 the proposal, resubmitted by Education Leeds, to close Miles Hill Primary was confirmed. Following this decision I would like to make three points.

Firstly, the actual proposal is to close Miles Primary, to close Potternewton Primary, to reopen a new school on the Potternewton site. Note that although both schools are to be closed we are not actually talking about any new premises for the proposed new school, we are talking about the existing premises currently used by Potternewton Primary. I have noticed that assumptions are made by many Councillors unfamiliar with the area that we are actually talking about either a new school or a greatly enhanced building. This is not the case and it does make a difference to both schools.

Secondly, consistently over the four year period that the school has been under threat of closure we have asked questions concerning community cohesion and trust building. Yet again the community here feels undermined. Miles Hills serves many special needs children. This school is a family which provides much needed stability in a community where stability and security is a scarce commodity. Ofsted and SATS are important but in such a community they do not tell the whole story. Some of us may find it hard to understand this but for such families academic excellence cannot always be the most important criteria, other needs are paramount.

Governing bodies in such a community do not find it easy. Where do we find professional parents able and willing to take on such a role, and if our governors do not come from the local community how do they ever begin to understand it.

Standards in this school are rising and parents are increasingly active and confident in the life of the school, and in taking responsibility for their children's education. Such development does not take place in such a community overnight, it takes time and patience and consistency, and consistency in this school situation has been sadly lacking. In fact there has been a continuing

erosion of resources and support which has led us to this point. An uncertain future does not encourage a school to flourish.

Surestart has now successfully established in the school bungalow their excellent work with young families. Even if they are allowed to remain on this site, as we have been told, with no school there they will hardly be a focus for parents, another resource set to diminish in the local situation it seems.

All agencies, local agencies are working actively on these estates, meeting regularly and supporting one another. One such meeting is that of the Beck Hill Implementation Group, Miles Hill School is actually situated on the Beck Hill estate. It is established by the North East District Partnership in recognition of the multiple issues the community experiences. Membership includes Leeds North East Homes, area management, Police and other agencies. They state, "Whilst the Partnership recognises the economic factors, Beck Hill is a priority neighbourhood for the District Partnership. Because of the geographic difficulties and vulnerability of this community residents face difficulties in accessing facilities that appear to be close by", and again while we may find that difficult to understand it really is how it is when you are on the ground there.

Other meetings include those addressing the extended schools agenda. Miles Hill School is ideally situated as a central and much needed focus for this work, it is a natural focus. But in spite of all the right words there has been little help to make this happen. A policy which removes help at the point of need in such a vulnerable community does not appear to encourage the regeneration and cohesion which we all seek.

Thirdly, we question the timing and the clarity of this whole process. Leak, rumour, lack of clear fact and process really have not helped either this school community or Education Leeds. Rather, they have fostered a lack of trust and confidence, yet another setback, and we now have to deal with many very disillusioned parents.

We understand that falling rolls raise financial challenges but we urge Council yet again to request Education Leeds to re-evaluate the roll of smaller schools such as Miles Hill and Potternewton within their local communities. Thank you. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Proctor. On behalf of the Conservatives who wants to refer the matter?

CLLR ATHA: Can I move on behalf of the Conservatives. (Laughter)

CLLR LEWIS: And I will second on the basis that he abdicates it(?).

THE MAYOR: Thank you. All in favour. Any against. Any abstentions. (Agreed)

Thank you for attending, for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which will be given to your comments. Good afternoon.

ANGELA HUGHES: Thank you very much.

THE MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. If you could give you name please and make your speech to the Council which must not be longer than five minutes and please begin by introducing your deputation. Thank you.

PHILIP GOODFIELD: Thank you Lord Mayor. My name is Phil Goodfield and I have on my right Emily Routledge and on my left Jane Walker.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak to the Council meeting today. I am here as a representative of Splash, and the acronym stands for Save our Pool and Sports Hall, and we are a campaign supported and backed by a whole host of local community organisations, schools, churches, mosques, parents, children and local people, young and old. We started out a couple of months ago with a meeting of just four people and our objective is to get South Leeds Sports Centre reopened.

In those few short weeks a lot has happened. Our campaign had a stall at the Beeston Festival and Mela. A couple of days before the last Council meeting we had a successful protest outside this building and then marched to the art gallery. We have organised a public meeting attended by well over 100 people, that was a week last Monday, and on Monday evening of this week we held a demonstration around Beeston attended by 150 local people. We have collected thousands of signatures and messages from school children in a very short time, and signatures are still rolling in on our petitions. All the activities that we have organised have received excellent press and local TV coverage, I am sure a lot of you will have seen it.

To say that our local community is angry about the current situation regarding South Leeds Sports Centre would be an understatement. I don't know how much you all know about what is going on although I suspect some know a lot more than others, so I will use a bit of my five minutes to briefly to go over what has happened.

Our sports centre has been closed since last December, a period of seven months. If you ring the centre you get a message that says, "Thank you for calling, unfortunately we are now closed for refurbishment". A notice stuck in the window at the centre says, "South Leeds Sports Centre closed in December 2005 for major refurbishment. The anticipated start day has now been delayed further and the centre will remain closed to the public during this time. Other essential maintenance and repair work will be taking place in the meantime. Sorry for any inconvenience".

To add insult to injury a big banner outside the sports centre proclaims, "Smarten up to sport, Leeds City Council". Another banner says, "50p swim for kids at Leeds City Council swimming pools 19th of July to the 5th of September". We wish.

Leeds City Council is quite rightly concerned about obesity in young children, in having a healthy population, indeed I caught some of the earlier debate when there was a whole lot of discussion about that. We are all concerned that our young children engage in healthy activities whilst at school and in the school holidays which, by the way, start next week. For the kids of Beeston and Holbeck there is nowhere for them to swim during the long six weeks they are off school this year.

The closure has had a massive effect on school swimming programmes. My step son has to spend an hour extra every week travelling to Morley to swim from school, time which could be used for education. Local school sports co-ordinators and head teachers can express this all a lot better than I can and are fully supporting our campaign.

My step son's mum took him to swim at South Leeds Sports Centre every week from when he was six months old. He is now almost eight. She took him every week until it closed down. She tells me that if you didn't get down to the centre on the day registration for summer swimming courses started you would be too late to get your child in. That's how popular the centre was with

local people, and of course there's a host of other activities apart from swimming which used to take place. I haven't got time in five minutes to cover all the activities that used to populate the centre, but suffice to say that our sports centre was central to our multicultural community.

I have got to mention that the very future of Beeston Broncos junior amateur rugby league club is threatened by the current situation. Since the closure they haven't been able to host home fixtures on the sports fields adjoining the centre because they can't provide adequate facilities which used to be provided by the centre.

The TV coverage I saw just over a week ago on the anniversary of 7/7 described Beeston and Holbeck as one of the most deprived areas of Europe. I don't know if that's true or not, but what I do know is true is that the area South Leeds Sports Centre covers does have a very high proportion of low income families and poverty. Are we really saying that it's okay to say to these people, the people of Beeston and Holbeck, that it's okay for your sports centre to be shut for seven months, are we saying that, and who knows how much longer. It's okay that you can't take your kids swimming in the school holidays.

So, the 64,000 dollar question is, why is our sports centre shut? With no apparent sign of opening, or indeed of any refurbishment having taken place, or indeed any refurbishment being timetabled to take place as far as we are aware.

We have followed the words of Councillor Proctor over the last few weeks very closely, not least because I am led to understand that he is the only person who can explain what is going on. No one else in Leeds City Council is qualified to explain to the people of South Leeds why our centre is shut. Those might sound unfair words, so let me explain a little. We invited Councillor Proctor and Councillor Harris, as Leader of the Council, to attend our public meeting I mentioned earlier ...

THE MAYOR: Finish your sentence please.

PHILIP GOODFIELD: Councillor Harris sent his apologies. Councillor Proctor's office at first said

THE MAYOR: Can you finish your sentence please Mr Goodfield.

PHILIP GOODFIELD:said he was otherwise engaged, then they said that he could not attend because his wife was expecting a baby.

THE MAYOR: Thank you, thank you.

PHILIP GOODFIELD: I would like to just, just the last sentence, if you are shutting me up let me please, let me just read out my last paragraph.

THE MAYOR: Please, please, thank you, you've had your time. We've got to be fair with everybody, you've made your point. Thank you. Can I call on Councillor Proctor.

CLLR ATHA: Is he back?

CLLR J PROCTOR: Thank you Lord Mayor, I am delighted to move that this matter be referred to the Executive Board for consideration.

CLLR SELBY: And I second Lord Mayor.

THE MAYOR: Thank you Councillor Selby. All in favour. Any against. Any abstentions. (Agreed)

Thank you for attending today's meeting, for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the consideration which will be given to your comments. Good afternoon. (Applause)

Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Could you give your name please and make your speech to Council which must not be longer than five minutes and begin by introducing your deputation. Thank you.

PAUL COCKROFT: Good afternoon Mr Mayor, Councillors. My name is Paul Cockroft. I am presenting this deputation by local residents who are against the sell off, demolition, redevelopment of Blackgates School at Tingley.

Several years ago Leeds City Council undertook a review of primary school services and in 2003 a decision was made by the City Council to close and sell off Blackgates Infant School at Tingley. This school closure eventually took place in July 2005. Local residents waited for advertising boards to be erected on the site detailing the sale of the school, yet nothing occurred. It came as quite a surprise to Tingley residents in September 2005 when planning notices were displayed locally detailing that a private housing developer wanted to demolish the school which has served our community since 1894 and wanted to infill the space with housing.

Instead of submitting plans to bring all of the access traffic to the site via the school gates, this developer has been allowed by the City Council to submit plans detailing that additional traffic would be brought on to the site through the tiny cul de sac where our small children play.

So why isn't the school being offered for sale freely on the open market to be tendered for, and why is this developer being allowed by the City Council to apply for planning permission to demolish the school and infill the space with housing you may well be asking. Let me tell you why. Back in 2003 this developer showed an expression of interest in purchasing the school and was given the first option to negotiate over the purchase of the redundant property. Requests have been made to the City Council for information relating to the property disposal and some of the requests made under the Freedom of Information Act have been turned down.

The planning application to demolish the school and infill the space with housing went before the Plans Panel East on Thursday the 9th of September(sic) this year - February this year, and local residents rightly raised concerns. Tingley residents were pleased when the plans to redevelop this site were turned down. The Development Department then set about forming an options appraisal report regarding the disposal of the school. Seeking transparency of course a request was made to inspect the option appraisal report and the request which was made under the terms of the Freedom of Information Act was once again turned down.

What disturbs us Tingley residents now is that the Council has given the developer the opportunity to consider appealing against the refusal of the planning application. We have now been informed by the Development Department that the builder has now considered the Council's suggestion and has decided to lodge an appeal. It begs the question, who exactly is running this City Council?

This appeal is going forward against the wishes of the public and it flies in the face of the decision made in February this year to reject the planning application by the Plans Panel East.

Whilst we understand that the Council has an obligation to obtain best consideration for the redundant school we feel that the Council have poorly consulted with the local community regarding how this could be achieved without upsetting and distressing our community.

This school has now become the target for vandals, substance misuse, yobbish anti social behaviour, and Tingley residents deserve some answers. We would like to see the Development Department agree a planning brief detailing that all the traffic enters and exits this site via the school gates. We ask that the Council places the safety of our children before the profits of any future development taking place at this site. We request that this matter is referred to the Scrutiny Board for Development and that an inquiry is set up which will allow local residents to make representations to, provide local residents with proper, decent, meaningful, transparent consultation regarding the disposal of this redundant community property and allow them to jointly agree a remit into the scrutiny inquiry. Thank you. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Proctor.

CLLR J PROCTOR: Yes Lord Mayor, can I request that, can I move that the matter be referred to the Executive Board for further consideration.

CLLR SELBY: Second Lord Mayor.

THE MAYOR: Thank you. All in favour. Any against. Any abstentions. (Agreed)

Thank you for attending, for what you have said, you will be kept informed of the consideration which will be given to your comments. Good afternoon.

Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Could you give your name please and make your speech to Council which must not be longer than five minutes and begin by introducing your deputation. Thank you.

MERVYN CRABTREE: Good afternoon Lord Mayor and Councillors. My name is Mervyn Crabtree and my colleague, Elaine Thornton, representing Drighlington Conservation Group. Drighlington Conservation Group re lack of consultation reference disposal of Drighlington Old School and land.

The site of the old school, Drighlington, is of great historical importance to the residents of Drighlington. In the 1600's the famous son of Drighlington, James Margetson, left his home and journeyed south to Cambridge where he was befriended by a wealthy merchant who paid for his education at college. He took Holy Orders and eventually was elected Archbishop of Armagh, Primate of All Ireland. He did not forget his roots however and having purchased an area of land in the centre of the village he had the school built which he called the Free School of James Margetson, and also set up the Margetson Trust Fund where monies were paid annually from his estates into the fund which is still in operation today.

When the fund was run by the West Riding, and after that by Morley Borough Council, many pupils benefited by grants from the fund to go to higher education, but we have not discovered any applicants who have been successful since Leeds City Council administered the fund.

The Parish Council have applied to Leeds City Council to be Trustees of the fund in order that the pupils of the new school can derive benefit. We trust that this can be achieved.

In the will of James Margetson he left the school - he left the land and school to the people of Drighlington, and in 1904 records show that the Trustees handed the administration of the school to the West Riding Education Department. No mention of any deeds, title or freehold being passed to the West Riding has been found in any of the records, and the land has never been registered at the Land Registry. The people of Drighlington feel that now the old school and land are no longer used for education purposes, possession should be returned to them as the original owners.

This building is the only monument Drighlington has to the memory of its famous son and we should not allow it to be demolished. The building is a stone Victorian building of architectural merit with a central clock tower, with a clock recently installed by public subscription as a memorial to a previous headmaster.

Over a year ago a petition was raised bearing 1,500 signatures by Drighlington residents to save our school from sale and possible demolition. However, the Officers concerned appear to have ignored this. In a recent report to the Director of Development recommending the sale of the school and land to the highest bidder, Shaun Smith of the Development Department, Leeds, says his report was delayed to enable consultations with Drighlington Parish Council and Drighlington Conservation Group. Neither of these groups have been invited to sit round a table and put forward the views and needs of the villagers and suggestions for the use of our land and property for the benefit of our community. Moves are afoot to raise funding to finance a legal challenge on ownership grounds, and in the Government's Directive with openness and transparency we suggest that the Officers concerned inform the prospective purchaser of this.

We believe in not seeking consultation with the representatives of the residents of Drighlington, we believe these Officers of Leeds City Council have failed in their duty. Thank you. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Proctor.

CLLR J PROCTOR: Yes, thank you Lord Mayor. I move that the matter be referred to the Executive Board for further consideration.

CLLR SELBY: Second Lord Mayor.

THE MAYOR: Thank you. Call for a vote. All in favour. Any against. Any abstentions. (Agreed)

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

5 REPORTS

Next item on the Agenda, Councillor Proctor.

CLLR J PROCTOR: Yes, thank you Lord Mayor. Can I move that the recommendations be moved in terms of the notice.

CLLR HARRISON: Lord Mayor, can I second.

THE MAYOR: Thank you. All in favour. Any against. Any abstentions. (CARRIED)

Next item, sorry, was there any abstentions. Okay, okay, thank you.

6 QUESTIONS

Okay, next item on the agenda is questions. Councillor Lowe.

CLLR LOWE: Will the Executive Member for City Services please update Council on his administration's consultation exercise to move to a fortnightly collection of black bins. Would you like me to say it again?

THE MAYOR: If you don't mind saying it again please, Councillor Lowe, we did have difficulty hearing. Thank you.

CLLR LOWE: Will the Executive Member for City Services please update Council on his administration's consultation exercise to move to a fortnightly collection of black bins.

THE MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Smith.

CLLR S SMITH: Thank you Lord Mayor. The Executive Board released the draft(?) way strategy for consultation at its meeting in December 2005, and a report dealing with the outcome of the public consultation will be considered by the Executive Board in September, September coming.

This matter is one of many issues covered by what was a fairly widespread consultation, and I can confirm to Council that there will be no changes to the refuse collection service in Leeds without prior approval of the Executive Board, and that there are no plans in place to change the service other than the introduction of a pilot garden waste collection service in some parts of the City this financial year.

CLLR LOWE: By way of supplementary Lord Mayor?

THE MAYOR: Thank you, yes.

CLLR LOWE: Could I ask that if the cost of waste collection per household was reduced from the £64.48 that it was last year back to the £34 it was when Labour was in charge, would you confirm then that you wouldn't have to move to fortnightly black bin collections in order to pay for more green bin collections because obviously you would be able to afford to do because you (inaudible) managing the budget properly.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Smith. Councillor Hamilton.

CLLR M HAMILTON: Thank you Lord Mayor. Would the Leader of Council care to comment on the difference between the amount of non domestic rates collected in the Leeds City Council area and the amount of funding from non domestic rates returned to the city as part of the Government's financial settlement for 06/07.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Harris.

CLLR HARRIS: Yes Lord Mayor. This is a very pertinent issue at the moment and it has recently been raised I think at the LGA in a major speech by the new Secretary of State. For those who aren't fully *au fait* with this, businesses do have to pay rates on the properties that they occupy.

In actual fact that money that they pay goes to Central Government, and then Central Government in its wisdom gives us varying amounts back each year.

It is interesting to notice that since Labour won the General Election in 1997 under this scheme we are now, we used to receive a net benefit, we are now net payers into the national pool, so in other words we have gone from a situation where not only did we get all of the rates back but we got more besides, the situation we are in now is that we get far less back than we pay in. The precise figures for the current year are that we believe we have got to pay £276.1 million into the Government's national pool and we will receive back only £221.8 million. That means we are subsidising the national pot, the businesses of Leeds are subsidising the national pot by £54.4 million. In 1996/97 we were net beneficiaries of £27.6 million. So it has reversed, effectively, by 300% since Labour took control.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Hamilton, do you have a supplementary?

CLLR M HAMILTON: Yes please Lord Mayor. Could the Leader of Council indicate if Officers have been able to give any indication as to what the Council, what more the Council would be able to do if the full amount of money was returned to the Council coffers.

CLLR HARRIS: Yes Lord Mayor, that is a very interesting question. If you, it depends on which measure you want to take in order to answer that question, but let me take two measures. If we were to average out, since 1997, our net deficiency, it means that each year we would have been £34 million better off than we have been. With £34 million, well let me see. If we were to use, let's say, £24 million of that - sorry, £26 million of that, by my estimation we could have funded Supertram. It would have been sufficient for this city to have prudentially borrowed and paid the interest on the money we required to build Supertram. Alternatively, it would allow us to prudentially borrow all the money we need to rebuild every sports centre in the city without having to kowtow, beck or gerrymander figures at the behest of Central Government, which as we all know is what is going on now.

If we were just to take the actual £54 million deficit we suffered last year, if it was retained in the city, which is not unreasonable, the money is paid by the industry, the great industry of the businesses and people of Leeds, we ought to be able to retain it, then we could pay for, we could borrow sufficient money to do Supertram and/or the sports centres, or we could do one of them and with the balance, let me see, well we could triple the amount of money we give children for school clothing vouchers, that would be wonderful with our money.

What else could we do, we could reverse unfaierer(?) charging lock stock and barrel, that would be a wonderful thing to do with this city's money. We could abolish completely the eligibility criteria for social services, the one you introduced never mind the one we are working to, that would be a magnificent use of this city's money, but unfortunately, well, it is probably just a dream because Gordon's got his hands on the lot. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Shelbrooke.

CLLR SHEL BROOKE: Thank you Lord Mayor. Could the Executive Member for Leisure please tell us what opera, football, pop music and photography all have in common.

CLLR J PROCTOR: You are always fearful when you are asked these questions aren't you really because you are never quite sure where they are leading, but I presume my - I presume, I presume my colleague is referring to all of those events which have been held successfully on

Millennium Square. Indeed, quite strange isn't it, the one champion of the, what was then a white elephant, but of course it was this administration that made it a success.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Shelbrooke, do you have a supplementary?

CLLR SHEL BROOKE: Yes I do have a supplementary my Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Member for Leisure tell us how Millennium Square compares with events spaces in other cities.

CLLR J PROCTOR: Well, a very good question to ask if I may say so, I might be able to help him with that.

Just in terms of the Square and some of its recent successes, and I should just say that when I first took over this role two years ago Officers came to me and asked me a series of questions as Officers tend to do in these circumstances, and one of those questions was, "Well do you have any opposition to alcohol being available on the Square?". I looked round and just went, "Fine by me, yes, why should that be an issue?", "Oooh well, ooh well, that wasn't the case under the last administration", and I have to say, like it or not, we have to make things pay and we have to balance the books on the Square and I am pleased that they do.

Just in terms of people and the Square recently, 27,000 people recently watched and enjoyed the England matches in the World Cup on the screen, somewhere in the region of 40,000 people have recently attended a range of concerts that have been successfully held on the Square. 450 people recently attended the exclusive viewing of opera and ballet shown live on the screen. If you add to this the many other tens of thousands of people who come to ice skating, German Market and the like, it is now truly one of the most used spaces. It is in fact one of the most successful city centre open spaces in the whole of Europe. Again, the last administration dreamt of being a truly European city, we are delivering it Lord Mayor. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Russell.

CLLR RUSSELL: Would the Executive Member for Customer Services provide a detailed comparison of the performance of all lines coming into the contact centre between June of this year and June 2004.

THE MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Blackburn.

CLLR D BLACKBURN: Thank you. Well we will start with the benefits. June 2004, just about the time that we took over this Council from the party opposite, this Council, this Council Corporate Call Centre was only taking, handling 25.46% of the calls, 25.46. In June 2006 we have reached 96.26%. (Applause) On Council Tax in June 2004 we were handing 84.28%, they were not as bad as they were on the other ones, but we are now up to 94.27%. On environment, in June 2004 it was 73.92%, it now stands at 80.11%. Housing repairs were 73.81%, it now stands at 89.43%. (Applause) Social services, 65.22%, today it now stands at 85.06%. Across the overall things that the Call Centre do we are now standing at 89.06%, this compares with 76.68% when we took over this authority. I think this shows what this administration is doing for Customer Services. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Thank you. Council Russell, do you have a supplementary?

CLLR RUSSELL: No thank you.

THE MAYOR: Okay, thank you. Councillor Graham.

CLLR GRAHAM: Thank you Lord Mayor. Will the Leader of Council please tell me what plans are in place to alleviate the effects of flooding in parts of the city.

CLLR HARRIS: Yes Lord Mayor, and I will read a response, unusually for me. The serious flooding which occurred in August 2004 and May 2005 in various parts of the city has been investigated by Officers of the Council in collaboration with Yorkshire Water and the Environment Agency. The investigations highlighted the need for improvements in the drainage infrastructure, maintenance of drainage assets, including water courses, and the response during emergencies. The responsibility for improvement is shared by all parties, including private owners.

The Council for its part has approved a 33 point action plan along with appropriate funding. The key points of those are, better maintenance of Council of water courses, a term contractor managed by land drainage has now been engaged to ensure this, fortnightly visiting of flooding hot spots such as grates(?) and culverts is under way. There is an expansion in the highway gully cleansing fleet by 50%, we have increased the fleet from four to six which is a serious investment on our part. The purchase of sand bag filling machines to try and stem flooding when this occurs in a flash situation. There are new drainage schemes of Council open space at Colton and Fearnville which have now been constructed. We are stepping up collaboration with our partners such as Yorkshire Water and the Environment Agency to identify wider measures for flood alleviation, particularly White Beck and Farnley, Wood Beck. A full and detailed update on the implementation of the plan was included in the report to Exec Board on the 17th of May this year.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Graham, supplementary?

CLLR GRAHAM: Thank you my Lord Mayor. Would the Leader of Council tell me to alleviate the effects of flooding due to gully's being blocked how many gully wagons or tankers we have in the city, and also how they are prioritised to which areas they go to. We had a recent incident in May in Whinlock Estate Ward(?) where there was an issue of flooding of ten inches of water which closed the road, it was reported at eleven o'clock, at two o'clock there was still nothing there, no wagon or tanker. We were told this had arrived in the area but it was called to the other side of Leeds to another issue. Can you tell me please how many tankers we have, and it is a question.

