

COUNCIL
14TH NOVEMBER 2018
VERBATIM RECORD

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LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Held on

Wednesday, 14th November 2018

At

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
CIVIC HALL,
LEEDS

In the Chair:

THE LORD MAYOR
(COUNCILLOR G LATTY)

VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

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VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL
ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY, 14th NOVEMBER 2018

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon again everybody and welcome to the full Council. I will tell you again, this meeting is being webcast.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE LORD MAYOR: One or two announcements. First we will do the cheerful ones and I would like to extend congratulations to the future heir to the throne, His Royal Highness Prince Charles. It is his 70th birthday today, so I am sure we all wish him many more of those birthdays. (*hear, hear*)

Also I think we should congratulate Ryan Stephenson, Councillor Stephenson and his fiancée, Laura. He has just recently got engaged. (*Applause*) Letters of sympathy to Laura can be sent through the office!

Councillor Caroline Gruen is home from hospital I gather. She had an operation on her back and I am sure that everybody will want to wish her all the very, very best. I hope Peter will take our best wishes home to her and hope she has a speedy recovery. (*hear, hear*) (*Applause*)

Now then on the dark side, I do have to – I do not have to but I would like to – offer mine and our sympathy on the deaths of the Honorary Aldermen Brenda Lancaster, David Schofield and Dr Jeffrey Sherwin.

Brenda represented the Moortown ward during her time on Council and she was Deputy Mayor 2004/5 and both the Lady Mayoress and I attended her funeral on 3rd October. I had quite a good relationship with Brenda, she and I were together pushing the tapestry through. It was one of our early things. Does anybody remember the Leeds Tapestry, which was a millennium thing? It is now on show in the library and Brenda was a tireless worker on that.

David Schofield represented Garforth and Swillington and Halton and Temple Newsam ward over four periods. He was elected four times, which shows some real stamina, and sadly he passed away on Monday evening. We have no details as to the funeral arrangements but we shall let you have them as and when we have them.

Dr Jeffrey Sherwin, he represented the Talbot ward from 1974 to 1980 and during that time he was instrumental in the opening of the Henry Moore Institute, and his funeral will be taking place this afternoon.

Would Members please join me in expressing sympathy and support and stand for one minute in silence.

(Silent tribute)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you.

ITEM 1 – MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 12th SEPTEMBER 2018

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dowson.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: To move that the Minutes of the last meeting be approved as a correct record, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cohen.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Seconded, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: In that case could we have a vote, please, to receive the Minutes. (*A vote was taken*) In that case the Minutes are received. CARRIED.

ITEM 2 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

THE LORD MAYOR: As usual, has anybody got any disclosable pecuniary interests to disclose that they have not already disclosed? (*None*)

ITEM 3 – COMMUNICATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Chief Executive, do you have any communications?

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would just like to report on two Government responses. First, the Right Honourable Damian Hinds, Secretary of State for Education, in respect of the White Paper on Education Standards considered by Council in September. The response has been previously circulated to all Members of Council.

Second, the Leader has just received a response from Dr Thérèse Coffey, Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for the Environment, to a recent cross-party meeting on flooding, which we believe is the Government's response to the Council's September White Paper as well, we are just clarifying that. With the Leader's agreement we will be circulating this to all Members.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you.

We have had notice that Councillor James Lewis would like to make a communication to Council. Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Members of Council, I would like to bring your attention to a letter received on Monday from the Environment Minister, Thérèse Coffey. All Members have a copy of the letter on their desk. Members will note that the letter is dated 7th November but was in fact received by email on 12th November, after the deadline for the normal business of this Council meeting, which is why it has come here.

Members will be aware of the unprecedented significance to the city of the proposed Clean Air Zone. The letter highlights how the Council is making good progress towards introducing a selective vehicle charging clean air zone which we are required to do under Ministerial direction. The letter also highlights that the Government is now questioning full funding of all the support identified as needed by all of the businesses and drivers in Leeds that will be affected. There is also no recognition that as no clean air charging zones have been implemented in the UK, no support packages have therefore been implemented and there is therefore no evidence available on take-up rates.

The letter asks us to resubmit our bid not using our knowledge to best meet the needs of the city but to a pre-determined and lower level of funding by the end of November. We are disappointed by this letter as the department has received drafts of the business case, and yet with less than 40 months to go before the date of implementation set down in the Ministerial direction, an unknown cap on the money available from the Government to support businesses and drivers has emerged.

Despite this setback we will continue to work with Government to agree an acceptable package and we will continue to work and mitigate the impact of this on sectors affected, including by ensuring sufficient individual support packages are provided. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Carter, do you wish to respond?

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Yes thank you, Lord Mayor. It is a concerning letter on two fronts: first of all, the content of the letter itself and more particularly the fact that the Minister is the same Minister we are dealing with in connection with flooding.

I recently went with an all-party delegation from this city which was bordering on a disaster, in my view. We travelled down by train and within half an hour of getting on the train I discovered that I was part of a travelling media circus when I discovered that various arrangements had been made with the press to cover it, which was fine except that nobody had the courtesy to tell me beforehand.

