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COUNCIL VERBATIM 8TH NOVEMBER 2017

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LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Held on

Wednesday, 8th November 2017

At

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
CIVIC HALL,
LEEDS

In the Chair:

THE LORD MAYOR
(COUNCILLOR J DOWSON)

VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

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VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL
MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 8th NOVEMBER 2017

THE LORD MAYOR: Welcome back, everyone. I hope you all had a nice lunch. Just to remind you yet again to just turn your mobile phones on to silent and a reminder also that we are webcast today.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE LORD MAYOR: If we can move firstly into Announcements of which I have several.

Firstly, and I think Councillor Finnigan did actually refer to this a little bit earlier, you may have noticed that Councillor Neil Dawson is not here today following a recent spell in hospital. I am sure that you all join with me in sending him our very, very best wishes for a full and speedy recovery. *(Applause)*

Secondly I would like to remind you all that it is actually Armistice Day and you are all welcome to join me at the War Memorial in Victoria Gardens for a short service at 11.00am, and there will also be the usual Remembrance Sunday service where again you are all welcome to join me. We will be meeting at Civic Hall at 10.30 and then we will be walking down to the War Memorial together.

Finally it is with great sadness that I have to notify you, if you do not know already, of the recent death of the former Lady Mayoress Liz Dawn, who sadly passed away on 25th September 2017. Liz was Lady Mayoress in 2000 and accompanied her good friend Councillor Bernard Atha on numerous occasions during the Mayoral year. She also raised more than a million pounds for her breast cancer charity, which funded a specialist Breast Cancer Unit at St James's here in Leeds. *(Applause)*

I think it is only appropriate if we could all stand and observe a minute's silence.

(Silent tribute)

ITEM 1 – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 13th SEPTEMBER 2017

THE LORD MAYOR: We have got a lot of business today so if we can move straightaway into Minutes of the meeting held on 13th September 2017. Councillor Ogilvie.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Latty.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I would like to move to the vote. (*A vote was taken*) That is CARRIED.

ITEM 2 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

THE LORD MAYOR: Declarations of Interest. Does any Member have a declaration of pecuniary interest they would like to make? (*None*) Great.

ITEM 3 – COMMUNICATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: We will move on to Communications. Tom Riordan.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Just to inform Council of two responses from Ministers to Council resolutions: from Guy Opperman MP, the Minister for Pensions and Financial Inclusion, in respect of the White Paper on WASPI – Women Against State Pension Inequality, considered by Council in September; and from Jake Berry MP, Minister for Local Growth and the Northern Powerhouse in respect of the White Paper on Government Investment – Northern Powerhouse, also considered by Council in September. These responses have previously been circulated to all Members of Council.

ITEM 4 - DEPUTATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. We are now moving straight on to Deputations.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thanks Lord Mayor, and to report there are four Deputations; Leeds Children's Mayor; Campaign for Better Transport; Leeds Rhinos Foundation; and Bardsey Action Group.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ogilvie.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Latty.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: If I can move that to the vote, please. (*A vote was taken*) That is CARRIED and we would like to move to our first Deputation.

DEPUTATION ONE – LEEDS CHILDREN'S MAYOR

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. If you would like to make your speech now, Isla, to Council, and it should

be no longer than five minutes and if you can begin by just introducing us to your Deputation.

ISLA BENTLEY: Good afternoon, Lord Mayor and Councillors. I am Isla Bentley from Gildersome Primary School. This is Charlotte Evans and this is Grace Keady.

If I was Leeds Children's Mayor my priority would be to tackle bullying in schools, the community and online. I propose that we raise money so that we can get a kindness box in every school around Leeds and to make posters to stick around the city of Leeds. My manifesto is all about people staying safe everywhere and anywhere.

I strongly believe that every term the whole of each school has a whole day of learning about how bullying can affect people, but children can have fun at the same time. I suggest that we have a competition to find the best anti-bullying poster to stick up around Leeds. I also believe that every school should have an anti-bullying Ambassador. For example, I would be happy to come to schools where there are victims of bullying and we could speak about how they feel. I am a loyal, kind-hearted girl who takes part in a lot of charity events. I have seen myself how bullying can affect people, therefore I am very passionate about stamping out bullying in every school in Leeds. I would turn up to every engagement and would really enjoy being Leeds Children's Mayor.

My manifesto – Kindness Costs Nothing - Stop the Bullies! - will teach every soul in Leeds to be kind and respectful. My manifesto does not just help children, it helps adults and families too. Why should children be banned from social media because of the mean people? Why should people be scared of going to school and work? My idea will encourage everybody in Leeds to help others and always try to be kind to others, no matter who they are. All children should be educated about cyber-bullying, why people do it and how it can affect others. If I was Leeds Children's Mayor I really would help stamp out bullying.

I believe everybody will benefit from my idea. If children are happier their parents will be happier too, which is why we urgently need to reduce bullying in schools. Having good support from other children and adults will benefit all victims and the bullies themselves. Cyber-bullying is a serious issue in our society. Educating young people about cyber-bullying, will benefit everyone who uses social media. Everybody in the community of Leeds should feel at least some change in our great city.

My manifesto is the best idea for a low cost/no cost idea. How much does it cost to be kind and how much is it to raise money? Almost nothing. I would raise money by holding events such as a sponsored silence, a teddy tombola and maybe a jumble sale. I once helped raise more than £1,000. I would start fundraising in Gildersome and the surrounding areas and if it goes well I would spread my idea around the whole of Leeds. It may cost £2 or £3 for pens and paper for the competitions, but we can get that back from the money we raise. Thank you.
(Standing ovation)

THE LORD MAYOR: That was lovely, Isla, thank you. Councillor Ogilvie.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: I move that the matter be referred to the Director of Children and Families...

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Latty.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: ...for consideration in consultation with the relevant Executive Member.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Latty.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: You see, Isla, this is what happens when you don't take enough notice! Your speech was lovely and you were very confident, it was really good. I would like to call for the vote, please. *(A vote was taken)* I am pleased to say that has been CARRIED.

Thank you for coming here today. Officers from the relevant Department will be in contact with you in due course. Thank you for coming, Isla, and your Deputation. *(Applause)*

DEPUTATION TWO – CAMPAIGN FOR BETTER TRANSPORT

THE LORD MAYOR: Ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon and thank you for coming. Welcome to today's Council meeting. If you would like to please now make your speech to Council, which should be no longer than five minutes, and if you could begin by introducing the people who are supporting you in your Deputation.

MR M PARRY: Thank you, my Lord Mayor and fellow and Councillors. We are the local representatives from the Campaign for Better Transport. I am Mark Parry and with me today is Ray Wilkes, Jackie Wilkes and Bill Timms.

Today we face a number of challenges in Leeds that many of you will recognise. Congestion is harming our economy. People struggle to get to work and access vital services on time. Air quality is affecting the air that we breathe and health issues are being developed in an environment that discourages active travel.

We can no longer continue to predict and provide for cars in our congested centres and suburbs. We are calling for more bus priority measures in Leeds. Buses are the cheapest and easiest way of reducing congestion. Each bus with 30 passengers takes around 25 cars off the road.

Leeds hopes to double the numbers of bus passengers - that will only happen if bus travel is as quick, or quicker, than car travel.

Less land is needed for car parking - it can be put to better use, for example new homes. Bus passengers are healthier, walking further than the occupants of cars. Bus

passengers are economic powerhouses. Not only are they using it to commute to work and travel to other services, they have the flexibility to change their plans to undertake new activities and spend money in the centres of our local economy. Instead of having to accommodate how to park a car, they can change plans at the drop of a hat.

Investing in bus infrastructure is lucrative. We are talking strong cost benefit ratios of up to £7 for every £1 invested. Investments can start at five figures and benefit our transport system for years.

Works to deliver bus priority create little disruption and take little time to implement. Bus priority measures benefit other transport users such as pedestrians and cyclists, and car users too. They make the built environment nicer for those who live and work in the area.

Bus priorities are the best way of encouraging motorists to choose to use buses. Reliable buses overtaking congested car lanes (as on the A65 in Kirkstall) should persuade more motorists that buses can be quicker than cars. They see congested car lanes and empty bus lanes. A congested lane full of traffic is not efficient and damages the health of all of us - pedestrians, cyclists and motorists.

If we modelled an average loaded bus on the density of car traffic moving at 30mph, it would be 211 metres long.

Buses need more space in Leeds. Outside of the city centre, they merge in with general traffic that has more flexibility with routes. The buses, with less flexibility, find themselves trapped in traffic queues that they cannot bypass. Sensible investment in bus priority measures would help to ease the flow of buses, making them more reliable.

Buses trapped in congestion not only increase journey times but have knock-on effects causing cancellations, more buses needed to operate a service and therefore higher fares. Unless we do something to stop this, the decline in bus passengers will continue, car usage will go up and congestion in Leeds will get even worse.

Recent changes to the Horsforth Roundabout with no extra bus priority improvements have actually made congestion worse, creating even longer queues for all traffic, including buses. Certainly, it will do nothing to increase the use of public transport - the opposite - and it cost around £7 million.

Transport is a topic that affects everyone. We ask that when there are decisions that affect transport use, you consider bus priority. We are also here to help and offer support. If you need inspiration or assistance, please do not hesitate to contact us.

Finally, we ask that Leeds City Council considers setting up a transport sub-forum for people to join and sending representatives to the West Yorkshire Combined Authority District sub-committee for Leeds as the main provider of infrastructure for most of the transport in the city.

Thank you for your time today. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ogilvie.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: I move that the matter be referred to the Director of City Development for consideration in consultation with the relevant Executive Member.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Latty.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: If I could call for the vote to refer the Deputation. (*A vote was taken*) That is CARRIED.

Thank you for coming here today. Officers from the relevant Department will be in contact with you in due course. Thank you for coming. (*Applause*)

DEPUTATION THREE – LEEDS RHINOS FOUNDATION

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's council meeting. If you would like to now make your speech to Council, which should be no more than five minutes, and if you could begin by just introducing us to the members of the Deputation.

MS L FORSELL: Good afternoon Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors. I have got Bob Bowman, Chief Operating Officer, and Leon Crick, Rugby League Development Plan Manager. We would like to thank the Mayor and the Councillors for giving us the opportunity to talk to you about the work that we do at Leeds Rhinos Foundation and we look forward to working with you on some of our programmes throughout the city through the Foundation.

In particular today we are talking about the launch of the Leeds Rhinos Women's Team. We launched in September at Emerald Headingley Stadium and we are now looking forward to getting the squad up and running for January 2018.

Following the launch in September we had a lot of media response and it has been really, really positive so going forward we are looking at using that to give it as much promotion as we can.

We are at the stage now of building a team, so we have had team selection and we are looking to get things under way in January and competing in the launch of the Women's Super League in April.

At the Foundation we have had a Rugby League Development Plan for four years now that focuses on supporting community teams and schools within Leeds and as part of that the women and girls has always been a key aim. Going forward with the launch of the women's team that has been brought about by the RFL who are launching a Super League with other teams across Yorkshire such as Castleford Tigers and Featherstone Rovers and Bradford Bulls taking place. We are going to look at building on our programme within the community clubs and schools so we are

always supporting girls, giving them the opportunities to play at the clubs, in schools, and getting more girls and women involved in sport which I am sure you will agree is a massive benefit for the city.

As part of our plan we are looking to just increase the standards throughout our clubs and giving girls a real opportunity to play grass roots rugby league, whether that is playing at a club all the way up to representing England, hopefully, and with the 2021 World Cup taking part in England, we are really keen to make sure that we support girls getting them involved from primary school, high school into a community club and at Leeds Rhinos giving them the opportunity to play in the Women's Rugby League World Cup, which will be massive and will only take momentum going forward with the women's team who I am lucky to be part of, I am flying out to Australia on Friday this week to take part in the Women's Rugby League World Cup.

At the Foundation we are all about increasing standards, engaging more players and working with a lot of people within the community and hopefully you would like to help us work with a broad range of children and adults. Thank you very much. (*Standing ovation*)

THE LORD MAYOR: It is a real honour to be in the presence of an international rugby player, because you did not actually introduce yourself in all that. Do you just want to tell everybody who you are?

MS L FORSELL: Yes, I am Lois Forsell.

THE LORD MAYOR: Excellent rugby player, everybody, you really need to go and have a look. Councillor Ogilvie.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: I move that the matter be referred to the Director of City Development for consideration in consultation with the relevant Executive Member.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Latty.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: If I can call for the vote to refer the Deputation. (*A vote was taken*) That is CARRIED.

I would like to thank you all for coming to today's meeting. Officers from the relevant department will be in contact with you in due course. Thank you for coming, thank you. (*Applause*)

DEPUTATION FOUR – BARDSEY ACTION GROUP

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. If you could now make your speech to Council, which should be no more than five minutes' long, and if you could just begin by introducing us to yourself and Members of your Deputation.

MR C SIDLE: thank you. Lord Mayor, fellow Councillors, thank you for the opportunity to make this address to Chamber. My name is Chris Sidle and I am representing Bardsey Parish Council. I am here today making a joint deputation with Professor Edward Stentiford, Chairman of Bardsey Parish Council, and Corina Kettlewell on behalf of the Bardsey Action Group.

We are here to draw your attention to a looming democratic and physical threat that would cause irreversible damage to our environment and the faith that residents of Leeds have in the power and determination of its elected representatives to uphold its principles of transparency and accountability. We share your democratic objectives and place our trust in you to help avoid this damage from happening.

We asked for this opportunity because of deep concern and frustration that months of attempted dialogue has destroyed Bardsey residents' faith in the proscribed communication processes with the Council, that officers appear to be being forced to withhold information from the community but are unable to justify why and seem unable to bring to your attention facts that you should be made aware of.

For 25 years the Parish Council and the independent Bardsey Action Group have unanimously supported Leeds City Council's green belt policy. The Parish Council has undertaken numerous consultations with residents – from design statements to the recently made Bardsey Neighbourhood Plan, all of which affirmed the need to find alternative solutions to our village housing need other than the green belt destructive proposals submitted by developers and landowners.

Bardsey Action Group was formed in 1992 to reflect the residents' concerns about threats to the green belt during the lengthy Unitary Development Plan processes and, as these threats have re-emerged, is co-ordinating a joint response. We share with Leeds City Council, our MP and our ward Councillors a common purpose - to prevent development sprawl along the A58 between Leeds and Wetherby that would create a new suburb, one much loved by house builders but that would fail to address the real housing needs of either Bardsey or Leeds.

We therefore recognise the efforts that you as Councillors have made over the last decade to try to defend the A58 villages and landscape from the deluge of planning applications that seek to take advantage during the painstaking process of strategic planning that you have gone through.

I began by highlighting two threats, physical and democratic, so firstly to deal with the physical, the environmental and landscape issues.

Like other communities in Leeds and West Yorkshire, Bardsey and its nearby neighbour Collingham have suffered from flooding. The impact for those most directly affected is devastating and now Leeds City Council is the main agency in partnership with the Environment Agency working to address the risk, including the impact of housing development.

If the risk management process was subsequently found to have overlooked a relatively small piece of information and that omission led to a disaster, then the community would seek to hold those responsible to account. The complex process of assessing risk, interpreting data and planning preventative measures is the preserve of experts. Simple observation, local knowledge and the collection of visual evidence of what were once rare but are now more frequent occurrences is the presence of residents. The combination of the two would create the best chance of avoiding the damage that can so easily ruin lives.

We ask the Council to audit how the flood risk liaison between its agencies and other public bodies is working and to meet with us to explain how the Council plans to address our detailed concerns - concerns that are almost certainly not unique to our village.

Secondly, democracy and transparency. The second subject of this deputation concerns the democratic process that allows the public to be consulted about all issues that directly affect them and to be given as much information as possible to allow them to come to an informed view on the decisions to be taken in their name. We know that there are times when it would not be safe to provide public access to certain information - security intelligence, public health threats and a number of technical issues which most people will not be fully able to comprehend, but national and local government are committed to be fully transparent in carrying out their respective responsibilities, and to apply the powers invested in them to protect the public interest.

Again, I draw your attention to the impact of a blip in those processes. Despite its resolve to abide by its principles of transparency, Leeds City Council can be forced into backtracking, thus preventing public scrutiny. This can occur purely because of a clash between case law, statutory law and national and local guidelines, where only the legal implications and technicalities are considered. The impact of a misguided decision can be irreversible, however, and at the stroke of a pen what you and residents have fought to avoid can become a reality

My Lord Mayor and Members of the Council, these are not fanciful imaginings, they are current and real threats and we want to work with you and your officers to prevent them from becoming reality. Even if it may seem insurmountable, we can work together to persuade Government to urgently look at the guidelines that lie at the heart of these problems and by so doing secure the trust and confidence of residents in the ability and resolve of their elected representatives to protect the communities they serve.

We thank you for this opportunity and hope we may now arrange a meeting to discuss our Deputation. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ogilvie.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: I move the matter be referred to the Director of City Development for consideration in consultation with the relevant Executive Member.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Latty.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

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

I would like to thank you for coming to today's meeting. Officers from the relevant Council Department will be in contact with you in due course. Thank you for coming. *(Applause)*

ITEM 5 – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD – LEEDS
LOCAL PLAN AIRE VALLEY

THE LORD MAYOR: We now move to Item 5, Recommendations of the Executive Board. Councillor Lewis.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ogilvie.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Leadley.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: Lord Mayor, everyone should welcome and support the Aire Valley Action Plan which is perhaps the least contentious part of the Leeds Local Development Framework Site Allocations jigsaw. If the housing numbers were revised down to a sensible level to meet the needs of our citizens rather than the hollow ambitions of others, there would be no theoretical need for loss of green belt to housing. The 70,000 net LDF housing target foresaw more than 12,000 houses being built on green belt across Leeds. Bringing the net housing target down from 70,000 to 46,000 would be a reduction of 24,000.

On a map the land covered by the Aire Valley Action Plan looks like a giant sea turtle about to swim off majestically to the South East to devour Castleford, and I am sure Members who have looked at the map will agree about that. Much of the Aire Valley South Eastern boundary is formed by the M1-A1 link opened in 2004, so most of the green belt boundary was adjusted in anticipation to run along it in the UDP of 2001. Only the head of the turtle lies beyond the motorway. The thinking part is the not green belt but the lower jaw is green belt.

The Aire Valley Inspector reported on 8th August before the housing numbers meltdown, so there will be some loss of green belt to housing on the turtle's lower jaw, but that should not compromise the rest of the Site Allocations Plan. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The Aire Valley Action Plan was a result, obviously, of about how more local decision making should be encouraged and how if we are able to plan for our own future we should actually be able to enable a national economy by getting our own economy done, based on the fact that we know best about what should happen in our area.

I was told off when I raised this in Executive Board as being irresponsible but it is actually something that should be mentioned. The principle behind the Aire Valley is that we should be the people who are in charge of it. HS2 Ltd has decided that they are, as part of their project to come to the city, going to place their rolling stock depot slap bang in the middle of our Aire Valley Action Plan.

I know that some people who do not think too deeply about it might welcome it for the potential jobs that it supposedly brings. However, I would point out that by this being imposed by HS2 Ltd on to the Leeds Plan it means actually the Leeds Plan has to be amended. This land, for instance, would have had a much higher employment volume than that which would be proposed through a rolling stock depot. That means that actually potentially we will have less jobs on this site than we ourselves actually planned for. Without the information that has not been given so far by HS2 Ltd we do not exactly know what kind of jobs are going to be within this rolling stock yard but since quite a lot of them are going to be due to the maintenance, both internal and external and not all of it is to do with engineering, quite a lot of it will just be to do with cleaning, potentially we might not have the number of skilled jobs that we were hoping to achieve through this Aire Valley Action Plan and on this particular site.

Thirdly, HS2 is going to take a long time to come, so while we are waiting for HS2 to come to this city, there is potentially a very large piece of employment land which will have no employment on it, so we are going to miss out a decade's worth of employment opportunities for our people.

I would like to see some kind of opinion being made by this Council to that kind of imposition because it goes against the very spirit of the devolved economic decision making that the Coalition Government actually had in enabling this Council to put this plan together. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I generally welcome the fact that we have now got the Aire Valley Action Plan through inquiry. It does bring about the possibility of a development, not just housing but for industry and commerce as well that was in fact begun by (Councillor Golton will remember, I am sure) our joint administration a number of years ago. These things take one heck of a long time to deliver. I am not going to be critical of the administration on this because these things do take a long time to come to fruition and it presents a significant opportunity for the city. The link road which, of course, was built during the administration that I have referred to that Councillor Golton and I were part of is in place and now we have the planning framework in place as well.

Just to touch upon the HS2 rolling stock depot. The way Councillor Golton seems to try and interpret it is I think a bit misleading...

COUNCILLOR: It definitely is.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: ...and I suspect other people will say precisely the same thing. We received significant assurances at the Exec Board and have prior to that on this particular development and, indeed, none other than our illustrious Chief Executive was at pains to assure us about the quality of jobs and the skills required to maintain the rolling stock associated with HS2. To hear Councillor Golton talk you would think we were talking about a Hornby train set. We are not.

The only point I would agree with him on is that because this is a relatively new development it does cause some disruption to what the original plans were and the judgment has to be, is it going to be the right thing in the medium to long term? I think it is. Sometimes you have to take these judgments and the administration has clearly taken that judgment and I have no problem in saying I support them in that. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think this is a fairly uncontentious issue which some people have tried to shoehorn contentious issues into, so we had the revisit of this morning's debate from Tom – well done, Tom – Stewart doing a typical Stewart.

There are things that are sometimes a challenge and a bit of a headache but that you fundamentally embrace, and the idea of having the HS2 depot is something we as a city would embrace. Wakefield does not embrace it and they are happy for it to come here. It is not a Richmond Hill Mark II, it is not just cleaners coming in at night. These are incredibly high tech vehicles that are coming in that will need people with i-Pads doing all kind of wonderful technical things, and so that is about a highly skilled workforce. There will be people cleaning as well but these are jobs that we should really welcome to the city. What we are doing currently is actually working with HS2 on the best way that that requirement lands within the Enterprise Zone. What it generates is actually other firms looking and saying well, if they have got their depot there there are things that we would like to do not far away equally linked with HS2, future rail developments.

One thing leads to another and another. It is dead easy to take that view of “Oh we don't want that because it is only cleaners” but you are forgetting about the implications of everything you want to turn your nose up at and I think it is something you are very prone to, Stewart, and sometimes you ought to step back and see the bigger picture.

I will just finish with commenting on the hard work of the officers in getting to where we have got to and I remember many, many years ago going and looking at a piece of waste ground and saying “That is where we want the link road to go.” This is stuff that is very long term and I think as a Council we should all be pleased that we have got to where we have got to, thank those officers who have really spent years on

this and let us avoid the chelping and the cheap shots because this is bigger than that. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Right, I would now like to call for the vote to approve the recommendations set out in the report. (*A vote was taken*) That is CARRIED.

ITEM 6 – REPORT ON AMENDMENTS TO THE EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now moving on to Item 6, Councillor Ogilvie.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harland.

COUNCILLOR HARLAND: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: We can now move to the vote to note the City Solicitor's Report on Executive Arrangements. (*A vote was taken*) That is CARRIED.

ITEM 7 – REPORT – PLANS PANELS ANNUAL REPORT

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now moving on to Item 7, Report from the Panels Annual Report. Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Again, can I formally move, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ogilvie.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Leadley.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, the Plans Panel Annual Report is brief. As a Panellist I would like to thank all the officers who presented planning applications or wrote about them during the 2018/17 municipal year. Perhaps the report should make clear the point that Councillors can make a difference. It is not always up to officers. One thing that highlights that is the Hot Foods Takeaway Policy which grew out of MacDonald's defeat at Tingley White Bear. If it had been left to officers Tingley White Bear would have been let through and although I presented planning evidence on behalf of Morley Town Council which saw off MacDonald's, we would not have had that chance if Members of Plans Panel South and West had not dug their heels in and refused MacDonald's parallel application to make them go to appeal.

The Hot Foods Takeaway Policy, which must be fairly close to adoption by now, was drawn up only after all party insistence by Members who had been told repeatedly that it was not needed. White Bear showed that it was; without it we had a big policy gap.

Sometimes Members seem to be keener than the bureaucracy at large in upholding the planning system in the public interest, with particular regard to enforcement, and I have my own reasons to be thankful for that.

The list of significant planning approvals on page 30 is a bit odd. Last year we had plenty in Morley much bigger than 46 houses at New Village Way and the 93 at Towcester Avenue in Middleton is listed twice, so a better selection might have been made.

Development Plans Panel can seem to be a bit of a Cinderella but for better or worse it is placed to bring great benefit or cause great harm throughout Leeds well beyond the affairs of the City Council. A lot seems to depend on who chairs it. One long serving Chairman whose name escapes me since it has been airbrushed beyond humanist memory by Stalinist airbrushing, thought that we were in a race to outgrow Birmingham. Much of the housing numbers mire that we are now in was formed in that era and then made it almost impossible by Councillor Walshaw, who seemed to be completely out of his depth. Others will have to find ways out of the problems which they helped to create.

There were a few meetings when Councillor Congreve was Chairman so he was not able to show his paces, but Councillor Venner who chaired DPP in the year being reported was its best recent Chairman. She knew that she did not know all that much about planning so she did her homework, she read the reports thoroughly, had at least one re-written because it was unintelligible and was ready to listen to the old lags and anoraks who tend to gather in that part of the Council. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Peter Gruen.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: Lord Mayor, thank you very much. The only thing I got of that was something about airbrushing, but I think he probably meant hairbrushing, which I know he does very regularly.

I want to start by thanking my predecessor Councillor Fiona Venner because this report really refers to last year and her stewardship of Development Plans Panel. New to planning, new to Development Plans planning but under her stewardship she managed to shepherd her flock very well indeed and some very important decisions were made.

I also want to thank some superb officers who advise the Panel. I think David Feeney, Martin Elliot, Lois Pickering, Kathryn Holloway and their teams work exceptionally hard and diligently and have many calls on their time right across a different spectrum within the planning arena. They deserve credit.

So do – in fact I might reprise part of my speech from this morning – I think so do Phil Crabtree and Steve Speak. They were very well respected senior colleagues and when Opposition Councillors referred to spurious figure of 70,000, it is an insult – an insult to those officers and an insult to us. That figure did not come from nowhere. That figure was meticulously calculated and advised and I am sure that other politicians take the advice which is given categorically, unequivocally and untaintedly by Directors and their colleagues. I just want to put the record straight about that.