CLLR HARRIS: Well there were various issues raised there, but I will just repeat what I said. In the first answer I gave, we have expanded the gully cleansing fleet by 50%, so we have expanded it from the four vehicles we inherited to the six vehicles we have now. That is a significant expansion in the fleet.

Councillor Graham, Councillor Graham raises a - I don't in any way decry or deny the significance of the issue she raises, and it is terrible for the people affected, I accept that, but you raise a specific incident which I don't have to hand the specific response, the way which we dealt with that incident or the detail of scheduling of the use of the gully guzzlers, but I will get that information to you.

The important issue to remember, and we are experiencing it today, is that we are grappling with the unexperienced weather patterns, in fact increasingly we don't have weather patterns. We used to know what winter meant, and we could plan for winter gritting. We no longer know if we are going to have a harsh winter, a mild winter, cold snaps, difficult to plan for it. We have not in the past experienced flooding to the extent that we have in the last few years. Clearly it looks as if it is

no longer a one in one hundred years storm flooding, but there is no pattern to it. We are in completely new territory and that is what we are grappling with.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Cleasby.

CLLR CLEASBY: Thank you Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Member for Leisure tell me what the relationship is between the Middleton Park Equestrian Centre and the City Council.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Proctor.

CLLR J PROCTOR: Yes, thank you Lord Mayor. The Middleton Park Equestrian Centre is a registered charity operating with, as I understand it, three Trustees, Councillor Dunn, Councillor Atha and an independent Trustee. The premises consist of an indoor riding school and stabling, two staff bungalows and an outdoor yard. The premises are owned by the City Council and leased to the charity. Through the Learning and Leisure Department budget the Council makes a revenue grant to the equestrian centre every year. The manager of the centre and a number of staff are employed by the City Council but are under the direct control of the Trustees. Thank you Lord Mayor.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Cleasby.

CLLR CLEASBY: Thank you Lord Mayor. By way of supplementary, could I point out colleagues of mine in the area, Councillor Proctor, tell me there are rumours of financial problems at the centre, can you shed any light on that.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Proctor.

CLLR J PROCTOR: In response to Councillor Lyons comments, far from it. I understand, Councillor Cleasby, that the centre has accumulated losses of somewhere in the region of £151,000, for which I understand the Trustees are personally liable.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Andrew.

CLLR ANDREW: Thank you Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Member for Development please explain the misrepresentation of the transport innovation fund bid in a regional newspaper.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Carter.

CLLR A CARTER: I think I was annoyed, as a number of people were, when I read Friday mornings Yorkshire Post which had a headline, "Motorists to face congestion charges in Leeds". I contrast that with the article which appeared in the Yorkshire Evening Post which was headlined, "Leeds in joint £1.5 million bid to reduce the city's road congestion blues". It went further on in the Evening Post in the comment column indicating that I had hit the nail on the head by saying that motorists must be given a genuine alternative if the congestion problem is to be solved.

In fairness to the Yorkshire Post, I have to say that if you read the rest of the article it accurately reported the details of ...

THE MAYOR: Councillor Carter, sorry to interrupt, if you could just keep papers away from your mouth because some people are having difficulty hearing you.

CLLR A CARTER: That is a record Lord Mayor.

THE MAYOR: It is, yes, it is.

CLLR A CARTER: I will make sure Councillor Atha is fully attuned from now on.

So the rest of the article, the rest of the article in the Yorkshire Post accurately reported I think what the joint study by the City Region Local Authorities had come up with in our application for a TIF(?) bid.

The following day in the Yorkshire Post, I am pleased to say, it was corrected and it made crystal clear what the policy of this administration is, which quite simply is that we will not consider congestion charging, we will not be blackmailed or strong armed by the Government until such time as we have a 21st century public transport system in this city. (Hear hear) (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Andrew, do you have a supplementary?

CLLR ANDREW: By way of a supplementary, in view of the fact that we need such investment in this city in our transport system, is the Executive Member aware how much money is being spent on Kings Cross Station.

CLLR A CARTER: My Lord Mayor, I am all too painfully aware of that. I attended a meeting on Monday with the Secretary of State for Local Government & Communities in which a very pleasant lady Minister from the Department of Transport was present. We robustly reminded her about the fact that investment in public transport, indeed roads for that matter, in this region is the second lowest in the country.

As we walked back to the station we were greeted by hoardings proudly proclaiming the fact that £480 million is to be spent on upgrading Kings Cross Station, which is approximately £130 million more than it would cost to have built Supertram. If you add to this the fact that we have got the Crossrail project in London, which would pay for Supertram ten times over, you will see that this Government is still intent on investing anywhere but where it should be. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Blackburn.

CLLR A BLACKBURN: Would the portfolio holder for Learning in Children's Services like to comment on the Lord (inaudible) letter about the future admissions policy to be used by the David Young Academy and shown to the admissions forum on the 10th of July 2006.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Harker.

CLLR HARKER: Thank you Lord Mayor. I would first of all like to say that all the Councillors from all parties, as well as other members of the admissions forum, are in agreement that the policy that the David Young Academy wish to introduce for 2007/8 is likely, highly likely to disadvantage the children, many of the children in East Leeds.

The admissions policy they wish to introduce is called fair banding(?), but it isn't fair banding at all in the sense that it will disadvantage many who are special needs, many under the sibling rule and many under the distance rule as in our own admissions policy.

His Lordship said, the Academy is going to use fair banding as part of their admissions arrangement. This has the effect of ensuring that the ability of a school's intake mirrors the ability range of its applicants, which may be different from the range of ability nationally, and he doesn't

say locally. I would like to assure this Chamber and this Council that following the admissions for that year I will ask Scrutiny Board and the Officers of Education Leeds to make sure that the young people of East Leeds have not been disadvantaged by what I think is a very, very unfair admissions policy.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Blackburn, do you have a supplementary.

CLLR A BLACKBURN: Thank you Lord Mayor.

THE MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Keith Parker.

CLLR PARKER: Thank you Lord Mayor. Will the Executive Member for Neighbourhoods and Housing please tell me what plans he has to devolve responsibility for community centres(?) to area committees.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Carter.

CLLR J CARTER: Thank you. As Councillor Parker may or may not be aware, may not be actually, there was extensive, extensive work done by scrutiny some time ago. Following that a report came to the Executive Board and following that the administration's policy, obviously not mine, the administration's policy was stated in various reports, one which was considered by the East Outer Area Committee chaired by Councillor Parker on the 11th of July 2006. I have a copy of the report there, I am certain Members don't want to go right through it, but that contains our policy.

THE MAYOR: Supplementary Councillor Parker.

CLLR PARKER: Supplementary Lord Mayor. Regarding the report, Councillor Carter, you will obviously know that the area committee deferred that report, there were many things we weren't happy with. I wonder if you could put some clarity into it. There are several community centres in the outer east area requiring substantial upgrading. Can you tell me if funding will be available for this, when it will be available bearing in mind a statement that you went to previous area committee that you would support the transfer of community centres to area committees with the appropriate budget, and my concern is without this funding being made available management committees of community centres are being asked to sign the leases, I would think we will have great difficulty getting management committees to sign these leases as we are required.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Carter.

CLLR J CARTER: Well in answer to Councillor Parker's question. First of all the budgets, which are revenue budgets, have been distributed in a fair manner, right manner depending on what community centres were across the area committees.

However, the big problem we have is the lack of repairs to community centres that have gone on for years and years and years. It is not something that will be cured overnight. It is not something that I can wave a magic wand and say, "Here are the funds, you can repair that centre". If I could I would have thought over the last 24 years you would have done that, which your party did not do and we have inherited what we have inherited.

However, to be constructive and to go forward, what the Scrutiny Board people were looking at, what the Members were looking at, was we ought to use our assets in the best way to improve these, and the idea being was that some of those assets will have to be realised and spent on other ones.

Now there is two people can do that, either the Council itself, which will be through its Executive Board committee, or the area committees, and it is the area committees which Members seem to favour, of all parties, the area committees should look at these things. Now schemes will be, you will be putting schemes in from area committees, partly will come from the Wellbeing Fund and partly from the Council's major maintenance fund. But to ask me if I can tell you when all our community centres in Leeds will be all up to the state they should be, having for 24 years failed to do that, I think that's a bit much actually, thank you my Lord Mayor. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Hussain.

CLLR HUSSAIN: Yes Lord Mayor. Could the portfolio holder for Customer Services care to comment on the reduction in sickness levels in call centre operations.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Blackburn.

CLLR D BLACKBURN: Thank you Lord Mayor. I will be happy to do so, unlike what has been expressed by Members opposite over the last few months about Customer Services. An amazing turn round has taken place in recent times. If we compare the year ending 31st March 2004 with the last financial year which ended 31st of March 2006, we have improved from 21.4 days under the party opposites control to 15.05 days, and during this year ... (Applause) ...this improvement has continued and we are on target for reaching 13 days. There is still a lot to do but there is a lot of hard work going on down there and with our staff who are call operating and the people down there who run the place.

I also would like to comment regarding a thing that happened on Saturday night, Sport Relief. The Corporate Contact Centre was one of the places, call centres up and down the country that took the donations. We had more than 90 staff from Corporate Services and other departments who voluntarily gave six hours of their time between six and twelve on Saturday night. We actually took £82,869.50 and of all the call centres that were finishing at midnight we took the most amount of money. I think the staff down there and all the people from all the other departments that were involved in this want congratulating. Thank you Lord Mayor. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Hussain, do you have a supplementary? Thank you.

Thank you Members of Council, that concludes the time allowed for the questions, any unanswered questions will be responded to in writing.

7 RECOMMENDATIONS OF EXECUTIVE BOARD

We will move on to the next item on the agenda, Councillor Harris.

CLLR HARRIS: Yes, I move Lord Mayor.

CLLR A CARTER: Second Lord Mayor.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Leadley.

CLLR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, I wish to comment on the report on the adoption of the Leeds UDP Review which (inaudible) agenda item 7 beginning on page 21. It brings us near the end of a UDP process which began in 1989 though it will live on in the guise of the Local Development framework. A timetable including legislation which is about to expire means that we have little choice other than to accept the review as it is presented here. Even so, there are outstanding matters

which were not resolved to the satisfaction of everyone. Most strikingly of all, the review inspector decided that the City Council should make 25% of all new housing affordable, though less unaffordable might be more accurate. At the same time he removed proposals which would have enabled the Council to increase the output of affordable housing without providing any other mechanisms for achieving it. As many planning permissions are exempt from the affordable scheme because they are for fewer than 25 dwellings, and others may have reductions to take account of high site reclamation costs, we may forecast with confidence that the 25% target will not be reached. Without significant public subsidy for new social housing the problem of finding and paying for somewhere to live will become increasingly severe for anyone under 30, and that was a fact that was remarked upon at yesterday's development plan panel meeting by several Members.

It has not always been so, only six or seven years ago houses were cheap and plentiful in Leeds, which must have helped economic growth by leaving people with money to spend on things other than mortgages and utility bills. If the City's economy becomes too closely linked to borrowing against inflated property prices it will become unstable and liable to sudden collapse. Thank you my Lord Mayor.

THE MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Harris to sum up.

CLLR A CARTER: Lord Mayor.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Carter, did you ...

CLLR A CARTER: Yes, I am dealing with this item as it comes under the UDP.

I understand Councillor Leadley's concerns, he has voiced them before, so have many other Members, myself included. What I can tell you, and I think I mentioned this at the last Council Meeting, is that we are looking at a raft of ways in which we can increase the amount of affordable housing available around the city, particularly affordable housing for sale. Obviously, when we have so many developments being brought forward on brown field sites, most of the developers have a whole string of reasons why they cannot provide the percentage of dwellings that we want affordably because of the amount of other unexpected measures they have to carry out on site to make it fit to build on. So it is a complex issue. But we, if we are to continue to thrive as we have as a city it is going to be important that we have enough affordable housing, both to rent but particularly to buy, which is part of, of course, the Government's national agenda as well as our agenda.

It is a complex issue but I do think, and I notice with interest that the MP for Pudsey is on about, "Planning is the business of locals", he has told the House of Commons, and it says further on, "Mr Truswell has frequently raised the issue of mobile phone companies", I mean, he would do better to explain to people why he and the other MP's for Leeds have failed to make the Government understand that they have made the planning process themselves so complex, they have taken away so much jurisdiction from local planning authorities and bogged us down with so many of their guidelines and their targets that we are failing to deliver the sorts of things we should be able to deliver, and refuse in some instances the things we should be refusing.

My Lord Mayor, I do wish our Members of Parliament had a little bit more sway over their Government and were able to get them to realise that it is their own fault that we are not being able to deliver some of these very worthwhile agendas, affordable housing being one of them.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Harris to sum up. No, no. All in favour. Any against. Any abstentions. Thank you. (CARRIED)

8 RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

Councillor Harris.

CLLR HARRIS: Yes, I move Lord Mayor.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Blackburn.

CLLR D BLACKBURN: I second and reserve the right to speak.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Leadley.

CLLR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, I wish to comment on the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee's recommended amendments to the constitution which are in a report beginning on page 74.

As a Member of a Plans Panel I welcome the proposal not to allow delegations to full Council which would cut across the due consideration of current planning applications by adding to or bypassing the three minute speeches which objectors or supporters may make at Plans Panel meetings. It is likely that such delegations could be held to be prejudicial to the planning process and might leave the Council and its Plans Panels decisions open to legal challenge from applicants.

This amendment to the constitution might be described as a repair which was prompted by proposed legislation - a proposed delegation rather to the April meeting of Council, and I fully support the recommendation set out in paragraph 7 on page 76.

Unfortunately, like many running repairs, it does not go quite far enough. I would urge that we should have thorough(?) going constitutional amendments which would bar delegations which wish to speak in any live licensing or regulatory manner - live licensing or regulatory matter. Obvious examples would be licensing applications to do with public houses, takeaways, nightclubs and taxis, though we shouldn't forget the more obscure items which a Council is charged with licensing such as scrap metal dealing, pet shops, houses in multiple occupation and performances of hypnotism believe it or not. It would be unfortunate if applicants whose applications were refused managed to escape on some kind of legal technicality.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Second my Lord Mayor.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Blackburn, do you have any comments to make? No. Councillor Harris to sum up. Thank you. All in favour. Any against. Any abstentions. Thank you. (CARRIED)

9 MINUTES

Councillor Harris.

CLLR HARRIS: I move Lord Mayor.

THE MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Proctor.

CLLR J PROCTOR: I second if Councillor Harris moves Lord Mayor.

(a) Executive Board
(i) Central & Corporate

THE MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Wakefield.

CLLR WAKEFIELD: Yes Lord Mayor. Could I under Rule 14.10 seek permission to withdraw the reference back.

THE MAYOR: Thank you. That is seconded, Councillor Selby. Is that accepted? All in favour. Any against. Abstentions. (CARRIED)

Councillor Hussain.

CLLR HUSSAIN: Yes Lord Mayor. I would like to speak to Minute 26 on page 86 in relation to the annual efficiency statement. I would like to take this opportunity to thank staff right across this Council for achieving huge efficiency improvements over the past two years. Generating more money for front line services by making savings within the back office is something that this administration has asked Officers to do ever since we took control, and they have responded magnificently. The latest annual efficiency statement shows that we have doubled our obligation(?) target of £15.34 million to a staggering £30.87 million. This has provided extra resources that have become more vital than ever in the current climate. Central Government demands more and more from local government but keeps on tightening the purse strings. Without the brilliant work done in this final section of every Council department the situation would be extremely difficult indeed. Thank you.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Harris, do you want to respond?

CLLR HARRIS: I agree. (Laughter)

(ii) Development

THE MAYOR: Councillor Illingworth. Councillor Leadley.

CLLR LEADLEY: I have prepared some notes in anticipation of what I believe Councillor Illingworth might have said. (Laughter) Nonetheless I shall deliver them.

What it comes down to is that by chance I have become a gatekeeper of the Council's calling procedures and as I see it that role should be played so as to let people make any case to Overview and Scrutiny which is reasonably plausible and well meant.

I did not support the case in principle or know more about it than might be gleaned by whatever homework might be done during the few days which fall between a decision and the calling deadline. Even so, a gatekeeper must be willing to draw lines so that calling is not abused.

In Councillor Illingworth's case I felt obliged to draw a line. As the fate of St Anne's Mills and Abney Mills(?) is still work in progress it could be argued that there is no decision to be called in. What Councillor Illingworth did not mention in his e-mails when he called for the calling was

that he had been given about half an hour by Executive Board to make his case and that he had been assured that his views would be taken into account before a final decision was made.

What is most striking is that throughout the recent history of these mills - he is behind me - Councillor Illingworth seems to have been lobbying on behalf of an organisation of which he is a member, even perhaps a leading light. As well as wanting St Anne's Mills to be cheap rent he wants convict labour to repair them free of charge. This goes against the best traditions of community groups whereby members put on their old clothes and muck in to do the work themselves to save money and build more community spirit.

Even though I have been unable to support Councillor Illingworth, generally I would tend to give colleagues the benefit of the doubt to make sure that the Executive is held fully to account, so I hope that other Members will not be put off when they have well founded concerns about any decision which is being made anywhere in the Council. Thank you my Lord Mayor. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Thank you Councillor Leadley. Councillor Illingworth.

CLLR ILLINGWORTH: Thank you Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, I speak on Minute 32, page 88. I doubt the factual accuracy of the report to Executive Board and it is important to set the record straight.

The reports are published electronically two days after legal deadline, they are not marked as late items. We cannot find a paper copy supposedly available for inspection, nor identify who was responsible for their care. Limited access to these reports made it difficult to challenge and correct the numerous errors and omissions before the meeting. The Executive Board were not fully aware of the following problems.

We have an adverse audit report about the (inaudible) in December 2004. In June 2006 Corporate Governance and Audit Committees referred this matter to the Executive Board, but on 5th July the Executive Board received only a jumbled summary and they were advised the report was considered elsewhere. Neither body examined the audit report in detail.

If members studied the audit report they would realise that the errors went beyond the discounted cashflow analysis. The entire financial basis is insecure. Errors identified at the scrutiny hearing in January 2005, and confirmed by external audit, are reproduced yet again in the current documents. There is no financial justification for the decisions we are taking. The Council could easily repair both mills, and retain their present functions, using prudential borrowing. Many other viable options have yet to be considered as recommended by the auditors.

The selected option is staggeringly poor value for money. There has been no option appraisal showing that St Anne's Mills is the best site for incubator units. Evidently it is not the best case. Are we giving accurate information to Yorkshire Forward about the costs and benefits of these proposals. Investment at Barkstone House(?), Croydon House or at Beckett Park School(?) offers better returns than St Anne's Mills. We are not achieving best value, nor have we properly assessed the various alternatives against our corporate plan.

The Development Department cannot produce background papers underpinning these proposals as required by the 1972 Local Government Act. Their records are not in good order, there are huge gaps in their documentary evidence. Our Development Department handles millions of pounds of public assets, poor record keeping should be a cause for Member concern.

The public consultation excluded 90% of people living closest to the mills. The Council confused opinions with consultation, Kirkstall Ward Members were largely excluded and many of those canvassed lived over a mile away. The Council and its contractor did not follow the legal advice of the Treasury Solicitor or from the Department of Constitutional Affairs. It did not observe local or national guidelines (inaudible) consultations. Residents were approached in secret so they heard no counter(?) views, and the factual basis for this exercise has been discredited in the audit report. Serious mapping errors are discovered in the drawings for these proposals. Figure L2 in the draft planning brief is misleading, geometrically inaccurate and conceals the adverse effects of the scheme.

I am still waiting for a response from the Monitoring Officer to my complaints about the consultation process. The Department has scarcely modified its proposals in response to consultation. Despite a majority of adverse comments, the present scheme is virtually identical to one first published in July 2005.

The chosen option is unsafe. Paragraph 5.2.7 is factually wrong about the ROSPA safety audit. The proposed access to Abbey Mills is on the inside of a blind corner. It creates a crossroad intersection with inadequate sight lines that does not meet local or national safety standards. It is on a steep slope with poor visibility. The design is ugly. Safety improvements would carry a huge environmental cost.

The Department for Transport in London have copies of the proposals and say the driver's sight lines are 38 metres too short. The A65 is extremely busy and the highway scheme is obviously unsafe. If Members of Council visited the site they would be convinced in seconds. We need an independent safety audit and an environmental assessment before proceeding further. The option appraisals and the public consultation must be repeated in the light of these results.

Lord Mayor, these mills were purchased nearly 40 years ago for a public park. Some defects have been exaggerated but others reflect 40 years of incompetent Council management. Lord Mayor, we would get better value for the citizens of Leeds if this Council just occasionally would admit to its mistakes. Thank you Lord Mayor.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Carter to sum up.

CLLR A CARTER: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I will not, Councillors will be pleased to know, catalogue now, bar the last two, the previous 24 years of incompetent Council management, but I am glad at least that Councillor Illingworth recognises that buildings in the ownership of the City Council have been left to get into a terrible state of repair and the present administration is now having to pick up that bill.

My Lord Mayor, I am not going to comment particularly about the two schemes that Councillor Illingworth has mentioned. Most of what he has said, it seems to me, is a criticism of the processes by which consultation and documentation take place, and I know those matters are being looked at by the legal department, and indeed some of the matters are going to go to Governance and Audit Committee.

So I will make a general comment about Councillor Illingworth's continued insinuations about Officers of this Council, and actually I quite welcome the opportunity to do that because it will place on record some issues which need firmly placing on record.

In 33 years as a Member of this Council I have never known a Member of Council make so many accusations - and don't grin John, it's not a funny matter. We have - no it's not, I mean please take note ladies and gentlemen, Councillor Illingworth thinks it is a funny matter, but actually by the way in which this Councillor conducts his business he is wearing down Officers of this Council to the extent that they have made accusations to the Standards Board for England which is under investigation. Not only that, we have now got complaints from employees of this authority to their trade union that they are not being protected from the way in which this Councillor treats them. That is not acceptable in anybody's standards and by anybody's terms. Simply not acceptable.

My Lord Mayor, we have a duty of care in this Chamber to everybody who works for us. Most of them are used to robust questioning from Councillors and that is correct, and robust criticism where we think it necessary, and that is correct, but what is not correct and not acceptable is the innuendo, the suggestions, veiled or otherwise, from a Member of this Council that questions the integrity and the professionalism of people who work for us. It is our responsibility, collectively, to stop this happening, and I look directly at the leader of the opposition who so far has conspicuously failed to take any steps to control that particular Member. (Applause)

(iv) Neighbourhoods & Housing

THE MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan.

CLLR ATHA: Can I ask, Lord Mayor, if there is any way in which anyone else can rebut an attack on a colleagues character in a way which is quite unpardonable when it is raised on a totally different matter. I think the (inaudible) is not the standard I honestly expect. If ever you want to attack a Member, attack him by a backwards route, and I think it is not the right way. (Uproar)

But I have made my objection very clear, and my defence of Councillor Illingworth, if under attack, will be equally positive, (inaudible) and not by innuendo.

CLLR A CARTER: You should be ashamed of yourself Bernard. (Uproar)

THE MAYOR: Gentlemen, behave yourself please. Point made, can we move on now please. Councillor Finnigan.

CLLR FINNIGAN: Perhaps more mundane issues. Thank you Lord Mayor, I am speaking, page 87, item 30, which is the future of Arms Length Management Organisation for housing in Leeds.

People will be aware that we have had a long term concern in Morley that we must localise things as best that we can do, and try and make the decision making as local as possible, that's worked very well with area committees, we have got our own Town Council, and we know what is being said about the ALMO's and we understand, even if it is regrettable, that we are reducing the number of ALMO's that we go in to.

Certainly our view is that we need more ALMO's because there isn't a one size fits all that will accommodate the different housing needs that we have got across the city. We don't want to revert back to a place where there is, if you like, central control, and even with three we do get some localised decision making and that has got to be good for the people that we represent.

Certainly speaking to Les Carter prior to this particular one, he has offered me one for Morley on its own, and I am quite happy that Morley will have its own ALMO and the rest of you

can scrap over the other two if you so wish. We think that will be a marvellous idea even if perhaps is something that Les Carter will deliver on(?). We do think it is important, we are giving this steer(?) that we look at making sure that there are those variations, there are those different groupings, there are hopefully three ALMO's and that is a point of view that local tenants will support because I think we do need to have those different decision making processes and organisations to reflect local needs not an overall city wide collective need. Thank you Lord Mayor.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Lewis.