Then – this is not the Council's fault – there was a tragedy on the line and we were late and missed the meeting. We had to try and conduct the meeting from an office which was facilitated by our Chief Exec at Network Rail using a normal mobile phone on the table on loud speaker. We missed most of what was said and that was very unfortunate, but what we did hear was an altercation between one MP and the Minister which did not go down particularly well and the whole day turned into pretty much of a disaster. I have not been on such a venture and I hope not to go on one again.

What I would say to Councillor Lewis is, we are now dealing with exactly the same Minister who I suspect has a few question marks about this Council and that we ought to plan very carefully because if we will certainly need to put our arguments to the Minister if we want to get a fair funding package, which I would absolutely support, but I do hope and I accept that part of what went on was not of our making and not of our fault (nevertheless it was not good) that we plan and all agree on a cross-party basis what we are going to say, stick to it and make sure all information is properly shared.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you.

ITEM 4 – DEPUTATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Chief Executive.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. We have four Deputations: firstly, Leeds Children's Mayor; second Leeds Community Foundation; thirdly, Leeds Asylum Seekers Support Network; a group for a Clean Air Zone in South Leeds.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dowson.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: I would like to move that all Deputations be received, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cohen.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: In that case we will vote to receive these Deputations. *(A vote was taken)* That is CARRIED. Right, so we will receive the Deputations.

DEPUTATION 1 – LEEDS CHILDREN'S MAYOR

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to Leeds City Council. You are now going to speak to us. I think it is a few less than that last time you spoke, Rio, is it not, so not as daunting. Please make your speech to Council. It should not take any more than five minutes but would you please introduce your colleagues on your Deputation before you start.

RIO: I am Rio, I have Bradley, Madison and Phoebe and Harry.

If I was Children's Mayor of Leeds I would tackle racism by making posters to spread awareness and to make a video about what to do if you were in that scenario. The video would make you think about what you are doing before you do it. I would like every school to have a book in school where children can express their feelings. Maybe older children can give children advice or adults could go through the book with them.

I would like to have a bake sale and a second-hand stall to raise money to buy wristbands to spread awareness. On the wristbands I would like to have a snappy slogan about stopping racism. It would be 'Stop Think Racism Stinks'.

My idea will stop people judging other people for who they are. It will benefit people who have had racist comments made against them and also the people who are racist – the video will make them stop and think before they act.

It will also benefit the world because some people who may have grandparents who lived through apartheid and know the effects of racism.

Other children can help by spreading awareness and doing a bake sale. The money they get will go towards the wrist bands which they can then give out in their schools. They will also have the book in their school which they can decorate themselves. This would be very cheap or even free as all schools have exercise books.

(Standing ovation)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dowson.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to move that the matter be referred to the Director of Children and Families for consideration in consultation with the relevant Exec Board member.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cohen.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Delighted to second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: In that case we will have a vote on this Deputation. *(A vote was taken)* In that case, that is CARRIED.

Now, Rio, thank you very much indeed for coming today. Officers from the relevant department will be in contact with you as soon as they have had chance to consider what you had to say. It was very well done, thank you very much indeed. *(Applause)*

DEPUTATION 2 – LEEDS COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. If you would now make your speech please. It must not be any longer than five minutes and would you begin by introducing your colleagues, please.

MS K HAINSWORTH: Thank you, Lord Mayor and Members of Council. I would like to introduce myself, Kate Hainsworth. I am Chief Executive of the Leeds Community Foundation. This is Nick Lane Fox, our Deputy Chair of the Trustees, and Pip Goff, who is our Partnerships Director and member of the Senior Leadership Team. Thank you for having us.

Community Foundations exist worldwide to promote local philanthropy and connect local donors with the needs that exist here, that is local, and so for us it is Leeds where we come from, where we care about, where we work, where we live.

We have got I think a lot of connections with you as Councillors in that just as you care enormously about Leeds, so do we. Actually some of your former colleagues, including Councillor Keith Wakefield, were very instrumental in setting us up. That was about 13 years ago. We have been working hard ever since to build relationships

with donors, empower local philanthropy and give out timely and really meaningful grants to those in our area that need it most.

How do we do that? Forgive us, we would like to stage a little Show and Tell. Instead of Nick standing here before you today, please imagine very many individuals, many businesses, many people who are giving money to us, directly through us, because they care about our city. Instead of Pip please imagine the entirety of the local public sector, NHS, Council etc, a wide range of charitable trusts and foundations like the Lottery and also, by the way, Central Government. They are very good actors!

From this wide variety of sources and from our own endowed investments, we pull that together and match available funds. To all donors we provide detailed and up to date knowledge that we acquire through our work and that really helps us align what donors want with the needs of our city, creating win-win programmes.