Councillor Procter said how did we arrive at the figures. Actually, he was part of it. He was part of it. He was part of the SHMA process. I reformed the group, he sat on it, so did actually Councillor Colin Campbell but he wants to forget about his part in this. He was part of it and the whole process came out with around 55,000. It is evidence-led.

This morning's debate, Lord Mayor, was really about green belt and nobody mentioned it. I am not surprised, because Sajid Javid said "We are going to tackle inter-generational unfairness and the obvious dysfunctionality in the housing market. We have got to tackle green belt." There we are.

Mr Hammond, no less a person than Mr Hammond - some would say there is no less a person than Mr Hammond - talked about reclassifying some of the protected countryside and land that will be used as part of a deal to allow extra borrowing to fund extra house building. The Chancellor is keen to liberalise planning restrictions and is looking closely at building at the green belt. There you have it, not from me, not from the Labour administration but from your own national politicians.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor McKenna.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would just like to remind all Members of Council, you do not all sit on planning but our three Planning Panels plus Development Plans Panel are very hard working. There have been 47 meetings of those in the last year. That is an incredible amount, almost one every week, and it does not stop there. On most planning days we have site visits commencing as early as half-past eight sometimes and going on until almost 7.00. I would like to take the opportunity to thank all the Members who sit on Planning Panels for their dedication and their hard work.

The Panel I chair, City, is also, I have to say, an excellent Panel. We have excellent Members from all parties who fully participate and I think we do come eventually to the right decisions. I would not agree with Tom that we are Cinderella. I have a list of the planning applications we have gone through in the last twelve months and some of them are hugely, hugely important to the city. The ones that I am really fond of is the application to renew the old disused viaduct. It is going to bring much needed houses on stream and we have, I think, across the panels agreed 2,500 in the last year.

I disagree slightly with David earlier on – David Blackburn. Most of these houses are actually in the centre. The city and inner areas are taking the lion's share

of the housing but we have to maintain the ability to have social mobility. I am fond of saying that my two next-door neighbours, one of them moved to Harrogate and the other moved to Wetherby and the other one moved to Guiseley and my own two sons moved to Morley. There has to be that type of social movement so we have to have housing in the outside area.

I will finish very quickly (I see the light coming on) thanking all the excellent officers we have on Planning. I am particularly grateful, and names have been mentioned so I feel free to talk about Daljit Singh who is our Lead on City – excellent service, a fantastic planner. I would like to pay tribute to Steve Butler, who actually took on the role of Acting Head of Planning for 18 months and did a sterling job after the retirement of Martin Sellens who in Planning terms we call him St Martin – he is the Oracle, we all look to him.

Again, as I say, excellent stuff. Great things happening for the city. Redevelopment of the Tetley site is going to be magnificent and we are going to come up with an almost three hectares of an inner city park – something we have been after for many years and in the last year, of course, John Lewis, the Victoria Gate scheme was opened which I am sure will get a design award. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Caroline Gruen – Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR C GRUEN: I am speaking on the work of the South and West Plans Panel and I want to echo a number of things that Councillor McKenna has said, firstly by thanking all Members of the Panel for the time, dedication and thought that they have put into making some very difficult decisions over the year and for ensuring a fair and balanced debate. It should be acknowledged that it is a time consuming job being on a Plans Panel, involving preparation and site visits and very often very long meetings in the presence of an engaged public gallery. I would also like to thank the full team of officers for their professionalism in supporting and working with the Panel.

During the period ending October 2017 the South and West Plans Panel made a total of 32 decisions, most of them on full planning applications plus one outline and one listed building were included. There were 27 approvals and five refusals of which just three were Member overturns. I think this reflects the right level of challenge provided by the Panel, particularly when you consider that of the five refusals only two went to appeal, one allowed and one dismissed and neither of those was a Member overturn.

A particular challenge and frustration this year has been the lack of a five year land supply and as a result the Inspectors assertion that there should be a predication to approve housing applications despite, in some instances, unsuitable locations, infrastructure and design and failure to adhere to the standards set out in the Leeds Guidance. This has been a constant tension throughout the year.

A further frustration has been the lack of commitment by some developers to provide the required planning gain, especially in terms of affordable housing, which always seems to be the first thing to go when their profit levels threaten to dip below

the astonishing 20% margin. One such example was Tower Works in Armley where the policy requirement was 15% affordable housing on or off site and the developer argued through the Viability Report that, due to remediation costs, no contribution could be made to either affordable housing or green space. The District Valuer came to the same conclusion and the Panel had little choice but to grant permission because of the likely consequences at appeal.

A similar example at Chevin Park in Menston where permission for 562 dwellings was supposedly going to fund the conversion of two listed buildings. Having built these the developer declared them no longer viable and was subsequently reluctantly granted permission for a further 25 which, again, bore no planning gain and did not benefit the city any further.

To end on a positive note, the Panel has increased its attention to the importance of design quality during the year and this has led to amendments and addition to the design and materials on a number of schemes. The scheme to refurbish and convert the beautiful Spenfield House on Otley Road funded through the construction of seven terraced dwellings of a starkly contrasting, modern design, is a case in point.

Once again, Lord Mayor, my thanks to the Panel. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Neil Walshaw.

COUNCILLOR WALSHAW: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking, as you might imagine, on the North and East Plans Panel. Elected Members on that Panel, my, you are a feisty bunch at times! Thank you very much for your contributions. Members, can I let you into a secret? John liked two particular applications so much that he almost moved the recommendations – almost, he came so close! One day, John, one day! I hope I live to see it.

First of all thank you so much to the officers, Dave Newbury, Steve Butler, Daljit, you have worked really hard. We have had a lot of applications this year and the two Area Panels have been taking on more strategic and more complicated and more difficult applications and I am really pleased about that. We have done some good work and we can all be pleased with the last twelve months.

A couple of things we have seen in the area. We have seen a growth in contemporary design and a growth in design quality. I am a big fan of contemporary architecture and just good design and we have seen that coming through in applications. Maybe the word is getting around a wee bit, hopefully.

We are seeing an increasing number of brown field sites across the area come through and I think that is really important. The development sector has bounced back after a global financial crisis the last four or five years and I think we have seen some interesting movement and that is really pleasing to see.

A couple of comments, though, I think. I would like to touch on a few applications in the area that I thought were particularly of note and a few, perhaps, not to do from applicants.

Recently we had an excellent application, we had a co-housing development on Roundhay Road in Chapeltown. If you do not understand co-housing, co-housing is about a high density development where people share certain facilities and they have different models of tenure. There is also LILAC Bramley. I think they are an excellent, excellent way forward. Armley, I do beg your pardon, I apologise.

What do we get with co-housing? You get an excellent community, you get a nice place to live, you get low carbon. In general I think it is something we should promote as a city so we will be looking forward to people from across Leeds coming forward with those applications, I am really pleased to see that.

An application that was really difficult that has been going on for a while now was Buslingthorpe Lane in Chapeltown which is the big mills down at the bottom of the A61, if you know where that is, and that has come on really well and that will be a fantastic development, we are really pleased with that.

You do not have much time to sum up so I just want to touch on a few things not to do. I would say to applicants, please, if you want a good decision and you want a fair decision, do not constantly change your applications, do not offer a flurry of late information to elected Members and to the Chair. It does not work, it is not in your interests to do that and I say that using this as a pointer to all applicants across Leeds, it causes problems for officers, it caused problems for Members.

Just one last thing really is to talk about something we are actually very proud of on the Panel is the brown field land programme which was a range of sites across East Leeds where we have looked to infill affordable housing into Seacroft ward and into Temple Newsam ward and I am looking at Councillor Coupar who is nodding furiously. We are really pleased with that. It is just under 1,000 homes, a large percentage are affordable and it shows that we are willing to build in the Inner areas in Labour held wards and I think that speaks to some of the arguments we were having earlier. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I could not quite work out if Councillor Gruen was being helpful to Councillor Lewis there and digging him out of a hole or if he was doing something in reverse, but I shall risk the temptation, as Councillor Lewis says, not to return to the debate that we had this morning and tempting, though it is to put the record straight with Councillor Gruen in terms of who actually decided we should have 70,000 houses, I will resist that temptation and I will instead move on to talk about more general planning matters.

To listen to the contributions that have been made everybody would think that all is well and jolly within the Planning Department, but it is not and again you have got to go some way to find such congratulatory back slapping as we have just heard. The fact of the matter is the Planning Department is under severe stress and strain. It can barely cope with what it is currently expected to deal with and there is absolutely no chance whatsoever that it is going to be able to cope with what is coming at it. Not particularly my view but just go sit down and talk to any of your Area Planning

Managers because that is very clearly what their view is. That is the feedback that certainly colleagues on this side are getting from all of the Area Planning Team Leaders.

My plea is for more resources and before I hear the howl from certain Members opposite – and they usually come from the same place, I might add – but before I hear the howls, it is all self-funded. Why is it self-funded? Because actually you are receiving substantial – substantial – sums of money from pre applications that are coming in. Everyone goes “Ugh”. I am sorry but just take a look at the future – you are. There are substantial planning fees that are flowing into the Council now. They need to be used urgently to recruit some expert help to assist the department. I do not mean just day to day assistance, I mean specialist assistance. Officers themselves at the Development Plans Panel on Friday made it crystal clear that they are under severe pressure and effectively cannot cope and, as one of those officers said, there are only three of us trying to deal with the re-formation of the SHMA, the new approach to site allocations – it just cannot be done. Three officers cannot deal with that workload and so I look to Richard to urgently look to divert some of the moneys that are already being received and will continue to be received, I might add, if the intelligence is what we think it is, that we are going to see a whole flood of additional applications on some of these PAS sites. Please put some of that into the department. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. There were a couple of contributions there that I thought were perhaps a little bit sour but we will not worry about that.

Overall I would just like to say thank you to everybody who plays a part in the whole Plans Panel process. As somebody who has studiously avoided doing that in all my 30-plus years on Council I can only congratulate myself but I would particularly like to say thank you to the Chairs and the officers and I do fully appreciate, John, that a lot of our officers do an incredibly good job and I am obviously always in discussion with the Chief Planning Officer about that issue. Again, thank you everybody who is involved. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, I would now like to call for the vote to receive and note the Plans Panel Annual Report. (*A vote was taken*) That is CARRIED.

ITEM 8 – QUESTIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: We will now move on to 8, Question Time, where for a period of 30 minutes Members of Council can ask questions of the Executive. Councillor Caroline Anderson.

COUNCILLOR C ANDERSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Executive Member for Resources and Strategy agree with me that Local Authorities should try to keep mileage allowances paid to staff to a minimum?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Yes, I think is the answer to that.

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary? Councillor Caroline Anderson again.

COUNCILLOR C ANDERSON: Thank you. Will you undertake to make a commitment today to Members and the Chamber to review the expenditure and see what savings are possible – for example instead of travelling using video conferencing, telekits, linked meetings and any other thing that we can use. If we saved just ten per cent of the amount spent by Leeds in the last two financial years we could have brown bin collections twelve months of the year in this Council.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Again, I think the answer to that is yes. I think it is worth remembering that we could have had some of those things as well if the Conservatives had not cut over £300m from our budget as a Council. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Jonathan Bentley.

COUNCILLOR J BENTLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. In view of the increase in fly tipping and its consequent cost to the Council and impact on the environment, will the Executive Member tell Council the cost of dealing with fly tipping and whether she is still happy with the decision to charge for bulky waste collections?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Yeadon.

COUNCILLOR YEADON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. All but a handful of Councils across the country charge residents to remove items of bulky household waste. The charge in Leeds is £20 for up to four items and that compares favourably with other Councils and our service is provided to Leeds residents at significant subsidy. The forecast income of £150,000 from collection this year provides a new and much needed income stream to the Council and represents good value for money for its users.

The costs associated with fly tipping cannot be reliably divorced from the cost of running the multi-task crews which deal with a wide range of street cleansing work on a daily basis. In addition to generating an extra £150,000 the drop in and the more efficient collections has freed up time to be able to undertake other street cleansing work.

The charge was introduced following research of other Councils that have adopted this approach in recent years. Their experience was that the demand for collections reduced significantly but that there was no corresponding significant increase in fly tipping.

In terms of the incidence of fly tipping in Leeds, there was a gradual increase but this commenced six months prior to the charge being put in place. In September this year fly tipping levels dropped compared to the previous month and reached levels typically seen to the months before the introduction of the charge.

The number of city-wide reports of fly tipping has fluctuated from early 2016 to the present day but the overall trend is that they have largely stayed the same, and in September this year the number of fly tips reported was the lowest seen for the last 20 months.

The evidence indicates that there is no direct correlation between charging for collections and the incident rate of fly tipping. I do not think that I will ever say that I am happy about introducing any new charge. However, I am satisfied that in the current financial climate it was the correct decision. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary, Councillor Bentley?

COUNCILLOR J BENTLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor, and I thank Councillor Yeadon for her, as usual, very thorough answer. I would like to ask if she would like to comment a bit further because observations in my ward and others and anecdotal evidence would suggest that there has been an increase in fly tipping and there has been an increase over the whole of the country of about seven per cent. Would Councillor Yeadon care to take another look at the evidence she was talking about because Nottingham City Council has recently reported that over the past four years there has been a 42% reduction in fly tipping which the Council says is due to the launch of a free bulky waste collection service, so could she just do her sums again, consider reintroducing the free bulky waste collection service as part of next year's Budget submission? Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Yeadon.

COUNCILLOR YEADON: Thank you. I think it is very difficult for me to comment on Nottingham's record so I am going to stick to Leeds. I know that this information is going to be brought in more detail to the next Environment Champions meeting, so you will be able to have the opportunity to look into it there.

If we go down to ward level I will take a random ward off the top of my head like, say, Weetwood (*laughter*). In Weetwood ward there has been little change in the pattern of fly tips over the last twelve months. Like I said, the charge was brought in in May but if we look over the last twelve months there has been an average of 18 fly tips reported or removed by crews every month. Although this often fluctuates, the indicative amount from the information we have gone down to at ward base level your ward, is no overall increase. I think from the information I have I think two of those fly tips you reported, Councillor Bentley, and I appreciate your support in that. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hyde.

COUNCILLOR G HYDE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Member for Health, Wellbeing and Adults comment on the recent launch of the new Recovery Hubs across Leeds?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Charlwood.

COUNCILLOR CHARLWOOD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Thank you, Councillor Hyde. I am sure that Members will understand I am delighted to be standing on my feet talking about the new Recovery Hubs that we have in the city because I have been on my feet talking about this subject quite a lot. It has taken us through a long journey over many years, really, with the Better Life Strategy and having seven years now of austerity from the Government we have had to go through a period of renewal and change. We have increasing demands on our social care services and we have to modernise what we do in order to be able to provide the services that we will need to provide for the city.

Last year there were times when we had, Lord Mayor, 92 people in hospital on trolleys. Nurses and other professionals from the healthcare sector who are in this Chamber know what that is like working in that environment, so the demand that we are seeking to meet with our new and reformed and modernised services that we can offer are those provided by our Recovery Hubs now in three areas of the city. We have gone through a really difficult process to get there. Lots of Members here have been worried and concerned about it and so it is really good that we have to say that we are opening three new services for this city.

There are about 100 beds now in each section of the city, if we split it up into the old CCGs, that are providing recovery based care, some with extra levels of nursing, to help people get out of hospital into their communities for a few weeks of rehab and support and nursing care and get them home and in their own communities quicker, get them out of a very busy, frantic, chaotic hospital environment where they are losing their skills every day and into a place where they are being helped to gain their skills and their ability to thrive in their own natural environment.

I went to the Recovery Hub opening at The Green in Seacroft the other day which I have to say was such a delight. It is a great environment for people. The staff, most of which always work in The Green, five new members of staff who came from the other services across the city that were decommissioned, like Middle Cross and others, they are all Council staff and they were so pleased that they had jobs, that they had new purpose, that they were helping people in a new way and I just want to say thank you to all of those who supported us through this difficult time, to ward Members who did have difficult processes and pressures upon them to help us to deliver this and especially staff who helped the process and the people who lived in these homes that were residents of care homes into a new home of their choosing with the right care for them and to create what are going to be fantastic services, so thank you to officers for doing that.

I did a quick back of a fag packet calculation and if we had six months of people staying for approximately four weeks at a time, city wide we will help 600, 700 people this winter alone get out of hospital. I think that is something to be really,

really proud of and I would like to thank everybody who has helped us to get to this place. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary, Councillor Hyde? No. Councillor Ann Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Member for Regeneration, Transport and Planning tell me how much of the Traffic Regulation Order Contribution made under the Section 106 Agreement between the Council and West Yorkshire Police Authority on 28th October 2010 in order to mitigate the loss of parking on match days at Elland Road Stadium has been spent?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The figures are as follows. Council was awarded in the region of £380,000 in contribution. This was split as follows: £250,000 towards the Traffic Regulation Order; £23,000 towards Metro Cars which will be transferred to West Yorkshire Combined Authority, £103,673.62 towards public transport infrastructure which was used to part fund the Elland Road Park and Ride Scheme in 2014; £4,545 towards monitoring travel plan fees. These contributions, roughly £187,000 remains.

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary, Councillor Blackburn? Councillor Nagle.

COUNCILLOR NAGLE: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Member please provide an update on the number of individuals in temporary accommodation in Leeds?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Coupar.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Thank you, Lord Mayor and thank you, Councillor Nagle, for asking this question because I am really pleased to report on positive news regarding our temporary accommodation figures. Council will know at the end of each quarter every Local Authority has to submit a Temporary Accommodation Placement figure to Government. The figure for the end of September 2017 was 24 placements. This is our lowest number of temporary accommodation placements on record, the highest being 748.

The low number of temporary accommodation placements can be attributed to the effectiveness of homeless prevention interventions which are forecast to be around 9,500 preventions in 2017/18 alone, equating to over 80% of Leeds' housing options presentations. It also demonstrates a proactive approach to moving people on from temporary accommodation. Leeds has not used bed and breakfast accommodation for over four years.

The latest available data for other Local Authorities shows a significant difference, in Birmingham having 1,740 in temporary accommodation including 379 in bed and breakfast; in Manchester, 1,282, including 189 in bed and breakfast. This

just goes to show that in these times of austerity keeping people out of temporary accommodation is no mean feat and everyone involved in keeping our numbers so low deserves great credit, including all the Housing Officers at Housing Options as well. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary?

COUNCILLOR NAGLE: Yes, thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Executive Member agree that Government policies since 2010 has greatly exacerbated the homeless problem in Leeds and across the country?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Coupar.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: I would simply answer that with a “Yes”, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cohen.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Is the plan – this is for the Executive Member for Children and Families - for the Roundhay Free School now shelved with the proposal for the new through school, with four classes of primary entry, at Allerton Grange?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mulherin.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor and thank you, Councillor Cohen, for the question. As you aware there is currently a live consultation taking place on a proposal for a through school which would, if it was progressed, meet the need for school places in that part of the city. The proposal we are consulting on is intended to deliver the school places we need at the time we need them, to ensure children have good places parents and children can walk to, to remove the uncertainty of delivering a site on green belt land that would, as we have always been clear with both the Trust applicants and the Government agencies, be difficult to secure for school use through the planning process in a timely manner.

Whether the Regional Schools Commissioner and Education Skills Funding Agency wish to proceed with the free school is a matter for them to decide.

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary, Councillor Cohen?

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Member explain why it apparently costs £12-15m to build a 480 place primary school on an undeveloped site in North Leeds but only a third of that, £5m, to build a 480 place primary school on an undeveloped site in Councillor Blake’s ward? It cannot possibly cost £10m just for the planning and the infrastructure, so what is it? Incompetence, special treatment for the Leader of the Labour Group, or is it the continued resistance to build a much needed Roundhay Free School?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mulherin.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you. I am glad that we have cleared up the previous accusations from the Opposition that this administration is opposed to free schools in some ideological way. We have worked very successfully to deliver a number of free schools, not least the Wellspring Academy Trust Elements Primary which is going to be opening in Middleton.

The Local Authority has not paid for the free school in Middleton, the free school has been paid for by the Education Skills Funding Agency and the money we received from Government to provide school places there will be reduced for the Local Authority subsequently.

I will just take this opportunity to remind Council that we are already facing an £82m shortfall in funding from Government to provide sufficient numbers and school places in the city.

Any proposed school expansion or new school brings with it significant highways and planning issues, as Members are aware. The proposals we are consulting on currently in the area of need that we are talking about right now would involve expanding sites that are already in educational use and where we would work with the schools and local community to address any highways access issues.

If the Education Skills Funding Agency decides to progress with one of the sites for the Roundhay Free School then they would need to seek planning permission for a site that sits within the green belt. One of these sites would require extensive highways infrastructure works to enable children to cross the ring road safely twice a day. The other site, in addition to being in the green belt, is also on historic parkland. In order for these sites to gain planning approval it would need to be clearly demonstrated that all possible alternatives have been explored, including the proposal currently out to consultation.

We have been absolutely clear with both the Education Skills Funding Agency who have offered us a third of the estimated cost of the build of the Roundhay Park Lane site, which is estimated by our officers at £12m to deliver that school. We are already facing a shortfall, as I have already said, of £82m in the money we are given by Government to ensure we have sufficient school places in the city and how much it would actually cost us to provide those places.

What we need to do is for the Government to adequately fund Local Authorities to enable them to provide the school places that we are statutorily obliged to provide and I would like to invite Councillor Cohen to join with us on this side of the Chamber in putting pressure on Governments to do just that so that he can help and be part of the solution. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Can the Executive Member comment on the recent reduction in take up of nursery places and outline her plans to reverse it?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mulherin.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you. Over the last three years there has been a reduction in day care numbers in the city of approximately 17 a year in our nursery places. However, numbers attending the centres overall are projected to increase this financial year. This volatility of numbers is a result of the expansion of two-year old free early education entitlement places. The Council's Children's Centres have a high percentage of two year olds compared to the private, voluntary and independent sector providers.

Our Local Authority has a statutory duty to ensure that there is sufficient nursery provision for all children to take up the free early education entitlement and we have been working to expand the number of places for two year olds as part of this duty in order to meet those national targets.

This has reduced the number of babies and children under the age of two who have been offered places in our Children's Centres as we have striven to meet that national target. Last year we revised the business model to increase those numbers and this has resulted in an upturn which should improve over the next two to three years as more full-time children are taken in and moved through the Children's Centres.

We obviously need to ensure that we have enough places for children to start nursery with us as babies who will then remain with us until they start in school rather than attending another provider up until the age of two and then moving across to access the free hours with us.

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary, Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Yes, thank you, Lord Mayor. Given the volatility that the Executive Member has referred to, does she think that it was wise in the Budget to project a £300,000 surplus in nursery places when actually, due to nursery increases in both January and September this year, she has ended up with a £900,000 minimum deficit in nursery places and does she think that that was wise and does she think that maybe her department should do a little bit better market testing when deciding to raise fees which might actually be putting families off?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mulherin.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: So obviously the reduction in fee paying places has had an impact as we fulfil our statutory duty to provide sufficient two year old places, as I said in the first part of my answer. We are looking to improve our out-turn position by around £500,000 to have undertaken a rebalancing exercise again which I referred to in the first part of the question which Councillor Golton asked.

The income shortfall is not of the extent that is being suggested. It is offset by savings in the Family Centre staffing so there is a pressure but not the pressure of £900,000. There is a net pressure of £650,000. The fee increases were timed to coincide, as previously stated, with the introduction of the increased free hours to minimise the impact on parents.

Our fees remain below the market average, they still represent good value for money. We have to ensure that our Children's Centres are sustainable as we have been repeatedly underlining our ambition to keep them open in the city and I know that Scrutiny support that aim, something that Local Authorities up and down the country have been struggling to do and many of the equivalent Sure Start Centres have been closing in Local Authorities up and down the country as a direct result of Government funding cuts to Local Authority budgets that started when Councillor Golton's party sat alongside the Conservatives in Westminster.

We are working to achieve the sustainability of our Children's Centres as outlined. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dunn.

COUNCILLOR DUNN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Executive Member for Environment and Sustainability join me in congratulating everyone involved in the recent opening of the Arium?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Yeadon.

COUNCILLOR YEADON: Thank you, and thank you, Councillor Dunn. Yes, I would very much welcome that. As you will probably know the Arium is the Council's new state of the art plant nursery which I had the privilege of opening on 5th October. If you had not had the chance to visit yet, you can go and you can browse and choose from an extensive range of plants for sale in a stunning 19,000 square metre glasshouse setting which boasts over 22,000 panels of glass.

The cutting edge technology at the site also provides enhanced efficiency with sufficient growing space to produce over 500 different plant species on site each year which includes production of 3.5 million bedding plants and 250 edible plants for use in our community parks which will support the In Bloom initiative.

We have been open for nearly five weeks now and already the Arium is providing a very popular place to visit with over 10,000 visitors already having enjoyed the on-site shop and cafe, outdoor picnic area and the children's play area which offers a welcoming educational and fun environment that all the family can enjoy.

Over 50 Leeds City Council staff worked on the construction with five apprenticeships. Therefore, I am very happy to add my congratulations to all of those involved and particularly our Parks and Countryside team who worked tirelessly until all hours of the day to make sure that the Arium was ready to open. They deserve a great deal of credit and a massive thank you on behalf of the Council for their innovation, dedication and extremely hard graft. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary? Councillor Jonathan Pryor.

COUNCILLOR PRYOR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Could the Executive Member please update Council on the late night openings at Kirkgate Market?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Thank you for that question, Jonathan, it comes as a great surprise to me!

I think to be serious for a moment, one of our concerns over the market since we started redevelopment there has been how do the small businesses there cope with the extended shopping and working hours that you see in the city centre, so that when you see that everything else is open, how do we make sure that the market is opening without putting undue pressure on the traders in there. I think the exercise that we are currently doing with the night market is very encouraging.

It was launched on 26th October. The first night market saw the events based in the food hall area of Kirkgate Market remaining open until 11.00pm. Alongside the existing food stalls there were 20 new pop-up stalls encompassing food to go, fresh produce and bars.