CLLR R LEWIS: Thank you Lord Mayor, on the same Minute, in the consultation and decision making process that we have been going through over the past few months up to now hasn't exactly been a model one. We have had Price Waterhouse Cooper reports which are slimline reports, which have then been revised and criticised by Officers. We have had lack of clarity about really where the administration is coming from in that it starts off saying it wants three ALMO's then suddenly it's two, or is it one, then we are back to three again. We have had withdrawn reports, it does seem to have been a bit of a mess. But I think that's as it is, that's where we are, my concern is that perhaps those messages that have gone out through that kind of lack of clarity have actually given ammunition to people who will not be supporting the three ALMO option which we as a group are supporting, and will perhaps give some strength to people who are arguing for one ALMO.

I think it's also - that it's clear that you have ended up in a situation where you are not giving people a choice between the status quo and three ALMO's, because of the way you have gone through that process of decision making, you have ended up with a one versus three which is, you know, I would feel regrettable.

But my main concerns aren't about that, I think you, as I say, you are where you are, we have a problem where you have to put a clear question to people which is do you want A or B, you can't ask people whether they want A, B or C. I think the wording is going to be very important and I think we would be concerned to see how that is done.

But my main concern here is about the governance issues that are raised and that really haven't been covered in the reports that have been seen so far. One concern I have is about who should be Chairs of ALMO's because there was, I think it was the first report that was considered by the ALMO boards, did suggest that Councillors could not be Chairs of ALMO boards in the future. Now this didn't come into the Exec Board paper, I am glad it didn't, but I would very much like some clarification on that, because to me what we are doing is potentially creating second class ALMO board members. We have had people like Barry, people like Peter, who have done a very good job as Chairs of ALMO's, we should allow them to stand for election, whether they get it or not is a different matter, you know, let us do that, let us make it clear on that one.

I am also very concerned about elected Members role in the new panels because we go down from having 30 elected Members who are involved in ALMO's to just having 12. That is a big drop, I think all of us who have council housing within our wards have big concerns about how investment is made, about those things that really make a big difference to a community, which is about council house spending or the environmental spending that is carried out by the ALMO's. I hope that there will be real consideration given to how all elected Members can play a role through the new panel arrangements.

Likewise, I would just like to argue very, very clearly that we need to get it right on how tenants are involved. I would have to say that tenants on boards often struggle with full board meetings, and I don't think that's unfair, I think we place a huge burden on them by saying, you know, "Here is 200 pages, read that, get on with it", who haven't had our backgrounds of reading this

stuff for year in, year out. I think that the local panels give an opportunity to give tenants a better say, and we can do that in a better way if we think it through carefully. So let's really give a lot of thought to the new arrangements at that local level to ensure that Ward members have a better contribution, all of us, and the local tenants are enabled to have a say in larger numbers than they can have a say through the current arrangements. Thank you Lord Mayor.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Pryke.

CLLR PRYKE: Thank you Lord Mayor, it's on the same Minute again.

It is wonderfully repetitive to be talking about ALMO's again - yes, I don't know whether it's on or not.

The Exec Board decision is another step on the way to getting better services for all Leeds Council tenants, not just better services but affordable ones too. I imagine Councillor Carter will agree with me that for the Council to do nothing would lead to a number of ALMO's going bust within a few years, so it is no surprise that a number of Labour Members wanted, and Richard has reiterated it, the current six ALMO set up to be offered again, in effect a no change option.

Leeds Labour has always been a bit schizophrenic about ALMO's anyway, despite like running most of them. Unison's Defend Council Housing meetings, which I used to attend, were boycotted by Labour and there hasn't been a whisper of the so called fourth option lately, it's a shame really. The Government itself isn't really interested in housing, there is no big donations there - sorry, loans in that sector, and peerages, peerages just don't compare with priority extra.

It was only a few years ago in the good old days of a hefty Labour majority in Council that their group nearly split because the leadership didn't want to allow Council tenants a vote on whether to have ALMO's, and the possible decency money that might come with them, or stay with the Council and get no decency money anyway. Well, the leadership lost, the tenants got a vote and they will be able to vote again soon.

I am all in favour of this kind of protestatory(?) democracy, although I would have preferred three options so we could have a single transferrable vote selection. Unfortunately my friend Les isn't a great fan of PR, well not that kind of PR anyway.

Of course, the elephant in the room, it is a very big elephant, is Labour's housing policy vacuum. No one seems to know what comes after decency in 2010. Mr Prescott's ODPM seems to want to convert ALMO's into social housing providers, in other words stock transfer or privatisation by another name. By the way, I am glad he enjoyed the slimline canapés with the Lord Mayor the other week.

The new Department for Communities and Local Government hasn't said much about ALMO's so far. As a department it is too new so far to be unfit for purpose, that 'with it' New Labour bit of coded criticism, and Ruth Kelly will no doubt have her mind made up for her soon enough, opus (inaudible).

Whatever she decides, Leeds tenants want the assurance from Ms Kelly that there will still be council housing in the future, that it will improve and that tenants rents will remain affordable. Thanks Lord Mayor.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Hollingsworth.

CLLR HOLLINGSWORTH: Thank you Lord Mayor. I would like to comment on page 88, Minute 31, about EASEL.

EASEL is the biggest single regeneration project ever in Leeds, and what's more it has been achieved without a single penny of Central Government money. Over a 20 year period thousands of new homes will be built, from family houses to bungalows for pensioners. Low cost housing will be included in this scheme. Profits from sales and from land sales will help fund the infrastructure and public facilities in the EASEL area.

What do you say does the Labour Party do, well the Labour Government doesn't give us money for it, we have from the local Labour Party leaflets put out undermining the EASEL scheme, criticising the EASEL scheme in the local elections, making fanciful claims. What I will say is that the Lib Dem, Conservative, Green administration is committed to EASEL, we will make EASEL work while all Labour in Leeds do is undermine it. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Gruen.

CLLR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, on the reference Minute 30, page 87. A brief comment to clarify the comments of Councillor Pryke and to help Councillor Carter in his response. I think there is - being one of your three star Generals - there is no difference at all within this group about, (a) the need and the desirability for a ballot, indeed we asked for it, and secondly that it should now take place. So I do not know where you have got that information from. Indeed, Councillor Lewis said we would like to see the question on the ballot before it goes out, and I have to say that a lot of the emotion which was around this whole question before Christmas, latterly there has been a good degree, a sensible degree of debate, discussion and thinking on the way forward. So I think probably most people are now on the same page about this, and hopefully, if the preferred option is the Executive Board option of three ALMO's, and they are campaigning on that, then the ALMO's themselves have very clear positions. South East Homes has a very clear position, unanimously signed up to, that we are in favour of the three ALMO option, and we will campaign in favour of that. But there are much more important issues, as Councillor Lewis has said, the involvement of tenants, the genuine involvement of tenants, so they don't feel suddenly that going from six to three that they are missing out, those are real issues which I think subsequently to this we need to tackle together. (Hear hear) (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Carter to sum up.

CLLR J CARTER: Thank you my Lord Mayor. May I start with Robert actually, and I understand Robert would like one of the ALMO's to be Morley but (inaudible), but what is important, I think it has been said by one or two other Members, are the panels. These panels will be vital because that's where tenants should really be involved with, that's where tenants will really, in my opinion, understand, have the experience that we should take from them, because they understand housing, they understand their own houses, they understand the problems with houses. I think it's always difficult for tenants with corporate boards, I accept that, and I mean some of which I look and think, "Would I put certain people onto corporate boards", it's very, very difficult. But having said that I am absolutely certain that the panels would be the solution to get them right.

Just coming on to Richard, I don't accept Richard's point, but there has been no confusion as far as I am concerned because until recently I have never announced how much I would support or not support one, two, three, four, five or six ALMO's. I have taken the basis that I want to see, (a) what the Officers had to say, and (b) what other people have had to say, and you are quite right, the first paper went out talking about one or two ALMO's, and quite honestly I wasn't happy with that,

but we have now got I think a reasonable and a satisfactory place of going for three ALMO's or one ALMO.

Now coming back to the question, this is important, the question we asked. We have got to be dead straight on the question. We can all look at it, I am quite happy (inaudible), I have an open door on this, (inaudible) questions, they will be asked and the way they are asked...

THE MAYOR: Councillor Carter, can you please move your papers.

CLLR J CARTER: Sorry, oh am I quiet as well. It's a vast improvement Bernard says.
(Laughter)

Can I just come back to the questions. On the question itself I have an open door on this because it is very important the question is right, but we have to put a fair question in, and probably notes to it, on both options, even though we, at this side - and I know you at your side - have a preference for three, but I think we will be pulled up very sharply if we don't ensure that the right arguments go in for both those. Having said that, then obviously the ALMO's will be arguing, we will be arguing about change (inaudible).

As far as the Chairs are concerned, I am always willing to look at things Richard, and I am always willing to consider that, and membership, well that again is back to the members themselves. I am pleased that we now seemed to have come to a consensus on this, with the exception of one gentleman who has left the country at the moment, I think we are all singing now ...

CLLR A CARTER: Who is that Les?

CLLR J CARTER: I can't think of his name. (Laughter) But we all seem to be singing off the same hymn sheet and that is the main thing to go forward on it. So all the things you have raised, there is nothing you have raised which I don't think is able to be considered, my door is an open door and I will talk to everybody.

As far as EASEL is concerned, well I saw, well I saw the leaflet from Gipton, and it says, "Vote Weasel Democrat", and it says all sorts of things. The sad thing about this is I don't think, I think on this one as well, we as a Council are supposed to be singing off the same hymn sheet here, and we are supposed to all be supporting each other for this particular project. I just got a few notes here which just tell you what is happening so far. At this moment in time, because of what is going on with EASEL, reinvestment in Gipton is more likely to be £20 million rather than £6 million as originally envisaged. The ALMO's have now expressed an interest in developing bungalows, they haven't come through yet, but it will come through, and the actual contracts will have a requirement to provide provision for 500 older person provision, that is - never mind waving, give me chance, I am telling you what's in here at the moment - all those things will be in. This is a massive development, I am pleased I had the opportunity to lead on it, I will be quite honest, I am delighted to have the opportunity to lead on it because I do believe it will alter the whole of East Leeds.

So all I ask is, and I am being serious, because there are some hard decisions to be made, and some have already been made by some of your Chairman of ALMO's which remove, which actually is talking about knocking down houses. If we aren't careful on leaflets like that the tenants will start saying, "Oooh", and they will start getting very worried about what is being said and what is not being said, and it won't be a success, and it will get, it will wind(?) people up. Now some of your people have done a heck of a lot to clear some sites and they have not wound it up, I would ask - Roger is not here today so I can't have a knock at Roger because I think Roger, I mean Roger gave

one of the best speeches I ever heard at the annual meeting, no, I am not having a go behind his back, I mean he was a man of God and now he's turned into a politician (Laughter). I hope he (inaudible) worst kind of politician.

But just coming back to the actual EASEL itself. EASEL is vital for this city, it is vital for East Leeds, there is something like 70 to 80,000 peoples lives will be affected. It won't be finished in my time in here, I'll have gone, but I do hope that I am still in a wheelchair and somebody can take me back and have a look and say I hope it's right and I hope they are better homes for people, I hope the environment people live in is far better, that's what we are aiming to do. So all I ask is, please, just be careful on your leaflets, I know elections, I put leaflets out in elections, but just be careful that you don't destroy something in trying to just fight a seat. Thank you my Lord Mayor. (Applause)

(e) Scrutiny Board (Leisure)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Taylor.

CLLR TAYLOR: Thank you Lord Mayor. I have always been proud to wear it and I hope that I will continue to do that for the rest of my life, and thank you for saying what you did about EASEL and the importance that it does have for the whole of Harehills and Gipton.

Can I comment, Lord Mayor, on page 106 on Minute 5, and it is on the Leisure Scrutiny Board, and I notice again with credit, Pauline, you have taken on a massive agenda as you did last time in the Transforming Services Board. I am slightly worried that when you are looking, in particular about the leisure centres, will you be looking in detail at what could be the adverse effects of political parties campaigning against the improvement of the leisure centres in the city. In particular whether or not this damages the possibility of receiving funding from your Labour Government.

I am concerned, at the end of the day, that the people of East Leeds in particular, and also Gipton and Harehills, would not be let down if this matter was taken into the political arena as we have seen has happened with EASEL, and I hope that the board will rise above that. Thank you Lord Mayor. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Grahame.

CLLR GRAHAME: Thank you my Lord Mayor. Thank you Councillor Taylor for those comments and I can assure you that I will Chair this board the same way that I Chaired Transforming Services, and I have always tried to keep the politics out of it and been fair with everybody, as somebody who you are very close to will tell you. Thank you. (Applause)

(f) Scrutiny Board (Development)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Andrew.

CLLR ANDREW: Thank you Lord Mayor. I refer to Minute 5 on page 109.

In 2002 members of the community in Yeadon, together with myself and Councillor Bale, met to establish a group to try and bring some investment into the town. Tired of seeing Yeadon, which is one of the many unique townships within our city, start to deteriorate through lack of investment, we decided that it was time for us to try and do something ourselves.

Initially our ambitions were very small, just providing hanging baskets and planters, but then we met with the City Architect to talk about how we could really take Yeadon forward. That meeting was extremely interesting and John brought up some great designs for Yeadon. But what was clear is that it would be nothing more than a pipe-dream, there simply wasn't the money available. After many years of neglect of the outer areas, Yeadon simply wouldn't have the money that it wanted to try and revitalise the local economy and improve our High Street.

As a group we did focus on the town hall ourselves, a unique building that is the landmark of the town, and we managed to secure grants to make improvements to the front of it, but it was just a fraction of what we really wanted to achieve. The outer areas were not getting the money that it needed. But thankfully along came this administration and now we have a Town and District Centres Plan, £10 million that is being invested into the outer areas. £2.5 million of that is providing extra money for our parks.

At our area committee the plans that were just a pipe-dream back in 2002 were put forward as a proposal and I am glad to say that these plans are now being drawn up and the exhibitions are already being planned in August, and the people of Yeadon are rightly and at last seeing some of their Council Tax money being spent in their area. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Andrew Carter.

CLLR A CARTER: I can update Councillor Andrew to some degree because, as he will be aware but other Members may not be, we had our Lead Members meeting for the Development Department only yesterday, and the Panel Chairs were there and so were the various Lead Members.

We left Officers of the department in no doubt, and it gives me an opportunity to remind Officers of Neighbourhoods and Housing who are also involved, and leave them in no doubt as well, as well as any other Officers from any other departments that are also involved, that we want this programme to move forward quickly so that people in the outer areas, the town and district centres, not necessarily in the far outer areas, but some in the very, very near to the edge of the city, can see the promises that we made fulfilled and get the investment in their town and district centres that they have been waiting for for a quarter of a century.

I have to say I am somewhat disappointed when I see spokesmen, Labour spokesmen disguised as other things criticising discussions with the public about investment in their outer areas. But indeed the Labour Party have denied those areas for so long. As I have said previously in this Council Chamber, the importance for Leeds in the future is that all the communities that make up Leeds, whether they are ethnic or whether they are geographical, believe that this city is going to move forward in everyone's interests, and that means investing in all the communities and making sure we value our small town, village and district centres, and invest in them before it is too late, and that is what this authority under this administration will do, and this £10 million is not the end of it. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Kirkland.

CLLR KIRKLAND: My Lord Mayor, Yeadon town centre is actually not in Yeadon Ward, but the Lib Dem Councillors in Otley and Yeadon are more than happy to co-operate with the Tory Councillors in Guiseley and Rawdon because Yeadon is the town centre for all of us. We have had several site meetings with all Members there, it isn't just Yeadon it is Otley as well. Both town centres have been crying out for development ever since Otley and Yeadon became part of Leeds,

and it really is about time that we put some serious money, not just for a one off, but on a long term basis, not only to make it good for local residents but to keep it good for local residents. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Cleasby to sum up.

CLLR CLEASBY: Thank you Lord Mayor. Well Scrutiny Board will be delighted to have heard Andrew's words to say there is more money available because Andrew, we agreed at our board yesterday our work programme, and on the 24th of April there will be a paper, Parking in Town and District Centres, so hopefully we will be moving on to the next phase, not just looking at them but then getting serious about how we do improve the use of our town and district centres. Thank you very much, thank you Lord Mayor.

(h) Scrutiny Board (City Services)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan.

CLLR FINNIGAN: Thank you Lord Mayor. I am commenting on page 115, item 4 on that particular page, really focussing on the last highlighted area, communication problems associated with the bulky collection grass cutting hotline.

Now people will know we had a debate about this last time, and as we understand it, seeing as the grass cutting contract is up for reconsideration this year, we would ask, and Stephen isn't going to be surprised about this, consideration about breaking down that contract, it is a big contract, we think breaking it down to smaller portions so that perhaps local companies can compete for the grass cutting contract, it might be something that people may wish to reflect upon.

Bulky collections, clearly we have had some difficulties from time to time, the system by and large seems to work reasonably well. Council Officers often get a kicking, I would just like to put, to pay a special tribute perhaps to Roger Boyle(?) who never, certainly in Morley, I am sure across the city, lets us down at the point we are asking for his help and advice, whether that is on grass cutting, whether that is on bulky removals, I think sometimes we do knock Council Officers, it is sometimes good to give them a pat on the back as well. Thank you Lord Mayor. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Barry Anderson to sum up.

CLLR B ANDERSON: Taking your last comment first, I am sure Randall and Steve(?) will pass on your comments about Roger Boyle.

In respect of the grass cutting, yes, we are going to be holding our workgroup meeting to take it forward and I personally would have no objection if you wish to either come along and address us or if you submitted it in writing. Last year one of your colleagues used to come along regularly and I was quite happy for them to contribute and would welcome contributions from anybody in terms of taking this issue forward, it affects every single one of us in our Wards. (Applause)

(j) Plans Panel (East)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan.

CLLR FINNIGAN: Thank you Lord Mayor. I am wishing to speak, page 136, Minute 32 with regards to Capital Park which is based in Morley. People might be aware of it, and what I am wanting at this particular is perhaps to raise some concerns and seek some reassurances about this

particular matter, because Capital Park, on the 1st of October 2004, donated £160,000 to the Labour Party, biggest sole donation from a company.

Now maybe a developer pays £160,000 to any particular party purely because it is convinced of its rhetoric, its philosophy, or whatever, but clearly when we have a developer operating in the Morley area and the wider area within Leeds that gets such a big cash donation to one particular group, then I think we need to make sure that there are some reassurances given across the board. I think we need reassurances from Legal Services that there are no breaches here, I think we need reassurances from the party involved that in no shape, way or form does this influence them when it comes to considering development in our particular area.

Now £160,000 is a lot of money, and I wrote to Jack Dromy(?) about this particular donation asking for his reassurance that it was pure, that it was clean, that there was nothing dodgy going on here. I am still waiting for a reply.

I wrote to Keith with the same point asking for his reassurances that this £160,000 hasn't influenced in any shape, way or form any decisions taken by the Labour Group when it comes to considering planning applications from this particular developer. Along with Jack I am still waiting for his particular response. (Uproar)

CLLR ATHA: Would you make that accusation then we can answer it.

CLLR FINNIGAN: I am asking for reassurances, that's all I am saying. I am just saying if somebody gave me £160,000, maybe they would give that because of the brilliance of my rhetoric, maybe they were to come in and listen to me in this Council Chamber and say, "I am entirely convinced about this", but at this particular point we would like some reassurances that there are no problems, no difficulties, no influences in any shape, way or form. I am not making any accusations at all. Maybe, maybe my cheque is in the post, I don't know, but I have tried to get reassurances - if Bernard wants to give me a written reassurance that this £160,000 was purely a donation and has no influence whatsoever and it's because of the brilliance of Tony Blair, then fine, I am quite happy to actually accept that, but I think reassurances need to be offered at this particular time, especially when this developer has developed a hell of a lot of space in Morley and developed a hell of a lot of space across the Leeds City Council area. Thank you Lord Mayor.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Minkin.

CLLR MINKIN: Thank you Lord Mayor. I obviously know nothing about the issue that - I've forgotten his name - Councillor Finnigan, sorry, I just went a complete blank, a complete blank, sorry, apologies, that Councillor Finnigan was referring to, but I think I heard him say something along the lines of when the Labour Group decided what their position would be in considering this planning application. I think that is absolutely really - I think you would all agree, the other groups, that that is something that is very seriously amiss, and no way does the Labour Group, and I should, I am pretty sure that neither do the Lib Dems nor the Tories, come to a group decision about what the planning application view is going to be. Each Member of Panel takes that as an individual Member of Panel and so I am really surprised, Councillor Finnigan - I am really sorry for forgetting your name - that you should ever say such a thing and all it conveys to me is that you are living in the past.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan, point of explanation.

CLLR FINNIGAN: The issue is Capital Park have been developing, certainly in Morley, since 1992, Councillor Leadley, and certainly at that particular point, as far as I remember, well there were planning Labour Group. Now all I was saying at that particular point as a point of personal explanation(Uproar)

THE MAYOR: Excuse me, Councillor Finnigan, Councillor Finnigan. Excuse me, please, please. Councillor Finnigan, can I just make clear that what was quoted or misrepresented you should clarify that point rather than adding further bits to it, thank you.

CLLR FINNIGAN: Absolutely Lord Mayor. I was just asking for some clarification that ...(Uproar)

THE MAYOR: No, no, no, no. Thank you, sit down. Councillor Proctor.

CLLR J PROCTOR: Thank you Lord Mayor, thank you Lord Mayor. It's amazing isn't it how certain Members over there have amnesia. Liz, Liz, how many planning pre-meetings, group meetings did you sit in, how many do you think you have sat in over the years, hundreds, hundreds. It's not good saying, "Oh, where not living in the past, we are living in the present", the fact is is that you all sat, all of those who were on planning, in group meeting after group meeting and I, Councillor Carter, Councillor Harris and the like were saying for years it was wrong, you shouldn't do that, we had a White Paper Motion down about it, that it was singularly inappropriate, there was Government guidance that came out even that it was wrong and still you did it, still you had to sit down and cook up all of those decisions in private, it used to be room A or B that you met in, "What are we going to do about this, what are we doing about that", some of your colleagues boasted about it. I remember a certain Lee Benson who chaired a Plans East meeting in fifteen minutes flat. You didn't have time to turn over the pages because it was all pre determined in advance in the group.

Now, now, admittedly things have changed over those years, but it's no good, no good coming here and pretending that never, ever, ever did you ever have a Labour Group meeting in relation to planning applications because you did, you attended them. (Uproar)

CLLR MINKIN: That is definitely a point of personal explanation. I never said that, and you have a wonderful facility which sometimes I envy but actually I am glad I haven't got it, of just twisting things round and making them what was not said, I did not say that and I would like that record to be corrected, thank you.

THE MAYOR: Thank you Councillor Minkin. Councillor Selby.

CLLR SELBY: Thank you Lord Mayor. I was wondering if Councillor Finnigan could actually clarify in a little bit more detail what he is alleging, because if you actually look at the attendance - wait, wait, wait - if you look at the attendance at that meeting, there were two Labour Members recorded as being in attendance out of a total of seven Members. The affront that he is making is that planning permission was being granted and that there was some backhander being done - that is how it comes over from here. (Uproar) That is the inference of what he is saying, so I would like to know, if he is making an allegation what does he say about all the other Members who were present at that meeting, including - yes - including Councillor Proctor, in due course we will hear from Councillor Fox, maybe we'll hear from Councillor McArdle as well, to indicate what all the factors were that led them to make that decision. Are you alleging that they are involved in this alleged conspiracy. Come on, let's have a bit of honesty. At the risk of inviting you to speak again, bit of honesty. (Uproar)

THE MAYOR: Thank you ...

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: I apologise entirely.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan, can you please sit down. Councillor Selby, Councillor Finnigan cannot speak again, he has spoken once on this subject and you have made your comments and we will move on now please, thank you. Councillor Fox - sorry, Bernard did you want to, yes, sorry Bernard. Councillor Atha wants to speak.