Recently we partnered with the CCGs, with the Council, with the Police and the Crime Commissioner and with many businesses like John Lewis, like Haribo and many, many individuals. Working in this way we are able to bring millions of additional funds to the city – the city that we all love. We distribute between £3m and £6m annually. Since we started, we have been able to channel over £38m into hundreds of thousands of third sector organisations here.

This makes us the most significant independent funder in our city so, in our demonstration, Nick's private sector individuals and businesses and Pip's public and charitable sectors come through LCF and go out the other side of our activity, which is grant making, into the very many third sector organisations and individuals we serve, and in these few pictures here today we are just trying to represent some of the many, many individuals we are really proud to work with in terms of their talented, energetic and worthwhile programmes. Every ward represented here today will have had a programme with individuals in your patch and we are deeply honoured to be able to do that work together.

Apart from animal charities we support every cause you can imagine – so, youth unemployment, isolation in old age, recycling, food banks, domestic abuse, violence, community arts, sport for children – you name it, pretty much. From the old fire station in Gipton, which is one of our largest pieces of work, to micro-grants for the really local initiatives like little free libraries, if it is legitimate and it meets the fund criteria, we will make it happen.

Of course we are often over-subscribed. Our team work really hard to ensure that effort is not wasted and we launched in 2016 our Strategic Fund – that is the Leeds Fund, recently focused on mental health; you may remember HRH Prince Harry joined us in 2017. Now we are focusing on loneliness to inclusion.

What am I asking of you today? To make Leeds a city of opportunity for all we need to grow our available funds substantially. We are setting big targets for ourselves in the coming years, rightly. Leeds needs it; Leeds deserves it.

To summarise what success could look like and what we ask, your help in recruiting more local businesses, individuals, to give back; your help in raising

awareness of what we do; tweet, retweet, tell your constituents about us and the funds that we have got and the chance to get involved in these amazing local projects that we are able to fund. A Team Leeds partnership with you, a united quest to make our city a place of opportunity for all.

Finally, consultation. Your feedback is really critical to our development so today we ask permission for us to send a very short consultation survey via Councillor Coupar and James at the Directorate of Communities and Environment to you, very, very short I promise but we would really value your thoughts and feedback. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Dowson.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to move that the matter now be referred to the Director of Communities and Environment for consideration in consultation with the relevant Exec Board member.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cohen.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: In that case we will now have a vote on this Deputation. *(A vote was taken)* That is well and truly passed. CARRIED.

Thank you very much for coming today. Your Deputation speech will be put to officers in the department that will deal with these things and they will be in contact with you as soon as they possibly can. Thanks very much indeed. *(Applause)*

MS K HAINSWORTH: Thank you all, thank you.

DEPUTATION 3 – LEEDS ASYLUM SEEKERS SUPPORT NETWORK

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to the Council today. You are now going to make a speech to us, I sincerely hope. It must not be longer than five minutes and would you please begin by introducing your colleagues.

MS J GWILLIAM: Lord Mayor and Members of the Council, we represent LASSN, Leeds Asylum Seekers Support Network. I am Janice Gwilliam; this year I am Chair of the Trustees and I have brought three colleague Trustees with me – Jonathan Long, Ray Castle and Bill Urry, who I know some of you know. Thank you very much for receiving us.

Leeds Asylum Support Network has been operating in Leeds for nearly 20 years. There are three strands to the work we do with asylum seekers here in Leeds. We do befriending - local volunteers befriend an asylum seeker or refugee. They may do this in a number of ways: introducing them to local services, like the libraries, the parks and museums; they might help them with doctors' appointments; issues with children in school; or they might just do what you or I would do with a friend, have a cup of coffee,

a chat and a catch up. A very important part of this is building refugee and asylum seekers' confidence so that when they are able they can get back into employment.

Then we have English at Home. As its name suggests, volunteers teach asylum seekers and refugees English in their own homes. These are people who, for a variety of reasons - childcare, mental health issues, lack of confidence at getting on to a college course - need to have lessons at home. The Lord Mayor was present in the summer at our graduation event. Many of our learners have now gone on to courses in local Leeds colleges.

Grace hosting volunteers (one of whom is now one of the MPs for Leeds) give a bed for one or more nights to an asylum seeker who would otherwise be homeless for the night. None of these people then appear in Leeds's homeless statistics. Last year we provided more than 5,000 nights of accommodation to more than 90 different people. The Rough Sleeper on November 2017 recorded 28 rough sleepers in Leeds, that month LASSN accommodated 30 people who might otherwise have slept rough. Some of our volunteers now put up someone for about a month; others are more of a crisis support and just do a couple of nights. The guests get a meal, a bed and breakfast, but more importantly a feeling that a stranger cares enough to take them into their home for one or more nights.

Much of our work is funded by grants from various bodies, but increasingly we are dependent on individual donations and fundraising by individuals in the city. This has enabled us, for example, to organise activities for families and individuals on our befriending scheme. We have been able also to provide bus passes so that people can get to the various venues around Leeds where we have organised trips and visits.