The event surpassed all expectations with over 4,000 people attending and there was very positive feedback from social media. Alongside this, 88% of respondents in a short survey said they would return to future night market events and 53% said they would be more likely to visit during normal opening hours. Cyclists were also well catered for on the night with City Connect providing a free bike parking area and a bike maintenance gazebo. They also provided advice on cycle routes within the city and also sold lights and locks for bikes. The Lord Mayor's Charity, Candlelighters, also hosted an activity stall at this first event.

Further night markets have been planned for 30th November, 21st December and 25th January and I would like to invite all Members to go down and experience the event for themselves. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary, Councillor Pryor? Unfortunately I understand Councillor Wilkinson has had to go so it is my understanding that Councillor Lamb is going to ask the next question.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Will the Executive Board Member please advise Council of how many Blue Badges were confiscated in 2016/17 and so far in 2017/18 due to their illegal use?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Disabled blue parking badges are issued under guidance from the Department of Transport. Council's main focus is to deter and detect the misuse of disabled badges. Badges are confiscated when the Enforcement Officer establishes that a badge is being misused when in conversation with the motorist.

There were twelve instances of this in 2016/17. In the same period the Council prosecuted 156 people for misusing a blue badge. This includes all twelve of those people whose badge was confiscated; all were found guilty. I have been advised that

our records for this year, 2017/18, currently show seven instances of blue badge confiscations and 62 prosecutions. All were found guilty.

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary, Councillor Lamb?

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Thank you for that answer. Can the Executive Member confirm what the sanctions are for those prosecutions and whether or not the blue badges are then returned to their proper owner?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: I think that would be dependent on what the finding of the court is.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cleasby.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Exec Member tell me if and when the airport road consultation results will be announced?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Lord Mayor, in terms of the link road scheme itself, following the completion of the initial consultation exercise in early 2016, there have been a number of other developments, most notably the allocation of £173.5m from the Department of Transport to the Leeds Public Transport Investment Programme and three new railway stations including one to serve Leeds Bradford Airport, providing an additional new Park and Ride hub for north-west Leeds.

As well as the modelling and further development of link road options, further work on the strategic context and the interaction with the proposed rail station is being undertaken. The next stage of the scheme for us is the development of the outline business case and the next stage of public consultation on scheme options for which firm dates have not been set but can be expected later in 2018.

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary?

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I ask of the Exec Board Member how much of the £174m he referred to is being spent on the A65 or the A660 outside of the ring road?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Clearly I do not have those figures to hand, I will be happy to provide them to Councillor Cleasby but perhaps...

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: I am happy to give them to you, Richard.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Brian, why did you ask me those questions if you already know the answer? *(laughter)* I would say I hope Brian will join me in congratulating the Council's Highways Department on securing funding for the

scheme which will be invested on the A65 and will, I think, bring significant improvements to the traffic flow on that road going out to serve the good residents of Guiseley and Rawdon. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: I am sorry, Councillor McKenna, we have just run out of time so, in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 11.6, any unanswered questions will receive a written response.

ITEM 9 – MINUTES OF THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD AND THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 9, we are now moving on to the item to receive and comment upon the Minutes of the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Executive Board. Councillor Blake.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ogilvie.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, consideration of comments on the Health and Wellbeing Board Minutes will be for a period of up to 20 minutes, starting with Councillor Golton.

Health and Wellbeing Board

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I will be making a short contribution here. One of the things that was very useful for us as members of the Health and Wellbeing Board recently was we held a workshop on the needs and requirements of refugees and asylum seekers within the city and one of the aspects that came up in terms of making sure that those people who are in those cohorts and some of whom may have very specific needs because they may have suffered significant trauma in reaching this country in the first place, was making sure that they had good access to healthcare that they required and what was the best conduit for them to achieve such a thing.

One of the things that – we had quite a lot of health professionals within the room all giving different presentations about their own specialisms in the area and one of the things that was left off was how do people within communities access healthcare within the first instance and actually in communities pharmacies are often the most accessible health point that you can have.

One of the points that was made in that workshop was that pharmacies had not been included or consulted, really, in any effective manner in trying to see how much they could do in terms of playing their part in making sure that the health needs of those particular parts of the community were looked after.

I am only mentioning it now, Lord Mayor, because it was not so long ago that we put a White Paper forward which supported the pharmacy lobbying groups which pointed out that Government cuts were looking to disable around about a third of our local community pharmacies to the point where they would go out of business and that actually a lot of that soft strength that they have within communities, which is not officially recognised through commissioning bodies in the NHS or elsewhere, actually could mean that we have a less effective health networking system for our communities.

It is just a reminder here that we need to revisit to see how we have fulfilled what we committed to in that White Paper debate about strengthening the position of our pharmacies within our communities, what we have actually done so far to enable that to happen because that precariousness for these small, often family run businesses, is still apparent and is still there and it is up to us to actually fill that gap to ensure that they do have sustainability going forward. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hayden.

COUNCILLOR HAYDEN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on Minute 22 of the Health and Wellbeing Board, Continuing a Conversation with Citizens.

As a city we are facing serious and significant challenges in our health and care system. It is vital that we work together to tackle issues of under-funding and health inequalities. Quality engagement of stakeholders is crucial to change conversations across the city and to develop the necessary infrastructure and workforce to respond to the challenges ahead.

In addition to the Community Committee engagement that has happened over the last year, a recent Members Development Session on the Leeds Health and Care Plan, Scrutiny has also been involved in both Board and working group meetings. This engagement is to continue with Members and communities with every Community Committee over the winter; also with the Third Sector and public events across the city. We are working with Leeds Involving People, we will deliver a series of events in each neighbourhood team area.

The needs of patients and citizens are changing, as is the way in which people want to receive care. People expect more flexible approaches which fit in with their lives and families so it is important that quality conversations take place to ensure that people are at the centre of decision making, that people are listened to and we build on the resilience and assets of our communities.

If we are going to achieve our ambition to be a healthier, happier city, then each of us as citizens has a role to play, not only in consultations but, as the Draft Leeds Health and Care Plan highlights, in managing and looking after our own health where it is safe and sensible to do so. However, our communities need support to be available and access to the necessary facilities to look after our own health.

Full and proper engagement with citizens of our great city is crucial if the Health and Care Plan is to address the key challenges and priorities of reducing health inequalities. That stark and disturbing fact that statistically you will die ten years earlier if you live in Hunslet than if you live in Harewood.

Another priority is to improve the quality of health and care services in Leeds. Our health colleagues talk of a left shift. I am in favour of any shift to the left but I think what they are talking about is moving from secondary providers such as hospital to the communities so that the number of people needing to go into hospital is reduced as are the number of people waiting to leave hospital and, as Councillor Charlwood told us earlier about the excellent Recovery Hubs, we are working hard to do that.

The scale of the challenge and ambition means that continued engagement with Members in communities and key stakeholders is vital so the vision for Leeds to tackle the challenges and inequalities highlighted is realised and that the plan can make a real difference to our communities. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Renshaw.

COUNCILLOR RENSHAW: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on Minute 22 page 36. The Leeds Health and Care Plan seeks to address the gaps in health inequalities, quality of services and financial sustainability. Of course, these are the fundamental areas to the wider Health and Care Plan in the city and this is why it is absolutely important that the transformation we see is done with the communities we represent in mind.

I am pleased that this is exactly the approach which has been adopted when it comes to the plan, a citizen centred approach where engagement with people will help to define what has been set out best for the health and wellbeing of the city and what this means to our communities. What will be crucial for people and for me as a Councillor is to ensure that the vision for health and care in this city set out in this plan reflects the improvements that people want to see. People must also be seen as far more than just service users. We must also emphasise the significant stake and role that they have in the future of the health of the city.

It is important too that health is seen as being influenced by other factors, like housing, employment, environment and families. Members will know that this is a feature of our health and wellbeing strategy for Leeds and it is important that the Health and Care Plan also reflects this.

I want to add also that as the Outer South Community Committee Champion for health, wellbeing and adult social care I have been encouraged by the effort to engage with Members about the plan. I am pleased also that there are plans to continue this conversation where we as Councillors can offer our contributions to ensure the people we represent have a system which delivers for them. Community Committees offer a great forum for there to be an open discussion about these key issues and it is great that representation in the Health and Care system and practitioners will be part of this engagement with the committees too.

Lord Mayor, this is very important and a crucial issue and matters in our communities. Continuing this engagement will be vital to seeing the transformation of the system that meets the challenges identified and importantly delivers for the people of the city. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Jarosz.

COUNCILLOR JAROSZ: Lord Mayor, I think most things have been said on this Minute. I have got a particular interest because I also am a Health Champion for the Outer West Health, Wellbeing and Social Care for the Outer West Community Committee so really the Health Care Plan aims to improve the health of the poorest and it is critical that ultimately any plan focuses on delivering a real change for the communities we represent.

Basically the idea is that we work with people instead of putting things at people, imposing things on them. I think we have already done a great deal in the Outer West and I think we just need to work more on making sure this strategy comes into place, that we do talk to the Third Sector, all our organisations that we know so although the Health Champions should play a big role I think every Councillor in their area needs to play a role in making sure we listen to people and that the right outcome comes for this city. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Caroline Anderson.

COUNCILLOR C ANDERSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It is incumbent on all of us to look after our health. It is not anybody else's job, it is our job unless, of course, a person requires family support or professional support but we have a duty, the majority of us, to take responsibility for ourselves. We need to make use of what is around us. We do not need expensive gym memberships. We have a whole raft of free leisure activities on our doorstep no matter where we live. There are enough hills in Leeds for a good cardio workout. We have some lovely parks to walk in and we have miles of canal towpath to walk or cycle on. There is no mystery to losing weight and improving health – you can write it on a postage stamp - eat less, move more.

I know that is not as easy as it sounds but it is incumbent on us as a Council to ensure we carry through the aims of the Leeds Health and Care Plan and delivering the desired health improvements in Leeds, for all the residents of Leeds. A person-centred approach should mean that individuals have a fully participative role in their own health and take every opportunity to prevent and to improve. Prevent any issues, including there is plenty of help to give up smoking, GP Well Women programmes, GP Well Man programmes, these are all free. Breast screening clinics; free flu jabs for those that meet certain criteria. We also need to make more use of our pharmacists. The help is out there.

Looking at the take-up figures for breast screening in this city, it is quite worrying that the percentage is not nearly as high as it should be and it is far from satisfactory. Why are people not taking up these opportunities?

Things that can be easily done to help improve health are self-explanatory and it is what you hear all the time on the radio and the television – get off the bus a stop

or two earlier, take the stairs, reduce sugar intake. You have heard it all before but why are we not getting through to people? Why are people not taking up the opportunities presented to them?

This is something we need to work at. If we are going to help people to live longer and to stay in their own homes longer, we need to ensure they have a quality of life commensurate with that but we can only achieve that if health outcomes improve and people take this seriously. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Right. I cannot see Councillor Lay sitting at his seat, so I am afraid we are going to have to move on to Councillor Charlwood if you would like to sum up, please.

COUNCILLOR CHARLWOOD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Thank you everyone, all the Members who have contributed and raised points on the Minutes. Thank you for the mention of the Health and Wellbeing Board as well. I just want to put on record my thanks to Councillor Latty and Councillor Golton for their contributions on the Health and Wellbeing Board as Opposition Members. It is not that sort of forum, it is very a very constructive partnership forum and I pay tribute to the Members on our side and on Opposition benches for creating a really strong partnership in the city where we can try to speak with one voice about health.

I think it is really interesting that all Members who have spoken have spoken about health. As our role as a Councillor for all of us improving the health of our communities is an intrinsic part of it. I think that is very marked, actually, because we do not cover the NHS as part of our remit in the Council and yet we all see the links between what we do in the Council and how we support good health out there.

Just going back on Councillor Anderson, a couple of points she mentioned about the stop smoking services, healthy lifestyle services and I am really glad she mentioned those services because I do not know if anybody saw the Taxpayers' Alliance attacks on exactly those services that Local Councils are funding through Public Health and I think they mentioned, changing people's lives and trying to nudge people into new behaviours – behaviour management and that somehow that was a bad thing. Like you have just mentioned, it is an essential part supporting people to live healthier lives to actually cost the State and Local Government less because people lead healthier lives, so I am glad we are speaking with one voice with that.

I think the other thing I just noted down about your comments was I used to be a mental health worker and I think people who have serious mental health difficulties or serious debt or stress or extreme poverty and have a lot of stress in their lives do find it much more difficult to access a healthy lifestyle than other people who have fewer issues to contend with in their daily lives. It is not easy and we together should recognise how hard that is for people to access. Whatever we can do to focus on the poorest and the most disadvantaged in society will help to improve the health of our city and the poorest the fastest and that is why it is so important.

Just going back to Councillor Golton, you mentioned the workshop on refugees and asylum seekers work. There are some really – not worrying changes - I suppose they are worrying changes, how it is going to impact that section of our community,

increasing charging. There have been pilot sites around the country – I think Leeds was actually one of them - a hospital charging overseas visitors for health services and I think together as a Health and Wellbeing Board we were concerned about the impact of that on some of the most vulnerable people in our society and I think again as a Council we will pick up the pieces of that should there be any issues about that.

That comes back to the biggest point we have all talked about which is the wider determinants of health. The Health and Wellbeing Board focuses on the social issues relating to health and we always have to come back to that. The more we do it through the Leeds Plan and other joint strategic plans that we have helps the NHS and other partners that we have to focus on that together we will get a preventative system, that people live healthier lives and have less need to go into hospital.

I am glad somebody mentioned the Recovery services because that is exactly what we are trying to do – reduce the impact on statutory services at a time of very diminished resources, and hopefully that will change as well in the future. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Charlwood. We are now moving on to consideration of comments on Executive Board Minutes which will be heard until 4.10, at which point the relevant Executive Member will be allowed to sum up followed by the Leader of the Council. Councillor Campbell.

Executive Board

(i) Regeneration, Transport and Planning

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I just refer to Minutes 61, 62 and 63 on pages 50 and 51. Can I start with the Key Junction Improvements, which is 62. Can I say that local ward Members welcome the news that somebody is at last going to have a look at the Dyneley Arms junction. Without a doubt it is one of the big problem junctions on the 660 corridor and I think Members should be aware that the 660, along with the 65 corridor, are the two most congested routes into the city. Unfortunately as part of the Transport deal which unfortunately Councillor Wakefield is not here to comment on, unfortunately there is little or no improvement on the A660 corridor to relieve the obvious congestions on there. Certainly we welcome the proposal to do works to the Dyneley Arms. It is an accident blackspot and hopefully it would both make it safer and increase traffic flows through there.

Can I also just briefly touch on Item 63, delivery of the East of Otley Housing Allocation. I am slightly surprised that Councillor Sobel has left, given his strong support – or apparently strong support – for the latest proposals by Persimmon Homes to extend the site. I think it is fair to say that ward Members are somewhat concerned about the attitude of the developer in relation to this, and I think whereas the Council has approached this in good faith in an attempt to perhaps facilitate development that might not have taken place, I think the developer themselves, by in effect circumventing the system and going directly to the LDF Inspector asking for an increase in the site, has shown a lack of faith, I think is the best word to describe that there, and I would hope notwithstanding the comments here that the Council will use

its influence to ensure that the developer is not allowed to expand the site and therefore increase the feasibility of development in that area.

I notice we have got to orange, Lord Mayor, so I will sit down.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thanks, Lord Mayor. I only have a few minutes and I am meant to be speaking on three different things, one of which is the Aire Valley Action Plan Transport for the North and the Integrated Station Masterplan with HS2.

Let us just say the Aire Valley issue has been done so I will concentrate on the other two.

Transport for the North. It is interesting, actually, because the Transport for the North and the HS2 Investment Plan are correlated. When you talk to business in the North and you say what are the priorities for you, they usually say it is not HS2, it is actually HS3 but naturally we have got to follow what the Central Government is willing to allow us to get involved with.

What I will say is in the Minutes that are here for the Council I am very grateful, actually, that the concerns that were raised by me in Executive Board have actually been acknowledged here and it does say that there was discussion about whether or not a paper could be brought to the Executive Board which did not just talk up the advantages of HS2 which, of course, the Council naturally as a corporate body would want to build upon and take advantage of and find opportunities within it. It is my duty though, as a Board Member and representative of the community where this route goes through to get to the city where the city hopes that those investment opportunities are going to occur, that they are not forgotten in this process and that the construction of such a large endeavour will obviously mean that there is going to be a lot of disruption. Actually, for all of the economic benefit which is incurred potentially in the centre, there is going to be an economic reckoning in the areas which I represent. I have discussed this at Executive Board so I will not go over the Board here now.

What I will point out though is that a lot of what the local community wish the Council to pursue in parallel with that which they have said is their priority, which is the economic investment, is also to support them in their call for under not over and that is the principle that we should have fair consideration in the same way as Manchester has in that the approach to their city centre should be as underground as possible. It is notable that there are 14 miles of tunnel that are associated with the entrance to Manchester whereas in the approach to Leeds we are only afforded 1.4. We get one tenth of the tunnelling that the other side of the Pennines accrues.

For the community which is going to have to take on the consequences of the construction, they think that is the least that the Council can do to support them in their endeavours to get that.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Jonathan Bentley? Councillor Kim Groves.

COUNCILLOR GROVES: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak on Minute 61 page 50 on the Leeds Area Action Plan.

At last, after many years of discussion and planning and a lot of people putting a lot of hard work into this plan, we have now reached the end of the process. The plan is transformational and I am so pleased for the 13,000 people that live around that area already. The plan has got housing, education, green sport and hopefully excellent transport links. It has by far the largest number of employment opportunities and it is in a vital area that connects to the wider projects for the Council and HS2 and the South Bank Framework.

It is, however, crucial with any regeneration plan that we have a plan that is for the people that includes inclusive growth, so we need to start thinking about the connecting communities who are on the border of the Aire Valley Plan, such as Richmond Hill, Cross Green and Hunslet that are economically deprived and have high levels of unemployment. We must make sure that also everybody in Leeds benefits from this plan and we must start now and leave no stone unturned.

There are real life concerns, and I think Councillor Golton was alluding to those earlier, that we have a skill shortage and we need connected transport. Aire Valley has by far the greatest concentration of employment land in the city. We have an opportunity to work with partners, education, investors, Third Sector, the Chamber and small businesses to make sure our people are ready and have the skills for the thousands of new jobs that will be created. It may be a long way away but we know that this city and this country, because of the lack of skill shortage, has not got the growth that it should potentially have. Let us make those procurement conditions, the planning conditions, the business deals work for Leeds and for Leeds people.

Local Government is and must continue to be at the forefront of shaping inclusive growth. The Aire Valley is hugely important and the Enterprise Zone has already started to show us what incredible potential it has and how we can create thousands of new jobs.

I am confident the Action Plan meets ambitions for the Aire Valley. Lord Mayor, we are absolutely committed to providing the best outcomes for every person in this city. I firmly believe that the Action plan represents this by being clear, fair, ambitious and focusing on creating a strong economy and a compassionate city. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Rafique.

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I welcome the chance to speak on Minute 61 page 50, the Aire Valley Leeds Area Action Plan. The Aire Valley is a significant growth sector for the city which will act as a magnet for further inward investment and a focal point of infrastructure levy delivery.

Members are aware that one of the key projects in this area is HS2. The development of this project presents Leeds with a momentous economic opportunity which goes above and beyond the construction operation of the line and

infrastructure. HS2 gives us the opportunity to transform the City Region economy, improve connectivity across the city region, become more attractive for inward investment and as a cultural destination and importantly doing this by young people in particular.

As ever with new developments in the city we have ambition to ensure that all of our residents can benefit from the variety of opportunities that the project offers. Of course, employment is a major element of this project. Working with the partners in the city, the skills and supply chain strategy sets out the number and range of jobs including apprenticeships that we anticipate the development of HS2 to create. These will be across a variety of skill areas.

We recognise that HS2 development in this area will require substantial growth in skilled labour sectors including construction, engineering and digital technologies and we are committed to ensuring that people from local communities receive these opportunities. In particular we have a strong ambition to improve access of these opportunities for women and BME communities who are under-represented in these sectors. With Brexit looming and its impact on our workforce, skills in particular looking unfavourable, the HS2 project provides a great chance to develop our domestic workforce and reduce the skills gap.

We have outlined a number of initiatives to support growth in these sectors. These include careers in the high speed rail transport industry to all school pupils in this region, creating better and more visible pathways for progression in the sector, and create a fund which education providers can bid into for the development of new curriculum provision and qualifications to inspire the next generation of engineers, technicians and infrastructure specialists.

Lord Mayor, this is a unique opportunity for the city and I am confident that we are well prepared to make the best of it. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Coulson.

COUNCILLOR COULSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Minute 62, page 50, Corridor Investment Programme.

I am sure we are all aware of the congestion problems on a number of the roads in this city. Not only do we see such problems cause huge queues for motorists, they also cause health concerns through air pollution. They can stifle future development and economic growth. Residents and visitors alike have had to suffer such consequences for a long time which is why I am delighted that our Corridor Investment Programme is now being taken forward.

The three sites identified in the North West of Leeds for improvement in the first phase of the work are congestion hot spots. I would like to mention one site in particular, which is Dawsons Corner, which is in my own area. This is a key strategic location on the junction of the Leeds/Bradford corridor, the outer ring road, New Pudsey station and the Supercycling highway.

Although the proposals for this site are still only in their initial stages, improvement there could reduce bus times, reduce air quality problems from the standing traffic, better pedestrian and cycle facilities and more Park and Ride facilities at New Pudsey station, which there is room for. Not only would this improve health issues, promote sustainable transport but access to employment would be better and in an area where there are pockets of deprivation and poor access to jobs, this could be life changing for many of our people.

This programme is not just about boring roads, it is about roads, can we really contribute to the quality of life and the ongoing growth and the economic success of the city. This is why it is absolutely vital that local communities, ward Members and the relevant interest groups are involved in the planning of these schemes and this is exactly what will happen. Local people and representatives will be rightly given the opportunity to give their views to provide a real local angle on the development of the proposals. I for one am looking forward to be part of this extended consultation to make sure that we get everything right on this project. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I want to limit myself to commenting on only two of the Minutes down in my name, 62 and 80. 62 is the Corridor Improvement Programme. Councillor Coulson has mentioned Dawsons Corner which is, in fact, in Calverley and Farsley ward but has a huge effect all around the city. It is not just a junction, a roundabout, it is almost a gyratory. Finally, the Council admitted and everybody else admitted it was at capacity and the problems it creates are significant.

The consultation with local residents is crucial, which is why my colleagues and I, when we had our first briefing, requested that the consultation begin as soon as possible, albeit at a very early stage yet of the project. It is a massive junction improvement project and there are a lot of people who live very near to it. Whatever we do with this junction improvement it will impact on them significantly. They already see the problems that the cycleway has caused and what we need to see now is the junction improvements there getting traffic of all modes moving through that junction more safely and more quickly to ensure that pollution can be reduced, because the pollution in the area must be significant. I welcome the fact that we have got this Government funding and that this junction in particular is a very significant piece of work and I look forward to participating in the consultation.

The other Minute I referred to was in fact the Leeds United proposals to change the training facilities. Let me say at the outset, I am in favour of the proposals that were contained in the paper. I raised concerns about the parking knock-on effect around the ground which I hope will be taken on board. The reason I am speaking on it today, however, and I will say this very quickly.

At the SAP Allocations first session a representative of ID Planning said that it was implicit in the report that came to the Executive Board that development would take place at Thorp Arch. That was not implicit and I was not intending to speak on that issue but I did and I said it was neither implicit nor explicit nor should it be, and I

have to say I am thankful for the fact that Planning Officers present spoke and endorsed entirely everything that I had said.

The Wetherby ward Members, in whose ward the facility resides, have had no proper consultation as yet other than phone calls. The land is currently white land. It will be, according to the Site Allocations Plan, made into green belt and there is a significant issue.

I will finish very quickly, Lord Mayor, but it is a warning. I do not want this Council to get itself mired in the same sort of nonsense it got mired in over the Weetwood and Morley sites, housing sites, and Headingley cricket ground and if we are not careful that is exactly where we are going to end up with this. When it was discussed at the Site Allocations Plan it was out of order. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Lay.

COUNCILLOR LAY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I shall be speaking on Minute 63 and the East of Otley Development and the recent unhelpful intervention by the Moortown Councillor who is our new MP. To any of my community watching it should be noted that while Lib Dem Councillors are here for this very important topic, your new Labour MP is not. The topic is so important to Alex that it warrants a letter to residents and a press release to the paper but no attendance here. I am sure he is very busy – aren't we all – and yet he can be here for the vote this morning when he voted yet again for the inflated housing target; it appears he can be here as a Councillor to support the Labour administration this morning, but he cannot be here this afternoon as our MP to support the people of Otley.

Anyway, may I briefly remind Members that this site was first identified in the mid-1990s by the then Labour Council and again in the original 2001 UDP under a Labour administration. Inspectors have said that the site must provide a relief road, a school, employment and green space.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Where are the other Members?

COUNCILLOR LAY: They are in a meeting, actually, about a play park - *(Interruption)* - which it is, in my opinion, the road that is required first, foremost and urgently. It is vital that Council ensures that any development meets the needs of the community so I was pleased that following our lobbying and campaigners, officers brought forward plans to build the road at the beginning and in its entirety. As few of you will be aware, 200 metres from this site sits a mineral site with a third of Yorkshire's gravel sitting waiting to come on stream. If we are to ensure that hundreds of lorries do not go through the town, then we need that road started and the bypass completed.

We have also gained a commitment that the school, employment and green space will also come forward early in the development. Getting those commitments took time, understanding and partnership working with officers, so you can imagine my disbelief when the developers submitted a revised site plan, submitted without the knowledge of Council, ward Members, the Town Council or its Neighbourhood Plan

Team. No discussions, no evidence, no chance of being supported when no effort is made by the developer to discuss that revision.

Here is why no discussions took place. Having sat down with the developer – I have not got long – last year and heard them ask for 800 houses rather than 550 that the plan stipulates and no infrastructure which we rightly objected to, we know what we really want so it is very disappointing to see the intervention of our MP. He came, rode roughshod over a long-held position and created division where there was none. Many residents have told me how angry they are that he appeared to be taking the developer's side rather than maintaining the one voice that ward Members and the former MP took. Persimmon must be laughing their heads off.