CLLR ATHA: I just want to say one or two things. I treat this as a defamation by innuendo, to ask about an assurance. Let me put it to you, Councillor Proctor, I ask you an assurance that you weren't out with a young lady who is not your wife last week and you would say, "Of course I wasn't", but implied ...(Laughter) ...so far as I know, so far as I know, you weren't. If I were to say to Peter Harrand, if I were to say to Peter Harrand, can you give an assurance that you aren't, for instance, downloading pornography from a Council computer, you would say, "No, sadly not", but the implication is there. Now the implication here is that there has - just be a quiet a moment you lot, they are a well mannered lot, you're not. (Interruption)

What you are saying by implication is that there is some dirty dealing. If there is dirty dealing then it's in all our interests, all our interests to have it exposed, and if in fact there has been a back hander, if in fact there's been corruption, whether it be of an Officer or of a Member, it should be exposed, and if you've got some reason and some knowledge of that then you should tell us, then if you do that we shall at least have the respect for an individual who is prepared to get up and smear others in a general way, because, by God, I won't be smeared by a character like you, and I know other colleagues here would refuse to be the same, and I would not wish to smear some people over there because I know their integrity too. That is not the way to behave in this Chamber and you demean yourself, even though in your case that might be difficult. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Fox to sum up.

CLLR FOX: Thank you Lord Mayor. My Lord Mayor, I think it true to say that it's at least four Council meetings, if not longer, before we've actually ever reached the Minutes of Plans East, and I'm sure it's been well worth waiting for. (Laughter) That is due to some quirk of the system whereby we always seem to be some way towards the end of the agenda and we ran out of time. I would just comment that as a general principle planning applications are determined in accordance with the provisions of the Unitary Development Plan which establishes the principle of what type of development may take place around this city, and of course much if not all the applications which this company has been involved with have been in accordance with the UDP. On this occasion this particular site happens to be an unallocated site, that is to say the UDP has actually spelled out in no detail as to how it can be utilised, although it has to be said that this site is immediately adjacent to other industrial sites of, for similar usage.

I don't think, my Lord Mayor, propose to go into the details of what has been suggested. All I would say is that as far as I am aware the Plans East Panel made a decision in this case on the merits of the case and took into account no other considerations and that's as it should be. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Harris, you have the right to exercise the right of final reply.

CLLR HARRIS: Lord Mayor, we have touched on many issues in the last hour and a bit, some more entertaining than others. It is always dangerous to attempt to read another Councillor's

mind or to speak for them but I am reasonably confident that Councillor Finnigan was not alleging anything, he was merely bringing an issue into the public domain which is akin to other similar issues which are in the public domain at the moment, though with regard to contributions to political parties I think it is a reasonable thing to discuss.

What does stick in my claw however is Bernard Atha getting up with his holier than though, as if ...

CLLR ATHA: Because I am, I deserve it. (Laughter)

CLLR HARRIS: That's it, little Saint Bernard. (Laughter) A saint in our lifetimes. Well Bernard (Inaudible). I will produce verbatim Minutes of something you said to me at Council then try and, in the future, remember some of the outrageous assertions you make against other people in this Chamber before you start attacking others.

Now, of course, what we have been talking about, what we have been talking about just now are innuendos, possible assertions, grey areas, what I want to talk about are some facts, and these are akin to the issues that were raised by my colleagues, Alan Taylor and David Hollingsworth, you may recall at the last Council meeting, when you were talking about the way in which the confidence in this city is eroded by the irresponsible behaviour of the opposition and we did in fact refer to leaflets. Keith Wakefield, and it's on the verbatim, shouted out, "Produce the leaflet, produce the leaflet, show us them", and we have had reference today to one of those leaflets, and we are going to deal with some of the facts in those leaflets which have been raised today.

The EASEL Project. This is what the Gipton and Harehills Labour said this is about, it is not an assertion, it's a fact. It says, "Labour put together the East Leeds and South East Leeds Regeneration Plan, one of the biggest regeneration projects in Europe. Money from land sales must be used to provide new houses for Gipton people. Now the Civic Hall bosses are planning to keep most of the money". Well, Less Carter was very generous when he commented on this. That is a lie, that is an outrageous blatant lie, and it will, if these things continue, will undermine the confidence that major investors have in this city.

Sports Centres, Alan Taylor talks about the politicisation of the way in which we deal with sports centres. Here it is on this Labour leaflet, "Fearnville Sports Centre to close". It says, "The Council are hoping to transfer green land adjacent to Wykebeck Valley Road, York Road, to a private developer to build a sports centre for commuters". That is a lie, it is an absolute lie.

It goes on, "The Labour Government has given the Council £30 million for sports centres, it should be used to upgrade Fearnville Sports Centre not to build a private sports centre on valuable green land". Those are lies. Nobody is building private sports centres and the money has not been given for the upgrading of existing sports centres. Those are lies.

Now the group opposite have got into the habit now of peddling half truth, innuendo and lies, these are lies. We can't stop people printing lies, these are lies, we can't stop that, nor can we stop people reading those lies. It may be that some people believe those lies, I regret that. You may think it is politically astute, it is actually base, pathetic, it may in due course cost us electorally politically if certain people continue to peddle such lies, but it will not stop us at every opportunity of pointing out exactly what those are, lies. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Can I call for the vote on the receipt of the Minutes. All in favour. Any against. Any abstentions. (CARRIED)

10 WHITE PAPER MOTION - PROPOSED MERGER OF POLICE SERVICES

Move on to Item 10, White Paper Motion. Councillor Andrew Carter.

CLLR A CARTER: Thank you my Lord Mayor. You may wonder, some of you, you may wish some of you, that in the light of Government announcements this White Paper should be withdrawn. Well it's not going to be withdrawn. I have to say it was underlined to me why it shouldn't be withdrawn when I saw Councillor Lewis's amendment. Richard, your amendment is simply untrue. Now you might not want to accept that but we will point out to you very shortly why it is untrue.

Quite simply the heat has got far too much for the Government on the controversial proposals that they were going to force the rest of us into accepting. They already had a couple of Police mergers well on the road to being fulfilled, and they were going to force the West Yorkshire area to join not just with North Yorkshire, but with Humberside, with South Yorkshire as well, making some super Police Force.

It was pointed out to them how much this would cost, not just the one in our area but the ones across the country. The Association of Chief Police Officers, they estimated, they estimated, it would cost £800 million, the equivalent of 40,000 probationary Police Officers, and you know whilst we are great supporters on this side of PCSO's, we still need to recruit full time Police Officers with all the powers that those Police Officers have, and that regrettably in some cases, because I think that some more powers could be devolved to PCSO's that PCSO's don't have.

On this side, ourselves, the Liberal Democrats and the Greens, we have all criticised the Government proposals from the outset. First of all the Government delayed their proposals. Surprise, surprise, everything in the Home Office appears to be upside down.

My Lord Mayor, we hear only today that they are now looking at building more prisons. Now, some of us have no argument with building new prisons, but what I was extremely disappointed to see - yes, absolutely, they actually, in The Times today, Garforth. This lot campaigned at the local elections telling the people of Garforth, oh how they had been saved from this prison by Colin Burgan and by the so called Chairman of the Garforth Residents Association, Labour Party member and candidate, one Mr Dobson.

Let me tell you, let me tell you - eh, your Government, they don't care who they do it on, whether it's you lot, us lot, the residents of Garforth, I am telling you your Government has put Garforth Prison back on the agenda. You can't trust a word your Government says about anything, in any department, any Minister, anywhere, and that's why Garforth Prison is back on the agenda unless we can talk them out of it. That is why they misled the House of Commons, the whole country on failed asylum seekers, not once, but twice, and now the figures have gone up yet again, and that's why you cannot believe a word they say about Police Force mergers.

Now Richard, when you get up tell us whether Tony Blair, your Prime Minister, was telling the truth when he said on the 12th of July, "Police mergers are not off the agenda", direct quote. When Tony McNulty, the failed Transport Minister who helped scupper Supertram, got moved from the Department over asylum seekers, he now appears to be involved with merging Police Forces - that really does frighten you - says, "Mergers may come back on the agenda. I reserve that right". 14th of July, it's only last week, and here we have Richard congratulating the seven dwarfs in advance of the next General Election on achieving damn all again. You know, let's face it, we all

know that when you congratulate your Members of Parliament you know how deep in trouble you are.

The worst part about the Police merger proposals is that it was never in your manifesto. You never campaigned eighteen months ago, up to the last General Election, on the basis that you would merge these Police Forces. They should be scrapped and the word used should be scrapped, and it's not been. If they aren't to be scrapped there should be an undertaking that there will be a referendum and ask the people, who were never consulted in a General Election, or I will tell you what, even better, at the next General Election you campaign on these Police mergers and we'll campaign against them. You are destroying localism in policing just at a time when we are beginning to see more localism in the West Yorkshire Police Force, and an acceptance, an acceptance in West Yorkshire, and others, that the Police have to be more in touch and more in tune with the wishes of the people and deal with those crimes that are really, really bothering most of the people who live in this city, and your Government is intent, Richard, intent on bringing this back and driving through a reorganisation that is costly, wasteful, cost Police time as well, and not help with what I hope we all agree is the right agenda and that is more localism in policing. I move the White Paper. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Harris to second.

CLLR HARRIS: Second and reserve the right to speak Lord Mayor.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Lewis.

CLLR R LEWIS: Thank you Lord Mayor. You know, it's not a sin to change your mind is it, I think that should perhaps be our theme for today. We have got a new Home Secretary who has actually done the sensible thing, we have all jointly said, "Do this", and what we are doing, we are giving him a hard time. Well that's politics isn't it, that's not desperate.

Are these proposals back, are these proposals likely to come back on anybody's agenda? Tony McNulty is doing what all politicians do, he is just saying, hey, come on, don't push us right to the point where we say that we totally failed, he is saying, come on - Andrew, Andrew, you don't really think, I am sure you don't think that there is any chance that they could come back with a set of proposals, in terms of timetabling, in terms of the need for primary legislation, it just ain't going to happen.

But there is a very serious point, which I will come back to in a moment, but you did throw in a few kind of little jokey bits. Now I have read the report in The Times, it doesn't say anything about Garforth Prison, doesn't say anything about a prison at Garforth, it says, "Land available near Leeds". (Uproar) Hey, now, if you're ...(Uproar).

Andrew, Andrew, just think this through, Garforth is near Leeds, but there a lot of other places near Leeds. I don't know, but you are jumping to an equivocal conclusion that it has to be the Garforth site, which anybody in their right mind would see is not a good site for a prison, and I come back to you, do you really think that using the site that was identified previously is a good site for a prison, we certainly don't.

You know, let's, you had a good little go at our seven MP's, let's be honest, Paul Truswell in particular has done a brilliant job, he has done a brilliant job in Parliament about this issue. Now you can have a little giggle, he has been absolutely sound on this issue, time and time again he has raised it, well before the debate was getting going, and yes you can have a little grin, but Paul Truswell I

have to say has done a great job, and if it weren't for Paul Truswell I think certainly the West Yorkshire case would never have been made anything like as well as it has been.

You also touched on the whole issue of localism. Well one of the whole reasons behind the merger, the proposals for merger was to make sure that we had neighbourhood policing teams across the country, because while in West Yorkshire we have been pretty good at neighbourhood policing teams, there is plenty of other places that ain't been as quick, and so there is a good, there were real reasons for actually putting forward proposals for mergers. That is not to say that I agree with those proposals, but there was certainly a case to answer that the Government has come up with.

Just bear with us while I struggle to find my other bit of paper which is getting lost here. We have a - Andrew, there is no need to be rude.

There is, if we look at the whole issue of Police mergers, it was never some kind of neat and tidy thing of saying, right, you know, there is no case here whatsoever for any Police mergers. There have been plenty of small Police Forces which are not effective, there are plenty of medium size Police Forces which don't do a very good job. There happens to be within Yorkshire, we have four Police Forces, not all of which perform as well as the West Yorkshire Force does by any manner of means, so there are always good arguments for saying, you know, that there should be mergers, that there should be consideration of changing the way Policing is delivered in the country, and one of the big questions for that was clearly about terrorism, and, you know, while we might kind of say it's not an important, it is an increasing issue for Police Forces in this country that they have to deal with, more and more Police time, more and more Police resources put into dealing with terrorism and the threat of terrorism, and you can't kind of just say, that's not the case, so there is a very good argument for even within Yorkshire of having a strategic approach to issues of dealing with cross border crime, terrorism issues, that you can't just look at in terms of a West Yorkshire Force.

Now my view is that merger was never the way of doing that, that is the view of our group, that the way of dealing with that was to look at having kind of strategic alliances, having management arrangements whereby you would have, you know, much like the old Regional Crime Squads, you would deal with issues cross border but you wouldn't merge forces because our concern has always been, as we have all expressed before, it is about the governance issues, which remain a huge concern to us, and it's about the funding.

Now take away those issues, there are reasons for going towards merger, and I am not just saying that there is a watertight case, but what I am saying is that there was certainly good reasons for the Government coming up with the idea of merging forces, and we can't just look at this from the point of view of us in West Yorkshire, we have to look at it from the point of view of the country as a whole.

So, certainly we on this side have been quite clear about how we felt, but if you look even within the West Yorkshire Police Authority, there was not some clear cut argument from day one that we should oppose merger per se - I am not pointing at you Les, I am pointing generally - I am saying that in terms of the independence, in terms of the Magistrates, it wasn't that clear cut, and it was only fairly recently that we had a meeting that came to the conclusion that everybody was on side to say that we opposed the merger.

Now we are in a position where the Government has quite rightly changed its mind. I wish that your Government had changed its mind a few times, I really do, I really wish that perhaps when all the evidence was piling up about Poll Tax your Government - Poll Tax - yes, they've just changed

their mind haven't they about British Rail, oh perhaps we shouldn't have split it in the way we split it, it's about twenty years too late they have decided that. (Uproar)

Let's have a look at (inaudible) regulations, as my colleague Jim said, you know, twenty years later, I wish that you had changed your mind. You lot have never in Government been prepared to change your mind, but you are prepared to slag off our Minister, our Minister who has done the right thing, has said in terms of the information provided to us we are doing the right thing here, we are going to stop, we are going to stop progress on our moves towards merger, we are not going to merge the forces, we are listening to what local people have said, we are doing the right thing, they are accepting the arguments that have been put forward, it is - and I am not sure where Andrew got his figures from about this kind of, you know, savings and costs, because the figures that come to us as Police Authority members say something very different.

There are, however, big concerns about the costs to ratepayers, I should say Council Tax payers in areas, in terms of getting from the point where they pay what we currently pay in West Yorkshire to what we would be paying if we were part of a Yorkshire force, and the costs of equalising out, which the Government realised they couldn't achieve without primary legislation. But that is not the same as looking at the issue of costs in terms of what the savings are, if you do amalgamate forces, and we have to be honest, we should, all of use who are involved in the Police Authority, we should all realise that it's not some kind of simple issue where there is a yeah or nay. There are good arguments, we have to, we have got a window of opportunity here to say how we in West Yorkshire want to see strategic working across the whole of Yorkshire, with other forces, both to improve them and to make sure that we can provide a good service, an effective service in terms of those things that matter cross border, the terrorism issues, the protective service issues and the cross border crime. Those have got to be issues that we have to address, we can't sit pretty in West Yorkshire and say, "Well everything is wonderful", it isn't, it's not perfect, our force isn't perfect, it has done a huge amount to improve the performance that it gives over the past few years, but it is under pressure. We have to not kind of live in some world where we say, yes, everything is fine. There were good arguments for what the Government was proposing, there are very good arguments for the Government dropping its proposals, I am very pleased that they have dropped their proposals. Andrew, if you think that the Government is in a position now to turn round and say that it is forcing through proposals, it won't, it will now struggle I think very much to even(interruption) (Uproar)

Oh don't worry. Andrew, don't worry about what Tony Blair says, we will not see, we will not see any mergers forced through on forces that don't want it within the lifetime of this Parliament, anybody can see this, anybody can see this. (Uproar)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Raffique.

CLLR RAFFIQUE: Thank you Lord Mayor. In seconding the amendment in the name of Councillor Lewis I would like to add that the present structure of the Police Force was established about thirty years ago. The present structure includes 43 separate Police Forces across England and Wales, 19 of these forces have less than 2,000 Officers, we have over 5,000 in West Yorkshire. Modern times, we are all agreed that modern times bring profound challenges for the Police on many different fronts. They include, as Councillor Lewis has mentioned, they include international terrorism and cross border crime, including people trafficking, drugs, money laundering, ID fraud are all too complex to be dealt with by the small existing forces. Most people would agree that all Police Forces must have the capability to deal with terrorism, cross border and organised crime if we are to keep the public safe and give them the service they expect and demand.

In the case of the smaller forces, such as the Humberside Police Authority, it is envisaged that they don't have sufficient expertise to deal with high profile cases such as the Soham murders, or in fact the media attention which such cases inevitably bring. We know from our own authority in West Yorkshire that larger forces are able to handle these challenges more easily.

It is my view that there is an argument for the merger of North Yorkshire, South Yorkshire and Humberside units, but given the size, potential(?) cost, the difference in geography and population mix across the four areas we all agree that West Yorkshire Police Authority was absolutely right in objecting vigorously to the proposals.

I think we should have been given more time for consultation to respond to proposals. However, I do believe that due to the hard work of MP's, in Leeds and across West Yorkshire, throughout West Yorkshire, to persuade the Government not to proceed with the unpopular proposals, we are standing here today discussing this. Talking about scrapping, you just today at this Council Meeting scrapped a very unpopular proposal which would have hit the most disadvantaged and deprived children in our city. You have listened to this opposition under pressure, the Government has once again listened to the people, the local people throughout the country, and quite rightly, we have got to commend the Government for listening to local people. Thank you very much. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Carter, J L Carter.

CLLR J CARTER: My Lord Mayor, I am not certain there was an argument for a merger. I think you are a bit confused in what he was saying. Poor Richard, I am a great admirer of Richard, but by God he should work on the roads, you have been digging that deep, I have never seen anybody dig as deep as you have been digging while you made that speech today.

As anyone heard of the Police and Justice Bill?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Yes.

CLLR J CARTER: Right, you know it's gone through the House of Lords, and do you know there was an amendment put in there by the House of Lords. What the amendment did, it will stop all mergers of Police Authorities without the consent of Police Authorities. So you couldn't have any mergers without consent.

Now then, what has Her Majesty's Government done, they have made it very clear that when the Bill returns to the House of Commons they will reverse this amendment.

CLLR J PROCTOR: Why?

CLLR J CARTER: And to reverse this they will be calling on the seven Leeds MP's to vote to reverse it. So these great saviours of ours, the great saviours, have actually, are actually going to be voting in favour of removing the very thing they are arguing about.

The real reason why these mergers have stopped, I will tell you why. When Lancashire and Cumbria, who both volunteered to go together, when they looked at this and they had a thing called equalisation of precept(?), and they looked at this and they suddenly realised that, can we go above the 5% capping? The Treasury said, no, so the next question was, well can we have some extra money if we don't do that, and the Treasury again said, no. So they couldn't go over the capping limits and they couldn't have any extra money.

Let me tell you how that would affect Leeds, and West Yorkshire in particular. In the case of West Yorkshire, Leeds precept would have to increase, for no improved service whatsoever, for exactly the same service, by 16%. 16% over a four year period, 16% over a three year period. Now then, our colleagues in North Yorkshire, our Conservative colleagues who voted in favour of this, they know a good deal do the Tories. (Laughter) The people of North Yorkshire, their precept is going down by 30%. You would have voted in favour, or asked to vote in favour. Humberside wouldn't change a lot, neither would South Yorkshire.

Now if we were in this situation, that we had a capping limitation, no more funding from the Government, had to maintain this 16%, the result would be in three or four years time, we would be short by £35 million. £35 million. That's what has been estimated by the Treasury people in the Police Authority, £35 million.

Now what does that mean, I will tell you what it means. It means across Yorkshire there will be something like 1,200 uniformed Police less. Indeed in West Yorkshire it is the equivalent of 527 uniformed Police less, and what hurts me most is 190 uniformed Police in Leeds less, and I am not prepared to have this.

Now, if it is true, and I don't believe it is true that it has gone away, I believe that mergers, it will be off the table but it is just to the side of the table to grab again. I am going to challenge our seven Labour MP's, and also our student prince as well, because he's got a vote, but our seven Labour MP's that when this comes back, when the Police and Justice Bill comes back to the House of Commons, that they vote against any change to the amendment, and I will tell you this, we will be watching their vote, we will watch how they do it and we will record how they do it, and I can show you people over there, you want to talk to them, because the people of Leeds will know exactly if they do not vote against this which will allow the, Mr McNulty and Co, to bring in mergers without consent. Thank you my Lord Mayor. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Shelbrooke.

CLLR SHEL BROOKE: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I would like to make two comments, my Lord Mayor. First of all I wouldn't hold up too much hope, Les, about our MP's doing a good job for us. As it's come out in the Evening Post tonight about the Garforth Prison being back on the agenda, there is a quote from our MP, and I will read what it says. It says, "Mr Burgan said today, 'For the past 20 months I have been patiently lobbying and making the case against Garforth as the possible site. This has obviously pushed us back into the frame'". Brilliant. All that work ...(Laughter) ...all that work and he's pushed us back in the frame. (Laughter) So I don't think there is too much chance of the MP's helping us then.

But let's look at the important issue here about resources, Police resources and how quite frankly resources are constantly being moved away from the job of Policing, and resources, I am not just talking about money, I am talking about time and effort and everything, what the Council's resourcing.

Basically, we all heard Les say Cumbria and Lancashire pulled out of this because they saw a lacking of resources coming down. Do you know, my Lord Mayor, that a 2001 Home Office commissioned survey found that Police Officers spend only 17% of their time on patrol. The same Home Office study found that 1% of Police time is spent on proactively reducing crime, and the report also showed that 40,000 Officer hours were wasted in one year alone filling out a complex stolen vehicle form. Is it any wonder that crime levels in this country appear to, on the face, be

going up in certain areas because the Police are not out there proactively doing things, and the problem comes, if we are merging the Police Forces and we are merging areas like that, other resources are being pushed away again from front line Policing.

Now I have had some recent experience of areas where uniformed Police Officers are not having the time to do proactive Policing. Now I reported an attempted burglary at a house near me a couple of weeks ago and the Police turned up within an hour, the residents were on holiday, and the Officers were very pleasant, they dealt with the situation, it was wrapped up in a few hours, and off they went.

So I was very surprised when six days later I received a telephone call from the Sergeant of that relief at Killingbeck Police Station doing a telephone survey on how the Police were turned out, were they polite to me, did they seem efficient and did they do the sort of work I was expecting. Now I have no issue with those sorts of questions being asked, but is that the job of a Sergeant in uniform, someone who thousands of pounds has been spent training this Officer to protect us on the street and they are stuck behind a desk asking questions like that. Public service should be held accountable, but surveys like that aren't the job of the actual Police Officer, they should be pushed back, and the Government has not dropped these plans, they have merely pushed them aside, and if we don't keep an eye on this we are going to see the problems of community Police reduced. We have seen the proactive difference that community Policing can make in this village, that is why this administration has put three PCSO's in every Ward, and is trying to put more into each Ward because we recognise the importance of that community policing.

Another little fact, Police Stations have to undergo regular audit, and in 2004 one force reported 37 inspections, audits or checks in one twelve month period. Is that proactive policing, is that the sort of policing we expect from our Police Officers, no it isn't, and quite frankly merging the Police Forces, all that does is just take away resources from getting the Police from behind their desks, out on the street and doing the job which we respect them for and which we all expect from them. Thank you my Lord Mayor. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Blackburn. David. Councillor Brett.

CLLR BRETT: Thank you Lord Mayor. A few brief remarks, I am very pleased that we actually have a piece of paper now where Councillor Lewis is congratulating Greg Mulholland, and very pleased that your amendment stresses all MP's in Leeds, so we will note that.

I do actually agree with you about protective services, because it has always been my instinct in this matter that merger was the wrong solution, but there very much is a problem that the Home Office were right to address, and that what we need to be encouraging now, and encouraging very rapidly, is co-operation between different areas in order to make sure that protective service issues are properly addressed.