We have a hardship fund so that if, for example, someone has their phone stolen – and of course if you are an asylum seeker you cannot get credit to get a home phone or a phone with a contract, you have to have only pay as you go - we can help to replace it. The hardship fund is also able to provide food and domestic essentials to asylum seekers who are destitute and are not allowed to seek work.

If you are able to put on an activity, or know someone who could please get in touch, or just give a donation that would be great. Some parts of the graduation ceremony, which was really appreciated by learners and teachers alike, were funded by individuals having put on activities to support that event, or just by donating.

I would welcome the opportunity to have a discussion with the relevant Council officers after this meeting. Thank you for listening to me and I think I have stayed within time! (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Yes you stayed within time, and do not go for a minute. Councillor Dowson.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to move that the matter be referred to the Director of Community Environment for consideration in consultation with the relevant Exec Board member.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cohen.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: In that case we will now call for a vote on this Deputation. (*A vote was taken*) In that case that is CARRIED.

Thank you very much indeed for coming today. Your Deputation speech will be put to the officers in the relevant department and they will be back in touch with you as soon as they possibly can. Thank you for coming today. (*Applause*)

MS J GWILLIAM: Thank you all very much.

DEPUTATION 4 – CLEAN AIR ZONE SOUTH LEEDS

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to the Council today. When you make your speech to Council it must not be any longer than five minutes, or we stop you, and would you please start by introducing your colleagues. Thank you.

MR E CARLISLE: This is Katrine, Mahbub my name is Ed, Eunice and Kevin. We are all residents of LS10 and LS11 in South Leeds.

We gather before you today as Members of a campaign group called Clean Air South Leeds. We have wide-ranging support from across our area and beyond. We are here to question the Council's recent decision to exclude our communities from the forthcoming Clean Air Zone.

The original plans for the Zone included the whole city within the Outer Ring Road, but the revised version, following pressure from industry in particular, excluded LS10 and LS11. Once again, Hunslet, Beeston, Holbeck, Belle Isle, Middleton, and neighbouring communities are left out in the cold, alienated.

When the Municipal Borough of Leeds was formed in 1835, it stated a commitment to equally serve every taxpayer in the city, yet once again we in south Leeds feel excluded, like we are getting a raw deal.

We love our communities – they are great places, with loads of great people and yet you all know we also face many challenges. Ours are marginalised and disadvantaged communities. Life expectancy is ten years less than in our city's wealthiest communities. In particular, in line with the high levels of air pollution in our area, people in Hunslet and Riverside wards suffer far higher levels of respiratory illnesses like COPD, lung disease and asthma than anywhere else in the city, with people in Beeston and Middleton wards not far behind. We more than anyone need your support on this issue.

You might shrug and say we have missed the boat. The Exec Board agreed the Clean Air proposals last month, but whether or not these have yet been submitted to Central Government, we would urge you to reconsider them.

We are told that your modelling confirms that including or excluding our area from the zone will make little difference, but we do not buy it. We will continue to have dirty heavy goods vehicles ploughing through our streets, and we in fact anticipate an increase as firms relocate out of other parts of the city into our area. Unlike the Cross Green Business Zone, also now excluded, our area is not an industrial heartland. It is home to tens of thousands of people.

Whilst we are given assurances that the Council is looking at extra measures to reduce local air pollution and encourage firms to go clean, we all know that without rigorous legislation, businesses will dodge and duck responsibility. We will continue to breathe your toxic fumes on behalf of the city.

So we have some demands. We would like full access to all the documents, emails and everything that informed your decision-making, or we can request them via Freedom of Information, and to meet with the lead Councillors and officers behind this scheme to discuss a way forward. We want to challenge you and also to listen, to share ideas and work together for the good of the city.

We are not purists. We understand some of your reasoning and concerns. We also do not want to drive jobs from our city but south Leeds people are now waking up to this issue and are pretty furious that we are being treated as second class citizens again, as if our air quality was less important than elsewhere in the city.

Ideally, going forward, we want the Clean Air Zone in January 2020, like the rest of the city, but realistically maybe we have missed the boat. So perhaps instead we would ask that you look very seriously at formally and legally including south Leeds in the Clean Air Zone within two years of its inception, by January 2022. We would ask that you include this in communications with Central Government, as soon as possible.

This will give business an extra two years to adapt and also crucially will head off any moves from industry to evade the Clean Air Zone charge by simply relocating to south Leeds. We do not want our communities to become the free-for-all zone where industry goes about business as usual, continuing to pollute our air.

We are fed up with being pushed around and treated as a dumping ground – a sacrifice zone for the city. We just want to be treated fairly.

Thank you for listening. Please be in touch and we look forward to meeting and working with you to take this forward. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you very much. If you would just wait for a moment, please. Councillor Dowson.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to move that the matter be referred to the Director of Resources and Housing for consideration, in consultation with the relevant Exec Board member.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cohen.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Seconded Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: In that case we will take a vote on this Deputation. (*A vote was taken*) In that case that is CARRIED.