I beg him to stay out of something he knows little about or to work with us in the community to achieve what the community needs on a non-partisan basis. Whatever my new MP chooses to do Otley is....

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor David Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: After that I will have to put my glasses on so I can see what I am speaking on! I am speaking on Minute 64 and Minute 82.

First of all, Minute 64 which is the Aire Valley Flood Alleviation Scheme. Can I say, I welcome it, the scheme. It is good we are moving forward with it but as the Executive Member knows from a discussion I had with him yesterday, I and maybe some others have had letters from the Rodley Reserve about concerns that they have got which I am going to meet them about, and I hope that what we can do in this Flood Alleviation Scheme is do the right thing for nature and do the right thing for people, and I trust we will do that.

Moving on to Minute 82, I think it was, to do with High Speed 2. I cannot say I am a great fan of High Speed 2. Actually, I probably agree with Councillor Golton, that basically it is the East-West we need, it is Yorkshire and Lancashire that we need connecting with, having used those lines a lot, and not necessarily connection with London.

We are talking about something that most of us in this Chamber, if we are still on this planet we will be getting on a bit by the time it comes forward and actually we need our transport system lifting now. The Exec Member and myself and Councillor Leadley had this trip to Reading yesterday and we went outside of Paddington, coming outside of Paddington Station, and officers are telling us that is for Cross Rail and that is for High Speed 1, and millions and millions of pounds are being put in there while we want some of that money up north. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ann Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on Minute 80, page 62, Leeds United Football Club's training ground proposals.

Leeds United proposes creating Leeds United Foundation facilities on the Fullerton Road car park. If this goes ahead it will mean even less places for match day parking, though I note the Executive has agreed in principle to these proposals.

When the West Yorkshire Police Authority bought the former greyhound stadium at Elland Road to build their HQ, as the site had been used for match day parking they made a Traffic Regulation Order contribution to mitigate the loss of parking. Much to the annoyance of local residents, after five years of the residents only match day parking scheme being proposed by Highways officers, this ended up being cancelled recently and replaced with a smaller scheme just to provide some yellow lines.

Now, unless some proper parking provision is going to be provided to replace the Fullerton Road car park, local residents will not only have the current match day parking to contend with but also parking caused by the loss of this site as well.

We therefore request that the Executive Member negotiates with Leeds United Football Club to provide proper replacement parking facilities to mitigate the loss of parking on this site and that local ward Councillors, including those of Farnley and Wortley ward, are kept in this loop as to the progress of these negotiations. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harper.

COUNCILLOR HARPER: Lord Mayor, I welcome the opportunity, though I will speak a bit more positively on the Leeds United Football Club training ground proposals. As Members are aware, these proposals will see Leeds United relocate their training academy and Leeds United Foundation facilities close to Elland Road instead of remaining 40 minutes away in the town of Thorp Arch.

I must say, Lord Mayor, I am delighted that the Council will be entering one-to-one negotiations with the club in order to assist them with the development of these proposals. I know that the club and the local community will be working more closely than in the recent past to improve South Leeds for everyone.

Whether you are a football fan or otherwise there is no doubting the significance of Leeds United, not only in the city but in the entire region. Quite frankly, Leeds United is one of the biggest clubs in Yorkshire boasting a stadium with a capacity of 37,500, the fourth largest outside the Premier League and the twelfth largest in the country. In particular Leeds fashion, the club has the highest average home attendance of any other Championship club for the last two seasons. Why am I not surprised? Because the people of Leeds get behind our own and our club, unlike some from across the Pennines who have to look for fans from hundreds of miles away.

Which leads me to another aspect of Leeds United's significance to our city. Leeds is one of only a handful of major cities in the UK that boasts just one major football club. To some Members that may seem a little but let me tell you, it contributes to the national and international profile of this city, a profile the club and particularly their new owner are committed to and abiding to.

Look, it is not just about football. Leeds United share our city's ambitions to become a successful city. We have seen already their commitment to ensuring opportunities for all, not least through the recent move to reform the Leeds United Ladies football team, bringing them back under the ownership and funding of the club. The Leeds United Foundation has also recently announced the addition of twelve new schools on to their successful education programme and in August the club endorse the creation of the new LGBT supporters group.

Lord Mayor, Leeds United reaches everyone in this city including the most disadvantaged and I am delighted that the club will secure the place in the heart of our communities in the future. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Salma Arif.

COUNCILLOR ARIF: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I too am commenting on page 62 Minute 80 on the proposals around Leeds United Training Ground. I would like to focus on the benefits that these proposals will bring to young people of our city and in particular young people from inner city.

As a city we have been fortunate to have the support of Leeds United Foundation, a charity that works in schools across in schools across Leeds to provide education and sport development programmes as well as supporting local youth projects and sports clubs and providing grant funding to local organisations.

The foundation has recently added a number of schools to their programme and these schools will benefit not only from programmes such as Premier League Primary Stars but also sessions that are focused on the fundamentals of movement, agility, balance and co-ordination with a strong emphasis on personal, social and health and economic education.

The relocation of the Academy to the former Matthew Murray site will ensure that young people from the inner city are able to easily access a facility that they could otherwise have missed out on.

Lord Mayor, as Councillor Harper said, it is so much more than just football. The work in schools and the Academy form part of the wider drive to encourage more children and young people to become involved in sport at any level. We know how important it is to be physically active and the health benefits are huge. Research shows that people who develop healthy lifestyle choices as children are more likely to follow through with these healthy choices into adulthood too.

There are further benefits, though. Focusing on activities such as these helps develop team working, encourages friendship groups, teaches resilience and determination and helps prepare children and young people for adulthood as they develop the necessary skills. Leeds United are showing a real commitment to centring themselves in the local community and a real desire to share their successes, both current and in the future.

We already know that from their status as Child Friendly Leeds Ambassadors they believe strongly in investing in the future generation and they have proved to be invaluable partners. We have been lucky enough to benefit from the free use of their venue for the Stars Young People's event for looked after children for the past three years, this being just one example of their contribution to our Child Friendly City ambition.

Lord Mayor, I look forward to seeing these proposals progress and the benefits they will bring for children and young people across the city. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Buckley.

COUNCILLOR BUCKLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I refer you to Minute 81 page 64. We have heard quite a lot, quite rightly, about some of these exciting transport projects which we are going to have through the next decade. HS2 is the most obvious one and, like Councillor Blackburn, originally I was a bit of an HS2 sceptic, but over the years, particularly as we have seen now it has drawn nearer and will help Leeds so much, I have become convinced that it will increase - dramatically increase - the capacity on the railways and also speed as well and it will be vitally needed.

As a result of that, we should have a state of the art new station in Leeds which will also be a massive regeneration project. As a result of the whole thing, this should be a transformational situation and not only that but should produce not only jobs but high quality jobs and careers.

Following from all that we have HS3 which is unlocking transport links right across the North from Leeds, so Leeds will be this vital hub.

We also have new and improved roads proposed across West Yorkshire which should be a further plus point. This is all good and progressive and modern and I have no problem with that. The administration and no doubt Members opposite will be familiar with the well-respected document called The Sustainable Cities Mobility Index 2017. You are all looking as though you do know about it! In Alwoodley they speak of little else! (*laughter*) This document measures how easy it is to get around global cities. In the United Kingdom they report, Leeds is behind Bristol, Birmingham, Manchester, Sheffield. I think we already knew that. Interestingly, what they point out is that Leeds is ranked 59 out of 100 cities in the world. The good news is that we just push Bangalore in India down to 60th place but they have a population of eight-and-a-half million.

Last Tuesday I left this building at 5.30, walked down to Infirmary Street, caught the bus at 5.35 and got home at ten-to seven. That is six miles. The bus, of course, was stuck in gridlocked traffic in the carriageway and as we all agree it is completely hopeless. My plea on this point it just illustrates the whole point, we need carriageways or bus lanes outside the carriageways completely separate from buses in order to press on with separating them from the traffic and make the journey times lower without punishing car drivers first. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: I cannot see Councillor Cleasby in the Chamber so we are moving on to Eleanor Tunnicliffe. Councillor Tunnicliffe, please.

COUNCILLOR TUNNICLIFFE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I too am speaking on Minute 82 page 64, about the Leeds Station Masterplan. This is the plan that sets out the vision for Leeds station, taking into account the development of High Speed 2 and potentially High Speed 3 as well.

I am sure many of you, like me, have spent a lot of time in King's Cross station as it is where you are dumped once you come down from Leeds. You may remember ten, 15 years ago what a pretty awful place that was to arrive in – it was dirty, it was grimy, it was quite dark, I did not dare go into the toilets, it was a pretty horrendous experience.

Now when you arrive in King's Cross it has been completely transformed, it is light, it is airy, it is a centre for business and for culture, it is somewhere where I want to go and have an over-priced coffee, it is basically somewhere where I want to spend time and somewhere that is a lot better connected than it used to be.

This Masterplan is the first step to achieving something similar for Leeds, something that sets out our vision for the future of what our train station can be in this city – a vision that sets out quicker, easier, greener, pleasanter journeys for people who are travelling, that sets out a vision for three million square feet of extra commercial space, space in which businesses can thrive; it sets out we can generate jobs, local jobs in our community, highly skilled jobs; and it also explains how Leeds train station can become both an international and national destination, a transport hub but also so much more than that.

I had not appreciated that Leeds is the busiest train station in the North of England. We have 29 million people pass through the station each year and, rather alarmingly, that figure is set to double in future years, and I am sure again many of you have been at Leeds train station at busy times and imagining twice the number of people is quite something. We have also heard other colleagues speak about HS2 and HS3 so they are going to be bringing more traffic to our city centre.

The Masterplan sets out a new layout for an enlarged station so it is a layout that prioritises pedestrian traffic, which I will appreciate as I dash for my train having left it too late once again, so pedestrianised areas outside the main exits and entrances and also facilitating travel around the station for pedestrians. There will be much better bus links and also as a cyclist I will welcome much better accommodation for cyclists to move through the station, park their bikes and move their bikes at the station as well.

Expanding the station is about much more than improving journeys. It is about economic growth for the city. I have already mentioned the increase in commercial space that is proposed in the Masterplan. It fits very neatly with our plans for the South Bank. Five per cent of jobs in HS2 have been earmarked for people who have been previously unemployed.

The Masterplan sets out this vision and in doing so clearly and coherently I think it takes us a step closer to achieving it. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Davey, please.

COUNCILLOR DAVEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I want to speak on the same Minute. My colleague Councillor Tunncliffe has spoken very eloquently and probably a lot better than I can on the subject so I will not reiterate what she said, but I will just add a few comments.

Transport infrastructure is essential and crucial, really, it is a crucial stimulus to Leeds given we are one of the largest economies and hubs of the North. The Station Masterplan and potentially the HS2 Growth Strategy forms an important part of this Labour Council's ambition for the city centre. As Eleanor said, we want to develop public space and bring it to life for the people who are living here, working here and visiting Leeds.

As a Labour Council we are committed to making public spaces wherever possible look more attractive and welcoming and people friendly. What was there before we are hoping to replace with places that people and families can take time to sit and enjoy and just enjoy life.

Some of the projects which have been or are in the process of being delivered really show what can be done to make our city centre much more inviting and modern and vibrant, as well as putting people first. I could spend the whole of my three or four minutes simply listing what is going on in the city centre but I will name just a few of the projects currently taking place or in the pipeline.

There is, of course, the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme; the City Centre Gateway; the Townscape Heritage Initiatives at Quarry Hill; the refurbishment of West Yorkshire Playhouse; and, of course, the ambitions for the South Bank.

We need to capture the signify cant regeneration possibilities that are coming forward and we need to build on the successes that have happened so far, development must, as always, be joined up.

Lord Mayor, as a Council we have a real opportunity to shape the fantastic city centre over the next few years and our role should be to ensure development is correctly managed and fostered with partners for successful regeneration. I am confident that only a Labour run Council can ensure Leeds becomes even more prosperous, friendly and cutting edge now and into the future. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Khan.

COUNCILLOR KHAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak on Minute 83, page 65, on the South Bank Leeds Framework Plan.

The South Bank area has been discussed by us many times because it is such an important part of the city. It is critical that we identify the opportunities that South

Bank offers and rise to the challenge of getting it right. As a Council we must make the South Bank work for people who live, work and visit there. That means providing green space, play and sports facilities, ways to get around, public transport connections and attractive buildings. We also have to achieve the right mix of housing and provide real family homes.

South Bank is not an island. It needs effective connection, especially with the people who already live south of the city. I believe the new Framework is an excellent base on which to turn our ambition into reality. Our Plans Panel looks at each application on its own merits but getting the Masterplan right will enable us to make clear and informed decisions. That Framework will help us to create the South Bank we can be proud of and that will develop and last for many decades to come.

Some may say that making a Framework a supplementary planning document increases bureaucracy. However, what it really means is that while retaining some flexibility the framework will have some teeth when it comes to securing the quality of development we want to see.

Lord Mayor, this is the biggest opportunity in 150 years for the South Bank, along with the Station Masterplan and HS2's Growth Strategy the Framework is generating huge interest nationally. As Councillor Richard Lewis said at the Executive Board, it is a privilege to be involved in shaping such an exciting proposal for the area. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Iqbal.

COUNCILLOR IQBAL: My Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, I would like to speak on Minute 83 page 65, also the paper on the South Bank Leeds Framework Plan. In particular I would like speak about the extensive consultation that has been carried out in relation to the plan.

The consultation was carried out last year over a period of three months and involved a range of methods including paper and online surveys, social media, workshops with residents and businesses and information events. In all 72 events were held. Through these we received more than 2,200 responses. 20% were from the local community and 20% were from young people. This I am sure you will agree is a fantastic response.

The consultation was always intended to inform the final version of the Framework plan and therefore the comments we received provided invaluable input. We wanted not only to listen to local views but to take them into account as well. We just did that.

Feedback showed that local people wanted to make sure that culture had clear importance in the plan as well as high quality public land on the waterfront area and accessibility to family friendly features. Feedback also told us that it would be useful for the plan to have a formal planning status. We listened and made sure that these wishes were reflected in the Framework and we gave the plan formal status as a supplementary planning document.

As we all know, the South Bank will effectively double the size of the city centre creating thousands of jobs and homes. It is one of the largest regeneration initiatives in Europe and we will cement Leeds as the UK's fastest growing city. This is why it is so important to take the local community with us when developing plans for the area.

The consultation and changes we made to the Framework plan as a result of what people said shows just how important we see the views of local people and how local people really can make a difference and rightly so. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: To sum up on the Regeneration, Transport and Planning Minutes, Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thanks, Lord Mayor. I think probably Councillor Leadley, Councillor Blackburn and myself do not get out much so we are all pleased to say we have been to Reading! That is probably as far as we get! It actually was a very interesting day and there is one comment that really stuck in my mind and I do not know if the other two heard it, but one of our hosts said because they are getting Cross Rail 2 there at a cost of £30bn or whatever, they said "Well, Cross Rail is more image than reality for us here. The main thing for us is actually being on the Underground map." We said if it is only image, that money, we could have spent it better, really was my take.

We did go on a bus tour around this huge business park, I think it is called Green Park, and it just went on for mile after mile after mile of modern office facilities. You just realise how much easier it is if you are 40 miles and probably minutes from London than it is in the North and that real issue of productivity. I think a lot of people have touched on it in various ways, particularly on the transport issue. It really came home to me looking for how a town like Reading, it is easy – how for us in so many ways it is difficult.

Lots of stuff to go at. In terms of Leeds United I welcome the comments about the role of the club. It is to be tested. I think some people say oh no, they won't come through. I have had probably rather a long time talking to different owners of Leeds United. I say that the new owners impressed me far more than anyone else has. I do not know whether they will deliver but I certainly have more faith in them than anybody previously and they do seem to have that vision, particularly about bringing the training facility into the city, because that is of huge importance to anybody who represents a deprived community. Saying that you have those facilities two minutes away rather than 40 minutes away – the opportunities that that really gives, plus all the good work that is already starting to be done by the Foundation.

I know that Councillor Ann Blackburn is worried about the parking. I understand all that but I think we have got to get away from thinking that the answer to all our problems around sports facilities is always it is another residents' parking scheme, because we are never going to satisfy every community. What we will do is we will just move the problem to the next community and then they will be coming to us and saying, "We want a scheme." We have got to be more imaginative, we have got to come up with different ideas as to how to make things work.

On HS2, Stewart – HS2, HS3, I want them both. Let us not call it HS3, it is Northern Powerhouse Rail. We want them both and HS2 is not just about getting down to London. It is about connections with the Midlands. I know our friends in the Flat Earth Party over there are very much against it but 150 years ago that Party would have been against any rail coming and they would have said we need faster horses and another coach.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: And Supertram.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: That is the thinking that you have got there and really, Robert and everybody else, you need to get away from it.

We have talked a little bit about the road schemes like Dyneley Arms and Dawsons Corner. We do have to do proper consultation with residents on this because they are quite impactful, but if I think particularly of Dawsons Corner, which I know far more intimately, the importance of the Leeds/Bradford corridor in terms of HS2, in terms of the growth of the city, is absolutely huge. So many people travel up and down that corridor to work largely in Leeds. It is an opportunity for us and it is an opportunity for New Pudsey Station and developing the parking there so that it is not just about cars coming in.

Again, some positive stuff that can be done. A bit unfair, I thought, Sandy criticising our new MP. I think he is a breath of fresh air (*applause*) I think most of us do. I will not repeat any confidences that have been given me about people's opinions of him elsewhere. Give him a chance and I am sure that he will do a fantastic job for the constituency...

COUNCILLOR: Six months in.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: ... and I look forward to him in 20 years' time still being ensconced there.

Neil, I welcomed your comments on bus lanes. I absolutely agree, we do have a problem that people see empty space of bus lanes as being wasted space. Actually it is not the bus lane that is the problem. It is the pinch points. People see a bit of empty space and think, "Oh, I could be in that". When we had people in our bus lanes before some antisocial person decided we should fine them, the roads did not move any more quickly so I am very glad that you are on board with that.

Consultation on South Bank I think making a point about the consultation being so important. Yes, absolutely, it needs to be. We got a lot of young people responding to that and again that is part of what this city is about. We have got to engage with young people. I think that is also the debate about a lot of the planning issues. I think we tend often to be driven by what an older generation do not want rather than what a younger generation do want.

I am sure there are a few other things. Councillor Groves I think was absolutely right in terms of we have got to get the skills right and I know we are doing a huge amount of great work on that.

On the A660 corridor, I do not think we ought to think just about the A660 corridor, which is incredibly difficult to tackle. It is about the other things that we can do and I would say look at the new railway station that we are talking about up near the airport, look at the Park and Ride facilities that we will bring in there because they will be the solution to the problem, not the A660.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. (*Applause*)

(ii) Environment and Sustainability

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, we are moving to the Environment and Sustainability Minutes, Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Page 45 Minute 56, the development of the new park in Moortown, which I absolutely welcome, a great initiative. It is interesting that earlier today we obsessed ourselves with the Site Allocations Plan, but actually in the Site Allocations Plan there is the green space strategy for the city which actually was – do not smile, Councillor Gruen – which actually is extremely important and it was dealt with at the SAP Inquiry.

When Councillor Lewis made his brief appearance on the first day and introduced the discussions, he made a very interesting comment. He said, “We want to continue to be a green city” and that underlines the complacency of the issue when it comes to green space and particularly publicly accessible green space.

What I pointed out at the inquiry was that we are far from being a green city – it depends what you want out of a green city. What I want is plenty of publicly accessible open space, playing fields, facilities, parks facilities, tennis courts, bowling greens, play areas for kids. What was very clear in the study done by the Ordnance Survey, the Government’s mapping agency, is that Leeds is far from being a green city. Indeed, I found it hard to believe until I dug into the statistics but Manchester, Birmingham and Nottingham – just three – have two-and-a-half times more accessible green space in their cities than we have. That was the point I made at the SAP Inquiry, that the Council has no strategy.

I was not the only one. I also went on about Policy G4, which is ludicrous, I will not go into that today. What astonished me was that the Planning Department had done absolutely no research at all, it would appear, into the Ordnance Survey study and it is accepted as being the most thorough piece of work mapping publicly accessible space in this country, and it is the most formidable piece of stuff, really. It is incredible. It tells us exactly what we want to know and Leeds is not a green city, not if what you believe in is public accessible green space and more facilities for people in every ward in the city, which I do.

If you think loads of farmers’ fields in the North, South and East of the city makes you a green city, sorry, you are wrong. You are not a green city because you have a lack of publicly accessible space in every ward in this city and the SAP should be addressing that and it is not.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Carter. Councillor Bentley.

COUNCILLOR J BENTLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on page 45, Minute 46, the same Minute on the Moortown Park and also page 69 Minute 88, the development of Lotherton Hall.

Like Councillor Carter I welcome this park at Moortown. It gives a lot of benefit to our citizens, our citizens' wellbeing we have heard before about getting out, exercising etc, but also through the work and training opportunities available through the Parks and Countryside apprenticeship scheme is good work creation, it is good training, it is developing skills, so we certainly welcome that.

In my ward we are in the early stages of developing a new play park in the Tinshill area and again Parks and Countryside staff have been most co-operative helping managing consultation exercises with residents and children and young people and have given us lots of advice and been very creative and professional in their approach and I am very pleased to praise them for that.

That brings me to the development of Lotherton Hall, where I must question what is being done at Lotherton Hall. Is a pool for penguins, a children's zoo and cages for exotic animals really a 21st Century approach to engaging with and learning from wildlife in the natural world? Isn't it all a bit last century?

When I was being briefed on this I was asked if there was any conservation or educational element in this development, whether it involved the protection of rare or endangered species, and it does none of that. These animals are there purely for entertainment, some might say exploitation. It need not be like that. You have only got to watch programmes like David Attenborough's Blue Planet to be truly amazed about animals in their natural setting, in their natural environment. We could do so much more in a setting like Lotherton Hall with virtual reality, internet streaming, all types of technology so that people could have a real experience of and interaction with the natural world – better than watching a penguin going round and round in a concrete pool driving itself mad. It really does not fit with our Capital of Culture ethos.

We heard a lot about the Arium and that is the way to get young people and all people really involved with the natural world. Let us have more of that and think again about Lotherton Hall. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Arif Hussain.

COUNCILLOR A HUSSAIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor, and fellow Councillors, I would like to speak on Minute 56 page 45.

I am speaking on the Executive Board paper on the new park to be built in Moortown. Moortown Park is to be established by June 2018 on to the land of the former sports fields at Allerton Grove that have been lying unused and overgrown.

I am delighted to announce this development not only because of the benefit the park will bring to the local community but also because it has been developed in an

enterprising way that will contribute towards the intentions and progressions of the Council apprenticeship schemes.

Moortown Park is designed to maintain the natural appearance of the park including the rec field areas that will improve the qualities of the site. There will be a play area for the children as well as open green space that will allow for flexibility as to how the park is used by the community.

The development of the park is no doubt contributing towards Leeds becoming the cleanest, greenest city and fits with all reasons for Leeds to be the best city to live in where everyone can enjoy a good quality of life.

I would like to talk about how the creation of Moortown Park will contribute towards the development and to the Council's apprenticeship schemes. The park is fully funded through Section 106 developer contributions. This funding will be also contributing towards a number of the new apprentices who are to work on the development and maintenance of the park. Apprenticeships are important to the Council. A number of the reasons, not least because they provide the opportunity to diversify our workforce to better reflect the population of our city. The Parks and Countryside Service has been appreciated successful with apprenticeship programme with 87% of those appointed have moved into the fulltime operations.

It is therefore highly pleasing to report that we have been able to create a further opportunity for the service through work on to the new park in Moortown.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: That is lovely, Councillor, thank you so much.
Councillor David Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I speak on Minute 88, page 69 regarding Lotherton Hall. I share concerns that have just been said by Councillor Bentley, that what we are creating is something like a modern zoo.

If you go to Pudsey Visitor Centre, what we have done there, what has happened in Outer West there is that we have created something that is about the nature which is around us and it is bringing children in to understand that actually nature is here, not some exotic animal but actual nature is here. It does not seem to me that what we are doing here is about getting people to understand the wildlife and trying to understand that it is important. It is just there as an entertainment.

I hope I am wrong in doing this but as I say it just seems to me that we are going backwards and creating a zoo. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harland.

COUNCILLOR HARLAND: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like also to speak on Minute 88, page 69. I want to speak today on the potential Government grant bid for the Lotherton Wildlife World. I would like to start by mentioning the importance of tourism to the city. Leeds is currently the sixth most popular overnight visit destination in the UK. In 2016 it was estimated that tourism generated £1.64bn

to our local economy. The number of visitors to Leeds, along with the money that they bring into the city, continues to grow at a rate faster than the national average. We were this year named by the Lonely Planet Guidebook as one of its top five European travel destinations for 2017 – that is European.

This attests to the fact that we are doing exceptionally well at putting on world class events such as the Grand Départ and Triathlon, improving our retail offer through the Trinity and Victoria Gate developments and effectively promoting our attractions through Visit Leeds. I have no doubt that the Capital of Culture bid will also result in a boost for visitor numbers to the city.

It is therefore pleasing to report that we have agreed to apply to access grant funding for an attraction which has already been successful in improving our tourism offer. If the bid is successful the bid will provide further improvements to the Lotherton Hall estate which has prospered since we began to invest in its redevelopment attraction in 2011.

It is worth noting that the hall had as few as 13,000 visits per year under the previous administration. In spite of the continued cuts to our budget, we have managed to increase footfall to the estate almost tenfold with the amount of visitors to the hall expected to exceed 125,000 in 2017.

A successful partnership between Parks and Countryside and the Museums and Galleries service has enabled Lotherton's transformation into the thriving visitor attraction it is today. Income into the estate has increased along with footfall up to £1.1m in 2016/17, which represents a 90% increase since 2011. This growth has been driven by the improvements to the facilities on the estate as well as promoting an expanded on-site event programme.

This report outlines a series of further improvements that could be enabled through accessing the Rural Payments Agency's grant funding. The money is intended to see existing bird gardens extended to include exotic mammals, along with the creation of a penguin pool which my grandkids were really looking forward to.