No one so far in the debate has mentioned what I consider in some ways to be the most important issue about merger. Even if we don't have mergers we still, with West Yorkshire Police, have accountability issues. Wakefield still seems remote to many people, and for me that's an important argument as to why mergers is wrong. The governance issues, the precept issues have been well rehearsed, and I won't add any more on that front. Thank you.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Harris, do you want to speak?

CLLR HARRIS: Lord Mayor, we heard from Councillor Lewis and Raffique actually an apology for merger. Les Carter was right to make the point that it was hard to be clear as to whether they were speaking for merger or against, and one is somewhat drawn to the conclusion, I might be being over suspicious on my part, I mean I am not a naturally suspicious person, but you may be drawn to the conclusion that by both of them devoting a significant part of their speeches to the same form of apology that they are actually leaving a door open locally to be able at a later stage to recover the situation if indeed mergers have not been scrapped. We have to, when trying to assess whether they have been scrapped or merely deferred, we really do have to look at what the general direction of travel is with this Government, and it doesn't matter where you look, the direction of travel is to regionalisation.

Everything is regionalisation, the Strategic Health Authority, we will debate later today, all things being equal, the regionalisation of delivery of the New Deal Jobs service, that has been regionalised. This was an attempt at regionalisation, everything they are doing with local government is pushing it towards regionalisation, so it is reasonable to suppose that that is the direction of travel and why should the Police be the exception.

Are we really to believe that this has been scrapped. Andrew Carter points to several issues, Garforth Prison being one of them, that where we are told one thing and then there is a reversal. Let me remind everybody about the most recent one that we have grappled with as an authority, and that is casinos. Before the last election casinos were dead in the water, that was the fact, it was impossible to get that proposal through Parliament. What is the situation we have got now, well it's very much alive and kicking again. So there is clearly a record of changing one's mind, and that is why it is reasonable for us to put this White Paper in the way in which it is moved in Andrew's name.

There were, however, two other points which Richard Lewis raised which I would like to comment on. The first was his explanation, notwithstanding what is in the Evening Post, his explanation about what The Times article meant, but the logic of his argument should be that there ought to be there lying in the papers, or a leaflet that says, "All outer areas of Leeds under threat of the potential of a prison being built there", that is the logic of your argument. There is now no part of the outer ring of this city which is safe from that possibility, because if it is not Garforth, you are saying it must be somewhere else in Leeds.

Well that is a very interesting campaigning issue, but the one that really stood out to me was your comment that merger was an aid to localism and local policing. That actually is the logic of the madhouse, to say that by making an organisation bigger and taking its point of control further away from localities is actually strengthening locality Policing is frankly absurd and it's an argument, when put, that completely undermines any credibility in the proposal in the first place. I am quite clear in my own mind this is a deferral, sooner or later it will come back and we will have to argue again. We will be consistent on this side, we will oppose it when or if it comes back. It will be interesting to hear what you do. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Carter to sum up.

CLLR A CARTER: Thank you my Lord Mayor. This is a very serious issue, because we do have major issues of security, we do have major threats from terrorism, and we would have had those I think in this changing world whatever other circumstances might have been. But I have to remind the party opposite their Prime Minister seems to me to have printed the word 'target' from Lands End to John O' Groats, and some of the activities of the Government under his direction has certainly made, in most people's view, matters much worse, and indeed far more well informed people than I have made that very point.

On the issue of prisons, Mark is right and we should pursue Richard a bit on this because Richard seems to imply very clearly that to him, you know, somewhere in Leeds, as long as it's not Garforth, will be all right. Well let's be getting this straight. We already have Armley, Wealdstone, major Young Offenders Unit at Wetherby, and Eastmoor. Leeds is playing its part in the fight against crime and providing custodial sites. So no one is arguing about that, but what we are saying is that we, all of us said, Garforth was not the right place, indeed Leeds is playing, has played and will continue to play its part, but no more. Plenty of other places to look.

It is quite clear that this Government have strung the MP's along, not for the first time. You know the thing about our MP's having this influence with the Government, I think that Tony Blair's influence on George Bush must be akin to Paul Truswell's influence on the Government. (Laughter) I mean you can see Tony can't you, "Yo Paul". (Laughter)

CLLR J PROCTOR: He wouldn't even know his name.

CLLR A CARTER: Well actually, "Who the hell's he?". But anyway, let's just get clear about what these MP's do because they have a very clever tactic on rebelling. First vote, first reading of the Bill, some of them vote against, some of them abstain. Government get a shock, make some irrelevant concessions. Second reading comes along, headline, Government going to lose. What happens, the ones who voted against abstain and the other ones vanish, they aren't even in the Chamber. Result, we rebelled, say they, Government gets Bill, they are happy, and we have been conned again. We have seven MP's who act like a bunch of conmen in the House of Commons, they do one thing, say another and say something different when they get back here.

Now Richard, now Richard, now Richard, you didn't answer the question did you? Let's repeat it, Police mergers are not off the agenda. 12th of July, Prime Minister's Questions, was your Prime Minister telling the truth or not, because if he wasn't telling the truth you should say so. If he was then your amendment cannot be right, your amendment cannot be true, it's as simple as that. There is no other way of getting out of it.

Now what we are arguing for here is accountable, local Police Forces. Yes we recognise there are major national issues, and they are a myriad of ways of dealing with those. Some are co-operation, some are looking at national forces, but that still doesn't take away a local Police Force for local policing issues, and your Government had one solution and tried to bulldoze it through, and it would have resulted in a 16% increase for the people of this City on the Police precept, and 190 less Police. That by anybody's standards is a bad deal, and you should be prepared, instead of using these weasel words, and that's what they are, these weasel words, you should have got up and said, supported what we are saying because you know, you know we are right. You cannot trust your Government, any of your Ministers in any department to say anything and mean it. Everything has another intention and another meaning, and it's about time you woke up to it.

The people of this City have a right to expect a major political party to put in its manifesto far reaching suggestions like this. You did not. You deliberately misled the people of this country, not you personally, but I would suggest to you that by going along with the deception you are accomplices. You are going along with the deception and you know it is a deception, and it would be bad for this City, bad for the people you represent and bad for policing. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Okay, can everybody return to their seats please. Members of Council, for all those in favour of the amendment of Councillor Richard Lewis, can you press the button plus. Oh is it a show of hands, I thought Councillor Harris wanted a recorded vote, sorry. Yes?

Okay, now there is a confusion whether it is a recorded vote because I did hear Councillor Harris say that, that's why everybody is in their allocated seats. Press the button plus, P first, P button, okay, and those in favour of amendment in the name of Councillor Lewis, Councillor Lewis, press the plus button. Those against minus, and those abstaining press the zero button is it, I've forgotten now. Okay.

Okay, 93 Members present, 35 Members yes in favour of Councillor Richard Lewis, the amendment, zero abstentions and 58 against. Therefore that amendment is lost. (LOST)

Now again, those, if you press the P again, and those in favour of the Motion in the name of Councillor Carter press the plus button. Those against press the minus, and those abstaining press the zero.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Can Councillor Dunn ...

THE MAYOR: Councillor Dunn, is the button pressed, is it not working or something? Councillor Dunn.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: You are recorded as having voted against the ...?

THE MAYOR: Are you against Councillor, you are recorded as against.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Yes, okay, thank you.

THE MAYOR: Thank you. Okay, 93 present and 93 Members in favour, zero abstentions, zero against. That Motion is carried. (CARRIED)

So, Members of Council, we will adjourn for 30 minutes for tea break and can I also invite the members of public to join us please as well, thank you.

(Tea adjournment)

VARIATION OF ORDER OF BUSINESS

THE MAYOR: Please sit down. Okay, Members of Council, we will start the meeting again. Can I call upon Councillor Selby.

CLLR SELBY: Thank you Lord Mayor. I move under the provisions of Council Procedure Rule 3 - 2.3 that the order of business be varied to give precedence to Item 12.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Nash.

CLLR NASH: I second my Lord Mayor.

THE MAYOR: Thank you. Those in favour. Any against. Any abstentions. Thank you.
(Agreed)

12 WHITE PAPER MOTION - SERVICE PROVISION LEVELS AND CHARGES

Item 12, White Paper Motion, Councillor Harrison.

CLLR HARRISON: Lord Mayor, the Labour Group condemns the continuing cuts in services to some of the most vulnerable people in our City. In particular opposes the continual reduction in home and day care services, increased charges for older people using leisure facilities introduced by the ruling administration.

Once again I find myself standing up in Council voicing the concerns of the elderly of our City. Lord Mayor, for almost two years I have worked as the (inaudible) people's champion, a role that is sometimes very challenging, hard work but very rewarding, a role I have thoroughly enjoyed especially the week long celebration of older people where I learned to ballroom dance from a very sprightly 82 year old gentleman.

The older people of Leeds are a great asset and they give much to the community and are very much under valued, but we must never underestimate these people.

Lord Mayor, there comes a time when we really need to reconcile good words with what is really happening on the ground. Once again I am drawing attention to the horrendous cuts in home care services that has left some of the City's most vulnerable people struggling from day to day. Again I am highlighting the increased charges for the elderly for the use of leisure centres.

I am happy to provide a voice for these people and I wonder when the administration will actually start to listen. I will start by going through some of the leisure centre prices. Swimming with a Leeds Card 60 has gone up 10p. If you don't have a Leeds Card a swim will cost you £3, up 20p from last year. Bowls with a Leeds Card 60 has gone up 90p to £16.40, and without a Leeds Card a game of bowls now costs £21.80, up by £1.20 from last year. While we are encouraging older people to lead a more active life, charges have gone up by 20p without Leeds Card and 10p with one. How can we keep increasing these prices and not expect our older people to continue to use the leisure centres.

I will now move to home care. I know from the past when individual cases have been quoted in Council we have been accused of making them up. This time I am taking examples from the Yorkshire Evening Post, an independent source, dated 24th of June this year. Edith Allison(?), 80 year old, heart disease, diabetes, arthritis, deteriorating vision, cares for her 43 year old Downs Syndrome son, has had cleaning and ironing services stopped. Edna Sharpe, 94 year old whose hugely swollen ankles, walks with sticks, has cleaning services stopped. (inaudible), 82 years of age, shortage of breath, walking a few paces leaves him gasping for breath, has had shopping and cleaning services stopped. Sandra Proctor(?), 65 year old, has a disease which affects her nervous system, has had two hip replacements and is waiting for a knee replacement, also suffers from epilepsy. She says she was visited five times by Social Services Officers who tried to persuade her to sign a form saying that she no longer wanted home care shopping services. On one occasion she asked the Officer to leave four times. In the end she signed the form as she wanted the woman to stop visiting and putting her under pressure.

The current home care situation discussed frequently on the letters page of the YEP prompted Councillor Harrand, as Exec Board Member responsible for social services, to write in himself. Councillor Harrand called the allegations of running down social services as 'clap trap' and he said he would deal with the cases highlighted in another forum at another time. Well, Peter, is this the forum, is this the time, and if not, when? I know Peter is an honourable man, and I hope that he will listen to my concerns.

We are constantly being told that these services have not been cut. People are being signposted to alternatives, there exists a list of companies and organisations who provide cleaning,

shopping, ironing and gardening services, all at a cost of course. I decided to ask the voluntary sector how effective signposting is, and the answer I received surprised me, it seems a large number of service users are simply told to approach voluntary sector organisations and throw themselves upon their mercy. These organisations now feel that they are doing social services job. They are left to direct people with cleaning, ironing and gardening, signposting seems to be a way of passing the buck.

There is also concern that there is no requirement for organisations to be Police checked, Trading Standards checked and have public liability insurance. Some of the most vulnerable people in our City are letting anyone into their homes. Between a quarter and a fifth of the City's home care services are being re-let with smooth formal handover between companies to minimise the disruption of service users. This sounds fine but is not actually what is happening.

According to one elderly gentleman in Harehills this did not happen. The first time he knew of a change of provider was when the new team arrived at his house. This was disruptive enough for him but he was complaining that the new carers are arrogant, ignorant and rude, to use his own words, the sort of people he would not normally allow in his house.

What is going on with the provision of care for the elderly in this City? Each week there seems to be another horror story in the paper, another distraught pensioner on the phone, how much longer can the administration continue to deny the glaringly obvious, the home care cuts. They are cuts and are not working. When are they going to stop punishing the older people of Leeds and give them the services they deserve. I move the White Paper. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Blake.

CLLR BLAKE: I second Lord Mayor and reserve the right to speak.

THE MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor John Bale.

CLLR BALE: Thank you Lord Mayor. I am moving this amendment to correct some of the misleading information that has been published in recent weeks. There really should be no division in this Chamber on our support to vulnerable citizens.

We are talking about support to people, but the context inevitably is about money, so let me set that context. This administration is spending more than ever on social services, and increasing spending year on year. You have heard it before, you can't deny that it's true.

Central Government, your Government, is giving us less year by year. Since the Supporting People Budget was introduced in 2003 the amount of money we receive under that budget has been cut by £3 million. You like to talk about cuts, now that is a cut. Not a cut by us, it's a cut by this Government of which you would dearly love to be proud but will never bring yourselves to be proud I fear.

Let us be clear where the responsibility really lies. Let's be clear who is creating the stress under which our social services staff have to operate, and let's be clear how much this administration is doing to compensate for the Labour Government's neglect of vulnerable people. In the year 06/07 Central Government is giving us a 2.5% formula increase. We are increasing the social services budget by 8.5%. They are giving us 2.5, we are increasing by 8.5, that is £17.1 million more, and just round the corner is the next round of cuts recently announced by your Government under the

Welfare Reform Green Paper. £7 billion of cuts nationally, and again local authorities will have to pick up the pieces.

So what about the individual cases in the YEP? Well I am not going to name names and I am not going to use elderly people as political pawns, I don't believe anyone should do that. But I have looked, carefully, at some of the cases that are cited in this article, "Home Care Cuts Anger".

One lady was said to be having her home care services axed. She faced no cut of any kind. No cut, no reduction in support, no story other than a tall story. Other reviews did result in changes to care packages. Some service users agreed to those, others were concerned, some, in many cases as you would expect, professional Officers discussed these case with the service users and with relatives. One gentleman appealed against the result of the review and his appeal was upheld, his care package was restored, he wrote and thanked the staff for the careful way in which his case had been dealt with.

Surely no one can deny that a process of review is necessary. Recent reviews have revealed cases where circumstances have changed beyond recognition since a care package was introduced, and one of those care packages was introduced in 1969. In another case an elderly gentleman went to the shops with his home care assistant because he was concerned that the bag was too heavy for her to carry.

Now I am not making light of any of those cases, but I am suggesting that in a situation of constrained budgets and constrained Central Government funding, we have to look carefully, we have to assess, we have to reassess, if we really are to provide support to the people that need that support, and of course we could be more relaxed, more generous if this Government supported this City to the extent that we would all want. It isn't doing so. We should be prepared to put the blame where it truly lies. We should be proud of what we as a City, all of us, and our professional staff, are doing to support vulnerable people.

Lord Mayor, in conclusion I want to emphasise three points. Firstly to repeat those figures, Central Government is giving us 2.5% more, we are spending 8.5% more, not a cut by anyone's arithmetic. Assessment and reassessment are essential, surely we can agree with that, surely we agree that care has to be directed to where it is needed and that it is right to assess and reassess. It is not right, Members of Council, to pillory professional staff in the way that some of those press comments have done. It is pillorying professional staff, the people who go out and do those assessments are not Councillors, they are social services staff who care as deeply as all of us do, and they know the national context within which they are operating, and they are doing their best to provide the service that they know people need, and lastly, Lord Mayor, it is simply unacceptable to peddle untruths and half truths about social care to make political points.

In the factual context that I have outlined, those percentages, to talk about the thin end of the wedge, as Councillor Wakefield is quoted as doing in this article, is utterly irresponsible, it damages the confidence of vulnerable people, and that is something we mustn't do. All of us should know, all of us who have had elderly relatives, who have worked with elderly people know that confidence is very fragile at the best of times. The last thing we should be doing is talking about the thin end of the wedge. The last thing we should be doing is impugning the professionalism of social workers who are doing a hell of a difficult job and doing it well. We are selling those people short if we do that. The only wedge that I can see is the wedge that this Government has driven into our budget. Thank you Lord Mayor. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Harrand.

CLLR HARRAND: Second Lord Mayor and reserve the right to speak.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Millard.

CLLR MILLARD: Thank you Lord Mayor. I am speaking in support of the amended White Paper Motion, talking to it and the original Motion.

My Lord Mayor, all we hear from Labour is accusations of cuts, under funding and increased charges. Well can you believe anything that Labour says. In the previous debate we heard our Prime Minister being quoted by Councillor Andrew Carter. Well I think it was in 1995 or '96 when Anthony Blair, the Member of Parliament for Sedgefield, before he became Prime Minister, said, if I - and a paraphrase this - if I ever become Prime Minister we will pull out of Europe. So can you believe anything that he says.

Councillor Wakefield talked earlier about the school clothing allowance. In 2003/4, yes, the Working Families Tax Credit was replaced by the Working Tax Credit, and entitlement to this benefit was an automatic award to the school clothing allowance. Due to the anomaly in this it would have cost the Leeds taxpayer £3 million. So what did Labour do at that time, it cut it.

The benefit paid under that scheme was not increased at all by them, since 1992, now in my book, in real terms, that's a cut every single year, and what have we done this year, we have increased it dramatically. In fact how do we compare to other local authorities. It is no good shaking your head Councillor Graham, because compared to other local authorities, Labour controlled Manchester gives less as of today then we do. Labour controlled Sheffield does not operate any such scheme at all, and Labour controlled Wakefield has just ended their scheme, they have just stopped it. That's it.

Now compare that to what we have heard this administration has done today, and to what Labour did when it was in power here. Labour cut the sixth form maintenance grant, they cut it, worth some £430,000 a year they thought in their budget, it was actually costing them £540,000. What about the Education Discretionary Award Scheme, a scheme awarding grants to students entering education where no other source of funding was available, worth £3 million a year. What did you do, you cut it, but then it's not just in education, my Lord Mayor, that Labour makes cuts.

If Councillor Harrison wants to talk about increased charges for leisure facilities as in her White Paper Motion, then let's talk about them. Which former administration of this Council charged parking, and introduced such charges, for parking at Loverton Hall. Any idea Councillor Harrison, it was Labour. Which former administration running this Council introduced charges for entrance to Home Farm at Temple Newsam? You won't believe it, it was Labour. Which former administration running this Council introduced charges for entrance to Tropical World, any idea? It was Labour, and it's not just in leisure either. What about housing. Which former administration introduced service charges for tenants in multi storey blocks costing residents an extra, wait for it, £1.2 million a year. It was Labour. The list goes on.

I look forward to hearing Councillor Harrison's summing up and to hear her replying on each of these specific points, particularly the leisure ones, which I have raised, and how she squares that with her White Paper.

Councillor Bale is absolutely right when he says the current Labour Government, like the former Labour administration in this Council, has and continues to make cuts and provide inadequate settlements. I support the amendment Lord Mayor. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Harris.

CLLR HARRIS: Lord Mayor, we, Councillor Bale has dealt with what we have done this year. I have been just talking about money, I want to just again reiterate what we found and what we have done in two and a bit years.

We found your budget, it was your Labour administration budget, £18 million in deficit, and widening by £1 million a month. That was your budget, that you had voted on and you accept that is what we inherited, and had we, had we stuck to your budget then we would have had to have cut £18 million out of what was eventually spent on social services. In our first year we did not. We funded the deficit, the biggest deficit ever funded by any administration in any year of records available in this authority. In the two and a bit years we have been in control we have roughly increased, in real terms, spending on social services budget in the region of 25% now. That is a real increase in spending, approaching £45 million, directly into services. The assertion, the constant sniping assertion that we are penny pinching, that we are money grabbing, that we are cutting services, is a complete distortion of reality.

You, in control, had to deal with eligibility criteria, we have had them mentioned twice already. You changed the eligibility criteria for the school clothing allowance. Every administration, every year, is dealing with issues of eligibility criteria. That is all we have done, we have looked at eligibility criteria. Yes, some people have received fewer services, it is not a cut in service, they are deemed to require fewer services. Other people have received immensely increased services because they required it, they needed the extra support which was not available under your criteria.

But as we have said so many times in this Chamber, the meanest, cruelest thing to do to a person in need is to hold out the promise of help and then not give it, and we are fond of anecdotes, we are fond of case stories, here we are, 77 year old person, terminally ill, assessed in January 2004, no services available to support them. Re-assessed in April 2004, lots of services available to support them, and why was that, that was because everybody knows that under your regime, from January to March, year in, year out, budgets were constrained because there was no way you could fund what you said you were offering. So for 25% of the time people in need were not being looked after because you had no hope of funding it. Right or wrong, in our opinion right, we have at least evened that out, everybody gets something all the year round according to a fair principle of eligibility criteria.

Finally, and we have had this discussion so many times, something has been introduced by Councillor Harrison which is nothing to do with this issue. We do not choose to let contracts to new providers, we are bound by your Government's legislation to go through re-tendering, best value, and that is why contracts are constantly turning over, that has got nothing to do with cuts, it has got nothing to do with eligibility criteria, it is the system of tendering and giving business that we are bound legally to adhere to because your Government insists upon it. It is they that constantly push us into a financial corner, that push every social services department in this country into a corner, it is not a cut, it is appalling behaviour. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Hussain.

CLLR HUSSAIN: I always think it's a sad day when debates mainly focus on whether there have been cuts or not. As all of us are aware, even if the Labour Group try to ignore it, there has been massive increases in the social services budget over the last two years. Some of that funding has enabled new and innovative schemes to go ahead at a more local level, at a level where they can directly improve the quality of the people's lives.

I can give you some examples in my Ward. The (inaudible) Woodhouse Scheme such as appointing a new community advice worker at one of my community centres and the joint initiative with the health sector to provide the new Woodhouse Enhanced Primary Care Centre on Cambridge Road(?) are just a couple of examples of how social services has improved the lives of ordinary people in my Ward.

The advice worker provides a range of services including advice on benefits, housing, energy efficiency, particularly valuable at this time of increasing energy costs, and of course social services support, particularly valuable at this time of increasing energy costs as well as assisting people in filling forms. It may be a small scale but it is greatly appreciated by many of the residents in my Ward and it makes a real difference to the individuals the worker comes into contact with.

Let us focus on some of the other examples across the other Wards, for example City Services can appoint new initiatives such as new home for disabled children in Armley. This was a mere £1.1 million investment in the Armley Ward. Acorn Lodge(?) upgrade and replaces previous children's home which was unsuitable with a high level of modern care for children with learning and physical disability needs. The new facility at Acorn Lodge are designed to stimulate and engage the children, a great step forward which I am sure is welcomed by Members, particularly those in Armley where Acorn Lodge is located.

This administration is committed to actually investing more in social services and for those people who need it most. So let us stop this mantra Labour have of cuts, cuts and cuts, and open our eyes to the good things which social services is doing and congratulate the department on moving forward. Thank you my Lord Mayor. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Blake.

CLLR BLAKE: Lord Mayor, John says in his speech that one thing is clear, that we should be agreeing to work together on this issue, and sadly we are not, and I will explain some of the issues around that.

I have been privileged over the past twelve years to serve on the boards of three of our neighbourhood projects for older people across the city. These projects deserve the national recognition they have achieved, they provide excellent dedicated provision for some of our most vulnerable people, giving them dignity, support and above all independence, and for many the chance to continue to live in their own homes. Crucially they have built up good partnerships with social services and other service providers, giving an additional range of non statutory services to older people.

So what has changed? I will tell you what has changed, this administration's review of social care, and particularly home care, is what has changed, and this, whatever you are saying about the additional resources that is going in, has led to enormous concern and alarm amongst the sector about the gaps that are opening up and the expectation that the voluntary sector can pick up the pieces of hundreds, and I mean hundreds, of our older people who have had their home care cut, removed or taken away. The figures I have for this are that 406 people so far have had their services reduced, 751 now have no services at all. This is often, I am sad to say, without notice, explanation,

or adequate explanation, of what can be done to replace it. Whether it be shopping, cleaning, meals on wheels, and particularly without the resource to cover the work that has gone out from social services, and I will tell you one thing that you haven't mentioned, Keeping House was allocated a budget of £300,000, figures supplied by the Council's, your social services department reveal that £133,000 of that budget has been spent on setting up these including consultants and promotion.