Thank you very much for coming today. Officers from the department you have heard mentioned will be in contact with you as soon as they have something to communicate. Thank you very much and good afternoon. (*Applause*)

ITEM 5 – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD – SAFER LEEDS
COMMUNITY SAFETY STRATEGY (2018-2021)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Coupar.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It gives me great pleasure, really, to introduce the Safer Leeds Community Safety Strategy to this Council Chamber for approval.

This is a three year strategy that Safer Leeds are following and I would just like to give some acknowledgement to the consultation process and the Scrutiny process that this strategy has been through.

We went out to wider consultation outside of the Council and it also went through the Council's process of Scrutiny with Councillor Barry Anderson and his Scrutiny Board who looked at it in great detail, I have to say. Throughout that consultation and that Scrutiny a few things were suggested for change in the strategy. Just to point out to Council actually that we do listen when we go to consultation, we have changed the strategy to include those things that were mentioned during the consultation and also at Scrutiny, so that is around road safety and vehicle anti-social behaviour that is happening in the city particularly. Also, with some detail on the sexual violence that was not noted in the original strategy that went out to consultation.

I have to say, actually, that since I took on this role that the partnership of the Executive and Safer Leeds has developed and evolved as we have gone along and it is now in a much stronger position, I believe, than it ever has been and it is great to see all those partners around the table taking responsibility and taking actions and believing in that partnership work, because we cannot do things on our own as a Council; West Yorkshire Police cannot do things on their own and neither can other organisations and partners in this city, but together we can make that difference and we can make that change that is needed in this city.

For the first time I believe I am starting to see and feel a real change about how things are done in this city. If you take, for instance, the introduction of the Street Support Team in the city centre that will tackle some of the issues of vulnerable street users, actually people, organisations, businesses, everybody is coming along now and wanting to be a part of something different, a sea change, a step change that is happening in this city and everybody wants to play their part in that. That for me is a first, I believe, for Safer Leeds Exec and I am really pleased to see that.

Just a couple of points I would like to note before I pass over for everybody's comments on it, actually. Some of the changes that we have made to the Strategy are around the priorities of Safer Leeds now and those priorities were worked on across the Joint Strategic Board, so all three Strategic Boards came up with those priorities together, again demonstrating the partnership work that we are actually delivering in this city.

It is a change from mainly acquisitive crime towards the safeguarding agenda and quite rightly so, and around protecting and focus on victims and vulnerable adults and children in this city.

Another point that I would just like to make to colleagues in the Chamber actually is, it is a shame but crime has increased within the last year and it has increased by 11.7%. There may be some differences in how crime is being reported and logged by the police, but...

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Coupar.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Thank you. I move the Strategy, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dowson.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: I would just like to second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I call on Councillor Lennox, who is going to make a maiden speech, so can we observe the usual proprieties.

COUNCILLOR LENNOX: My Lord Mayor, today I want to speak about Big Change Leeds, which is a new initiative on homelessness and rough sleeping in our city, which launched last month and forms part of the wider Community Safety Strategy.

Colleagues, the efficiency of ongoing preventative efforts of Councils like our own unfortunately cannot change the fact that homelessness in the UK is on the rise and Leeds has not escaped that trend. Eight years of Conservative and Coalition Governments' austerity, an ongoing housing crisis with soaring private rents and a desperate shortage of Council homes, cuts to mental health services, to drugs and alcohol services, the closure of domestic violence refuges and the insecurity of life on universal credit have all contributed to an increase in the number of people finding themselves on our streets.

When we encounter people on the streets in our city and in our communities, we ask ourselves, "What can I do that will actually make a difference? How can I actually help people get what they need?"

Big Change Leeds seeks to reframe the way our city looks at homelessness support and connects charities, businesses and people to best co-ordinate and focus energies on delivering better and more direct help. Big Change will co-ordinate a collaboration and partnership between more than 45 third sector organisations along

with the Council's Street Support Teams, businesses and the public, to develop and provide the most effective support, safeguarding and signposting.

People in businesses can volunteer their support in whatever capacity they have, be that their time, their money, their goods or their items. Through Big Change Leeds monetary and physical donations are directed to the best charity or organisation to provide them to individuals directly, giving people the practical support they need to get away from the streets, be that rental deposit on a home or a new set of clothes for a job interview, or kitchen equipment or bed linen. Big Change will help to overcome the challenges that people feel about how they can best offer their help. It will further deliver on our commitment to being a truly compassionate city. It will be a central point of contact so the small actions that we take as citizens will have the greatest impact for our vulnerable.

It is an innovative way to bring together skills of a range of organisations along with the resources of businesses who are all committed to a better solution for the city of Leeds. In its first month the scheme has already seen direct results for individuals, one of whom has already been offered employment with one of the businesses partaking.

Colleagues, it feels wrong that in this country in 2018 people are living and dying on our streets, yet we all know in our communities that precarious work and housing circumstances are so prevalent and the effect of austerity is set to remain for years to come. That is why Big Change is a welcome and important advancement of the partnership work that we in Leeds are determined to maintain as we continue our work to reach our most vulnerable with the services that they need and further reduce the number of people who are homeless and sleeping rough in our city. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Iqbal, please.