The improvements to the wildlife offer will also include two new covered areas aimed at boosting visitor numbers through the autumn and winter. Depending upon the level of funding received through the grant, this bid may also be able to further develop skills by creating additional apprenticeship posts at this site. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Harland. Councillor Robinson.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I rise to speak on Minute 88 page 69, Lotherton Wildlife World too, and it is a great asset to the Harewood ward having Lotherton Hall in it and I have had the very, very fortunate opportunity to go down there many, many times and meet with officers and meet with the patrons of the Wildlife World and I think what Councillor Harland said is correct in some ways, that actually footfall has increased, there are more and more people using it. I remember back in 2011 we had a great deal of scepticism about what were the planned proposals around the access and the parking contributions and what would happen to Lotherton Hall and I think it is absolutely great that we are ambitious

to make Lotherton Wildlife park – Wildlife World, sorry, it is going to take some time for me to get used to the change in name there. I think it is great that we are trying to do even more and I say that as somebody who is usually immensely sceptical about large big spends on schemes like this. I do think that we have to be very, very mindful of the contribution from the public purse on to something that could be interpreted as a nice to have or a frivolity and actually we need to make sure that it is something that is a big asset.

One of the things that Councillor Bentley said there which is around the engagement and educational aspect of this I think is very, very important. I think we need to also think about the impact this will have on surrounding communities, and by that what I mean is that we need to think about highways access and how people are actually going to get to Lotherton. At the moment there are not many options for people. Public transport does not give people an easy option to get out there. If you are going by car many of the roads are small and rural, there is a big impact on Aberford as well.

What I would urge the administration to do and urge officers to do is to engage really early on with local ward Members and the surrounding community, especially local schools, to consult on this process and to make sure that they have lots and lots of buy-in and are raising awareness very early on.

I fully respect the other comment by Councillor Bentley which is around the animal welfare aspect. I do think that there is something that we need to see more of here. If you go and see the current deer park that is there, actually it is a huge site and it means that animal welfare is taken very, very seriously by officers that work for this Council. I think there is something to be said for seeing wildlife in its natural environment. It is nice to see Liberal Democrats in their natural environment of being slightly sceptical of proposals but I do think that what we want to do is try and have a nice cross-party consensus. I am happy to meet with Councillor Yeadon and have further discussions about this scheme with local ward Members. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Stephenson.

COUNCILLOR STEPHENSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Just to follow on from my ward colleague's points there about the Lotherton Hall scheme. First of all to address some points made by Councillor Bentley, because I entirely agree with the animal welfare aspect that you have just pointed out and I also think there is an opportunity here for the Council. If you look around the country at new ideas that are coming forward today focusing on animal welfare, the idea of a wildlife park, for example the one down Wakefield way, is focusing on conservation and that provides an opportunity for this Council to give a greater focus on conservation rather than just a spectacle piece for people to come and look at. Quite frankly, if people want to come and have a gander at a Macaroni penguin or a screaming hairy armadillo or a pair of did-diks they can do so on television these days. It is wrong to take these creatures out of their natural environment to do so, so we do need a greater focus on conservation. I say that as a member of the British Association of Shooting Conservation. There is a fine balance between animal welfare and conservation and it can be very, very good for animal welfare if we strike that balance well.

Just to comment on the park itself, or the World as it will be known afterwards. Since the parking arrangements change I would be interested to know from Exec Members or officers what footfall numbers, how that has changed, because I personally know a lot of families who stopped going to Lotherton, they went regularly and parked the car for £3.50 for the whole afternoon and, indeed, as a child I have very many happy memories of family barbeques at Lotherton Hall doing so.

If my parents today were to take their three grandchildren (not my children, my brother's children) to Lotherton Hall today, it would cost them a fortune to go in as a family so they do not go, they go elsewhere. We need to keep that in mind as well, the attraction, what is there at Lotherton for people who do not want to come and view the wildlife park. I would hope that Council would take forward some ideas. Look at Castle Howard, for example, look at the fantastic cafes they have built there, garden centres, farm shops. Something like that at the edge of our ward at Lotherton Hall would be fantastic alongside the attractions that you are coming forward with.

A plea for a focus on conservation, a focus on education and additional attractions that can benefit not just people who are coming to Leeds to visit these attractions but from people who live in our ward in Aberford and Barwick who might want to walk to Lotherton, walk in as I often do rather than pay the parking charge, and we can spend our money in there supporting jobs and growth and investment in the café or in a farm shop indeed. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Nash.

COUNCILLOR NASH: My Lord Mayor, I was not going to speak this afternoon but I have been provoked into doing so because I have never heard so much humbug in all my life on this Council.

Leeds has more green space per head per population than anywhere else and that is a fact. Lotherton Hall has been mentioned and it does attract tourists from all over, from not only Yorkshire but elsewhere. It is a huge success. Unfortunately, as has been mentioned, people who live in Leeds, if you do not have a car it is denied access but whose fault is that? The privatised bus service, and who privatised it? You did.

Leeds's record in the provision of parks is absolutely outstanding. We extended Lotherton Hall. Labour created the bird garden. Look at Golden Acre – a magnificent park there, very popular. We bought extra land on Otley Chevin to extend Danefield Park. We extended Kirkstall Abbey, another huge visitor attraction. We extended it by almost 50%.

Leeds has many Victorian parks and we have consistently over the time that we have been in office – not you but we have been in office – we have made improvements to those parks.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: It is not going according to plan now, is it?

COUNCILLOR NASH: I have not written a speech, I have just jotted some things down as the humbugs were speaking. We have just recently created a city centre park off Sovereign Street, absolutely magnificently designed. I will admit that the Leeds City Centre does not have any extensive parks, we have squares, but we have improved them, we have improved Woodhouse Square, we have improved the other square, Hanover Square, we have improved what we used to call Sparrow Park off North Street. We have done an awful lot and when you were in office you did absolutely nothing. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: What a load of absolute garbage. I have never heard such a load of rubbish in this Chamber for many, many a year. (*Interruption*)

Councillor Nash, you are wrong. You are simply wrong. “We, we, we the Labour Group.” I am sorry, you just had a complete blancmange then of what actually collectively, including the Lib Dems when we controlled this Council up until a few years ago...

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Made a mess of it.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: A load of schemes that we actually enacted, we were the people who were responsible for it. You talk about Sovereign Street – where did the idea come from for Sovereign Street and the park there? The then Leader of Council, Councillor Andrew Carter. Actually you have halved the size of it, that is the truth of it. It was going to be double the size before you lot got your hands on it. Oh no, you cannot pass up the opportunity to get your sticky little mitts on a bit of money, oh, sell to the nasty horrible private developers and the private sector, let us earn some coins for this city, let us halve the size of the park because that is what you did. That is absolutely what you did.

Do not come in here and start saying about the poor people of the inner city of Leeds not having access to parks. We were going to provide it and you stopped it happening. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Ladies and gentlemen, I would now like to ask Councillor Lucinda Yeadon to sum up on the Environment and Sustainability Minutes. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR YEADON: Thank you. You take two papers to Executive Board which were really non-controversial and everybody supports them (*laughter*) and then you throw in an all-out election and what do you get!

Anyway, Councillor Carter, first of all thank you for your support on Moortown Park, it is a great idea and I am very pleased we are going to be generating more opportunities for apprenticeships.

In respect to your other comments around Leeds not being a green city, I think Councillor Liz Nash has perfectly responded to you...

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: She is wrong. She is wrong.

COUNCILLOR YEADON: ...and so I will wholeheartedly support my colleague in her response to you.

Councillor Bentley and also Councillor Blackburn in both cases, first of all when we brought the paper about Lotherton to Executive Board I seem to recall Councillor Stewart Golton making a slightly bad joke and described the paper as “flippingly good” so I am sorry that is not necessarily felt by all the Liberal Democrat Group. On a serious side I also am very concerned about animal welfare and as we are Members of the British and Irish Associations of Zoos and Aquariums it is something that we have to take very seriously so our parks officers and our registered keepers, it is why they went into the profession because they want to promote conservation and animal welfare.

We are in association with other registered zoos and they swap animals and have to follow extremely strict regulations and it is at the forefront of their minds. In fact, a lot of the work that is going on at the moment is actually improving the environment which the animals are kept in at the moment so it is at the forefront of our mind.

Having said that, I will certainly go back and look at how do we ensure conservation and the work that we already do with schools and young people can be promoted more and more. I think picking up the points from Councillors Robinson and Stephenson, I think it is extremely important that young people and children are able to go into places and see different kinds of animals and it is something that I know I am quite looking forward to and the penguins should be open to the public on 21st November (*applause*) but we will continue to ensure that animal welfare will always be a priority.

Thank you, Councillor Bentley, about your comments about Parks and Countryside staff and the support they are giving you at Tinshill Park, I look forward to seeing that come forward. They work incredibly hard to ensure that the large amount of green space that we have as a city is protected and looked after in very difficult circumstances when we have seen a reduction in our grant because of Government cuts significantly and they have had to be innovative and think about ways of bringing in income to the service, which is what they have done so well with the work they have done at Tropical World, Lotherton, Temple Newsam and with places like the Arium and the newly established Leeds Parks Fund.

Councillor Hussain, thank you for highlighting the importance of apprenticeships. Like I said, the Arium also gave the opportunity to increase numbers of apprenticeships and this will be going forward at Moortown, learning new skills and I always remember that Sean Fletcher, our Head of Parks, was an apprentice and now is the Head of Parks. It is always good to see home grown talent coming up through the department.

Councillor Harland, again thank you, if your grandchildren want to come with me to see the penguins they are extremely welcome. Councillor Robinson, I am really happy to meet with you and your ward colleagues to discuss the developments and

what issues and as well how do we engage with the schools and young people in the area to really promote the service.

Also, Councillor Groves just showed me how much a ticket to get into Castle Howard is and if you are spending a lot of money at Castle Howard, please get better value for your money and spend it at Lotherton instead, Councillor Stephenson.

The Parks Department I think is totally coming into their own at the moment, they are being innovative, we are empowering them to be able to think creatively and do different things. We always have to remember what our purpose is there for but I am very proud that we have got such a great team and that we can do all that we can to support them. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Unfortunately that does mean we have now run out of time on Item 9, the Executive Board Minutes, so in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 4.1 and before the Leader of the Council sums up, I would like to invite Councillor Golton to formally move his Reference Back and Councillor Campbell to formally second.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: I so move.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: I take great pleasure in formally seconding.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Now I would like to invite Councillor Blake to sum up on the Exec Board Minutes.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Can you just show your appreciation on behalf of all the children and young people in this city who are really looking forward to the penguins arriving at Lotherton. *(Applause)*

I have to say, maybe talking to a few kids might be helpful in this debate but there is a serious point to this and, of course the welfare of animals is absolutely paramount, but so many kids go to Tropical World, how much do they enjoy going in there and seeing the young people? We have put a challenge out, haven't we, to Parks and Countryside to transform the estate. Look at the incredible assets that we have got in this city at Lotherton, at Temple Newsam, for example, and I for one am really looking forward to going back to the Christmas experience at Lotherton Hall. For those of you who went last year, what a fantastic opportunity. You are talking about the cost; you compare the cost of a family going to Lotherton Hall for a fabulous Christmas experience with Santa, with walks out through the estate, lights. Compared to the private sector you cannot believe how many families we gave a real Christmas experience to at a real affordable price, and it made money for the Council as well. All tribute to Councillor Yeadon, she has brought fairies back to Lotherton. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Tinkerbell!

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: I can really recommend the Fairy Dell, especially after an afternoon and a morning sitting in this place. *(laughter)*

Right, you know, actually on a very serious note the papers that we took through Exec Board in the last cycles have been incredibly important for this city and Councillor Groves mentioned the transformational aspects of the Aire Valley Plan and you can run that through. The paper on HS2 Growth, the station, the South Bank, absolutely incredible ambition that we have in our city and enormous opportunity as well.

Really, I am surprised, I think it was Councillor Golton that said that business is not talking about HS2. Actually I think, do you know what the reason for that is? They really believe now that HS2 is going to happen and they are talking now about the next stage. It was a very important breakthrough for all of us across the North through Transport for the North – and I am very disappointed that Secretary of State Grayling seems to have a bit of a low opinion of Transport for the North. It was because of the collective lobbying from the North that Philip Hammond stood up at his Party Conference and said that they would put the touch points in to the HS2 routes so that you could get the connectivity for HS3 Northern Powerhouse Rail in our case coming on stream. That is really important and Transport for the North has given a voice to the North in terms of transport.

We know how shocking it is, the discrepancy between funding, between particularly the North and the South East. I am glad that you went to Reading to actually see it first hand and just think, Reading really is not much further from London than Manchester to Leeds and people living happily in Reading and community into the city of Leeds and back again. It is such a nightmare trying to get around the cities of the North.

We have to keep the pressure up, we have to keep lobbying. It is simply not good enough that the investment in the south is ten times per head higher for transport than it is here in Yorkshire, so let us keep going.

The South Bank, a massive opportunity in terms of jobs, 35,000; 5,000 homes and running through it we already have the education, 10,000 students and young people in the South Bank in new educational facilities learning the skills that we need. Part of the HS2 depot situation – and it is not a Thomas the Tank scenario, someone coming out with a brush to wash the engines at night which you sort of got the impression that was what it was. This is high tech work, really skilled work looking after the engines going forward. Because of this the University is setting up an Institute for HS2. How phenomenal that we are going to get the high level, high grade jobs coming right into the heart of Leeds City Region here in Leeds.

Do not forget, referring to the discussion this morning about planning, your Government has to do something to unlock the development of those permissions that we have got, 10,000 plus in Leeds that developers are sitting on and doing absolutely nothing about. (*Applause*)

I am quite sorry that Gavin Barwell actually lost his seat in the sense of he did have a commitment to housing, I hope he is taking that into Number 10. He recognised that developers needed to be punished if they do not build out the permissions they have got because the land banking that is going on is, frankly, shocking.

I am delighted that Leeds United are really working with us now. What a transformation in terms of the culture. We know the pressure it puts on the local wards and the communities and we want to make sure as a city we work with you because United is so important to the city of Leeds. I wish we could come up with the goods and buy them a couple of strikers (*laughter*) but maybe we will get there.

The other success as well in terms of building confidence with young people, looking at culture – obviously we have got the Capital of Culture bid going in in a couple of week's time, but also Leeds Rhinos, what an inspiration. Great to see the foundation here knowing what they do with young people in the city and I am delighted that they will be bringing the cup to the Leeds lights turn on tomorrow night, so I am hoping as many people can get along or encourage people from your communities to go along. It always is a very, very popular night.

Andrew, I saw that survey that you are referring to. Are they talking about Manchester City Council area comparing that with Leeds? I really doubt it in terms of green space. What exactly was the criteria that you use? I think that has been really disputed as a piece of work. I am happy to look into it and all the rest of it but these surveys can have a habit of skewing the reality. As Councillor Nash says, look at my ward, Middleton Park, look at Roundhay Park but also look at the incredible ambition that we have in South Bank as well and one of the first commitments that the developer has made is so start working on the biggest new park in Leeds in a very short space of time. We do understand the value of open space, green space to our communities.

Lord Mayor, I do want to finish on some good news. We have been talking about transformational change and what we have been doing through the strong economy, compassionate city designation that we have given to Leeds that everyone, the business community in particular, are really buying into. Call it inclusive growth, every growth document that we have now in this city talks about inclusive growth. It is not just about the economy, it is not just about buildings. It is about growth for people and it is about recognising the housing that is needed, the transport that is needed, the skills that are needed, the incredible intense work that we have to do to really change the shameful statistics of 60% of our kids that live in poverty have one parent at least working. That is the legacy of the austerity measures that your Government has put in place and it is only going to get worse unless we intervene drastically.

I am delighted to announce to you today that PWC has just published the results of their Good Growth for Cities 2017 Index and Leeds has been ranked as number one, joint with Birmingham, as the most improved city in the annual report which measures the performance of 42 of the UK's largest cities. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Are you not happy? Are you not pleased?

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: No, not really. (*laughter*)

THE LORD MAYOR: I can see we are all getting excited so I would like to call now, Councillor Procter, for a vote on the amendment, the Reference Back in the name of Councillor Golton. *(A vote was taken)* That is LOST.

Now I would like to call on a vote on the motion to receive the Minutes. *(A vote was taken)* That is CARRIED.

I am now looking at the time and if you would all please be back in the Chamber at five-to five, please, so you have got half an hour.

(Short break)

ITEM 10 – REPORT ON DEVOLVED MATTERS

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, everyone, we are now moving on to the Report on Devolved Matters for a period of up to 30 minutes. Councillor Blake, please.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Just while people are coming in, I know you have got a copy of the Report from the Combined Authority in the pack for Council, so the usual business has been carrying on, taking place, around investment. Also a lot of discussion as you would expect with the Transport Committee and Councillor Wakefield leading on some of the transport investment. A lot of discussion about Transport for the North, HS2 Growth Strategy and particularly I think important just what we want to get out of the proposals for the Northern Powerhouse Rail. This is the new line that on top of all the issues we have got about electrification of the existing line, our priority is we want to see a connection between Leeds, Bradford and Manchester. We are waiting for the final documents to come out of Transport for the North with the recommendations about that in December.

I just wanted to give you an update about devolution for Yorkshire, which has been the subject of a lot of discussion and a lot of press coverage that you will have picked up on. Just before we met last time, 17 of the Authorities in Yorkshire had signed up to the Coalition of the Willing, supporting the One Yorkshire model and wrote to Sajid Javid from that to say that we wanted to engage with him. Following that there has been an adjournment debate in the House of Commons, there has been a lot of coverage in the Yorkshire Post in particular but it has also been in the national press as well and there has been an all-party Parliamentary Group meeting in Westminster which brought together MPs from across Yorkshire, Council Leaders from across the spectrum so myself and Steve Parnaby, the Leader of East Riding, Conservative addressed the meeting, the TUC were there, the trade unions represented and several of the business organisations from Yorkshire were represented.

The consensus in the room was overwhelmingly that we should be allowed to progress the One Yorkshire approach and, as such, a letter was sent off to Sajid Javid, the Secretary of State, asking to meet with all of us to discuss this. He has said in Parliament that he will do that but we have not as yet got a date.

There was a further Yorkshire Leaders meeting on 26th October and, despite a Conservative MP putting in the press that Conservative Leaders had walked away from One Yorkshire, the consensus was still there with the exception of one Leader

and we agreed to write again to Sajid Javid to ask him to come and talk to us. Doncaster and Barnsley are being forced to go into a Mayoral election next year for a Mayor with no powers, no money and without the will of the Councils in those areas. They have Special Council Meetings this week to decide whether they are going to go out to community polls. This is without precedent, a real example of bullying from Government and the precedent of forcing unwilling areas to move forward with devolution deals I think is one that we should be very, very concerned about and, just to add insult to injury, they estimate that the cost of that election would be £2m which would have to be paid for out of the local tax base. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: I second and reserve the right to speak.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thanks, Lord Mayor, I was not expecting that! Yes, devolved matters. I do not know why we even call it that any more because I am not sure that the National Government is really interested in devolution at all. I think it is interested in deals but it certainly is not interested in devolution as a concept and as a good.

I am fully behind Councillor Blake as Leader of this Authority in terms of making sure that the Leaders within Yorkshire carry on meeting, carry on demonstrating their commitment to finding a One Yorkshire devolution deal which is, I remind people round here, something which has evolved to take into consideration the needs of others. It has actually gone through a real transformation stage. It was previously simply about City Regions and that was in response to the Coalition Government at the time responding to the call for City Regional-type economic development structures.

Since then it has developed because it has actually listened more to the people who it is meant to be representing. We spend far too much time talking about what the Secretary of State wants whereas actually it is more about what the people want and what industry needs and now that we have listened to it and Yorkshire has come together and there is a consensus for that, for the Secretary of State to turn round and say, "You have come to the wrong conclusion. We want you to rewind and go back and go to the kind of deal that we prefer", it is just basically nonsensical.

However, it is something which there is a pattern on this in the Government as a whole. There is no leadership at all from Theresa May in terms of giving backing to devolution in the same way that under the Coalition Government you had it coming directly from the Cabinet Office with the support of the Deputy Prime Minister, and actually taken forward practically by the Chancellor as well.

The fact that Mr Grayling will not even turn up to a House of Commons debate and then his excuse is, "Oh well, I sent my Junior Minister because it was about local transport" when the whole point about Transport for the North is supposed to be saying that we agree that you have equal footing in terms of creating transformational potential for the country as a whole, I think that just says it all. This Government is

not taking us seriously but I do hope that we become ever more vocal and ever more insistent and I believe that Councillor Blake can commit to that on behalf of all of us in this Chamber. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Two or three points. The first one on the seriousness of devolution. It has been made very plain to me – in fact it was made plain to all my Conservative colleagues here when the Chancellor visited Leeds only a matter of weeks ago – that he is absolutely committed to devolution. He was particularly referring to devolution with Leeds at its heart. You could almost say it was a bit of a lecture, really, but he was very forthcoming about the fact that he believed a devolution deal needed to be struck and I take considerable heart from that, particularly as we have got a Budget coming up in three weeks' time.

The second issue is that there is the One Yorkshire deal. I wonder what the Plan B is, if the Government says “No, we have told you where we are and we are not going to take One Yorkshire.” My understanding is that the devolution deals for Yorkshire and two bits of South Yorkshire or all of South Yorkshire are very much part of the Government's agenda but that will probably be that when they get settled, and if they do not get settled quickly then we do have a problem and that brings me on to the second point.

My major concern is that some of the deals that we have in the Combined Authority, financial deals with Government and the substantial money that we have had, is becoming time expired. Where they have got Mayoral Authorities the renewal deals have already been done. My understanding is that is not the case with the West Yorkshire Combined Authority because we have not got the full blown devolution deal in place and that does concern me very much, because it is one thing not to have a devolution deal; it is another thing altogether to then see the ones that have a devolution deal having renewal of funding packages that we may not – may not – be able to renew and I am, I have to say, personally very concerned about that.

The final and third point is about the Combined Authority. It is a work in progress and something that was very much brought to my attention on Monday. We had a briefing from the Combined Authority (I think other Groups are having briefings as well). The Combined Authority and all of us who serve on it are guilty of this, I think. We need to accept that there are big projects taking place funded by and governed by the Combined Authority in all sorts of people's ward areas and there is no proper mechanism, it seems to me, for the Combined Authority properly briefing ward Members who will be significantly affected. You are talking big schemes.

I think it is a point, Judith, that we all need to take on board. Ward Members, devolution is not about disenfranchising ward Members on Leeds City Council, or it should not be, and we need to be very careful. *(Applause)*

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

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Thank you for the comments and thank you for your support, Councillor Golton. Just for information, I think all of you know that York Council is a Coalition of Conservative and Liberal Democrats. The Conservative Group put down a motion to support the so-called Greater or Lesser Yorkshire Model which is Yorkshire without South Yorkshire and, I have to say, the Liberal Democrat Group and the Labour Group joined forces together and defeated that motion and supported the motion for One Yorkshire from York, so these are big stakes, actually, going forward for some Authorities and we need to keep an eye out and make sure we give support to everyone who is working on this.

The other interesting thing, Andrew, is that I think Philip Hammond when he was up on that visit and subsequently in conversations with other people has actually much more of an open mind about considering a wider footprint. It may be we need to, together, collectively go to the Treasury because back before this Government it was Treasury that led the devolution debate and maybe – I am not sure with all the dysfunction (and I think we have to acknowledge that there is massive dysfunction in Government at the moment and probably some more unfolding as we speak), I do not know that all of the Cabinet are aware of what is being done in their name and this notion of imposing a deal on an area perhaps is not commonly understood, so perhaps we could join forces and just really highlight what is happening.

I think all of us want to make sure that ward Members are fully aware of the different developments in the area. The other thing that is happening is the industrial strategy is starting to get some legs and as part of that there is going to be a major review of LEPs, so maybe if we could come together and actually think seriously about what we want our relationship to be with the business community out there and how we can make sure we keep the democratic principles that we hold dear to right at the heart of that decision making, that is an opportunity to feed that in.

A huge amount of work. Sajid Javid has told us he will meet us, we have to hold him to that but I think we all know this is urgent for a whole raft of reasons and we want to make sure we get that meeting in the diary. Any supporting in helping us to achieve that would be very gratefully received. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, I would now like to call for the vote to receive the Report on Devolution. *(A vote was taken)* That is CARRIED, thank you.

WHITE PAPERS

THE LORD MAYOR: We now move on to the final segment of the meeting, White Papers. We have three White Papers this evening for debate. Each debate will last for no longer than 45 minutes and will conclude with votes on the motion and any amendments.

ITEM 11 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – TRAVELLERS

THE LORD MAYOR: White Paper Motion one, Councillor Buckley.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Lord Mayor, could I move under the provisions of Council Procedural Rule (CPR) 22.1 (Suspension of CPRs) that CPR 3.4 (Time Limits for Business) be suspended to extend the debate on Councillor Buckley's White Paper by ten minutes to allow all political groups to comment.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, we have had that proposed and seconded so I need to call for a vote. All those in favour of extending by ten minutes. (*A vote was taken*) I am sorry, Councillor Campbell, that is LOST. Councillor Buckley.

COUNCILLOR BUCKLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. This White Paper motion calls for two things. Firstly, for public consultation before Negotiated Stopping sites are created; and secondly for a report to be prepared for the Executive Board to set out how this Council can hold to account those responsible for costly unauthorised encampments.

Let us just remind ourselves what the background to all this was and what the events of last summer were. At the end of June on a Friday afternoon – it is always a Friday, of course, as we know – in Alwoodley the village green was invaded by travellers. There were around 20 or 25 caravans towed by large, expensive four by four vehicles, most of which with Republic of Ireland plates. Local people were incensed about this – if you are in favour of them just say, I am sure you will later on. Lord Mayor, people were incensed about this and feelings ran extremely high. Damage was done and residents were forced off their own green.

This particular area has been greatly improved in the last few years. It now has an outdoor gym, a Diamond Jubilee memorial, wildflower beds and band concerts are held there in the summer. It is now called Alwoodley village green. Parish Councillors, ward Councillors and residents have all worked very hard together to bring this about.

The travellers were eventually removed using Section 61 of the Public Order Act in between three and four days. They then went to Stonegate Road in Moortown where they stayed for weeks.

The administration has decided that nine Negotiated Stopping sites at any one time – they can only be used once in a year – should be created for so-called Leeds connected gypsies and travellers to be occupied for a short period – a short period – of up to 28 days. When 18 caravans are near your home or near your business, 28 days is not a short period, it is a very long time.