We have all read the cases in the press, many of us actually know the people who are involved, so to suggest that they are not accurate is unbelievable. One of the constituents mentioned lives in my Ward. I have seen her paperwork, the glaring mistakes about her medical condition, and unbelievable inaccuracies(sic) in her case led to her home care being stopped. For example, she gets a taxi once a year to go to the bank to pay her annual insurance premiums. Suddenly that is translated into, well she could get a taxi every week to go and do her shopping. This has led to enormous stress and upset, and we were able to give her support to put in an appeal and I am pleased to say that she has had her care reinstated, but not to the level that she had before.

The reaction that we get, and I think the reaction from across the administration, is very telling, blame the Government. I find it very difficult, John, to take that from your party in particular with the record on social services throughout the 1990's. (Hear hear) Every individual Council sets its own eligibility criteria, the Government guidance is clear on this. "Any change should be treated", and I quote, "with sensitivity and fairness. Care decisions should be based on current need", which is obvious, "but also should identify the needs that will worsen for lack of timely care", and I quote directly from the guidance.

The way these cuts have been imposed is neither sensitive nor fair and we are demanding now that they are withdrawn and re-looked at. The Older Better Strategy(?) adopted at the Council last time has many worthy objectives, but, you know, how are we going to reach the targets if you are increasing charges to go to leisure centres, and all the things that Councillor Harrison has mentioned.

Councillor Harrand, and I speak to you as the Executive Member, you should be ashamed about what is happening to some of the most vulnerable people in our city. You are responsible for this and whenever we have raised issues about this all you do is deny, deny us and deride us and accuse us of lying. Enough is enough, we are begging you to listen to what older people themselves are telling you. Stop the cuts, and you have proved earlier today that you can do this, and go back to treating our citizens with the dignity that they deserve. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Harrand.

CLLR HARRAND: Thank you Lord Mayor. I thought there would be more contributors to this debate than there have been, I imagined there would be a lot more joining in from the right hand side there.

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Can't hear you Peter.

CLLR HARRAND: I thought a lot more of you would want to join in to this debate, I am surprised, I thought there would be half a dozen contributors, but that's perhaps the end of it is it.

Judy(?), I have said, I have never denied that there will be difficulties with the assessment, what I have always said is, "Tell me". I have visions of Labour Councillors going to these people who have had this assessment and saying, "Yes, it must be terrible, it must be awful, we'll issue a press release about that". The stuff on the front of the Evening Post was at best 50% true, and if you

go in any detail it was a lot more of that was untrue, it was an absolute travesty of the facts. We have got letters from the people who were mentioned there.

I think there is a profound difference between us on the approach to these services. You seem to think that all older people are decrepit, dependent, incapable and suffering in silence. The old people I meet are vociferous, independent, intelligent - two out of three Mick - (Laughter) experienced and mature. Older people are not as decrepit, past it as you would think from listening to the debates in this city, and of course you can go see them if you like. My favourite quote is a very intelligent lady who I have met more than once who said to me, "If I have to play bingo in this room once more I will go mad", and that often constitutes Leeds City Council's contribution to their cultural development, and of course you could meet a lot more older people if you wished.

I have got a list here of events involving older people. The Voluntary Sector Reference Group, Keeping House Conference, Service Users and Carers Alliance, the Annual General Meeting of Carers Leeds, Tory Members at all those, no Labour Member present. The Mental Health Day Services Review - Alison was there, where is Alison. Alison was there, the first time we had seen a Labour Member, but she was there in another capacity, not as a Councillor.

The Voluntary Sector Reference Group practically filled this room with participants. Labour Councillors, all busy doing something else. The AGM of Maker(?) earlier this week, 150 people in a room. Three Labour - four Tory Councillors, no Labour Councillors. You could meet a lot of elderly people, get out and go where they mix.

Then I was going to go on at some detail about, in some detail about an e-mail which went from the Labour office to a major charity in this city. I forget who wrote it. "I have been asked to find out more about cuts in home care services for the elderly across the city. Do you have any examples we could use?". Not people we could help. Not ladies and gentlemen who might benefit from our contribution. Examples we could use, that's what the Labour Party's view of these people is. The answer of course was, in very polite charitable words, "Go away, the charity does not collect and hold individual cases. We have gathered information on the understanding that they are kept confidential and will not be used for anything else". You can meet a lot of elderly people in the right place, but don't try and use them as an example.

For the second half I am going to answer the question on The Breeze(?) which we didn't get round to earlier on. The Breeze is using £1,000 a day of social services money. About a quarter of that, you all got the letter, is going to other authorities. Now the simple truth is we cannot go on like this. At present we have plan A, which is to reduce the deficit and thanks to the eight Councillors

CLLR A CARTER: There you go, he says "cut" Councillor Wakefield already.

CLLR HARRAND: Well just wait Keith, hold on a minute. Thanks to the Councillors who have offered help, thanks perhaps to the other 90 who have not yet responded, no doubt your offers and ...

CLLR A CARTER: You have took the gloves off (inaudible).

CLLR WAKEFIELD: You have never misled people at all.

CLLR HARRAND: Wait a minute, wait a minute. Your letters from the other 90 people are presumably in the post. I am not denying that the future of The Breeze is now under serious consideration. There is a Save The Breeze campaign, and you are all in it. You can all help to Save

the Breeze. But we have a plan B. If plan A doesn't work we propose to ask Officers to investigate a scheme of delegation to area committees of the short breaks budget. Standard criteria across the city, but perhaps there are people in the city who don't want a short break that starts on a Wednesday and is always at Scarborough, and is in a hotel where two thirds of the bedrooms are not en-suite. You may know people in your Wards who would benefit from such an arrangement. But plan A is what we hope to make work, we hope we can get enough people to go and use it regularly, but I am quite happy to bet under plan B we get more Leeds people having more short breaks that they chose than they would if we stay with the present arrangement.

I think I am moving something, I support Councillor Bale's amendment. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Harrison to sum up.

CLLR HARRISON: Lord Mayor, in conclusion, a lot has been said on social services over the last year by Members of all parties. I have to read out a few figures. In ten years of Tory Government from 1986 to 87(sic) - 1996 social services funding was increased by £65.6 million. In ten years of Labour Government, from 1997 to 2007 the increase was £82.7 million. Between 1992 to 1994 Tories actually cut the funding by £0.2 million. The biggest monetary increase under Labour in 2004 was an increase of £27 million when FFS(?) was introduced. Facts.

I have to finish by drawing your attention to some of the many hardship cases. Anybody who knows me knows that I would never stand here without having the facts to back up my concerns. These are cases of fact not fiction.

Here I have twelve e-mails in front of me which have been sent to me - and I will name him because he's asked me to do so - Mr Malcolm Naylor which many, many people in this Chamber know. "As a service user of home care services provided I wish to inform you that it is atrocious and potentially dangerous. This weekend, on two days, only one carer attended for a two carer task involving lifting and hoisting. One carer had to travel 20 miles from Gomersal to Otley to attend. I am a pension carer and had to act as an unpaid care assistant. I request that the Scrutiny Board for Social Care investigates this matter". He has also sent out to Brenda six points that he wishes the Scrutiny Board to investigate.

I can go on and go on and go on. Many of you know Malcolm Naylor and know that these words will be true. This is the price of service users having to pay for the engagement of private contractors. It is not worth paying, and I ask you and the Council to review its policy on employing private contractors to carry out their work.

Another handful(?) of complaints. There is many, many, many concerns - by the way all these e-mails have been sent to not just me, various Members of Council and Officers.

Just while I remember, I recently went to Tropical World where I took my grandchildren, and I was very, very surprised, and I am glad you reminded me Andrew, that when I went there and I took my mother with me, finding out that we now no longer do concessions for elderly people, so I am glad you have actually brought that to my attention, something we can take up when I come back off holiday. (Uproar)

CLLR A CARTER: You're not going to The Breeze are you? (Laughter)

CLLR HARRISON: You can read out your list of improvements to social services but I have to point out to you that many of these were implemented by the Labour Group which you have taken credit for.

Back to Peter's point, attendance at meetings of the voluntary groups. Yes, Peter, as you will know I attend many, many meetings, but a lot of the times I am not invited because I am in opposition, many, many times. (Uproar)

In conclusion, Lord Mayor, I would like to move the White Paper. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Call for a vote now. Those voting in favour of the amendment of Councillor Bale, can we have a show of hands please. Okay, those against. Any abstentions. Any abstentions. Okay, that is carried and therefore it becomes a substantive Motion. (CARRIED)

All in favour of this substantive Motion, show of hands please. Against. Abstentions. Therefore it is carried. (CARRIED)

Okay, okay. (Uproar)

CLLR J PROCTOR: My Lord Mayor, can I request a recorded vote on the last item please?

CLLR J CARTER: I second my Lord Mayor.

CLLR ATHA: You're too late.

CLLR HARRIS: Lord Mayor, the procedures of Council are clear, that if a recorded vote is asked for after a show of hands within a reasonable period of time then a recorded vote can be taken. It is not the case, it is not the case, it is not the case that simply that there has been a show of hands a recorded vote cannot then be taken.

THE MAYOR: Thank you for your advice Councillor Harris.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: I am pleased to say that accords with the advice given to the Lord Mayor. The Lord Mayor has decided to give me a reprieve on this, Councillor Lyons, so I can read out the instructions for the recorded vote.

Please Members press the button marked P in order to activate (inaudible). Those Members in favour of what is now the substantive Motion in the name of Councillor Bale should please press the plus button. Those Members against that Motion please press the minus button, and any Member wishing to abstain please press the zero button.

THE MAYOR: Okay, thank you. 89 Members present, 57 in favour, zero abstentions, 32 against, therefore it is carried. (CARRIED)

11 WHITE PAPER MOTION - SPORTS CENTRE PROVISION

Councillor Atha.

CLLR ATHA: My Lord Mayor, the White Paper Motion expresses very succinctly what our view is, that we would welcome any sensible programme, no matter how varied, to improve the sports centre or sports provision generally in the city, and so we are at one on that.

However, we have very considerable concerns about the proposed plan and that's what we are here to discuss. I think none of us would disagree, and it would be great if we could start off with three principles on which we all agree, that we all agree that the importance of sport and sport provision for people in the city, in terms of health, in terms of quality of life and the providers(?) of fitness and so on.

The second point I think we would all agree on is that we are delighted that we have £30 million of PFI credits. I think we would all agree too we would have preferred £30 million in money, but PFI credits are what is going at the moment and so we have got to be grateful for that. I think we would all agree on that second point.

The third point I think we would all agree on, at least in theory, is that we would all agree that we would want to see these new, these millions used to very best advantage. In other words we wouldn't wish to see it used in any plan(?) in a way that was not to the best value that we would see collectively. What that view might be at the end may differ, but on those three principles I think we would all agree.

I would also point out to you the value of second thought, and I will tell you a story against some of us who were here some time ago. A generation ago the Council was going to build one very large sports centre, which would have certainly been one of the best in the country, one of the most prestigious. There was a change of mind, however, and for the same money the Council provided three district sports centres which are still operating most effectively, a good example being the one at Kirkstall which I had the honour of opening many years ago when Liz Nash(?) was Chairman of Leisure Services, although that was erected because of the Conservative change of mind, and so you can see that there are values in changing your mind, and that's what I am really asking in this resolution to do, to not to proceed with their plans that have been outlined but to look again at the issues and in such a way that we could well lead to a much better solution to the present problems.

This phrase, 'listen to the people', has resounded in this Chamber quite a lot. Only at the last meeting I think it was, it resounded because of discussions about (inaudible). The particular plan was withdrawn, why, because, as Councillor Harris said, as Councillor Carter said, almost before the decision had been made, if not before, "We listened to the people. If the people don't it then they don't have it". Today we have seen another (inaudible), again nothing to crow over, we could crow over it but it is meaningless crowing, the sensible decision to change their view on the policy about school clothing, and so if you listen to the people on those two issues, what I would say is we have got to listen to the people in terms of their sports centres, which they own and which serve their areas, and so we have to consider all possibilities, and those possibilities could be to go ahead with the plan exactly as it is, to go ahead with a plan for refurbishment, or a plan to go ahead with refurbishment and rebuild and new build, and until we have done that option appraisal effectively, then it is wrong to proceed on the basis of the PFI, and I do understand we have got a window of opportunity, because as I understand or have been told, the PFI bid should have gone in already and we actually missed the application deadline. But I am told further that although we made that bloomer an extension has been given, and so we have a period of time when we can look realistically and impartially at the issues.

Our concerns, in very brief form, and I want to keep the temperature down - intellectually that is, I can't do very much about the ambient temperature - our concerns are cuts in areas of deprivation. If you look at where the cuts are going to take place, the closures, it is East Leeds, Fearnville, South Leeds and Middleton under threat. Those are the most deprived areas of Leeds and that's where the cuts will be most effective, effective in the sense of damaging.

We have a plan in this new proposal to build on (inaudible) Killingbeck Fields, which almost everyone in that area feels should not be the site for any substantial building, and we should listen to the people, and if in the end listening leads us to the conclusion, well I hear what you say but we can't go along with it, then that I think is a decision you can take. But you must listen first.

There is no - this is a major concern - there are no detailed costings as far as I can ascertain for the cost of refurbishing to a decent standard those centres which are due to be closed. I went round with some of the Members of Scrutiny Board to Fearnville. As we were leaving one room, one of the ladies who was in there doing some gymnastics (inaudible) said, "Why don't you beggars listen to us?", and I went back and said, "Why, what do you want to say?", she said, "We want to keep this place. We do not want it to be pulled down and moved. Yes you can make it nicer, but listen to the people here and if you ask everyone that comes here they will tell you the same thing, Fearnville should be kept for the people of that area". Those were unsolicited comments, it was documented by myself for today's discussion when I could have an example of local people approaching us.

So there is no clear indication of the costs of refurbishment and what is needed, and if you look at some of these centres and you see the substantial buildings they are, and we are told we are pulling them down because the roof is a bit leaky, then you come to your own home, your own business, you would kick that idea into touch. There is no attention paid to the local opinion in those areas in which there is going to be a loss, and there is no clear indication either of how, if the PFI scheme goes ahead, it will tie in with the possible structure of the independent trust. Those concepts should be clear before you go down either route, because you would have a real mish mash if some of the resources went into a private (inaudible) trust, some remain with the Council and some were owned by contractors who in the sense that was quoted today, building a new centre on Killingbeck Field will be a private centre which is being built by private money and will be operated by private people like the PFI schools, but it will be open to the public.

CLLR J PROCTOR: That is wrong.

CLLR ATHA: If it is wrong then that information has not been conveyed because the PFI proposals, so far as we know, and that's what I am saying, if all the facts are known then there is the opportunity for a coherent discussion and possibly agreement. Well we've been scrutinising, I've got the documents here (inaudible) scrutiny, and the costs of borrowing the £22 million, at that stage, which would be £1.75 million a year, which over the 25 year period would be more than double the amount borrowed. So that is the information given by your former Chairman of the Committee and who was doing the scrutiny.

So our view is clear, we should retain Fearnville, we should retain South Leeds, and open it, not just retain it but open it, it should never have been closed. The £450,000 in the budget for its refurbishment should be used to open it and refurbish it, the East Leeds Centre should be (inaudible) retention(?), and the Morley scheme should not go ahead unless the Council can promise that the people in Morley will have a centre which has the same degree of facilities, the same facilities as it has now. It is wrong for us to impose something smaller on a town like Morley where Morley, because Morley is just a small town and doesn't fall within the (inaudible) certain political influences. It was wrong of Councillor Finnigan to complement his colleagues opposite with whom he votes on every occasion (inaudible) for producing this new scheme in Morley. He had to (inaudible) when he realised how stupid it was in recommending a smaller and more imperfect building and centre, and so we need an urgent rethink. We want full consultation with the public who own these facilities.

We could have, and this may be treated with derision by John and Andrew, but it would not be a bad idea to try an experiment and to put together an all party group of people who are absolutely committed to sport, and who know something about it, and give them a time constrained period in which they can come across with a sensible and coherent plan, it may be the same plan or a different plan, and let's do it without the silly party bickering, because we come here, we play silly beggars, particularly at this time when the press have gone, scoring points, but we are not scoring because (inaudible) and bit by bit (inaudible) and so basically we really ought to think realistically how we can deal with this problem (inaudible) and an all party working group with all the full facts, with the proper research at their disposal, and it would allow us to take the public with us.

So I don't think we should deprive the most disadvantaged areas of facilities, they are probably the only facilities in their area of any significance, and my suggestion would at least give them a reprieve until the whole scheme has been reviewed and the Council, hopefully, unanimously approve. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Ogilvie.

CLLR OGILVIE: Thank you Lord Mayor. I would like to second the White Paper in the name of Councillor Atha and in so doing particularly focus on the South Leeds Sports Centre.

We heard earlier from the Splash group of residents and community organisations in South Leeds. I first of all would like to pay a tribute to the campaign that they have been running to try and get the South Leeds Sports Centre reopened.

Lord Mayor, the South Leeds Centre is right in the heart of the communities of Beeston, Holbeck and West Hunslet, some of the most needy communities in the city. Now it is Councillor Proctor's view that the centre is actually in the wrong location because he believes people cannot drive to the centre.

CLLR J PROCTOR: That is not my view at all ...

CLLR OGILVIE: That is what you said in a meeting that we had, a working group meeting a couple of weeks ago.

CLLR ATHA: Well we all get old you know, can't remember.

CLLR OGILVIE: As I understood it you were supposed to be encouraging people to get out of their cars, and I think David Cameron made a speech a couple of months ago in which he said, "We must give people, particularly those living in our towns and cities, serious travel options that don't involve the car. If we are serious about tackling climate change, (inaudible) incidentally about improving public health too, we need to help make it possible for people to walk or cycle on these journeys". I agree with that statement.

Now the sports centre is also right in the centre of one of the Council's regeneration areas, the Beeston Hill(?) and Holbeck Regeneration Area, and both the Development Department and Neighbourhoods and Housing have been working on a good document, the Holbeck Action Plan, and I commend the work that they have done on that, and I think there is a statement in the Holbeck Action Plan which I think probably sums it up. It says, "With the exception of the South Leeds Sports Centre there is a lack of quality sport and recreation facilities in the area. In an area with

some of the worst health statistics in the country improving the quality and accessibility of facilities is considered a priority of the Action Plan”.

Now I agree with that, I agree with the Development Department and Neighbourhoods and Housing, it is a shame that a third department of the Council, Learning and Leisure, seems to have a different view.

Now we have read a lot in the press about Councillor Proctor blaming the Government, blaming everybody for the situation, and blaming the Government for withdrawing Sure Start funding, which is not quite the case. This is actually a bit of a smokescreen because not a single penny of the Sure Start funding was to refurbish the sports centre itself, it was for a separate children’s centre and a new entrance. There was actually £378,500 of Council capital money with £100,000 of SRB money allocated for the refurbishment and what we would like to know, and what members of Splash would like to know, what has happened to that money, where is it? (Applause)

I haven’t quite finished yet. Another point that Councillor Proctor said in the press was that decisions about South Leeds would not be made by him but by Council Officers. He went on to say, “Operational matters are delegated to Officers while elected Members set the steer”. Now perhaps Councillor Proctor could say whether he still thinks that is his view, whether something as important as the future of the South Leeds Sports Centre should be up to Officers or whether it is a decision for Members - he is not even listening now.

Finally, Lord Mayor, at the last Council meeting we had the debate about Post Offices and the effect the closure of Post Offices would have on local communities, and Andrew Carter said a couple of things that I wrote down as I agreed with them. The first one he said, “What drives people on to non existent public transport and into their cars to travel to other facilities”. I think if that applies to the closure of Post Offices it applies exactly to the closure of sports centres, and the other thing he said was that, “It is up to us to campaign to keep facilities in our local communities”. That is what we are doing on this side of the Chamber, that is what groups like Splash are trying to do and that’s why we put down this White Paper. I second Lord Mayor. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Leadley.

CLLR LEADLEY: Thank you Lord Mayor, I seek to amend Councillor Atha’s Motion to bring it a bit more in line with reality. There are those who cannot bear to see any alteration in municipal services, even if alteration is needed to allow replacement, or to free up resources so that they can be used elsewhere, or simply to allow services to be kept up to date. If they had their way no doubt there would still be a primary school in Stourton even though no one lives there anymore, there would be hitching(?) rails and horse troughs on Briggate and hydrants at street corners so that passing steam wagons and traction engines could replenish their water tank, all the gas lamps would have been kept alongside the electric lights which should have replaced them.

Some campaigners in Morley seem to be of a similar mind, they will not countenance any reduction in the number of squash courts at the leisure centre even though squash is nowhere near as popular as it was 20 or 30 years ago in the heyday of Jonah Barrington and Jahinger Khan.

Many sports centres were built in the 1960's and early 70's, when municipal building standards were at a low ebb. Years of neglectful maintenance have brought them beyond economic or practicable repair and we need to do something about that in the context of tight finances, perhaps made worse by funds being diverted towards London to pay for the Olympic Games.

Morley Leisure Centre is well used and was reasonably well built by the standards of the 1970's. Much of it is faced in real sandstone rather than plastic or cardboard. Even so, it has been neglected, the roof is in poor repair and it is speculated that only the weight of the water it contains stops the swimming pool collapsing in on itself.

We were assured at a recent meeting by a member of the public who claimed to work in the construction industry that Morley Leisure Centre could be repaired quite easily. In fact he turned out to be a salesman dealing in concrete drainpipes. (Laughter) Other assessments so far do suggest that the centre is beyond repair. Replacing it raises obvious problems. How can cash be raised, how can a period of closure be avoided unless a replacement is placed on another footprint. Those who campaign for the repair of the existing centre should remember that it would take up to a year to dig out and replace the swimming pool alone. What we need is more creative thinking to ensure that we have a good network of sports centres across the city. My Lord Mayor, I move the amendment. I would also ask for a recorded vote when we come to that stage.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan.

CLLR FINNIGAN: I second the amendment and reserve the right to speak.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Proctor.

CLLR J PROCTOR: I hear a sharp intake of breath over there, I am not sure why.

Lord Mayor, let's focus shall we on what we are actually dealing with. The City has 22 leisure centres city wide, built between 1904, Bramley, and 2007, still under construction, John Smeaton(?). The bulk of them were built in the 60's, 70's and 80's, and as Bernard quite rightly alluded to, the bulk of them were built actually under a Conservative administration, including I might add Fearnville and South Leeds.

It is interesting, over the recent time I have heard all kinds of things said about what people did and didn't do and who provided South Leeds. It was a Conservative administration who provided the South Leeds Sports Centre, so please let's not forget that, I've got all the dates here with me.

Having built all of these centres you would naturally presume that we should have the funds to maintain them. A reasonable expectation you would think. So the question then has to be asked, if that was the intention and that was the legacy that we left a then incoming Labour administration, some 26 years ago or thereabouts, why now is there a £60 million backlog of repairs. A perfectly reasonable question one would have thought.

I am coming to it. So the question is, Lord Mayor, where has the money gone? Over the last 26 years Councillor Atha has had his hand firmly planted, some may say rooted, to the rudder of the Leisure Services Department as it then was. Even today, even today, he is the person who is bringing this particular White Paper forward. I am not sure, Bernard, if anyone has told you within your group yet, but you are not actually your group spokesman on leisure anymore, I understand that now falls to Councillor Harrington. But again, this is just the indication of the overwhelming power and influence that Bernard has over this department, and still seeks to wield.

Let us analyse what has happened over those 26 years and where the money has gone. Let us look first of all at a whole series of organisations which Councillor Atha has a whole series of links to, and the beneficiaries of money that some may say, some may say, should have been spent repairing our valuable leisure centres.