COUNCILLOR IQBAL: Thank you, my Lord Mayor, for providing me the opportunity to speak about the partnership work we are doing as a Council to ensure the safety of our communities is maintained.

As a rapidly growing city we recognise with this comes additional issues and concerns. Those who live and work in Leeds as well as those who visit need to feel safe in their everyday lives, whether that is in their home, throughout the streets or wherever they choose to go. We know that crime levels have sadly started to increase once again with total recorded crime rising in the last three years in Leeds. This Community Safety Strategy allows for Safer Leeds to work in partnership to keep communities safe and with this we are proud to be working to ensure that we are addressing the shared priorities of keeping people safe from harm, preventing and reducing offending, creating safer and stronger communities.

We understand that just like other cities we face significant challenges and pressures. Therefore it is imperative that we have a strategy in order to address the safety of our community and prioritise this. Working together in partnership can only bring with it better ideas, better solutions and collaborative work, working that addresses not only existing issues but implements plans to prevent recurrences of these issues, protecting future citizens.

It reduces delays in finding the right solution. Take one of the newest initiatives that has just been launched, the Big Change, like my colleague said, Councillor Lennox. Over 45 organisations are working together to ensure those sleeping rough or those who are homeless receive the support they need as soon as it is possible to do so.

Our Street Support Team also launched recently sees the team work with the most vulnerable street users to provide ongoing wrap-around support to ensure they can access appropriate services which will in turn move them away from street life.

Only yesterday we had the Safer Leeds LASBT OBA conference session in Middleton and Councillor Kevin Ritchie was there, Councillor Regan and my good friend Councillor Anderson was there as well. A fantastic turn out, about 70 people, agencies, different agencies turned up and I have the presentation, so if anybody wants the slides I am happy to provide them to you. Having a collective emphasis on meeting the needs and demands of people in our city as well as preventing future victimisation and offending and ensuring we make contact count.

With our continued partnership way of working we can ensure that people in Leeds are safe, feel safe in their homes and feel safe wherever they choose to go in this city. Yesterday I am pleased to say we had the PCC's sixth Annual Conference in collaboration with Community Safety and Safer Leeds.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Iqbal.

COUNCILLOR IQBAL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I will stop there. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Amanda Carter.

COUNCILLOR AMANDA CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would also like to touch on the rough sleepers and homelessness in Leeds which came to the Exec Board last month.

There are a lot of complex and difficult reasons why people end up on the street and if you listen to their stories, it can happen to absolutely anybody. One thing seems to be prevalent though – that it is mental health that is at the root of most of it, and drug addiction and alcoholism.

I welcome very much the work that the City Council is doing to try to combat this. I think the only way to manage this is to have a multi-agency approach and have that intensive one-to-one with each one of these people.

I do not know if any of you have ever seen (you probably have) somebody who has been taking spice. It is absolutely terrifying to see somebody who can do that to themselves and be in a zombie-like state. It is also extremely frightening for the people in the city centre and the businesses, not least of all people going into work.

My one concern is that this work that is being done does not drive people out, does not drive these homeless people out into the outer areas where there is not quite so much support. We already have people in Headingley and actually we have somebody in our ward who is rough sleeping.

The other concern is, actually keeping them in a home. Once you have got them to that stage where they are in a state where they can actually live in a property, many of them do not want to stay there because they want to go back to their community; they need that support from the community on the streets, so I think we need to look at where we place these people and make sure that they do have enough support there.

I would also like to pay tribute to two wonderful charities, Simon on the Streets and St George's Crypt, who do some wonderful work with these people and I take my hat off to them.

I would just like to touch on one other thing, briefly. I think the Council could do much more to plan out crime. In my ward we have got a wonderful new estate, it is fantastic, looks absolutely great; the locks are absolutely rubbish and they have been burgled no end, and it is absolutely appalling. What we could do at the Council Planning meetings is insist that there are proper locks put on. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Barry Anderson.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. There is a lot to be welcomed in this particular strategy. In particular I would emphasise the preventing and the reducing of offending, to try and stop it occurring again and again and looking at ways that we can help people. Also, as Councillor Iqbal said, in terms of antisocial behaviour the Council is really looking again to make sure that it is fit for purpose and that is to be welcomed because they have done a fantastic job in terms of the antisocial behaviour but now we need to look again, reflect back and see how we move things forward.

This report also looks into things like safer travel. How many people have a fear, whether it be real or otherwise, about travelling within the city? Why do a number of people who live in the outer area, why are they scared to come into the city? This is a welcoming city. It is actually very safe to come into this city but people feel like that.

One of the ones that is very close to my heart is road safety. I do not think we are putting that high enough up the political agenda at the moment. On my particular Scrutiny Board cross-party it has been brought out that road safety is something that we need to work better with the police at so that we can make our communities safer in terms of enforcement but also in terms of education.