Residents and business owners should know whether a site has been designated near them. There should be full consultation with the public before sites are created. There should not be a secret list. Then there is the matter of costs. Over the last five years it has cost the Council something like £800,000 on legal costs, provision of toilets, environmental clean-ups and so on. A report should be prepared to examine how unauthorised camps can be made accountable for these costs and damages.

In addition, it should be said that local businesses suffer in all this, such as the local restaurant which lost 90% of its Saturday trade and they should also have some redress.

We know that the Blair Government in 2004 placed obligations on Councils to assess accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers, but when it comes to this proposal for so-called Negotiated Stopping sites, communities should be able to express their views on intended sites near them, otherwise it is just not fair for local Leeds people who pay Council Tax, Income Tax, VAT and goodness knows what else and in our case the Parish Council Precept, when travellers manifestly do not.

I have to say for Councillor Coupar's amendment to suggest that there is no list and no preparation for a list and that nothing has been carried out in preparation for a list completely defies credibility.

This is the crux of the motion, Lord Mayor – no such sites without consultation with local residents and a report holding to account for costs unauthorised incursions and these people to be held to account. I move this motion, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Amanda Carter.

COUNCILLOR AMANDA CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, I am pleased to second the White Paper in the name of Councillor Buckley, particularly as in the recent past my constituency, Farsley, on two occasions has been subjected to illegal traveller encampments on Council owned land, which just happened to be adjacent to a day nursery as well as a junior and infant school.

On the second occasion the travellers arrived on the same site, the Council were very proactive in ensuring that once the travellers had gone the site was secured. However, I want to quote to you part of an email that was sent to me.

“More of our chickens are being decapitated and the school site has been used as a toilet again. Pretty disgusting behaviour.”

A further quote:

“Last time we were assured that the excrement on our site would be professionally removed but as far as we know it is still there. There is more. There is excrement in a number of places including our den-making area. We have repaired some of the broken fencing ourselves.”

Now, I am not making accusations but quite clearly a level of antisocial behaviour, quite rightly referred to as disgusting, occurred. It occurred on two occasions, both coinciding with when the travellers occupied this piece of land. It is simply not acceptable. I could quote more information of a similar sort but, of course we should respect people's human rights but with those rights comes responsibilities and anyone perpetrating those sorts of acts should be subject to prosecution.

Councillor Buckley is quite right, the Council does need to be more proactive and take innovative ways in which they can deal with illegal camps. The police have their part to play as well. The police on both occasions did finally implement powers under Section 61 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act of 1994 to evict the travellers, but it took too long. A lot of distress has been caused.

As regards identification of sites in the Core Strategy and temporary sites, it is not acceptable that the Council tries to draw a veil of secrecy over the locations. It is right that the public are properly consulted and their views taken into account. It would go some way towards reassuring the public that the Council and the police could also point to the range of measures that they can take to deal with illegal traveller sites. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Leadley.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, in reading this amendment Members might have been surprised to see Headingley mentioned as well as Alwoodley. Really it is a random selection and the point is that the city-wide gypsy and traveller policy will not work unless it is city-wide, there can be no exemptions.

Policy 816 in Unitary Development Plan was well written. It said that there should be a spread of gypsies and travellers throughout Leeds. It did not work because it was never applied. Various administrations gave gypsies and travellers two choices – either go to Cottingley Springs or camp by the roadside which in practice meant parks, playing fields, factory yards and so on. No attempt was made to set up any new Council sites and planning applications for small private sites were resisted, though one or two did get through at appeal.

We broke away from that in Morley in 2010 when we supported a small private site at Nepshaw Lane which gained planning permission and has raised no objections or complaints. In 2015 in the Public Inquiry we successfully fought against the City Council's plans to extend Cottingley Springs from 41 pitches to 53. National and local policy says that no site should have more than 15 pitches. That proposal was against both the outgoing UDP policy 816 and the incoming LDF policy 87, yet its approval was recommended by officers at City Plans Panel and accepted by most of its members. Only a call-in by the Secretary of State stopped it.

One good thing that came out of the Cottingley Springs inquiry was a new City Council small site at Kidacre Street in City and Hunslet ward. When it became clear that the inquiry had gone badly and before its result had been published, the life of Kidacre Street was extended to three years and later to ten. It has been most successful and is presently being surfaced and fitted out to a higher standard.

If it is not applied properly, LDF Core Strategy policy 87 on gypsy and traveller sites will be just as ineffective as UDP 816 to the detriment to all.

Leeds has spent about £3m on unauthorised encampments since UDP was adopted in 2001, at least in part because it has not stuck to its own gypsy and traveller policies. Monitoring such matters must be a future requirement.

To comply with LDF policy 87 and make it work we will need approval for more small private sites. None seem to have been granted since the Core Strategy was adopted three years ago and at the recent Site Allocations Plan hearing the City Council tried to creep Cottingley Springs upwards by two pitches, even though it remains an unmanageable and sometimes frightening ghetto.

LDF Policy 87 also requires a rotating stock of nine temporary stopping pitches for up to 18 caravans to which gypsy and traveller visitors to Leeds could be directed to avoid the use of parks, playing fields and so on.

These could be anywhere in the Metropolitan district. Each would be used only once in twelve months and be changed to avoid the same places being used over and over again. Groups with more than 18 caravans would not be accommodated. It is more likely that the police would be prepared to use more quickly their powers under Section 61 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act of 1994 to remove trouble makers if the City Council could be seen to be complying with its own adopted policy, and that is where enforcement comes in.

Gypsy and traveller policy was discussed at the recent SAP Inquiry which the Councillors Blackburn and I attended. If the SAP Inspectors became convinced that the City Council had little intention of applying its adopted policy, including temporary Negotiated Stopping places, it is likely that the SAP would be declared unsound. The SAP hearing will not end until its second part has been held, probably in the middle of next year, after which the Inspectors will report.

My Lord Mayor, I move the amendment. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: I second the amendment in Councillor Leadley's name and just make a couple of points. Big fan of Section 61. I think the police are feeble and lack spine when it comes to using Section 61 and will use every excuse from now to the end of the day not to use the powers that they actually have.

The other side of the coin is that Cottingley Springs is unmanageable. The nearest residents at Cottingley Springs actually live in Morley North and certainly Morley North and our colleagues in Farnley and Wortley have been asked to deal more with the challenges than any other area in the city. I certainly have a small liaison meeting with residents who are impacted in Morley North with Cottingley Springs and clearly the travellers section, despite their best efforts, are struggling to cope. It is the management of the site, it is too large and it is unmanageable.

If that is the case then we are in a situation where we would want a more vigorous approach using Section 61. If that is the case then the only way we are going to do that is if other areas also accept that they need to contribute towards resolving this particular challenge. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Coupar.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Thank you, Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors. I am really happy to have the opportunity to move this amendment today as it gives me the opportunity first of all to talk about our comprehensive city-wide four pronged multi-agency traveller strategy, which covers current and future accommodation.

Leeds currently has 41 pitches on two sites in the West of the city and our Core Strategy commits us to providing a further 62 pitches by 2028 of which 25 will be managed by Leeds City Council. Private pitches – the Leeds Core Strategy sets out a need for 28 private gypsy and traveller pitches across Leeds for the period of 2012 to 2028. Traveller groups would apply for planning permission which would be assessed against national and local guidelines. Negotiated Stopping (which I will return to in a moment), unauthorised encampments, it will remain that case that if a site is unsuitable for Negotiated Stopping, then the eviction process will be carried out through the County Court or Magistrates' Court. We continue to work with the Police and other partners to improve the process for dealing with unauthorised encampments.

Returning to Negotiated Stopping, which Councillor Buckley clearly has concerns about, I have to assume that this topic is of long-standing interest to Councillor Buckley and was not only awakened by the rare site of a traveller encampment in Alwoodley earlier this year. I am pleased that the police were able to quickly use their Section 61 powers in this instance and move the group on.

Councillor Buckley is calling for a list of sites to be published but I have to tell him, he is missing the point. Direction to alternative sites will be based on what parcels of land are available on a short-term basis at the point when an encampment occurs. This means that there is no secret list of sites.

Negotiated Stopping will only be allowed where strict criteria are met. They will be small groups in place for no more than 28 days. Ward Members will be consulted on the negotiated offer and travellers will either be directed to land or to stay put while the Negotiated Stopping policy is triggered.

All partner agencies are then actively involved in the management of the site for the agreed term, and a communication plan is put in place to communicate with local residents and businesses. The Negotiated Stopping agreement is a temporary social contract which outlines the terms under which families may stay on a particular area of land without being evicted for a defined and limited period.

Gypsies and travellers agree simple terms, such as not lighting large fires, not dumping waste and keeping animals under control. In return, the Council agrees to provide items such as skips and Portaloos. The defining characteristic of Negotiated Stopping sites is that they are not permanently laid out for gypsy and traveller use. Sites will not be used more than once during a twelve month period.

There are good examples of where this approach has worked well – Bath Road, for instance – and having this kind of plan for dealing with gypsy and traveller encampments is a far cry from previous approaches undertaken. I can remember when Councillor Les Carter was responsible for these issues on those opposite Benches, only you were in administration then. Of course, his approach was not to tolerate and to enforce, which cost the Council dearly. He was full of bluster and

hoped that it would make the problem go away. This approach did not work then and it will not work now.

I hope that everybody, including the Conservative Group, will support our amendment as it clarifies the process in place around Negotiated Stopping and our strategy in general, otherwise it will look like the same old nasty party following a dog whistle rather than engaging properly. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

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

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: I second, Lord Mayor, reserving the right to speak.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Anderson.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Let us start – we ain't supporting your amendment. We are not turkeys voting for Christmas. That is the biggest lot of baloney I have heard in this Chamber today and it takes some going.

In case you are going to insult any of my other colleagues, this is a long-standing interest of mine because I did chair a Scrutiny Board that looked into it and did come up with something that was accepted by the Council as a way forward, so I do have knowledge of this.

I agree that we should respect culture and traditions but, as Councillor Carter has already said, that comes with responsibilities. You said not one thing during your speech about how you were going to ensure that these people recognised their responsibilities. Not one thing.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Yes I did.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: You do not care about the citizens of this city.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: You were not listening. I did say.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: You are determined to do everything you possibly can to destroy what they are doing.

What help and support did you say you were going to give to local communities when they get invaded? What did you say you were going to do? What support are you going to give local communities? You have got no plans, no budget, no nothing. All you have got is bluster to try and criticise anybody who dares to speak against you. Total, utter waste of time you are. *(Interruption)*

You say you will not disclose the location of these sites. If you are going to consult with ward Members, how long is it going to take to get the ward Members together and consult? You have got the problem that is there and then. You have got the problem there and then. Councillor Coupar, if I agreed with you now we would both be wrong. *(laughter)*

What communities are asking is what planning permission would be needed on those sites, because this is for 28 days. What happens if someone goes in it? What sort of planning permission is necessary? We do not know, there was no discussion about that in Development Plans Panel when it came forward. What consultation has there been? Has this supposed comprehensive policy that you have got, where has it gone? Has it gone to Exec Board to be debated? Has it gone anywhere to be debated? Did anybody else know about it until today? No, we had not a clue what was happening. What is the level of public consultation? Don't you want to be open, transparent and clear with the citizens of this city so you know all the time what you are doing? If you are so confident how great your policy is then let us go out, let us debate it, let us see what the public think of it, let us see if they support it throughout this city because everybody could end up losing out as a result of this.

You do not want illegal sites around here; I do not want illegal sites around here but the way you are going about it is not the way it is going to be delivered. I support the White Paper motion in the name of my colleague. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ragan.

COUNCILLOR RAGAN: Thank you, my Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors. I am speaking in support of Councillor Coupar's amendment. There are many of us who know that unauthorised travelling encampments can be extremely disruptive to the local community. Whilst there are many encampments which are trouble free, we have recently seen communities in East Leeds having to deal with a range of antisocial behaviour and related problems associated with unauthorised encampments. Frustratingly, the situation can arise where a group is finally moved on only to pitch up down the road. Many colleagues in East Leeds have worked extremely hard in trying circumstances to deal with these problems.

What the Negotiated Stopping Plans do is set out a process whereby certain geographical areas of the city will not be expected to always take the strain, as in East Leeds. These encampments will last for no longer than 28 days and the same site will not be used twice within a twelve month period. The sites will be land earmarked for development, so in many cases they will be used only once. Travellers that are entering into these negotiated arrangements will be required to sign a contract setting out the terms of behaviour that must be followed as part of the social contract.

There will be no more than nine sites in the city at any one time. It is important to stress that all people in Leeds, regardless of background, including permanent residents and those passing through the city, have to comply with the law and show consideration for their neighbours. By taking a common sense approach to gypsies and traveller encampments we are working to ensure that this is what is delivered. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mark Dobson.

COUNCILLOR M DOBSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Thank you very much. I think a lot of us welcome this debate because actually those of us who have been around in this Chamber for a long time would not actually envy anybody who has got responsibility of delivering a strategy. I did not envy Councillor J L Carter all those

years ago; I do not envy Councillor Coupar now because it is the original hiding to nothing gig. I think it is worse than even being Market Champion, which still sends shudders down my spine – I am getting nods from Councillor Anderson.

However, we do need a strategy and the reason we need a strategy is clear, because whilst there have definitely been improvements around how travellers are dealt with and how the clean ups are conducted and the better mix between enforcement and a controlled removal has been telling, but it is nowhere near where we need to be at present. The question, we need a strategy.

A couple of question I have got which would lead me to believe that it is more pressing than ever. I am not convinced there is absolute parity across the city in terms of how travellers are dealt with from ward to ward. Councillor C Dobson tells me that in the 18 months since she was elected to Council in South Seacroft they have had 50 unauthorised encampments. In Garforth and Swillington ward we have had a great deal less than that, so I think one question I would just want to float out there, and I am not finger pointing, are some wards considered easier options than others? If that is the case then that is clearly something where there needs to be a fair and equitable approach to this subject matter.

Let us park that for the minute. Let us assume that is not the case. Where there is a problem – and I am not going to be quite as mean spirited towards the officers of the law as Councillor Finnigan but there is not in my opinion a parity of how Section 61 orders are distributed. I know it is dealt with at Inspector level and above and I have to say thank you to our local NPT team who on occasions where we have needed a Section 61 order have been extremely swift in the granting of and the execution of said order, but I do know that that same parity cannot be echoed by other Members. Whatever happens as part of the ongoing strategy around this issue, there has to be a clear understanding between us and West Yorkshire Police that it is fairly dealt with and that every ward has an equal right to protection around this issue as any other.

Consistencies aside and the fact that this has kind of come a little bit from left field, because the timeline I have in my mind is I received an email on this issue some time ago. The question I asked is, “Where are the sites in question?” The answer I got back is, “We don’t know.” Then it kind of went on a back burner. Then I heard comments had been relayed through Development Plans, that this was kind of gathering momentum and now we have a White Paper.

What I am actually saying is, this is a good debate because we need to get some flesh on the bones and actually find out what the strategy is because, let’s face it, we simply cannot go on, and I imagine it way, way pre-dates my time, the eleven years I have been on this Council, where it has been one of the original hot potatoes.

What I am seeking is perhaps some more urgent and telling briefings than we get in Council around what is actually being proposed, where and when. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think this is an issue which people have tried to deal with in different ways over the years and I always believe in following the evidence. Les Carter tried a certain approach which was quite a heavy approach to deal with the problem when it occurred, and what happened was the cost just kept on going up and up and up until we were spending about a third of a million a year on dealing with it. Since we took over in 2010, Councillor Gruen did a lot of work with the travelling community and the amount of money being spent now is around about £100,000 a year. I know everybody would like the cost of dealing with this issue to be nothing but I think if we are realistic we know that that is never going to be the case.

I would also say that I have had a lot of experience of trying to find locations for permanent sites and it is very, very difficult because ward Members by and large do not want traveller sites in their wards. People might think that is wrong but that is the case and it is certain wards that always get the greatest share, let's put it that way, and they tend to be wards in the south of the city, the south-east right through to the south-west, and they are the areas where travellers tend to congregate, so there is a kind of logic to it but those wards do not feel at all happy about it, particularly when you say "Here is another permanent settlement", so this is actually about a very reasonable way of dealing with an issue where you actually say if there are sites that are coming up for development that have not got a use long-term, why don't we use those because what you can then say to every community in the city is, "Right, we are using this one now but it is only going to be used once, short-term and then there will be other sites" because that one will come forward for development and we can actually ensure that there is parity and that certain wards do not feel continually that they are bearing the brunt of a particular community and feeling that they have been discriminated against.

It is just actually logical, it is a reasonable way of dealing with something. I am surprised that people are so keen to rubbish it before it has got anywhere because clearly if you ask me, we are not going to go out and find lots more sites and if there is anybody who want to come forward to me and say "I have got a brilliant site in my ward" I would say something crude but it is not going to happen, is it?

This is a very sensible way forward, let's go with it and I am a bit disappointed with Barry's language and his approach because it has been very confrontational and unnecessary. This is a serious issue for us all and we have got a solution. This is about a solution, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor David Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. As Members will know, my ward contains the two sites at Cottingley.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: There are three sites.

COUNCILLOR BLACKBURN: Two sites, Jim, there are two sites, A and B. They tried to make it three but there is only two and we beat you. The two sites at Cottingley and the two actual private sites that quite honestly if it had not been for the SAP scheme nobody would have actually known about because the travellers have

been there for years, no problems with anybody, everybody is happy but it has gone down to make the numbers up for sites.

That is actually the proof of the thing, that actually if you get a caravan site, a small caravan site and you mix with the community and work with the community, it works. You will always have people – people who live in houses can be not very nice people, so people in caravans can be not very nice. It does not matter what you live in, there's bad 'uns amongst all of us and there's good people that live on Cottingley.

What we have got to do, we have got to be fair by them but we have got to be fair by the communities we represent and that means that if you are going to find a site you have got to sell it to that community, even if it is a temporary site. We have got to be open about it. It is hard.

Having traveller sites in my own ward is very difficult because you have clash and I have got to say Tom and Robert have that problem because the other side of the road is there ward, but you have got to be fair by all the communities that we have got.

I have got to say, I can see this and I think Tom and Robert will see this, the fact is it seems that our part of the world is always first on the list and there are other parts of the city that are not taking part.

What I am saying to you is, wherever we choose and even if it is a temporary one, let us have something on paper, let us have something so that we can consult with people so those people can be made welcome there. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Campbell.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think it is fair to say that during the summer there were a group of travellers in Leeds who were, let us put it mildly, difficult and were certainly difficult for the Council to deal with. They did appear to pull up in Alwoodley and because they pulled up in Alwoodley, of course, we have having one of the good old-fashioned gypsy site debates. It is like going back in time, quite frankly. I have heard all this before.

What we seem to be missing though is actually the White Paper really relates to the policy. I am a little bemused by this because the policy that went through development Plans Panel was discussed quite openly, so when Barry says nobody knew anything about it, he did not know anything about it, I am slightly surprised because he was there and actually commented, and I am slightly surprised that everybody else says they did not know anything about it because you all get the agendas for the Development Plans Panel, you all saw it was on there. If you had wanted to read it you could have done – sadly you did not.

We did have an interesting discussion, I think it is fair to say, and we did look at all of the issues and I think it is fair to say that Development Plans Panel were by and large happy with trying a new approach because the old system just does not work.

The second part, of course, is that this was dealt with by the Inspector at the public inquiry, what was it, a fortnight ago? I thought to myself well, obviously if Councillor Buckley and his friends are really concerned about this they will be going along and actually expressing a view because the Inspector will want to know about that. I can see one, two, three people who were there – three people who were there, not enough, Councillor Buckley.

OK I know there is an issue, I know there was an issue in Alwoodley and you are right, there was an issue there and I think actually the bit that is missing off here is the bit at the end where it says, “Actually over the years we have been trying to get Government to change legislation to make it easier for us to move disruptive travellers off inappropriate sites” and that has been a discussion in this Council for 20-odd years and yet this Government – you are nodding your head because you agree with me because you have sat through these debates as well – this Government and all the others have singularly failed to grasp that nettle.

What we really want is a sensible policy from the Council – well, we are going down that way, whether it will work or not I do not know but what the heck. What we also want is something from Central Government which allows us to deal with disruptive travellers in a quick, timely manner and that is what we do not have and that is what there appears to be no intention of it providing us with. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I like Councillor Coupar, I like her a lot and she knows that and she knows that anything that I am now about to say is not directed at her at all... (*laughter*)

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: But it will feel like it is!

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: ...but do you know what, it is nice that suddenly we have heard a policy because was anybody aware of this four pronged approach? No.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Neither was Councillor Coupar until this morning.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Actually, I have to say, Councillor Buckley, thank you for getting a policy out of the Labour Group on this Council because until a few minutes ago we had never heard of a four pronged approach, but in it, I have never heard of anything as barmy in all of my life. For goodness sake, let me just get this right, I think I heard Councillor Coupar say that when travellers come to a particular site, Council owned site, playing field or whatever and they set up there, we will go and have a chat with them and say, “Why don’t you leave here and go to this other place that we have got? We are not quite sure where it is yet because we have not even spoken to the ward Councillors yet but it will be somewhere nearby, you do not have to go very far but just stay with us while we go and have a chat with the ward Councillors.”

Then you will go the ward Councillors and say “We have got this problem, of course, we have got all these travellers on your locale, on this playing pitch but we do not want to put them there, we want to put them somewhere else in your ward. Oh, we are not really sure where that could be, another playing pitch perhaps or a school playground or something else or another Council owned site. We are thinking about going there.” “How would you feel about going there? Do you think you would be OK about going there or would you like to go somewhere else? Would you like to go to a different ward altogether? Where exactly do you think you would like to go?”

After all of this and we have got all your feedback, actually we have now got this legal agreement. “We have got a legal agreement for you to sign, would you sign here on the dotted line that you are going to be really good travellers on this site that you are now going to go to and you are not going to have” – key word – “big fires; you can have little fires.” I don’t know what a little fire is compared to a big fire. “You are not going to have big fires and you are not going to throw any rubbish around, are you, or anything like that. We will let you stay there for 28 days. We will let you go there. Now, here is the legal agreement, so sign here.”

Well, everyone knows that no-one signs a legal agreement, do they, unless they have got some advice, so these people are going to go and consult with a lawyer, are they? Who is going to pay for that? They are going to go and consult, “Oh, I don’t know about this 45 page agreement.” Have you seen the agreements that this Council churn out? They are very comprehensive but they are hardly short, are they, and of course Legal Services are going to have to compile this agreement that they are going to sign up to.

For goodness sake come on – come on. Does this sound like a four pronged credible approach? I do not think so. It sounds to me, Councillor Buckley, as if you have forced a policy out of this Council. It is one that has been made up on the hoof, probably made up over the tea break actually by the sound of it because nobody knew of it beforehand. The Members opposite, the Labour Members opposite were almost gawping in disbelief when they heard the four pronged approach as well because they could see how completely crackers it was as well.

Have any Labour Members been consulted on it? Put your hand up if you have. Go on! Really? Really? OK, Lord Mayor, interesting. What we are now hearing is that actually the Labour Group have consulted upon a policy for themselves, not for this city. They have consulted amongst themselves, not taken it to Executive Board, not shared it with any other party at all and then they are trying to say this is a comprehensive approach for the whole of the city. No. This is a comprehensive approach for the Labour Party only to try and get them out of a problem they have got themselves into. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Buckley.

COUNCILLOR BUCKLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to, in case I do run out of time, thank all contributors to this debate.

I just had to point out to Councillor Procter though that he mentioned it was a four pronged approach. Actually, not only was it a four pronged approach it was a multi agency approach as well, so there were two things there.

I will start with Councillor Amanda Carter who made some very good points indeed.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: You have to say that.

COUNCILLOR BUCKLEY: Trying to draw a veil of secrecy over these sites is not just acceptable, it is completely unsound. She quite rightly drew attention to the appalling events in Farsley which is just not acceptable in a civilised city, it really just is not on.

Councillor Anderson was absolutely spot on with his comments. I have to say, just coming to Councillor Coupar's comments, it really was completely incoherent because she referred to Councillor Les Carter, events which took place a decade ago and are simply not relevant to today's debate at all.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Seven years.

COUNCILLOR BUCKLEY: She says in her amendment:

“Leeds residents have the right to live lives that aren't negatively affected by new encampments in their area.”

Tell that to the residents of Alwoodley or anywhere else in South East Leeds and Farsley and Moortown when they were there for about 28 days – and Wetherby, as is pointed out to me.

Then her amendment further goes on to state, and she confirmed today,

“there is no pool of sites as land used for Negotiated Stopping is land that is only available to be used for a limited period on a short term basis at the point when an encampment occurs.”

We have already had reference to whatever it is called, earmarked for development sites, so ergo there is a list. There must be a list of these development sites because two Members individually mentioned it. Either she says there is no list and there is no preparation for a list. There is either a secret list which she will not tell us about and it is hidden somewhere or there is no list, in which case is she seriously proposing that on the morning of the encampment, as Councillor Procter pointed out, officers are going to go along and say, “Well, let me think, let's do a land search and we will have a bit of a think about health and safety and see where we can put these people.” There must be a list and she has to come clean and tell us where the secret list is.

In addition to all this, a technical point maybe but this could be a legal point, actually – what about people who are buying homes near these proposed sites, or

business investors? What about them? Is it not against the law to withhold information from them about possible so-called stopping sites?

Just moving on to Councillor Leadley's amendment if I may, he made some very technical points about various events over the years but I have to say his actual written amendment mentioning the Alwoodley situation, which Councillor Coupar referred to and others, actually. Councillor Coupar said am I just interested in this now and not 20 years ago or am I just responding to concerns of my residents? I am interested in this problem right across the city but I take great pride in representing my residents and I will continue to do so.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you.

COUNCILLOR BUCKLEY: I confirm that is our situation. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. I would now like to call for the vote. Recorded vote.

(A recorded vote was held on the amendment in the name of Councillor Leadley)

THE LORD MAYOR: We have 86 Councillors present, "Yes" 11, abstentions 3 and "No" 72, so that is LOST.

We will now move on to the second amendment in the name of Councillor Coupar.