Middleton Park Equestrian Centre, Councillor Atha is a Trustee there, it benefits from £128,000 a year grant from the Council. Sport Aid Foundation, where Councillor Atha is the Chair of the Yorkshire and Humber Branch, benefits to the tune of £4,530 a year. West Yorkshire Playhouse, where Councillor Atha is the Chair, benefits from a contribution of £820,000 a year from the authority. The Grand Theatre, where until this administration took control Councillor Atha had been the Chair, I understand it, for maybe what Bernard, 20 years, 24 years, benefits to the tune of £310,000 a year. Yorkshire Dance Centre where Bernard is the Chair, benefits to the tune of £47,660 per year. Northern Ballet Theatre, where Councillor Atha once again is the Chair, benefits to the tune of £252,000 a year. The Craft and Design Gallery, where again Bernard is the Chair, benefits to the tune of £1,000 a year. The organisation that is Opera North benefits to the tune per year of just under £1 million, and until this administration came into office Councillor Atha sat on the board of Opera North. I further understand that local festivals such as the Irish Festival and also the Reggae Festival, and the like, where Councillor Atha is the President of the British and International Federation of Festivals, benefits to the tune of £43,000 per year. A grand total, a grand total Lord Mayor of - anybody keeping track - a grand total to organisations where Bernard Atha is either the Chair or has been a long term Trustee or Director benefits to the tune of £2,640,000, or thereabouts, from this administration. (Applause) I wouldn't do that if I were you.

If you add to - well, (inaudible) suggested is, 'splendid fellow'. Well just bear with me on this. If you add to this the events budget of the City Council, you get a there or thereabouts £3 million a year. £3 million a year of funding, which I would contend, 26 years ago, was destined to maintain the leisure centres in our city.

The maintenance budget, you may say. If you multiply that up, if you multiply that up, you get to somewhere near, over 24 years, you get to something like £70 odd million. £70 odd million has gone into organisations or on projects that Councillor Atha has championed and supported. I am not for one minute suggesting, not for one minute suggesting that we should now, in any way, cut or review, cut or review any of the expenditure to any of those organisations I have listed, and indeed I applaud, I applaud the work and activities of those organisations in this city, and I am proud of the work that many of those organisations do. I also want to be clear, and I have said it to him privately and in public as well, Bernard Atha has contributed in the past a huge amount to the cultural life of this city. I am sure everybody in this, I am sure everybody in this room would agree.

But let's go back to what I started off by saying. The fact of the matter is we have a £60 million repair bill for the leisure centres in this city, and £70 odd million, since Councillor Atha had his hand firmly planted on the rudder of the Leisure Services Department, has gone on other things. That is the stark reality, the stark reality of the situation. It's a bit like buying a house, buying a house and saying, "Right, okay, well I know it's going to cost me X amount a year to paint and decorate and maintain this house, but actually I will do absolutely nothing to it whatsoever, I will go out, I will blow the money, I will spend it on whatever", and then in 30 years time being surprised that the windows are rotten and that they are falling out and your house isn't actually worth very much money. It is basic, basic repair and maintenance, Lord Mayor, and it's that basic repair and maintenance that wasn't carried out over the last 24 years, and it's that that we have inherited.

Lord Mayor, it's interesting, I divide Members of the Labour Group into different categories. Some of them, some of them I class as friends, some of them I class as people who are quite new to this place and learning the ropes, some I class as old hands, some I respect, a few, a very few I might add, thankfully these days, a few still have the arrogance of 20 years ago in this authority, and that arrogance, and that arrogance continued up until a handful of years ago, and that's the real sad thing in this whole sorry tale.

Lord Mayor, I might add, and this is a bit of an aside, and I hear what Bernard says about not making things political, but, but, in addition to all of what I've said, if the last Chairman of the Recreation Committee had not instructed Officers of this Council to send a car for him, almost on a daily basis, to fetch and carry him around this city, to fetch and carry his children to and from school, if Labour, if Labour Members, Labour Councillors had been more interested in providing services across this city rather than self interest, perhaps we wouldn't be in the position that we are in now, and if Members want a further explanation I will be more, more than happy to give it to them outside of this room.

But I have to say, I have to say, for those of you who were around, in the dying days of the Recreation Committee, if any single one of you was comfortable sat in some of the meetings that went on, I can remember one in particular at the International Pool. I was so concerned that I asked our Leader to come along to that meeting, so concerned was I about a number of events that were going on at that time. The fact is that at that time we had a lot of concerns, and those concerns weren't being addressed by that administration and that's why we are in the pickle we are in now Lord Mayor. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Campbell.

CLLR CAMPBELL: I will second and reserve my right to speak.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Davy.

CLLR DAVY: Thank you Lord Mayor. I would like to join with Councillor Atha and Councillor Ogilvey in seeking improvements to sports centre provision but not at a cost of depriving needy Wards.

We have heard already this afternoon from the deputation Splash concerning South Leeds Sports Centre, and they have made their feelings very clear, and before I go on, Councillor Proctor mentioned that he was championing the cause, that it was the Conservative Council that built South Leeds Sports Centre, but can I also ask him if he is just as proud of the same administration built the M621 that split our community of South Leeds in two.

But anyway, going back to the White Paper. The people of Hunslet need every opportunity to develop a healthy, physical lifestyle, and they need a sports centre in their area to be assured of this. Childhood obesity is a real problem in our schools, with up to 17% of our children being overweight. This equates to 1 million children in the UK, 1 million. It seems ridiculous to me that children from the local schools in my Ward, who are less than a two minute walk away from their local sports centre, are now having to be bussed to Morley and Rothwell in order to go for a swim.

There are five key areas where there is a deficit in my Ward, and these are, health, youth crime, education, employment and community development. Recent work done for the Council of Europe by a noted academic, Professor Patrickson(?), indicates that a sports centre located in an area of deprivation helps improve the deficits in each of these areas for the local community. It builds community and sociability.

My constituents in Hunslet are telling us loud and clear, they want their sports centre. It is not something extra for them to enjoy in their leisure time, it's a basic need for the physical, mental and social well being of their community. All of us in this Chamber, regardless of our political beliefs, became Councillors because we believed we could make a real difference to people's lives. I

agree with what Councillor Ogilvey said, surely it's Members that make policy not Officers, otherwise why are we here. I therefore urge everyone in this Chamber, particularly the Executive Member for Leisure, who has decided he obviously needs a tea break, to put our political differences aside and support the White Paper that has been submitted by Councillor Atha and seconded by Councillor Ogilvey. Thank you Lord Mayor. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Blackburn, David Blackburn.

CLLR D BLACKBURN: Thank you Lord Mayor, I won't keep us long on this warm night, but I've sat here amazed, you know, we are actually talking about spending £30 million in this city on sports centres. You would think we were thinking of shutting every single one down the way they are going on. What the devil did you do when you were in power, spent nothing, nothing. Our sports centres were a disaster, that's what we inherited, and if the Government would give us more money we could do even more, but what, with the limited resources that we are being given we are doing what we can. You know, come on, what did you do over the last five or ten years, nothing. Thank you Lord Mayor. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Akhtar.

CLLR AKHTAR: Yes, thank you my Lord Mayor. Listening to the debate is quite interesting, I mean just to go into the history of it, just before the last local election, and we have just seen the Labour leaflet which was - from the Labour leaflet, when this leaflet was received by one of the, mother who had a disabled child, she was on the phone - absolutely - and I think you should be aware of your mistakes and the scaremongering, because the people of Leeds are sick and tired of these lies.

Now only in yesterday's Evening Post, only in yesterday's Evening Post in the comments, don't make political points out of leisure services, or leisure centres. What we have seen over the last 25 years of your administration, when you ...(Uproar) ... when you were running the ...(Uproar) ... when you were running the administration, when you were running the administration, the rundown of the leisure centres, just recently a few residents of mine from Gipton have said to me, "It's all right Labour putting these rumours out, the investment which is coming into the Ward, or into the East Leeds, where were they when we really needed them". You are absolutely right when you said when I was at your side, and now what you have seen, the people of Leeds have realised the lies and the scaremongering that you are causing, and the disturbance you are causing for people of Leeds, lie after lie, another one after another.

Can I also mention, and I think Members of the Council need to be aware of this, one of the Labour Councillors just recently, just recently wanted the investment to go into the Braim Wood High School, without realising that Braim Wood High School does not come in East Leeds. Now this is how committed some of the Labour Councillors are, so I will rest my case on those comments.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Harris.

CLLR HARRIS: Lord Mayor, when Bernard Atha moved his White Paper it was a reasonable, measured speech, and some of the things he focussed on, which is fair enough because we raised it at the very start of today's meeting, is we should listen to what people want, and if people are saying they don't want a sports centre here, or they want a sports centre to remain open there, we ought to listen to them.

Well that is a very valid point, that people should be listened to. The problem is, however, what are they being told in the first place to make them form a judgment on what they do or don't

want. Councillor Akhtar and I, earlier, referred to a leaflet in Harehills during the election. This referred to Fearnville. Now if people made up their mind about the future of a new sports centre in East Leeds, about the future of Fearnville based on that information, they have been completely misled. I mean they are expressing a view in a well meaning way based on the information that they have been given, which one supposes they think is true, but they have been completely misled and it is colouring their views and forcing them down a certain road, which frankly is resulting in requests based on nonsense.

Now we really need to go back to the basics with this entire debate and people have to understand really where we are. We have heard about the £60 million backlog, I am not going to labour that point again, but it is a fact. David Blackburn a few minutes ago though made a mistake when he said in your 24 years you spent nothing on sports centres, actually it is not true, you spent a small fortune on what is now the John Charles Sports Complex, an absolute fortune. Now at the time we all said, "Hang on a sec, are we sure this is right, is it in the right place, ought we not be using the money on other things?", but you were adamant and so it went ahead, and really we have been obliged to follow suit, particularly with the swimming centre.

Let us deal again with one particular aspect of that. The construction of the sports centre, remember that, never mind extra construction costs, unfortunately with big capital programmes there are often budget overruns, but what about the £10 million plus that was spent simply on penalties and legal fees by your administration. Imagine five, ten years ago, what we could have done with that money had it been available for us to start refurbishing the sports centres which we have inherited in a completely rundown manner. That's what people need to understand, the situation we have inherited.

Finally I want to deal with the question of the current PFI bid. I mean you really are attempting to guild the lily on every side and tell people that that money is available for everything in all shapes, sizes and whatever they want. We are constrained by the rules placed upon us, I mean it would be a marvellous situation if the money was made available to us for us to do with as we wish, but we are constrained by them. It is not available to refurbish sports centres. You have no right to tell people that and we are constrained as to where new sports centres can go, and equally they are pressurising us in terms of what existing sports facilities can remain in place. That is the game that is in town, forced on us by your Government. These are the facts that the city have to understand and trying to form an even handed assessment about what can and cannot be done, you are, as the Evening Post said, making this simply a political football. You are just pretending that it never had anything to do with you and that we have dismantled the thing overnight. The Evening Post, at last, have found you out and started to tell the reality.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Hamilton.

CLLR M HAMILTON: Thank you Lord Mayor. At the last Council meeting we, Members will remember we had a debate about the Woodhouse Moor car park and as the debate went on it widened into the situation within the city in terms of spending on our city's parks, and the chronic under investment over many years from the Labour Council.

Now during the course of that debate I flagged up the fact that since this administration took control we have been able to make a number of improvements to that particular park in terms of a new fence, in terms of funding for the replacement of the bowling pavilion, and indeed some proposals for Heritage Lottery funding to put some serious money into that park, and of course this is allied to a £2 million fund to regenerate a number of parks in our city.

Now why do mention this, I mention this because just as we have seen over the last 20 or 30 years in this city chronic under investment in the fabric of our sports centres, so we have seen the same problem within our parks. Why have we had this problem and where has the money gone? Well, Councillor Proctor made reference to a number of, I think an increasingly familiar story from my point of view, that money increasingly is spent on, was spent on pet projects, special interests rather than focussing the money on core services, on core facilities for the city, and so just as we saw the sports centres gradually go to rack and ruin through under investment, so the same thing happened with the parks, and so I think, Lord Mayor, just to conclude, the PFI funding will go some way towards reversing the neglect that we suffered under the Labour administration, just as the Parks Renaissance Fund will do the same, the £2 million Parks Renaissance Fund will do the same for parks, and indeed in many other areas in the city we are now investing in schemes to reverse under funding.

So what I would say is, Lord Mayor, we are faced with chronic under investment, our response is actually to try and find the money to reverse these problems, to put them right. What was Labour's solution when they were in power, it was actually to spend the money on pet projects rather than on core facilities. Thank you Lord Mayor.

CLLR J PROCTOR: Lord Mayor, can I move under Council Procedure Rule 22.1 that Procedure Rule 3.2 be suspended to allow this White Paper Motion to be debated to its conclusion.

THE MAYOR: Second? (Seconded) All those in favour. Against. Abstentions.
(CARRIED)

Councillor Pryke.

CLLR PRYKE: Thank you Lord Mayor. I wasn't intending to speak in this debate but earlier contributions brought back vivid memories of, I think it was my second Scrutiny meeting of neighbours(?) housing, when under the Chair of Councillor Proctor, and I think Councillor Lewis was there as well, I don't think anyone else in the room was there then, we were taking one, it was a following on report on community centres and leisure centres and the backlog on repairs and maintenance, and we were told by Officers at that meeting, and it has stuck in my memory, that at the present rate of expenditure for the community centres and the leisure centres it would take the city 65 years to do all the work that was necessary. But by then, by then they would all have fallen down or been condemned.

At the time both Rothwell and Bramley baths were facing condemnation by the public health people because they were about to become unfit for public use, and there was a small budgetary crisis for the Labour administration to get the filters sorted at the time, and we were told by the Officers at the time that the only possible way of paying for the leisure centres was through PFI, because that was the only system allowed by the Government, but the Government wouldn't allow us to have any PFI money to do the maintenance and repairs, so we were doomed to perpetual decline of the community centres and the leisure centres unless we found money elsewhere, and of course the then administration just didn't find any money elsewhere.

Now Councillor Atha's contribution I found pretty useful because he did seem to understand what PFI is all about. Now PFI, as we all know, is a scam, principally used by Gordon Brown to move public borrowing off the balance sheets. It has been exposed for years and the international financial community doesn't really believe in it any longer, so - PFI, as it's the only game in town at the moment we have to go along with it, but I am not happy with it.

Now you are advocating it for everything. Unfortunately Councillor Harrington, in his leaflet which you have seen from my colleagues earlier on, was telling people in Gipton that PFI means private, and private means the public, the members of the public in Gipton would not be allowed into the new centre. Now when Liberal Democrats challenged Labour people during the election on this they carried on saying, “Ah, but it’s PFI and PFI means private”, so I am fairly sure, I know he’s not here to defend himself, but I don’t think Councillor Harrington is that dim, I think he was deliberately misleading people and Labour should be ashamed of what was going on at the time, because now a lot of the people in Gipton not only think that a private centre is going to be built with in effect public money, but they’ve also been told by Labour that the Fearnville Leisure Centre is closing down, and it’s not closing down. The swimming pool would close if the other one was built, but not until.

Now I sympathise with Councillors Ogilvie and Davy about the situation in their Wards. Burmantofts and Richmond Hill is, if anything, worse off than theirs and it has nothing at the moment. If Members are going to argue that centres must be put in their Wards because they are so deprived, where does it stop. Do we have 33 tiny little centres that are financially unsustainable across the city, we would never get the money from the Government and we could never afford it ourselves, or do we follow Government advice, the advice we have at the moment, rationalise the centres that we have and go for some decent ones that people actually want to use.

To close on this, when at the Burmantofts Forum, the Area Forum meeting, we were considering the proposal for a new leisure centre for East Leeds, the people from Burmantofts who were there were saying, “Well we don’t like to use Fearnville or the East Leeds Centre because they are grotty, they are dirty, they are unkempt and they are not worth going to”, and one Council Officer who was there in particular, who happens to live in Kippax, said she would rather pay £6.70 and drive down the motorway to Barnsley and use the pool there than the ones in Kippax or Fearnville, and I think that says it all about the facilities we have inherited from you. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Cleasby.

CLLR CLEASBY: Thank you Lord Mayor. Well Bernard, you’ve been successful today, you have managed to get this Council talking about a pile of bricks. We haven’t been talking about sports centres, you have not been talking about recreation, you’ve not been talking about leisure, those are the things that go on inside that pile of bricks.

Now the Leader of the Council referred to the John Charles Centre. I have done some research, Bernard, you obviously haven’t. So I thought having heard yesterday from a Director of my board that we were hoping that as a result of the Olympics coming to London the spin off for our region, for our city, could well be that we would get a country, or may be two countries who would come to train in our area.

Now I put it to you, if that’s the thought here, what is the thought in those 188 countries that may be thinking to come here. They will be surfing the Net won’t they, so I did that Bernard. Right, how do you contact the John Charles Centre for Sport? A wonderful thing, we should have had three of them round the city but you squandered the money so we’ve only got one. Well I tell you quickly how you do it, you can telephone them. Yes, you can telephone them, right. So if there is somebody in the office, somebody from abroad can phone up and contact them, right.

So I did a little bit more. I went on to one of my favourite websites which is Bath and North East Somerset, that’s because I like the Liberal Democrat MP there, Don Foster, quite a lot. I quickly went through the sports facilities and all the leisure centres come up, plus some of the school

ones that are available for the public to use and so on, went right through, and I chose Bath Sport and Leisure Centre. There is all the things that you can book on it. Then the next page I decided I was interested in squash, there is the times when the squash courts are open, there's the costing, and there printed off screen, Bernard, is the internet form that if I had been intelligent enough to have finally put my credit card number on I would have booked a squash court in this leisure centre in Bath.

Now it is not possible, thanks to the legacy, thanks to the legacy - Bernard, Bernard, I'm standing - thanks to the legacy that you and your interference over the years left this administration, it will not be happening in this city until I am assured September when it will be coming on line. It is long overdue, we have talked in this Chamber about the lack of take up of sports centres. All the people in these offices around us, all with terminals that they sit at, all with internet connection, cannot book our sports centres unless there is somebody in the office when they ring up, if they have the time to ring up. Now that's how far behind in this city, Bernard, stop talking about piles of bricks and let's get real, and let's get this city moving upwards. Thank you Lord Mayor. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Grayshon.

CLLR GRAYSHON: Thank you Lord Mayor. I am particularly interested in Bernard's interest in Morley and perhaps if he had shown such interest when he was in a position to fund some repairs of the leisure centre in Morley it may be a different story now.

The thing I am interested in with the leisure centre at Morley is people's perceptions of what may or may not happen, and I find comments like, "And in the case of Morley a much reduced facility which involves a severe reduction in the level of service". Well I know Bernard is somewhat of a sage but I didn't know he was a clairvoyant and could see into the future and decide what we were going to do. He also comments, "Morley (inaudible) any reduction in the sports centre in the former Borough(?)".

I can assure Councillor Atha and those people who are too busy making stupid childish comments, Peter - I am sorry, are you saying something of interest, no, it's you that's speaking of course isn't it so it won't be of any interest. (Laughter)

You see the situation is that I have had a walk round Morley Sports Centre on a number of occasions. The fabric of the - it does indeed show, yes Keith, I don't think I've ever seen you there though although you seem to know a lot about matters in Morley as well. Anyhow, please don't interrupt me any further.

The situation with regard to the sports centre is that it is in need of some major repairs. As I walked round it with an Officer who showed me the problems in the sports centre and advised me how much it may cost to renovate, if that option was available to us - he did comment by the way, Bernard, that there may very well be asbestos in Morley Leisure Centre and I know you have had your own experience trying to get rid of asbestos, it appears easier to get rid of a Governing Board at a Theatre rather than the asbestos, but that's a separate matter.

The situation with regard to the facilities in Morley I can assure Members of this Council is under close review by elected Members in Morley. I have been contacted by a number of people who use the facilities there, I am in communication with them, whatever it is that happens in Morley will be the best deal that we can obtain for the people who use the sports centre in Morley, and I give you an assurance that whatever happens there will be the best deal that we can obtain for our town. Thank you.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan.

CLLR FINNIGAN: I will pass on this occasion, I think Terry said everything.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Campbell.

CLLR CAMPBELL: No I'm not going to pass. No, I'm not passing.

Lord Mayor, I have the pleasure of sitting next to Councillor Russell here who is a new Member of Council, and as you do you like to be friendly and pass the time of day, and he is new, and we like to explain to him the intricacies of Council Meetings and who various individuals are, and I am sure he mentioned last time, "Whose that quaint old gentleman in the corner?", (Laughter) - I said quaint, quaint, quaint, I think it was quaint. (Laughter)

Anyway, I hope I am going to get some extra time for all this laughter. I said, "Well that's Bernard Atha. He describes himself as the father of the Chamber", not literally. (Laughter) No, no, perish the thought Bernard, I wouldn't dream of insulting you, none of us would, and in fact I went on to discuss, because there was a sort of a lull in the discussion, I think Councillor Gruen was talking, so we had a little chat about your past life and I said, "Bernard used to be an actor you know, and quite a famous actor." I think those of us who remember his man on the top deck of a bus ...(Laughter)... and the unforgettable man in a blue anorak ...(Laughter). I have to say to you, I understand that was a Laurence Olivier favourite, Larry often mentioned Bernard.

But anyway, Bernard had an impact (inaudible) became a Councillor (inaudible) the Conservatives lost control(interruption) the Leisure Department and ran with it (inaudible). He actually said a very valid point because he said Hunslet needs a sports centre, and I have to say I agree with you. I don't think there is anybody here who would say Hunslet doesn't need a sports centre. In fact what I would say is Otley would quite like a sports centre too. The reason Otley doesn't have a sports centre is down to Bernard, because Bernard had a policy, and that was you only get, only certain areas of the city get things, and Otley is one of those areas that doesn't get things, and so, even when we had a situation where we had a partner who found 50% of the funding for some sports facilities which would be tacked on to (inaudible) school, and provided a facility for the community and the school, who vetoed it, Bernard vetoed it.

Now I have to say, you know, Bernard does two speeches. He does the leap up, interrupt when things are going really badly, and then he does the quiet measured when he really hasn't got a hope...(Laughter) ...and I look at the numbers over there and I notice that they are haemorrhaging away, I don't know where you are all going, but okay.

But let's look at a simple, simple fact, why is there a problem with the sports centres? The problem with the sports centres is down, quite happily, I can point the finger quite happily, it's the fact that you didn't pay for any repairs, and what happens is you go around saying, "Oh, look at this terrible new administration", actually you are smiling behind your hands because what you've done is stuffed us with it, because quite frankly, there is poor old John there, with not just these three we are talking about, every sports centre in the city, the ones we built, even the bits, in those areas that got one, those areas are all suffering, they are all in danger. What have we got to do, we have to find that money, why, because we have commitment. We have a commitment that makes sure that everybody gets a go, even Hunslet, everybody will get a go, everybody will get a fair share out of this deal. It will not be creamed off and certain pet projects will get that money, that is not the way we do things.

Can I just, for Councillor Davies's benefit, I need to give you a piece of information ...

THE MAYOR: Can you please ...?

CLLR: The Government have now removed the need

THE MAYOR: Thank you, thank you. (Applause) Councillor Gabriel.

CLLR GABRIEL: Thank you Lord Mayor. I wasn't going to speak today, but after hearing some of the lies that have been said at the other side of the room ...(Uproar).

CLLR HARRIS: Who lied?

CLLR GABRIEL: Beeston hasn't got a sports centre at all, Beeston or Holbeck have no sports centre. South Leeds Sports Centre is in (inaudible) City and Hunslet Ward ...(Uproar)

CLLR ATHA: Let the lady speak.

CLLR GABRIEL: The lies that were told, you told the members of the public in Beeston and Holbeck and West Hunslet that our sports centre was closing down for refurbishment - no, your administration did. Then (inaudible) Executive Board last June asked for £470,000 to be spent on that sports centre. You started running it down, it's not even part of the PFI scheme, you started running it down so that you could close it for refurbishment. No, is that a lie? No, you started moving things to other areas, that's not a lie, because you were closing it for refurbishing so the natural conclusion was that you were running it down, as you said in your e-mail to Splash that you were running it down (Uproar). There you go.

No, that's what I am talking about, lies and more lies, because the administration said that it was closing it down for refurbishment. The money is there, why aren't you spending the money on the only sports centre in West Hunslet. Can I have a straight answer instead of all this ... (Uproar)... and character assassination of Bernard, I think people in this room should be ashamed the way they behave. We have people watching this debate, they've sat their for hours, listening to you finding all this a big joke, and the person who is supposing to be ... (Uproar)

We don't want a PFI sports centre, we just want the sports centre we had, that the money is there for be reopened, and we don't want no more lies, we just want it reopening for our kids in Beeston. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Carter.