Scrutiny has looked at this and Scrutiny did fully endorse it. We made some comments and they were incorporated into the final document so again it shows the partnership in terms of people listening.

What we do need is, we need to educate the public as to what can and cannot actually be done because sometimes there are unrealistic expectations being put out there. We also need to communicate with people a lot better; the information that we as Councillors want, need, to help get a message across.

One thing I would like us to look at, however, is how relevant this document is to our local communities and what more can we do through being Community Champions to actually make it relevant with working with our own local police to try and find something that we can hang our hats on, because some of it is more applicable in certain parts of the city who unfortunately have bigger problems to face up to.

The final thing I would say is, it is my personal view – not necessarily this Group but my personal view – that I think policing in this area is at a crossroads and unless we start looking at the way things are, we could end up with a lot more problems than we have got just now and I do think we have all got to start working better with the police and the police with us in return as well. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor J Taylor.

COUNCILLOR J TAYLOR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It has been a refreshing change to speak with Safer Leeds Officer Paul Money who offers a direct approach to the challenges we face in our communities. One issue I spoke with him about is speeding vehicles and the devastating impacts the consequences of speeding have in our areas.

Members will likely recall the horrific car accident in Horsforth where four young lives were lost with a further three people seriously injured. Horsforth is an incredibly close community and this accident happened a stone's throw away from the family homes of these young people.

Following the accident my ward colleagues and I met with Highways officers to discuss what actions we can take to make our roads safer for road users and pedestrians, with consideration for a speed camera on the ring road to slow down traffic outside of rush hour. We are also advocating a speed limit reduction on the A6120 between Horsforth and Rodley to 40 miles per hour to be supported by a new camera; a reduction to 30 miles per hour on Rawdon Road on the approach to Horsforth roundabout; and a reduction to 20 miles per hour on Hall Lane.

Additionally, we have been speaking with local activists who are establishing the Safer Stanhope Drive Group to push for a Pelican crossing on the ring road where Stanhope Drive is split in two, where the majority of pedestrians, including school children, cross to access each end of Horsforth. The number of accidents on Horsforth roundabout on the exit from Horsforth Vale on to the A6120 and the ring road warrants serious attention from the Council and my ward colleagues now will continue to press for our constituents' safety, the installation of new speed cameras, reduction in speed limits and we hope for officer support in these changes. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lowe, please.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: Lord Mayor, the Safer Leeds Community Safety Strategy has several key priorities but the most important one is to keep people safe from harm. To do this, Lord Mayor, we need police officers and staff in enough numbers to meet the growing challenge of rising crime. The increase in the last twelve months was 11.7% compared to the previous year.

Since 2010 this Government has cut policing by 19%. At a recent Grant Thornton presentation that I was at - which is why I was not at the Labour Group – we were told that there are 20,000 less police officers now than there were in 2010. 2,000 of these are in West Yorkshire. To make matters worse, police in England and Wales have now been told (but only in September) that they must meet a £420m pension shortfall – that equates to £6.6m for West Yorkshire. If implemented this means that we will lose, in West Yorkshire, a proposed 400 officers and effectively the £12 that we raise through Council Tax this year, the lot will go not on the police officers that we were promised but on pensions and plugging the shortfall.

At our Police and Crime Panel meeting last Friday the Chief Constable Dee Collins said, “I am personally disappointed that our attempt to rebuild and reform at a neighbourhood level is at risk of unravelling. This will have a huge impact on police morale and service delivery.”

I hear over on this side that policing is at a crossroads. It is definitely at a crossroads but it is at a crossroads because of Tory Government policy on funding the police and to pick up – because I have got a few moments – the point on homelessness, people are homeless because of Tory welfare reform policy and for no other reason. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Buckley, please.

COUNCILLOR BUCKLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I was just about to say that I was going to associate myself with all the comments made on this topic but if I have chance at the end of my remarks to come back to Councillor Lowe’s points I shall certainly do that.

I also welcome this Safety Strategy for up to 2021. It is right, in my view, that some key issues have been highlighted and I just picked out three particular ones which struck a chord with me. What they describe as vehicular antisocial behaviour, gang and youth crime and organised crime. The reason why they stood out for me was that in North Leeds we have actually had a spate of crimes which exactly fit those descriptions.

Just a couple of examples were that going back probably a year now, for a long period of time there appeared to be an organised crime of burglary including particularly targeting the British Indian community. This seemed to be not only Alwoodley but other wards in North Leeds as well. Now this particular community is one of the most law-abiding, aspirational and exemplary communities that you could possibly think of. You could not meet better citizens across the whole city and they were the victims of all these burglaries because of what burglars thought might be found in their particular homes. I am not going to go into any more detail for obvious reasons.

The second spate of crimes was completely different and this was to do with gangs of youths driving things like quad bikes, motorbikes and cars on to sports grounds, cutting up football pitches, doing damage, all that kind of thing. Of course, the immediate result of all this is people get very upset, fixtures have to be cancelled and then the whole things costs thousands of pounds to repair and protect and so on.