(A recorded vote was held on the amendment in the name of Councillor Coupar)

THE LORD MAYOR: We have 86 Councillors still present, "Yes" 55, abstentions 7, "No" 24, so that is CARRIED and now becomes the substantive motion.

I would like to call for a vote on the substantive motion in the name of Councillor Coupar. We have been asked for a recorded vote.

(A recorded vote was held on the substantive motion in the name of Councillor Coupar)

THE LORD MAYOR: 86 Councillors present, "Yes" 54, abstentions 7, "No" 25 so that is then CARRIED. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR: Where are we going to put them?

ITEM 12 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – UNIVERSAL CREDIT

THE LORD MAYOR: Now we are going to move to the second White Paper Motion, Councillor Coupar.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Thank you, Lord Mayor, and I hope we can move from an innovative policy now to dealing with a more co-operative policy with the other groups, I will hope.

In moving this White Paper, in Leeds our experience of Universal Credit has so far been limited compared to other areas of the country which have had full roll out. However, we have our own evidence for the problems that Universal Credit can cause. This contributes to our sense of alarm about the effects of transferring the full roll out next June.

So far in Leeds single unemployed people have been transferred to the new benefit. These are meant to be the quick wins and yet they have been hit with substantial sanctions. Over the year from January to December 2016, 25% of all Universal Credit claimants in Leeds received sanctions. In 77 of these sanctions in Leeds, Universal Credit was stopped for three months.

We have attempted to work with Government sharing our concerns. In our submission to the Government's inquiry into Universal Credit following the initial 13 month period we found that the 67 week wait for the initial payment of Universal Credit is a real problem. The expectation that people would have enough funds to tide them over was, unsurprisingly, a long way short of the mark. We found many incidents where initial payment was delayed well beyond the six to seven week period. This ties in with what the Trussell Trust have been saying about the national picture of those referred to food banks having to wait for up to 13 weeks. The work the Pensions Select Committee has found that about a fifth of all recipients are waiting longer than six weeks for the first payment.

Our experience of the live service suggests that the accuracy of payments is frequently poor which has resulted in a lot of time consuming activity for our Housing Benefit staff seeking to clarify what payments refer to and how the calculations have been made. Despite a dedicated team of officers working to provide intense contact and support for claimants, we found an average increase in rent arrears of 33% per tenant. The level of support we have been providing will be unsustainable once we have full roll out.

Considering families with children and more complex cases are due to transfer over in June and we are having to prepare for more damage. Citizens Advice have surveyed those who have moved across to Universal Credit in pilot areas and found that 39% were waiting more than six weeks to receive their first payment, and more than half were having to borrow money to get by during this time. There is an obvious risk of families being made homeless in these kind of circumstances.

Universal Credit is a housing cost support scheme which by its very design creates significant rent arrears at the start. There are impacts on people's health and wellbeing. We surveyed people in Leeds who had moved across in the first tranche, 50% of whom feared that their financial situation would impact on their health.

A study of two Local Authorities, Southwark and Croydon, who have been guinea pigs for Universal Credit, found that poor tenants were pushed deeper into rent arrears and food bank referrals. The average Universal Credit household was £1,178 in arrears compared with £8 in credit for the average Council rent account.

In Newcastle, tenants living in Council housing who have been moved to Universal Credit have accumulated £1.2m of rent arrears. Universal Credit is the creation of a Central Government; however, its effects are felt very locally. By imposing benefit cuts, housing uncertainty and additional debt on those claiming Universal Credit the Government is asking another part of the State to pick up the mess it has created.

The purpose of Universal Credit was meant to encourage more people into work and I know that Councillor Anderson makes this claim in his amendment. This goal is laudable. Sadly, Universal Credit is set to punish those who are already in work and according to the Resolution Foundation around 2.5 million low incomes households families will be more than a thousand pounds a year worse off when they move on to Universal Credit.

Whilst Universal Credit was envisaged to be beneficial to people in work, multi-billion pound cuts to work allowances imposed by the long forgotten George Osborn has meant that the policy is now far less generous than originally foreseen.

There are also problems for disabled people transferring on to Universal Credit and we know that there are many prominent Conservatives who have indicated that they share our dismay at the Universal Credit process.

THE LORD MAYOR: Final statement, please.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I hope that Council can support my White Paper. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Smart.

COUNCILLOR SMART: Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, I am pleased to be seconding this White Paper on the important issue of Universal Credit. The Tory Government's shambolic Universal Credit policy has been a complete failure and risks pushing some of the poorest people in our city into deeper poverty.

Leeds has so far only seen Universal Credit rolled out to single unemployed people. While these should be the simplest group with which to implement a new scheme, we have already seen multiple teething problems. In the first year, 25% of all Universal Credit recipients in Leeds have received sanctions and a high number of these recipients are struggling to pay their rent and household bills.

Nationally where full roll out has been implemented there has been a stark rise in rent arrears, evictions and the use of food banks. A fundamental flaw with Universal Credit is the six week waiting time until the first payments. This assumes that people have the funds to tide them over during this period, which is just not the case. There is a very real risk of eviction in this period and a rise in homelessness.

The evidence from the roll out is that many have to wait significantly longer than six weeks. Just this weekend while the Armley Councillors were out campaigning, I spoke to a man living in private rented accommodation who had been waiting well over six weeks for his first payment and was being threatened with eviction by his landlord.

The problems with Universal Credit do not begin and end with late payments. It is important to remember that many people who will be affected by Universal Credit will be in work. The monthly payments are meant to mimic the world of work but this ignores the fact that many part-time or agency workers are paid weekly.

I am particularly worried about the impact this new benefit will have on vulnerable people. My ward, Armley, has high levels of both domestic violence and suicide. How is a woman meant to leave her abusive partner if all of their household benefits are paid into her abuser's bank account? How do we expect someone suffering with serious mental health issues or loneliness to cope with the stress of having no money coming in for over six weeks?

Concerns about this policy are not being raised solely by Labour voices. There are voices from across the political spectrum who have expressed concerns about the social impact of Universal Credit, including the former Prime Minister John Major and a number of Conservative MPs.

We are calling for a complete halt to the shambles that has been the Tories' Universal Credit roll out. If we want to end the dire situation many Leeds' citizens are facing, then it is imperative that the Government puts this cruel and heartless policy on hold.

I urge all Councillors to vote with their conscience and support our White Paper
Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I have been involved in the Welfare Rights scene since 1982 and have seen the complexities of the systems and different Governments tinker around with it at this particular point.

Universal Credit in principle is a good idea. If you go back and look at the mechanics and how it actually works, it is a good idea. It was a necessary approach because welfare reform was entirely and utterly necessary. If you want to examine perhaps other people's records on welfare reform, it is perhaps interesting to visit the previous Labour Government's record on welfare reform. They introduced ESA in 2007, along with ATOS. How did that work out?

COUNCILLOR R GRAHAME: We know, don't we?

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Not so well, really. You are absolutely right Ron, failure by the Labour Government in its welfare reform approach. They introduced the bedroom tax in 2008, did the previous Labour Government, under the

Local Housing Allowance. The Tories just transferred that through into the bedroom tax as we know it today. You thought of it first, you implemented it first.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Absolutely.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: We had something at that particular point called then Benefit Integrity Project. That was an attempt by the Labour Government to reduce the number of people claiming Disability Living Allowance and certain disabled people suffered quite severely and quite significantly under that particular reform. We are not likely to take much guidance from the Labourites on welfare reform and to pause.

Universal Credit is a good idea in principle. It needs to change. What we are suggesting is a practical approach that will make it work better.

It is always, always foolish to suggest that you should hang around for six weeks and put people on to monthly payments. That is not realistic, certainly for those people on low incomes who are often struggling from week to week. It needs to go in a payment cycle that is similar to Employment Support Allowance and Job Seekers' Allowance, fortnightly in arrears. Is it me that is saying that? It is Frank Field and you would do well to listen to your own MP on that who has a history longer than I have in welfare rights.

The first thing that needs to change is it needs to be paid certainly on a fortnightly basis. Get rid of this argument about waiting six weeks, it does not work, it is unrealistic, it is something that penalises the poor.

The second issue that Frank Field talks about is making sure that you take away the rent payments and have those paid direct to the landlord. For those of us who have been around a long time, in 1982 even Mrs Thatcher decided under the old Supplementary Benefit Regulations to take the rent money off people and pay it over to the landlords to make sure that people had roofs over their heads.

Why it was felt for ideological or philosophical reasons that it was a good idea to hand people the rent money at the point you have been waiting six weeks and you have got other bills piling up, chances are you were never going to pay your rent, so the second thing that needs to change is that you need to make sure that the rent money goes back in the Housing Benefit Scheme and is paid directly to the landlords to make sure that people maintain a roof over their heads.

The structure of Universal Credit is a better system. Certainly a calculation that I once did under the Labour Government's approach led to a taxation rate of 92 pence in the pound. For every pound you earned it was clawed back off your tax credits, off your housing benefit, off your Council Tax benefit.

Universal Credit is good in principle. It needs a practical change. We are suggesting rather than pause and talk about it we do something practical to make it work better for those on low incomes in our city. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Leadley.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: Can I formally second the amendment, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Anderson.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Again, this is one issue that has been to a Scrutiny Board I chaired and we were critical of the way it was being implemented, there is no doubt about that, so I have a degree of sympathy about what is being put forward today. The Council themselves actually have a lot to be proud of in what they have tried to do in terms of the work that they have done with the housing tenants. They have spoken to them, they have tried to prepare them the best they can for the issues ahead so they have taken the time to do that, which is to be applauded. They have also worked with a number of other claimants and the Benefits section within the Council has been excellent at being able to get people through the appeals process because the number of appeals they have had to deal with do not need as many appeals as we have done, as has been proved by our Benefits section. As a Council we do have things that we can be proud of.

What worries me and worries a number of other people about putting a hold to it is the confusion that would come throughout the country. The Labour Party nationally has support for a policy – not necessarily this particular policy but they have got that – and we have a great deal of sympathy and would be supporting Councillor Finnigan’s amendment today. The only reason we are not is we are not sure of the financing and the affordability of it as to whether or not that would undo any good that is being put in because of the fiscal problems that we have got.

What would happen if we were to suspend it? What would be the vacuum? Who would lose out? I agree with Councillor Coupar that a lot of people in work have been the ones who have lost out, but people who are trying to get a job and the salaries that they are being offered, this is a way of helping them into work and enabling them to go up and down when their salaries increase or decrease, so there are a lot of benefits to what we are talking about here.

The sanctions that are mentioned here, I do not know whether the Council when they are asking people what sanction they have actually been sanctioned for because I am not going to read them all out because we would be here all day and I am not going to do that, but, for example, it says “Failing to attend an interview without good reason.”

COUNCILLOR JAROSZ: Maybe the bus missed. You have only to be late.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: Without good reason, so if you have got the good reason, the bus, that is a matter of public record, isn’t it? You should be arguing that. Failure to participate in a scheme for jobs, that is another one. We need to look at the reasons. Some of them are justified by the way, some of them are ridiculous, some of the sanctions. I am not saying that they are not but we need to be more clear exactly which sanctions it is that are causing the problem, that is all I am saying to that.

To conclude, there are other problems as well. The six week waiting time is far too long. We need to make sure that the advanced payment option is made more clearly available.

COUNCILLOR JAROSZ: You have to start and pay it back even before they get paid credit.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: If you want to speak get up, don't just shout across the Chamber.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: Josie, you were on the Scrutiny Board so you heard what was being said at that particular time. We all agreed that something had to be done about that so we are all in agreement.

There are also delays in the way the evidence is being collected as well. That is causing problems so we need to do more about the evidencing that is there. Finally, we also need to look at better support for people who are applying for the first time, because these people are being asked to go online to do it and some people made an error and that means you have got to go back to the beginning again, which is a total, utter travesty for those people who have a problem.

THE LORD MAYOR: Concluding sentence, please.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: Please support my amendment. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Stephenson.

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

COUNCILLOR PRYOR: Lord Mayor, the roll out of Universal Credit has been beset with problems from the very start and instead of pausing and taking time to address the issues the Government has ploughed on regardless, showing a breathtaking arrogance and disregard for some of the most disadvantaged people in society.

They have left vulnerable families without payments for six weeks, leaving parents forced to go hungry to ensure their children can be fed. Six weeks. Barry's speech was saying there were problems with this but I am not sure if Barry has read the Conservative amendment that they have put forward. The Conservative amendment says "Universal Credit will support social mobility." How will not giving poor families money for six weeks increase social mobility? It is absolute nonsense.

Expectations are that 3.2 million working families...

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Listen.

COUNCILLOR PRYOR: ... will be worse off under Universal Credit with an average loss of £48 per week. Of these, 600,000 mostly couples with children will no

longer be entitled to anything. There are further concerns that the new system will wreak havoc on the allocation of free school meals, currently given to more than a million children from low income families.

Under the previous system there was a trigger for working out which families were entitled to free school meals. This has been removed and nothing has been put in its place to identify which families qualify. When questioned the Government said that full details will be released, and I quote, “in due course.” Lord Mayor, in due course does absolutely nothing for those families affected, leading many to believe that they actually have not got a clue and failed to notice this fairly glaring omission.

A report by the Resolution Foundation warns that Government is faced with two options: either cutting back free school meals or giving them to all children whose parents receive Universal Credit. If free school meals were rolled out to all who receive Universal Credit, it would cover an additional 1.7 million children and would cost up to £600m per year. As spending money on the most vulnerable is something this Government is unwilling to do, I very much doubt they will take this course of action.

Now, of course, being cynical I would suggest that the glaring omission was in fact a deliberate precursor to scaling back the free school offer – something if you remember in the Tory manifesto that caused such outrage they had to back down. Maybe this is a way of sneaking back in those cuts to children through.

When questioned about free school meals the Government have chosen their words carefully. Their spokeswoman said, and I quote, “As Universal Credit is rolled out we will ensure the families who need it most continue to receive the support.” Again the cynic in me would suggest that families who need this most is not the same as saying all families who currently receive free school meals will continue to do so. I have very real concerns that the Government is moving towards cutting free school meals by stealth, by pushing forward with a system that makes no provision for identifying families who qualify. Of course this will also mean a further cost saving to the Government as the number of pupils who qualify for Pupil Premium will drop overnight.

The end result will be vulnerable and disadvantaged children missing out on what could be the only hot meal they have each day and our already stretched schools facing further reductions in funding.

We have spoken before at length about the impact good nutrition has on educational attainment and I have to question the Government’s commitment tackling poverty and in particular child poverty. The blind push towards Universal Credit with a transitional protection that will in reality support less than a fifth of the families expected to lose under the changes is yet another attack on vulnerable families and is a complete and utter disgrace.

A pause in the roll out to address these issues is the only sensible and morally acceptable decision before we see thousands of families and children plunged further into poverty. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Salma Arif.

COUNCILLOR ARIF: Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, we have heard about the brutal impact that Universal Credit is already having in many areas of the country and the impact that the limited roll out has had in Leeds. Councillor Coupar's White Paper amendment is therefore extremely important for the people of Leeds. What I do not want to hear from the Opposition Benches is the claim that we are just complaining and not doing anything practical. Allow me to tell you, we do a great deal of work to tackle poverty in Leeds.

Poverty is estimated to affect 155,000 here in Leeds. The Leeds vision of a strong economy and compassionate city means that we must invest as much energy as we can into tackling poverty. This way we can show that all the communities in Leeds benefit from the strength of this city's economy.

The Citizens @ Leeds approach is to tackling poverty focusing on four key propositions: the need to provide accessible and integrated services; the need to help people out of financial hardship; the need to help people into work; and the need to be responsive to the needs of local communities.

Our personal work support programme introduced as part of the amended Council Tax Support Scheme has been an extremely positive initiative with 591 participants finding work whilst on this programme. Since its inception the scheme has exceeded the targets set.

Our focus on empowering communities means that we have worked to facilitate grass roots initiatives. A good example of this is the Debt Forums which have been established in East, West, North and South Leeds. These are made up of a number of agencies working together to provide the community with information and support focused on that community's needs. Our Community Hub programme has helped to put essential services where they are needed, right at the heart of the community. Development work has now shifted to focus on Phase 3 of the programme.

Our Community Committees also play a pivotal role as well. Over £1.3m has been spent through the Wellbeing and Youth Activity Fund in 2016 and 2017. Our Leeds Credit Union goes from strength to strength. It has more than trebled its membership from 11,000 in 2005 to over 31,000 in 2017. The excellent work carried out by the Credit Union alongside the Illegal Money Lending Team and Leeds City Council to raise awareness of the dangers of using illegal money lenders has been exemplary.

The Council also continues to support the Leeds Food Aid Network which delivers a joined-up approach to emergency food provisions at a local level. Sadly, the programme of welfare reform initiated by the Government means at times we are running to stand still. The roll out of Universal Credit in Leeds has the potential to undo all our hard work. Thankfully, in Leeds we take pride in our efforts to tackle poverty and we will continue to do so in the years to come. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Stephenson.

COUNCILLOR STEPHENSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to second the amendment in the name of Councillor Barry Anderson.

I think Councillor Anderson touched on some positive criticism, I think it is fair to say, of the roll out and what needs to be done. That is the way to approach the subject but we cannot forget either the reason why Universal Credit first came about as an idea. To understand that we have to understand, some fundamental facts.

The Treasury currently collects £130bn in National Insurance Contributions every year. It spends £245bn on Social Security and there is evidently a deficit there that we need to look at in the way of how we fund the welfare system in order to get that back into the black.

When we talk about funding the welfare system, there is undoubtedly a movement in this country to get a hold of what was happening with welfare under the last Labour Government. That is why the country elected two Conservative Governments to do that because, like ourselves, most people in this country knew Labour's record on the Welfare State. They knew that in the last four years of Labour for every day that they were in office for that last four years 25 jobs were lost from the British economy. Since 2010 every day 1,047 jobs have been created in the British economy. That is the record of what getting hold of welfare does and promoting a strong economy.

It gives people jobs, it gives people the dignity of being in work, it gives people the opportunity to pay taxes to contribute back to the system – to pay less tax, by the way, under this Conservative Government. We all know on these Benches that the only route out of poverty is indeed work.

Councillor Finnigan mentioned a lot of actions Labour took in Government. You did miss out a few, however, like, for example, under Labour people were able to claim £100,000 a year Housing Benefit. The average worker in Leeds has to work 36 years to pay enough tax for one claim of £100,000 benefits. Under Labour benefits rose at twice the rate of wages, wages of people in the public and private sector. That is not fair to those people who are claiming the benefits to put them on a cycle of dependency or to the taxpayers who paid for it. That is why Universal Credit came in, to fix Labour's broken welfare system – a system that discouraged work whereas if you went out and actually got some part-time work your benefits stopped, it is now a much better system that is coming in. Likewise, it also introduced the Benefit Freeze, a freeze that again was fair to taxpayers who pay for the Welfare State.

Whilst Members opposite I am sure would be delighted in suggesting that these are further attacks by the Tories, I would just like to paraphrase or indeed quote directly one establishment figure, the higher echelons of society who, indeed, on the benefit freeze said, "I do not think we can reverse it entirely. We should not be promising things we cannot afford", said Lady Nugee, Emily Thornberry, your Shadow Foreign Secretary.

We have to look at Universal Credit in the round. Yes, it is a fundamental reform, it is a lot of change, it is a new benefit, a new type of IT system is needed, a

new way of operating. It involves new ways of working with partners and to do so there will be some challenges, but implementation is a very measured case. It started in 2013, set to be complete by 2022.

It is important that we get this right and we cannot lose sight of the reason we are doing that, Lord Mayor, and that is to fix the broken benefit system that the Labour Party left behind. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ann Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Universal Credit is supposed to work if it is done properly to be a better system. This one is not. It certainly needs some altering to make it a better system because as it is at the moment it is terribly unfair.

We know that people have to use IT systems, that was one of the things that was brought in with it, you cannot fill in a form any more so you have got to be taught to use the system. You have got to get an account on the system so you have got to get some computer to do that and be taught how to do it, which is not always easy for people but you have to do it to make a claim.

Six weeks to wait for an initial payment. Six weeks is a long time, particularly if you do not have the money there. You might have been working temporary, a lot of people work temporary for agencies, for instance, and you can finish there suddenly, think you have got more work coming on, then the agency says “No, sorry, don’t want you any more, the job has stopped, you know, the other person has come back” so you are stuck. If you do not have the money then what do you do for six weeks? You might be lucky enough to borrow it from a friend or family but you might not so, as you said, some end up at food banks or whatever, some end up not having much food. Usually borrow from family or friends or whatever if they can for six weeks. That is no way for civilised society to be. What on earth is going on? If somebody claims something they should not have to wait six weeks for it but that is the situation we are in.

Sanctions I accept, yes, they are varied, it depends on what you sign up for but I do know where sometimes if somebody has been looking for work but maybe it is just a little bit lower than the hours that they said they would look for work, they can sanction you. It goes on what the person that you are working with, your adviser, says, so you can be sanctioned. If you are a couple and one has not fulfilled what they said they would do and the other one has, then it is half a sanction.

It worries me because I always thought that Universal Credit was good idea and I do still believe that it can be made good, it is just that this particular Universal Credit as it is now is not.

Quoting from what has been said by other Councils, which has I know been mentioned today, is that rental arrears are a particular worry. Three local Councils whose tenants have already been moved on to Universal Credit said they had built up around £8m in arrears. Croydon, Hounslow and Southwark said that more than 2,500 tenants claiming the benefit were now at risk of eviction.

Data obtained by the Observer shows that half of all Council tenants across 105 Local Authorities who are in receipt of the housing element of Universal Credit are at least a month behind on their rent and 30% are two months behind. By contrast, less than 10% of Council tenants on traditional housing benefit are a month behind on their rent.

THE LORD MAYOR: That is grand, Ann, thank you for that.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: OK, thank you. Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am going to refer us back to the very beginning of this afternoon's Council meeting. There was a young lady stood there, she was talking about her manifesto as the Children's Mayor and it was all about having respect for each other, it was about confronting bullying. The phrase that she used that stuck in my mind was how much does it cost to be kind? When Universal Credit got brought in (and it was brought in under a Coalition Government) it actually had all Party support because Ed Miliband was just as much behind the principle as the other parties who were in power, because everyone saw that there was a need to reform the system because it was not functioning as it was.

It is interesting how Councillor Stephenson introduces how he understood why the system needed to be reformed and it was basically because, well, as far as you were concerned, the tax income which was coming in just was not matching the tax income that was going out. It did not actually take into consideration the fact that we have an economy which is skewed in a way which is different to others within the European Union, for instance. We have a productivity issue in this country so the French are more productive than we are, the Germans are more productive than we are – even the Italians are more productive than we are. You will turn round and say “Oh, but they have got higher rates of unemployment, would you rather have that?” but the point is that we have produced an economy which is dependent upon lots of job growth in very low income areas and the issue behind that is that that means that there is the presumption that the State will be the bit that picks up the living standards of those people.

So, Universal Credit was meant to be encouraging people into work. You encourage people by respecting them. You do not show your respect to them by making them lose their self-respect, by having to go through a six week period where they are actually having to beg from pillar to post just to keep themselves with a roof over their heads and food in the bellies of their children.

That is where your Government has gone wrong, because when Universal Credit first came in, for example, I will give you this one here, there was a measure whereby should the recipient get a job then they would be certain to keep around about £1,332 a year and that was meant to be an incentive to people and it was meant to say we recognise the effort that you have made to get out of being unemployed and get into employment and we will reward you in work. I remind you of that term because that is what your lot used. We will reward you in work. As soon as the Coalition ended and Osborn came in as Chancellor unimpinged by the likes of us, he scrapped that. He scrapped that to save £2bn and then all of a sudden Universal

Credit was not about giving people a leg up, it was about what Councillor Stephenson was on about, it was about making sure they just do not cost too much.

All I will say is, all of the parties, as far as I am aware in this Chamber besides your own are saying is, can we please have a pause. Can we please look at unintended consequences, can we please make sure that something that we all want to support can be kind. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Robinson.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Interesting to hear the debate because I do not think anybody who has spoken in this Chamber, I do not think anybody who has sat in this Chamber has said that Universal Credit and its roll out has been perfect. There will be Members opposite who say that is the understatement of the century, but I do not think anybody has said that it has been entirely without fault.

I have sat in the Scrutiny inquiries that took place that Councillor Anderson chaired and the term has been used by Councillor Stephenson already that this was positive criticism. I think there is some positive criticism and the Government should have some criticism. Six weeks has been too long to wait and actually there is far more that needs to be done.

I thought that Councillor Finnigan's comments were very worthwhile too, as well, actually saying about just what has happened and that the intention of Universal Credit when your Party sat in Government as well, Stewart, that intention was the right intention. Do not forget that your elected Members voted that through as well, so there is some responsibility to be taken all round here.

COUNCILLOR TOWNSLEY: Since.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: What Stewart was saying was not entirely true here because actually one of the ways that you show respect for somebody is you give them control over their own budget, you let them decide their finances, you actually show them that it is worthwhile for them to have a say in their own future. Instead, I think this strange idea that is developing that actually it is a bit wrong to let people be in charge of their own budgets, you should turn round and say "Actually, do you know what, we will do it for you because we know a little bit better than you." Actually there is something that is fundamentally wrong with that as a society and as people that not just pay into the system but live in that same society and live in this country.

Also what you are saying, Stewart, about productivity. There are some choices that need to be made as a country. You talk about throw away lines about youth unemployment in places in Southern Europe and the Southern EU states where it is up to 40%. Actually, one of the best ways out of poverty is getting a job, we all know that, and actually I do not disagree with some of the comments that were made by Members opposite and I do not disagree with some of the comments that were made by Councillor Grahame and Councillor Ghulam Hussain, Councillor Rafique when we sat there doing the skills discussion earlier this week. We were saying actually

upskilling people, meaning that you actually close the skills gap, is the way to change productivity. That is not mentioned in any of the papers here today, our side's or your side's or anybody's. Actually we are not talking about skills, we are not talking about changing things, we are just talking about the brass tacks.

The paper that was produced in July 2015, which went to Executive Board and it was the cumulative impact of welfare report in Leeds, Policy and Practice of Welfare Reform Club, it said that the number of people in Leeds who have experienced no change through Universal Credit was 25,046. The number who would be better off because of Universal Credit was 15,773 and the number that would be worse off was 13,400. I am not saying that 13,400 people should be ignored but what I am saying is that what we need to do is to make sure that we take this into all consideration and look at the whole policy.