CLLR A CARTER: Thank you my Lord Mayor. I can assure Councillor Gabriel it is not a big joke, and I will return to that in a moment. But first of all I notice with interest when we had the vote about extending time that some of the Labour Members voted against at the back, and the rest, some of them voted for and some of them just looked as bemused as you do. Interestingly they, of course, haven't got a Chief Whip here today. Ted Hanley, known affectionately as Lord Ted. Lord Ted, of course, Lord Ted signed up to a very interesting full page in The Times, in The Times, headed, "We believe in Britain". Unfortunately Lord Ted doesn't believe in Britain quite enough to make sure he is here at the Council Meeting to keep us under control, he is on the QE2 I am told for six weeks, QE2 for six weeks. Well wherever he is, wherever he is, he isn't here, but perhaps in the light of this, perhaps in the light of this article he's gone to give Lord Levy some advice. This is signed by all sorts of luminaries, like Sir Alex Ferguson, that's right, Alex Ferguson has signed up

for it (inaudible) Labour Party, they got stuffed at the European Elections. So, my Lord Mayor, we will look forward to welcoming Lord 'Gissa Peerage' Hanley back when he next deigns to be with us. In the meantime we will stick with this.

Now, my Lord Mayor, I have here, I have here the KPMG report on the sports centres in this city, commissioned or reported on the 31st of October 2000. 2000. In this report is all the information that you were given but never gave to us about the state of the sports centres in this city. It makes quite clear the scale of the crisis, the amount of money required and the things that need to be done. What did you do? Absolutely nothing, nothing at all until the backlog of maintenance built up to £60 million. You seem to have a thing about £60 million, it's the same level of backlog you left us on highway maintenance, and I think it's about time, Councillor Harris, that we really set about informing the people of Leeds about what you did leave behind. £60 million on highways, £60 million on leisure centres, millions more on all the rest of the Council's assets that even Councillor Illingworth has referred to as incompetent, not to mention Councillor Murray, social services.

My Lord Mayor, millions and millions of pounds in backlog of maintenance or overspends, and you think you are scot free away with it. Let me tell you, you are not, it is time that everybody in this city realised the parlous state you left the place in, and let me just say this to you, I have an e-mail here which indicates quite clearly to me that you were informed that ie, "We have got a massive problem", this refers to this KPMG report, "we need to do something". Both the Leader and Deputy Leader were aware.

Now then, before you start blaming Brian Walker and Alex, whatever he was called, who are no longer here with you, plenty of the rest of you were here. You could have discussed it, if you didn't know Bernard well tell us you didn't know today. But I want to ask you directly, did, because you at the time were in charge of Recreation. Were you aware of the KPMG report, 31st of October 2000. If you were, why did you do nothing about it? (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Lyons.

CLLR LYONS: Yes, I've sat here all afternoon and listened to you all carrying on down there. What you talked about, what I have heard you say and what you have said, we must consult with the people, that's what we've got to do, is consult, consult, consult, that's what you said Andrew. Now we are talking about the sports centres. We had Councillor Campbell get up and spend four and a half minutes slating one of our Members over there. There is a lot of people been on this Council for a lot of years and I have a lot of respect for most of them, whatever party, whatever party - yes Peter, I have a lot of respect for the good work that they do. I do not agree with their political beliefs but I believe they are trying their best. But when you are in a hole and you are altogether, you are looking for a way out, and you think the way out is to start picking on one of our Members, this just does not work, and when they are talking about jokes, you were making a joke, you were saying different things, and you have gone on about our Chief Whip etc, what our Chief Whip does is nothing to do with you, what our Chief Whip does is something to do with us ...(Laughter). That's right, I don't advise you on what you do, so please don't think you can stand up in this Chamber and advise me what we could do.

Now about these sports centres. John knows, because he was good enough to invite me and take me through with what was happening. Before the election, and you are talking about Village Weekly Liar that used to be known as Liberal News, they are complaining now that we are not telling the truth on some of the stuff. By my Priest would be upset if he thought that what I were putting on my leaflets were untrue, he makes them out for me.

So as far as we are concerned with the sports centres, let's get back to consultation. What consultation did you do to the people in the area around Halton Moor, Osmondthorpe, Nevilles and across at Colton, nothing, none, you took, and they give us a plan like this and they showed us where the cars come down, and you remember it, we had a Highways Officer and he showed us where the cars were coming to the sports centre, but the usual people, wheelchair people, the schools and all them, were not consulted, so they complain that I put in the leaflet that the sports centre was going to close. There's nothing up with our sports centre, we don't want a new one built on Halton Moor, we've got one, if people don't know, East Leeds Sports Centre is up and running, it's not falling to pieces, it is approximately 20 years old.

I have no, wouldn't argue at all with them building somewhere a great big one with Labour Party money, what we are getting from the Government to say that we should build a big sports centre somewhere else, but please don't close our sports centres down. This is what you are doing and everybody is saying, and everybody is saying, "Why are you closing our sports centre down when there is no need to do it", and I am having to say, the only thing I can think about is, the money what they are spending on the sports centres here, spent on a private one built somewhere else.

John wants to get up and speak now because they don't like - we have heard a lot about lies and more lies and that, I haven't told a lie, I have spoke nothing but the truth, and what I'm saying is the people of our areas do not want these sports centres closing down. That is what the majority of people are telling us. Why don't you listen, why don't you listen to us instead of making jokes here, on a day like today, we are here at twenty past eight on a night, and getting all the speakers who think the Yorkshire Post will print all this (inaudible), Yorkshire Post won't print nothing, he'll be having a pint now, he's gone.

I am asking all of you, I am asking all of you here, please, you are scoring points and you are getting personal, and it isn't on. I haven't been personal with none of you, I am friends with most of you, good friends with most of you, please get back to political debate and political debate is about consulting the people, you being in power making the decision at the end of the day. Please do that, but we have a right to put our point of view and let it be heard, and then if it's not being listened to we are entitled to put leaflets out to say that we wanted these sports centres keeping open, and that is what we are going to do. So listen, and come back next time and say I've put another leaflet out, and see whether it's true. You can quiet me down quite easily by saying we aren't going to shut East Leeds Sports Centre down, we are going to keep it open along with the pool, and I will be all right. Thank you very much Lord Mayor. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Carter, Leslie Carter.

CLLR J CARTER: Lord Mayor, I am not going to take a lot of time, it's late and after this we all can go home, but I think there is one fundamental question that has not been answered opposite. Do you want that £30 million to come to the city or not? No ifs, no buts, no why for, do you want it? Now when you do ask that question you've also got to be prepared to take some decisions to have that £30 million. If you are not prepared to take those decisions then you don't - don't shout at me, I didn't shout at you - well I do occasionally. But you have got to be able to be prepared to answer that question.

I remember when our sports centres which are now really falling down, got changed, (inaudible) Bellow did that all those days ago, the last Conservative administration when sport centres, new built(?) sports centres were being opened up all round the city, and to be quite honest your record, your record is very, very poor as far as looking after those sports centres. Whatever you

want to say about them, they didn't happen in two years, that all of a sudden they started disintegrating.

Now this fella here is trying to sort that problem out and you have got to be prepared - if you are not going to put your hands up at once and say, "Yes, we do want that £30 million and we know we've got to accept some hard decisions if we are going to get it". Thank you my Lord Mayor. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Graham.

CLLR GRAHAM: Thank you Lord Mayor. I would just like to comment that at the scrutiny meeting we were told that the bid hadn't gone in yet, you had an extension because we asked if it would affect, because you were late putting the bid in, if it would affect the PFI and we were told September, and then we would be continuing the work on the inquiry until September. Is that not correct?

UNIDENTIFIED SPEAKER: Has the bid gone in or not.

CLLR J PROCTOR: My Lord Mayor, I can answer it if Council permits me.

CLLR LYONS: No, he's spoke once.

CLLR J PROCTOR: I would like to move Council Procedure Rule 14.6 so I may speak again Lord Mayor.

CLLR J CARTER: I second my Lord Mayor. (Uproar)

THE MAYOR: Those in favour. Against. Any abstentions. (CARRIED)

CLLR J PROCTOR: Mayor, thank you, thank you Lord Mayor. It is the case, and indeed Councillor Les Carter did not say that the bid had been submitted. He didn't say that it had, and yet suddenly as usual, it's like the cuts argument isn't it, "It's cuts, cuts, cuts", no mention of the word cuts.

Has the bid gone in, hasn't the bid gone in, well you were told - it gets really boring doesn't it, repeat it over and over again, (Uproar) it's quite simple, the bid has not, has not gone in. The bid has not - Lord Mayor, are we going to get some more time on this, it's rather ridiculous if we have to shout over them all the time.

The bid has not gone in, Councillor Graham was told that quite clearly. Like all of the other, all of the other authorities that were successful in the initial round, they have all be granted an extension of time. I may add though, it was a self imposed target by ourselves, it was a self imposed target by our department as to when we wanted to try and be ready for that bid. In actual fact we don't have to have something there I understand until January of next year, but that isn't where we want to be, we don't want to be there, simply because to tie in this PFI bid with a whole string of other things, and the way in which this PFI bid vehicle that is being used is moving, it is advantageous for it to be in by September, and that's what we want to do.

Let's just deal with consultation shall we. "Oh, no one has been consulted", oh really has no one been consulted. There are page after page after page after page after page of organisations that have in actual fact been consulted. Now if - hang on - if you say, "We want more consultation",

that's a different matter, and I would agree with that actually, I would agree that there is more consultation that is needed. But please, somebody, get a steer from whoever, or Bernard, someone say whether you want this £30 million or not, because that is the situation that we are - well Councillor Gruen goes, "Ha, ha, ha, you're in charge", yes Peter, we're in charge. If it was my Ward and it was my area I would welcome with open arms £10 million worth of investment into it, I would absolutely welcome it, I would welcome it.

Councillor Janet Harper welcomes it, she was quoted in the press saying how absolutely, she was delighted, she was over the moon I think were here words, in terms of Armley, quite rightly, quite rightly so. Unfortunately, unfortunately, through rules, not that I set, but rules that Government set, there was identified in the KPMG report, quite clearly, that Keith Wakefield knew all about, that Tom Murray knew all about, the Jenny(?) Blake knew all about. You weren't a Councillor in 2000?

Interesting though isn't, that same report, in the same report, in the department, neither, when you came as a Councillor and took over your brief you weren't briefed on it and didn't ask about it. The first thing I said to the Officers was, "What are we going to do about sports centres then, come on, what are we going to do, they are in a terrible state, everyone knows the backlog, what can we do". The first thing I did, the very first action I did, I went along to Councillor Minkin's Scrutiny Board and she (inaudible) and said, "Well is there anything that our board could look at during the course of this year, what is your recommendation?", I said, "Please, please look into the issues and the problems that we have to do with sports centres". Councillor Wilkinson chaired a working group that did some valuable work. I am concerned, Councillor Graham, that you are going to duplicate what's already been done in actual fact and so I would urge you to look at the work that's already been done.

But the question still stands, I asked the East, Inner and Outer Area Committees the same question, if you don't want the money, fine, just say. The consequence of that is that you risk all of the £30 million, you know that already because it was in effectively an options appraisal that was done in your administration's time, huge objections at that time to it, and the fact of the matter is is that if you had been in the position that we are in, you would have embraced this proposal with open arms just as we did, because I know for an absolute fact you were just waiting for the PFI credit window to come along. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Taggart.

CLLR TAGGART: There is something missing in all this it seems to me, partly it is to do with MP who reorganised local government in the 1970's and brought a number of (inaudible) authorities into what has become the City of Leeds Metropolitan District Council(?) 1st of April 1974, and it is quite remarkable, in some of the smaller authorities which were absorbed into Leeds, which I have to say did absolutely nothing from the 1940's, 50's and 60's in terms of building sports centres, suddenly faced the possibility of going into Leeds, and if you look at when those sports centres were built, they were built just before they were absorbed into Leeds, and when I - and so Morley (inaudible) Garforth Urban(?) District had a huge row because Garforth was an unusual Borough because it included Garforth (inaudible) Allerton Bywater, so a long sausage shaped authority, and the Councillors wouldn't agree. When I became Chair of Recreation Services it was explained to me the logical place to build a sports centre was probably Garforth because it was a bigger settlement, but the Council's wouldn't agree so they compromised and they built (inaudible) in Kivett(?), which is halfway from one end of the Borough to the other, and if we were doing it, you wouldn't do it like that now, that's how things were done in those days (inaudible), and then Leeds got created and actually started a process, in the old Leeds County Borough(?), and some Councils said, "Actually, these aren't bad actually, we want some of these ourselves", and you are right, there

was a Conservative administration, it had an overall majority between 1976 and '79. It is important because it is the first time, and last time, there had ever been a Conservative administration in Leeds Metropolitan District, using their own resources of Conservative Councils only, and (inaudible) Bellow brought, it is true this, he brought together the three party leaders because the Council was hung between '79 and '90, and it's hung from 1973 - '80, sorry - '73 right through to '76, and he brought the three party leaders in, and that's where the three Leeds City Sports Centres really come from, because each of the party leaders was asked to nominate a location, and Albert King, Sir Albert King, who was the Councillor for the then Gipton Whinmoor Ward, he nominated Fearnville, and the Liberals, at that time had would you believe it Councillors in Hunslet, and they nominated the site which in those days was called (inaudible) Hall, South Leeds, and Peter Sparling(?) was the Deputy Leader and he represented the old Chapel Allerton Ward, and Peter nominated Scot Hall, and that's where those three sites came from. It is an example of a Council which was either (inaudible) tied politically, trying to reach a consensus in terms of providing additional facilities, and that is the history of where those three came from. It is ironic because they opened in 1980, I think they all had their opening ceremonies the second week in May, by which time I was elected for the Scot Hall area and there weren't any Liberals left, in fact all three areas only had Labour representation.

That is the history of where it came from, and there was a big discussion in the Labour Group. We actually wanted more sports facilities throughout the city, and George Moody(?) has his critics, even today, in the Labour Party, though not many. (Laughter) He was absolutely determined and we opened, we proudly opened a whole host of sporting facilities in different parts of the city. I have to say not just in Labour Wards. I can remember when I was Chair of Recreation going to Farsley Celtic, I can remember going to (inaudible) Fitzhenry's and talking about what the development facilities would be, because I was someone who was keen to see sporting facilities developed across the city.

One of the problems was - by the way I was not the Chair of Recreation Services Committee that was referred to earlier on by Councillor Proctor, that was somebody who came after me (inaudible). However, the other issue that does face sport is that in those days there was very little private sector provision, there was hardly any at all, and obviously there was some voluntary sector cricket clubs, that kind of thing, but what we would call sports centres the private sector tended not to be interested in, and now they are our main competitor. So what looked good in the 1980's in terms of bringing in income from sports centres, some of them were struggling by the mid 1990's getting the turnover because of competition from the private sector. Now we in the Labour Group were determined to carry on with our sports centres because they were cheaper, they were often more accessible, they weren't just seen as being there for rich people or (inaudible), but they are for everybody, particular more working class people. So we did everything we did with the best of intentions and I think the Labour administration, much reviled by the current coalition, it should be understood that we did absolutely tremendous things in terms of sports provision across the city, and that should never, ever be forgotten. Thank you very much. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor McArdle.

CLLR MCARDLE: Thank you Lord Mayor. I want to qualify any comments I make, I haven't heard all the debate, I have had to go out, but I think Councillor Taggart is right in his appraisal, particularly Morley. Before Morley was a subsidiary to the Leeds City Council area it put up Morley Leisure Centre (inaudible), and I think the fundamental question was, a good little point that Councillor Les Carter has made is do we want the £30 million, and I think we should use it or lose it. (Applause)

THE MAYOR: Councillor Atha.

CLLR ATHA: Well I started off about an hour and a half ago actually, I said let's keep the temperature down and let's look at things impartially and objectively. I regret to say I failed.

We have adduced one gem of information which we did not know before, and this is despite a Scrutiny Committee only two or three days ago, and that is the deadline for the submission of this PFI is January. Now that leaves us ample time to do the things that I was talking about.

Let me just deal with one or two points first, having established that fact. Aristotle, who you will all be familiar with from your early days, classified arguments in various types, and what he said, "Use only when you can't deal with the argument attack the man".

Quite frankly this argument, which has been launched today, I must say it doesn't affect me at all, it amuses me, I think it must make some of your Members however feel just a bit uneasy because really that is not the kind of argument that one normally has with people with who respect, if respect isn't there then anything goes. So quite frankly, in a way Councillor Proctor's recital was very flattering. He talked about the events. Well yes, I was instrumental with my colleagues in producing the first Opera in the Park, the first Party in the Park, the Reggae concerts in Potternewton. Did that, not just me, a number of us did it, and are you saying that those shouldn't happen now? S

CLLR J PROCTOR: I you had listened I said that they should.

CLLR ATHA: So that must be a seal of approval for what I did, and when we come to things like the Opera North, are you suggesting Opera North should in fact not receive the support they are getting now. Don't speak when you've finished, when I've finished not when you - Opera North, you have mentioned, you are not saying to your voters that should have withdrawn its grant, no, so Northern Ballet Theatre, the most successful touring ballet theatre in the country, based in Leeds. Again, something the city is proud of. The Playhouse, the single biggest provincial producing theatre in the country, at the head of all the others, and again something of which Leeds can be proud, and not created just by me but by those associated with me at the time.

We could talk about the Grand Theatre, the Grand Theatre as a receiving theatre has for the last 15 - 20 years, under the Chairmanship of myself (inaudible) been a theatre that has required not subsidy from the city - yes, no subsidy for the Grand Theatre, remember the Grand Theatre Board covers - and I will prove it to you, I'll have a fiver on it. The Grand Theatre Board covers the West Yorkshire Playhouse - the Grand Theatre, it covers the City Varieties and the Hyde Park, and over those years I have mentioned the Grand Theatre has not required any of that subsidy and the reserves that we saved up as a result was a kind of half a million pounds, we put into the transformation. These are the facts, and yet it would appear that one was being attacked for being associated with that kind of success.

You mention the Yorkshire Sports Aid. Sports Aid Region, which we set up thirty(?) odd years ago, again with (inaudible) and others, is the most successful regional sports aid organisation in the country, raising over £80,000 to £100,000 last year(?), and giving away £80,000 in grant. We got £4,000 from the City Council and guess what the Leeds City children got, something like £28,000 in return, money spent on that sport aid. So it is a damn good investment. Now if you are only against the person in this, you are really reciting all these things, all of which are successes. You didn't mention the Craft Centre, which is again a success, one of the major successes in the craft world, and is deemed so if you read the information.

So I would suggest that if you are making an attack on those personal grounds, the attack has failed.

Could I also point out that I was no longer Chairman, sadly and it was a great mistake on the part of my party, for many years to do with sport, because if you remember we split the committee, one half into sport and the other half into so called culture, ignoring the fact that sport is part of culture. I was against that split, but that split took place, and sports centres were under the egis of others, and so I am not in any way shrugging off responsibility because I was a member of the majority group at that time, so one accepts responsibility.

If I can deal very rapidly with some of the other points made. Councillor Campbell made a completely incoherent - he was inaudible, I said incoherent, we couldn't hear him. It was obviously very funny, but if I can remind him he is the person who was Leader of the Lib Dems and sank without trace because no one actually noticed he had gone. But this was the person, if I may say so, who has actually spoken to me. (Inaudible) I withdraw that remark, (inaudible) with pleasure.

The fact of the matter is you said that we did nothing in Otley. On the contrary we did. We spent quite a lot on the pool and kept it open when plainly it had to close because of all kinds of reasons. We also put a lot of money into the school, the school, and it was a choice, should we put it into the school with all these other facilities, or into a separate centre. The school got some very large facilities as a result, if you don't know that it's because you haven't done your homework.

(Inaudible) Terrence(?). I apologise if I upset you in any way in (inaudible) about Morley. I do think Morley is a great place, I think it's a town that needs a lot of development, and if it's going to get facilities they should be at least as good as they are now. That is the only point I was making and I will support you and do it without any kind of political, for other reasons.

When we come to Councillor Price(sic) and PFI - is it Pryke, sorry, I got, my notes are not very good. Forgive me. You said you were against PFI, you said that clearly, yet you will vote for it, and so there seems to be sort of diversion in your own mind as to what you should be doing. You don't actually believe in it, you said so clearly, yet you voted for it. I don't think that is necessarily a criticism of you, it may be *force majeure*.

Let me come to Councillor Akhtar, and I can't remember much except - I got my not here - political rant, we don't know what he said, and I think that is possibly true. Again, with Councillor Blackburn, I was overcome by his academic and intellectual content of his contribution and felt unable to respond so I retired in fear.

Councillor Harris goes back to his, and the general trend, of exculpation from that point. Almost all, every day for almost every issue that has come up you have blamed the past Government, the Labour Government, the past administration, and the point is getting to now in your own time, now you have been in two years and going into your third, you will no longer be able to keep using that excuse and you are going to have to take the responsibility, and I think by this time next year we will be having to use your argument say, "Look what a mess you've left us". At one time I might have thought that was optimistic, but quite frankly (inaudible) Councillor Cleasby's narrow statement, and the one who nearly lost the seat in Moortown, I think Moortown has a special interest than others so close to us here, I am hoping there will be change, but I won't do what (inaudible) before, claim the gains before we have made them.

What I would do is with regret, because I know now it's a hopeless case. I had hoped to persuade the Council to do something quite simple, say, yes, we want a period of time, I didn't know it was so long, until January, let's look again at what we are going to do, let's get all the facts on the table, nothing hidden, no hidden KPMG report, and I do remember seeing the KPMG report although

I don't know how because in, at the time it was given I wasn't on that committee. But I do remember taking it to pieces with Officers because it said silly things like this, if you look at the map you will see we would have closed Holt(?) Park because Guiseley is so close. Everyone knows to get to Guiseley you have got to go either mountaineering or a long road round, or three buses. (Uproar) I just said so - and if you look at the (inaudible), you see I said it before, ooh you said so, it's called delayed thinking and incomprehension, and often (inaudible).

CLLR A CARTER: You just undo yourself the longer you talk.

CLLR ATHA: On the whole I think I have acquitted myself rather well. I thought, I might well, and I have a feeling, if you talk to your backbenchers you will get the same feeling, that possibly there is a case for a re-look, and just think how much better and how much greater credibility you would have, and you can go out to the public with more and more and better leaflets if you could say, yes, you were prepared to think again, you were prepared to listen to other views and other voices, and you are going to present all the facts, have everything on the table, and when that happened we shall come to a conclusion and hopefully take the public with us as well as the majority of the people here. That's what I was asking for and it seems sad that we are not going to get it, given now we know there is a January deadline. If, however, I have succeeded I trust that at the next meeting you will be giving me another encomium of similar length.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Leadley, did you want your amendment to have the recorded vote on or on all of them?

CLLR LEADLEY: Yes I did, I asked that at the stage when I spoke.

CLLR FINNIGAN: Second Lord Mayor.

THE MAYOR: Councillor Leadley, just to clarify, just on your amendment you wanted a recorded vote on or on all of them? You said you wanted a recorded vote, I am asking do you want, do you need a recorded vote for all of the amendments or just yours?

CLLR LEADLEY: Well I think it would be more straight forward if all were recorded. Thank you Lord Mayor.

THE MAYOR: And Councillor Finnigan second?

CLLR FINNIGAN: Yes.

THE MAYOR: Okay. All in the allocated seats and press the button P please. All those in favour of the amendment in the name of Councillor Leadley press the plus button. Those against press the minus button, and abstentions press the zero.

Okay, 86 Members present, 5 in favour, zero abstentions, 81 against, therefore it is lost. (LOST)

Again, if you could press the button P, and all those in favour of the amendment in the name of Councillor Proctor, if you press the plus button. Those against if you press minus, and the abstentions press zero. In the name of Councillor Proctor.

86 Members present, 52 in favour, one abstention, 32 against. (CARRIED) Therefore it is carried and it becomes the substantive Motion.

All those, if you press plus button, P button again, P button. All those in favour of the substantive Motion, if you press the plus button. Those against, minus, and abstentions zero.

Okay. 85 Members present, 52 in favour and one abstention, 32 against, therefore it is carried. (CARRIED).

That concludes the White Paper Motion. We will move on to the next item. (Uproar) I was all geared up.

Members of Council, thank you very much, it has been a very warm meeting. Thank you.