I heard Councillor Coupar saying before a fifth of people being worse off, a fifth of people not receiving it on time. Actually, 80% of people did receive it on time. This is not a perfect system, it needs reform, but the whole idea of a pause to not stop reform when you know it is not working is the stupidest thing I have ever heard, and this side says there are a lot of stupid things that have been said in this Chamber today. Actually to say we will freeze as we are and not do anything, fingers crossed and hope for the best that it will change the lives of people, is the most ridiculous thing I have heard. The way you do it is you dig in, you make reforms, you upskill the economy, you increase productivity and you give people jobs to get out of poverty.

If you want a constructive debate, if you want a big debate, let us have that but let us not look at it in a microcosm of criticism of the Government. Thank you very much, Lord Mayor, I will stop there. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Coupar to sum up, please.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to start by thanking Councillor Arif for outlining the excellent work that is going on here at Leeds City Council and with our many partners around the city, such as the Leeds Credit Union and Community Committee work that we are all doing, including the Benches opposite, and outlining the work that we are doing on poverty in the city. Thank you, Councillor Arif.

Councillor Smart, you covered a great area there about women's rights that has been forgotten in all of this, I have to say, so thank you very much for raising that. Councillor Pryor, thank you very much for your passionate speech about remembering the effect on families and children in this city, because we have to protect families and children from moving across to this benefit until the Government actually gets it right.

I have to say, Councillor Robinson, I did not at any point say, nor does my White Paper say that I do not think that people should have control of their own budgets, but actually the Government did say they were going to have a test and learn process during the roll out of Universal Credit. I would like any of you to point me to

where they have learned anything from the evidence that has so far come forward nationally and from all the mistakes that they have made, because they have not.

I have to say that I cannot support the amendment from Councillor Finnigan although I do agree that Frank Field has said a lot of useful things on this topic, but before any more tinkering with the substance of Universal Credit is carried out, I think it does still need to be fully halted before more families find themselves plunged into a nightmare of food banks and rent arrears. That is the realism, that is reality out there for people. It is not just a matter of black and white and a piece of paper that they have got to wait six weeks. They have got to queue up at a food bank and they have got to go into arrears and lend money.

Councillor Golton, I have got to say well done for reminding us about the kindness and respect that we learned earlier from a very young lady in this Chamber and we could all take lessons from her, I am sure.

Councillor Blackburn, I think from your comments I hope that you will be supporting my White Paper, from what you said earlier. I also cannot support Councillor Anderson's amendment and he will know as his role chairing the Communities and Environment Scrutiny Board that it is not the case that this Authority wants to allow the continuation of cycles of deprivation or worklessness and that our strategy of tackling poverty and supporting communities is testament to that fact. I think Councillor Anderson you have been a little naive in your assertion that Universal Credit will increase social mobility because it is not borne out by the facts, I am afraid.

We have heard warnings this week from the Trussell Trust about families on Universal Credit struggling in the run-up to Christmas. Their latest figures show that demand for its parcels in areas where full service Universal Credit is in operation had increased by an average of 30% since April. The Peabody Trust, one of the UK's biggest social landlords, estimates the mandatory six week wait for a first Universal Credit payment will put more than 23,000 low income families at risk of destitution on the run up to Christmas and it is surely essential that the roll out is halted until this can be sorted out.

I think, Councillor Stephenson, I just have to say that I think you missed the point completely. Either it went over your head or under your feet, one or the other, I am not quite sure but I would just like to remind you of a debate that took place in Parliament with a Labour motion calling for a pause in the roll out being passed. It was passed by 299 votes to zero. This debacle shows the Government's contempt for Parliament two times over - firstly by Whipping its Members to abstain because it knew that many Conservatives agree that Universal Credit needs to be halted. I hope you will agree with my White Paper. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Coupar. Right, I would now like to call for the votes. Firstly, the amendment in the name of Councillor Finnigan. *(A vote was taken)* That is LOST.

I would now like to call for votes on the second amendment in the name of Councillor Anderson. *(A vote was taken)* That is also LOST.

Now we move on to the motion in the name of Councillor Coupar. (*A vote was taken*) That is CARRIED. Thank you.

ITEM 13 - WHITE PAPER MOTION – HOUSING REVENUE BORROWING CAP

THE LORD MAYOR: We now move on to the Third White Paper, Housing Revenue Borrowing Cap, Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: I have had quite a good go today so I am going to be short on this one.

Basically, this Group believes that Government has responsibility for setting the policy nationally but this Council also always has a responsibility for making sure that they have a policy which either makes up for the lack of credibility in national policy or they are able to make an opportunity out of that policy.

We believe that this Council is not fulfilling its full responsibility in terms of getting housing numbers up in this city and our proposal is one which we think you should be taking seriously. I am now going to pass over to Councillor Bentley to give you the details.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Bentley.

COUNCILLOR J BENTLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Good job I had one prepared earlier, isn't it!

Looking at the amendments that have come through for this White Paper, there is a great deal of agreement across the Chamber and with a bit of thought we would have probably got to a position where we could have had a resolution that we could have all agreed with and that would have strengthened our position with the Government, demonstrating that this really was a cross Party resolution and not based on party politics. Unfortunately Labour cannot resist having a little go at previous Governments and it makes it difficult to support amendments that way.

What we are saying to Whitehall is, start listening to Local Government and stop dictating to it. I am pleased that the LGA has made a similar plea as part of its budget submission to the Chancellor.

We have highlighted before on many occasions the anomaly of having freedom to borrow through investment in commercial property but having restrictions on borrowing for house building that makes it virtually impossible. Financial models produced by officers in Housing and Resources show that if we could build 1,500 houses over a five year period and have the HRA cap removed, it would give us a borrowing requirement of about £150-£160m and the project would be in surplus by year 5. That ambition is fairly modest 1,500 houses over five years and I think we could upscale that significantly.

Thanks to Councillor Carter and to Councillor Coupar for supporting that aspect of our White Paper, but we all know that Governments do not always listen and it is down to us at a local level to take some ownership and some initiative to be as innovative as we can within the restrictions that are there.

That is the reason for the second part of our White Paper, which asks the Labour administration to do something not just complain about the Government not doing enough. Once again, I think the administration has missed the opportunity to say what it could do, what decisions and actions it could take locally. We have suggested in the White Paper a possible arms length ownership or joint venture with a developer to build houses and flats.

Councillor Coupar rightly draws attention in her amendment to the fact that one of the consequences of the housing crisis is the reliance on poor quality, high cost private rented property with little security of tenure. There are now financial institutions in this city that we know of investing in build to rent schemes, investing for the long term, not for the short term, giving relatively long leases to tenants with an element of control of rent increase.

If we borrowed to invest in these sorts of properties rather than the commercial properties, we could ensure good quality properties, secure tenancies, affordable rents. We could not use the Housing Revenue Account to fund it or to manage them so they would not be Council houses but that means there is no right to buy.

Just look at what the Labour Mayor of Salford is doing. He is investing in a development company to kick-start house building in his area.

Lord Mayor, we heard earlier about a four pronged approach. We can only come up with a two pronged approach – we know our place! Our two pronged approach to dealing with the housing crisis in Leeds, firstly persuading the Government to ease up on its restrictions but, as importantly, to come up with innovative local solutions of our own and I ask Council to support it. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Coupar.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I promise this will be the last time I am speaking today!

I am pleased to be moving an amendment on what I thought was Councillor Golton's White Paper but actually it turns out to be Councillor Bentley's White Paper, but in any case the Liberal Democrat White Paper. I am pleased to be moving an amendment on that although I have got to say that we do agree with the main points of your argument around lifting the HRA cap. Indeed, we have been actively lobbying Central Government to remove the cap on HRA borrowing.

However, unfortunately, we cannot support this White Paper. I know Liberal Democrat Councillors have been quick in the past to criticise us for not approaching them to move a joint White Paper. In this instance, where there is so much agreement

on the substance it might have been a good idea for the Lib Dems to practice what they preach and approach us before they laid down the White Paper.

Councillor Bentley's White Paper calls for the consideration of an arm's length trading building company. If it could be proved that this would result in more social housing being built I would be happy to consider it. However, I have to say that many areas with this arrangement in place have fallen far short of what we here in Leeds have been able to achieve.

Our Council House Growth Programme has currently delivered 627 homes from the 2014/15 financial year to the present, predominantly for affordable rent. By contrast, Sheffield's housing company has led to 293 new homes since 2013, of which only 70 are for affordable rent. Matrix Homes in Manchester has brought forward the development of 240 homes, more than half of which were for market sale rather than affordable rent.

The company option would be a less efficient vehicle at this time for us in Leeds. Councillor Hamilton is going to talk later in more detail about our own Council House Growth Programme and, colleagues, through the PFI and the mixture of grant and our own HRA funding, we have built social housing in Leeds at a scale I think is something to be proud of.

Not only that, but the homes we have built have been more important to the regeneration of Little London and of Beeston and Holbeck. We have restored to use derelict sites and pioneered high quality extra care housing. I do agree, however, on the need of the HRA Borrowing Cap to be lifted as the cap severely limits Local Authorities' abilities to build and leaves the sector over reliant on a small number of high volume developers. Local Authorities need to be given tools to solve this country's housing crisis.

In our conversations with DCLG we have provided details financial models demonstrating that delivering via the HRA will be the most cost effective way of delivering the greatest number of affordable rented homes and we will continue to make these arguments.

What is certain is that Councils need to be given more powers to tackle the country's housing shortage because what we are getting from Central Government is paltry. Theresa May's eventful Conservative Party Conference speech this year did contain a pledge of an extra £2bn to build affordable homes and Councillor Carter has trumpeted this in his amendment. I look forward to hearing him try and make his announcement sound impressive. What it means in reality is that that investment in affordable housing will sit at £1.8bn a year, half of what it was in the final year of the last Labour Government.

It is estimated that the extra money will deliver 5,000 homes a year nationwide. This is a fall from 39,000 a year in 2010 and this was meant to be a flagship announcement signalling a revolution in the Government's thinking about Council housing. It is just not good enough. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Coupar, thank you. Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: I second, Lord Mayor, reserving the right to speak.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Yes thank you, my Lord Mayor. I thought that perhaps Councillor Coupar would not have spoken again once her prongs fell off but she had two more goes at it.

My Lord Mayor, it is a pity, is it not, that we could not have had, particularly at this moment in time, a White Paper that we could all have voted for. To be frank the excuses from the ruling administration are not good enough – just simply not good enough.

Actually, the White Paper in the name of Councillor Golton or Councillor Bentley, I have no problem with really at all. I certainly haven't any problem with the first part. I was the first Councillor to stand up publicly in this Council Chamber and say that the Borrowing Cap on the Housing Revenue Account should be lifted and you can create a funding pot which can be self-funding from which you can build more Council homes or homes to rent, and I am delighted I said that. It was right then; it is right now. I will come back to that in a moment.

As regards the other part of the White Paper, the company, there is very mixed reports from around the country about these sorts of vehicles and Councillor Coupar is at least right in that respect. Nevertheless, we are not talking about it, it really shows the problem, does it not? It underlines why we are not doing as much as we could, and Stewart is right in that; because it is somebody else's idea we are not taking any notice of it. I am sorry, that sort of arrogance just does not work.

This debate actually latches on to the debate we have had throughout the day on housing issues, on benefits a few moments ago. It is about providing housing for people that they can afford either to rent or to buy either in the public or private sector. I am not going to boast about the Government's announcement but the fact is they made an announcement and furthermore, Councillor Coupar, if you used a bit of common sense, you would think to yourself about the document that I supported to the Chancellor that has gone from the West Yorkshire Combined Authority. Leeds would be the biggest beneficiary. We are asking the Government to lift the cap and we are asking for £133m additional, £113 of which would come to Leeds. We are asking for permission to forge a partnership, the Leeds Living Partnership, with all sorts of partners in the public and private sector to build on brown field sites in the centre of Leeds. It is a good document.

Why do you have to start slagging the Government off again when in three weeks' time you want the Chancellor to stand up and say, "By the way, I am going to give West Yorkshire £133m"? It makes no sense, Councillor Coupar. It is bad politics, it is bad timing and today we should have been having an all party resolution based on the document you have submitted, I have endorsed and submitted my

comments to the Chancellor and I profoundly hope it will be accepted. I do not know whether it will or not, it might not be. I will be disappointed if it is not.

I sometimes wonder why we bother talking to you lot at all or why you bother saying to us “Will you support us? Will you lobby on our behalf?” when you can’t even use the brain you were born with and use the proper timing and the proper opportunity for an all party resolution that we could all have signed up to. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR R GRAHAME: We have never seen the document, Andrew. We have never seen that document.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Procter.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hamilton.

COUNCILLOR HAMILTON: Lord Mayor, Councillors, I would like to speak in support of Councillor Coupar’s amendment.

While we support what Councillor Golton or Bentley has to say about the importance of removing the Housing Revenue Borrowing Cap, I think it is important to take the time to acknowledge the positive work that the Council has done in the area of housing growth.

Since the launch of the housing growth and high standards in all sectors breakthrough project, development has commenced on twelve sites, delivering a total of 1,200 units with a further 14 sites moving through the planning process. The Little London, Beeston Hill and Holbeck PFI project has seen 353 new Council homes delivered to date and 1,245 homes have been refurbished to achieve the Eco Home XB standard.

This project has also brought additional investment of £6.4m from the Basic Need Programme to extend the local primary school and a further £1m to build a new community centre and housing office to serve the local community.

We have seen a flagship extra care scheme open up Wharfedale View last December – it is coming up to its birthday – and we have heard at Council in recent months about the plans to develop our extra care provision further, using the Council Housing Growth Programme as a catalyst in investment in extra care across the city.

We have also seen schemes such as the development of the former Lord Cardigan public house site, a former property of the Derelict and Nuisance Site Programme is now new affordable housing. The new tenants move in in January.

Then there is our empty homes strategy. We first recorded the number of empty homes in the city in 2005, then the numbers stood at 12,000. Today that figure is less than 3,800 as we have reported quite a few times here in Council. This strategy is a great example of the successful partnership work we do so well in Leeds. We have

worked in partnership with local community based organisations such as LATCH, Canopy and GIPSIL who provide long term leases, property purchase and funding support to undertake renovation work to homes. The organisation works with long term unemployed people to carry out this work, helping to improve future job prospects with those involved.

I am proud of what we have achieved in Leeds. With the active support of Central Government we could achieve so much more. We believe in social housing here in Leeds, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Bruce.

COUNCILLOR BRUCE: Thank you, my Lord Mayor, and Councillors. As Rothwell Councillors one of the main issues that people come to see us about at our surgeries and contacting us in various ways is housing, or the lack of it. It is heart-rending to see people in dire need who are sleeping on a friend or family's sofa or overcrowded, desperate to be rehoused in their community where they grew up and where their family support network is.

The problem is that demand is high and turnover is very low. The simple truth is that we do not have enough Council housing to meet our community's needs and we need more to be built. When local people cannot get the social housing they need, they are often forced into unstable private rented housing, where tenants can experience repair and maintenance problems, housing benefit delayed or not enough to cover the rent.

Some landlords do not protect your deposit and often do not pay it back either, but worst of all is if you are an assured short hold tenant you can be booted out with two months' notice. That is the reality for our people.

You heard the delegation from our residents of Sugar Hill Close and Wordsworth Drive estate in Oulton today and their heartbreaking plight. They are at the mercy of a ruthless private landlord. This is a nightmare scenario because it is not trying to help a family out to be rehoused, but we are facing the prospect of not one family being evicted but up to 70. The homes are set to be bulldozed as Pemberstone, the private investment company, gets ready to build a new housing development in place of where these's people's homes are.

It seems an impossible task to rehouse 70 families, especially when we struggle anyway to help people get housing in Rothwell. David and I are doing all we can to support the residents. We said from the start we will not make false promises but we are looking into anything that can be done.

These homes have actually stood for half a century, they were originally Coal Board houses. People love where they live. Pemberstone says they are not fit for purpose but we beg to differ and the residents certainly do.

As I said, we are supporting these residents and doing all we can to help. It is a safe place; not all housing is in a safe place. These residents feel secure where they

are, they know the area, they have children at schools, they are within a short distance of their workplaces at work and their family and they want to stay in their community.

I also want help from all 99 Councillors because for a great city like Leeds it will be an absolute disgrace if we collectively fail to help these families. By working together we must do something to help these people save the community that they love. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: David Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thanks, Lord Mayor. I think Councillor Bruce just said something and it is about working together and this is not. I think the Liberal Democrat motion was something that could have been potentially something that we could work together. I can understand everybody saying they support the first bit but I just cannot understand where these people are saying about the second bit.

All right, schemes might not work. It does not say do a scheme, it says consider. Let us look at possibilities. Let us have a bit of blue sky thinking. If we take it away and it is not going to work, there is no harm, we have at least had a go.

We have got to do something and the first paragraph, the way to get that out of the Government is not to go slagging them down all the time but actually go to them united, with a united front, saying we all agree on that. I just think this is a waste of time.

I will probably finish up, when the Labour amendment gets through as the main motion I will finish up supporting that but the fact of the matter, I would rather have had something that we all could support. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Very, very briefly, successive Governments from the 1960s have failed miserably on housing policy, regardless of whether it is Tory or Labour or Lib Dem or whoever it might actually be. There has been a consistent failure all the way through.

All 99 Councillors I suspect would support the Housing Revenue Borrowing Cap being removed because it makes absolute sense to anybody with half a brain – at the point you build more Council houses you get the rent coming in from that, you are going to be quids in and that is clear and obvious to anyone.

We have had a position and we consistently stated this position that you stop the right to buy because that makes no sense whatsoever at the point you are trying to build new Council houses and you are in a situation where you flog them off after a few years. It does not do anything in terms of community cohesion, indeed it creates all sorts of problems that has allowed the Housing Benefit Schemes to grow out of proportion as they are at this particular point.

It is a great pity because I think all 99 of us would agree that we need more Council housing and I would point out that the new Council housing that is coming,

none of it is coming to Morley. We do need to figure out a collective way of approaching this because to a degree you are all hostages to whatever Government Ministers or Shadow Ministers you have got down at Westminster.

The fact of the matter is, we all unanimously agree we need more Council housing, we all know that this cap ought to go, we all know that we need to look and explore other ways of building more affordable homes so we are happy to support anybody that is going to do that and bring some additional Council housing to the Morley area. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Barry Anderson.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: Just briefly, just a couple of things – well, three things I want to say.

One is I do think as a Council we need to be aware of the work that Councillor Carter has been doing behind the scenes to try and get this money. He really has been trying to go right to the top in order to convince things, to try and help us out. He really has. He is obviously not going to stand up and blow his own trumpet but I am standing up and pointing out to you the hard work that he has done.

To come back to the debate, those of us who are on the Housing Advisory Board were sent a request from an organisation called OFSIT which actually stands for Off the Streets into Trades, who I met with this morning because they are looking to get housing and I asked them which Council officers are elected Members they have spoken to yet. They say I was the only one who has responded to it.

I am going to send the information through to Councillor Coupar because they have sent me an email thanking me for meeting them today, but I do think it is something that we need to consider, the offer that they are looking at because they are talking about helping people in deprived communities to work on houses that are empty by working, getting trades and then as a result of that getting jobs, so I do think it is genuinely something worthwhile.

The final thing I was going to say was something that Councillor Blake had actually contributed to, which was a report by the Local Government Association called Building our Homes, Communities and Future. I personally have not seen the Council's response to what is in here as to what we could do. I think there are 36 recommendations or something in it. I am not saying they are all acceptable to us but it might be an idea to bring back to a body – whether it is the Housing Advisory Board, whether it is the Exec Board, whether it is Scrutiny - to look at what the Council's response is to the good work that has been done in this particular report. Thank you very much Lord Mayor. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Procter, do you want something?

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: I reserved my right. I do not know if Councillor Lewis was exercising his right as well which you reserved.

THE LORD MAYOR: Sorry, you need to make it very clear to me.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: In any event, here we go. First of all, Lord Mayor, can I thank those Members of my Group who have wished me and Rachael well over the last few weeks – things have not been particularly easy – and also the many friends I have right across this Chamber from all political parties who have also done the same.

Lord Mayor, we have heard a lot today in this White Paper about partnership, working together and the like and yet all the way through today what has been revealed – and we have spoken on very many different housing matters, whether it is benefits that will pay for housing or whether it is gypsies and travellers and accommodating them, whether it is a housing target of 70,000 – we spoke about all of those things in isolation, not as one. Not as a comprehensive view of the city.

The real problem that we have in this city is that nobody from the controlling group comes forward and says, “Do you know what, Councillor Carter, can we sit down and have a serious chat about how we are together going to solve the problems of the people of Leeds in relation to housing?” Let us work on it together because actually, Councillor Carter, how this city normally works is when the Labour Group is in administration here, there is a different party in Government nationally and, I have to say, often it swings the other way as well. Actually, if we want our fair share of anything that is going, that is what we need to do.

We need actually to work together and comprehensively address all of these matters. None of them are insoluble, we could do that, but instead what we actually get is somebody saying, “Well, Councillor Carter, can you talk to your Minister and we will try and talk to our Front Bench and Chief Executive, can you talk to those in Whitehall” and it is all completely disjointed, whereas actually we should have a different approach that better serves all of the people in Leeds. We should cut out a lot of this banter. The Government bashing is all well and good and some of us indulge in the same thing of our own Governments occasionally as well when they have got it wrong, and you have heard that today, honestly, from those on our Benches.

All of that said, you are not going to get the best possible approach from a Conservative Government if you simply have a go at it all the time. You are just not going to get that and you should know that – indeed, you do know that. You do know that, but is it better to not receive what you and we really want out of Central Government but to be able to turn round to electors and say, “Oh, nasty Tory Government.” Is that the name of the game? Is that what this is all about for you, because that is certainly not where we are. We do not want that, we do not want that approach. Really I guess it is an offer of a different way to try and deal with some of these very real issues that the City of Leeds has and to comprehensively deal with them. Let us hope you take up on the offer. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you very much. Actually I thought that was quite a good debate, to tell you the truth. I am only going through the different speakers.

Councillor Coupar, I have to agree, actually, with virtually everything that Andrew Carter said which is basically just because it is not your idea does not mean to say it is not a good one. One of the things I will point out is, you need to think where do we get our ideas from because I know Jonathan is a great *éminence grise* next to me and he understands finance a lot better than I do I can assure you, but actually a lot of our ideas come because we listen to outside organisations that we are involved with, like the Local Government Association. We are members of the Local Government Association because we value that. There is a lot of expertise in Local Government generally across the country and sometimes you can learn from others. Our idea is actually something which has been taken out of the LGA suggestions for Councils who want to increase their housing numbers, so it is not as if it is something that has been made up.

As you pointed out yourselves, other Authorities have gone for housing companies and in that list of Authorities that you mentioned where you were implying that they had been wholeheartedly unsuccessful, what you actually pointed out is that a lot of those Authorities have actually delivered quite a lot of housing, and even if you dismissed the proportion of that which was affordable housing, it was still affordable housing that they have now that they did not have before.

I will then refer you to the comments of Councillor Bruce. Councillor Bruce from the heart talked about the plight of residents in our ward. Those people are private rented sector tenants. As was pointed out, in the private rented sector sometimes you do not have assured tenancies. Sometimes you can be out on your ears. Sometimes you can have a private landlord that is not as scrupulous as others.

Now that they are under threat what is our Council's response? You talk about your record in delivering affordable housing. We got told about the Beeston and Little London project the PFI. The original PFI was suggested when you were in power before we were in power, so for you to point that out as your delivery is completely nonsensical and actually just shows your level of complacency because you are still talking about your delivery and your promise on homes that have been occupied for years, some of the now. Please, just show some chutzpah and think about how you can actually take your ambition forward and think for yourselves.

One of the reasons why we talked about these companies is because they can be inclusive growth mechanisms. This was mentioned by Councillor Anderson, why don't we have schemes whereby people can learn skills and they can take back empty promises and whatever. Legal and General as an organisation recognised that they could actually invest in housing like this and use their pension fund to create positive outcomes and inclusive growth in the housing market that so desperately needs it.

We should be looking at how we can do exactly the same thing for our citizens so that we can make our own weather and when we get citizens like the residents of Sugar Hill Close and Wordsworth Drive coming to us and saying "Please help us, there is nowhere else for us to go", actually if we had done the work we should have done by now they would have had somewhere else to go. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Now we are going to call for the votes. If we can first have a vote on the amendment in the name of Councillor Coupar. *(A vote was taken)* That was actually CARRIED. Thank you.

We move on to the second amendment in the name of Councillor Andrew Carter. *(A vote was taken)* That is LOST.

So we now move to the substantive motion in the name of Councillor Coupar. *(A vote was taken)* That is CARRIED. Thank you.

It has been a long, long day and thank you all for your patience. We have had some very good debates but I was very remiss in my announcements, ladies and gentlemen, a little bit earlier and I am sure you would all like to join with me to congratulate Tom Riordan, who has recently been voted Yorkshire Man of the Year. *(Applause)* I would like to say the drinks are on him but he is a Yorkshireman so I doubt that!

SUSPENSION OF COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULES/LEAVE OF COUNCIL

THE LORD MAYOR: We now move on to the final item and I would like to call on Councillor Ogilvie, please.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Latty.

COUNCILLOR G LATTY: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: If I could have votes for the suspension of Council Procedure Rules. *(A vote was taken)* That is CARRIED.

ITEM 14 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – LEEDS RHINOS (no debate)

THE LORD MAYOR: We now move on to White Paper Motion - Leeds Rhinos. Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I cannot speak on this but I am going to congratulate Tom and just say to Keith Wakefield we picked a good 'un, didn't we? Congratulations.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: You can work together then"

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: I have great pleasure in moving the resolution in my name to our wonderful rugby league team. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Formally support.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Delighted to support.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor David Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: I formally support.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Catherine Dobson – I am sure she will support as well. Councillor Mark Dobson.

COUNCILLOR M DOBSON: Very happy to support, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Right, so our final vote of the day, I am calling on a vote on the motion. *(A vote was taken)* I think that was unanimous.
CARRIED.

Thank you all for your patience today and see you at the next Council meeting.
Thank you.

(The meeting closed at 7.25pm)

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