Actually, it goes deeper than that because it completely demoralises and demotivates all the amateur volunteers who work in all sorts of ways in the Get Active campaign, racial cohesion and all sorts of things like that.

As ward Councillors we will do all we can to help and combine with antisocial behaviour teams to come together to make sure that these groups are dealt with but we would like a little bit more communication, as one of my colleagues said, on the grounds of the antisocial behaviour team and the police actually letting us know what is going on so we can actually respond to the community and give them some kind of reassurance.

Just coming back... *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Not even that briefly, Councillor Buckley, thank you.
Councillor Caroline Anderson.

COUNCILLOR C ANDERSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The Safer Leeds Community Strategy is welcome and if we achieve everything in it, we will be doing really well. I am particularly pleased that antisocial behaviour is one of the main areas of focus because I think that that is where it all starts. Low level antisocial behaviour is blighting the lives of many people in this city. I am talking about people dropping cigarette ends, dropping litter, not picking up after their dogs, driving around on quad bikes in areas where quad bikes should not be.

Just last week we had thousands of pounds of damage done to local green space in our ward by someone who tore up the grassed area of an estate in some kind of vehicle and separately part of the local golf course was torn up by somebody on a quad bike. These perpetrators see this as victimless and they do not think of it as a crime. Well, it is not victimless. Somebody has to pay for that damage, pick up the litter – that comes out of Council Tax payers' hard earned money.

I have also seen an increase lately in the number of teenagers and young adults riding around on bicycles or motorbikes without helmets, in the dark, wearing dark coloured clothing, riding on the pavements or coming up the road the wrong way and doing wheelies, and it is really frightening if that is facing you as a driver just out of the dark. Who would be in trouble if we ran over one of these people? It would be the innocent motorist. We need to start right at the beginning and go into the schools, the reception classes, the nurseries and teach the children about keeping their neighbourhoods tidy as a first step.

I do think something we should all be prepared to do though is to speak up if we witness anything at all that is in any way criminal. The police and other partners cannot do this on their own. They need our help to catch criminals. Our Area Committee has a Community Safety Sub Group which works very well alongside partners in housing, the police and the antisocial behaviour unit. The committee meets regularly and we always get an up-to-date report at every full Area Committee meeting.

Looking at the deliverables in the report, I note there are a number of actions for Adults and Health and I look forward to receiving updates on the work in that area. I am also pleased to note that the report contains information on how we are actually going to do these things because something that I bring up constantly is that we always get told

what we are going to do and who is going to do it but we very rarely hear about how we are going to do it. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Matthew Robinson.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I welcome the Community Safety Strategy and some of the comments that have been made and I appreciate Councillor Coupar's approach, which has been to listen to all the feedback that has been coming in and take this to Scrutiny. I think it is absolutely the right thing to do.

I would highlight three areas that I hope we can see further action on between now and 2021. One of those is burglary. In the Outer North East as well as across this city we have seen a huge increase in burglary. We are in a stage where actually vehicles are being stolen to order. It is like Amazon offending where you can go and you can pick your car and it can quickly be stolen overnight and then delivered to you within the next few weeks. Actually we know that what is going on is particular targeting. I hope we are able to work with the police on this.

However, there are some easy steps that I think we can take within the report and within the actions that the Police and Planning can do.

Councillor Carter has mentioned around anti-snap locks being on new properties. I have been writing to Councillor Lewis about this and I know that he responded at the last Council meeting – or the Council meeting 11th July – with a written response saying he would be writing to the major house builders and their forum about this, and I think that is absolutely the right thing to do and I hope we can have a cross-party approach in this place where we take that forward and make sure that the best locks are fitted on our properties all across Leeds and we can actually stamp out some of these pernicious crimes.

I also note that one of the stories we have had in our area is, we have been told that criminals have been assisted by using taxi travel across the city to engage in some of their crimes, particularly some of the burglaries and thefts. I hope that we can open a new conversation with taxi companies across the city to make sure as part of their licensing agreement that they are sharing information with the police and with services across the Council.

A second area is knife crime. Between 2011 and 2017 we have seen an 81% increase in knife crime in the city. Knife crime is one of those issues that damages communities and their faith in what is going on in their area. It makes people afraid to go out, it hits people of all age groups and it is not something that we should tolerate. I hope that the police will look at engaging in a new knife amnesty as well as further discussions with schools and communities across this city.

Finally, as I do not have a lot of time, Lord Mayor, I would highlight something which I have mentioned in the past which is Justice Reports. We know what the level of crimes are across our city but we do not know what happens to the offenders and I think one of the best ways that we can increase confidence in the police is by helping communities understand just what has happened to offenders, what sentences they have

received and actually what sort of engagement they have got to do with the community going forward. It is about an open dialogue and it is about making sure that we increase our community's faith in policing and our faith in this Council. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harrison, please, and I would mention to Members this is a maiden speech, even though it is not marked as a maiden in the papers.

COUNCILLOR M HARRISON: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I would like to take this opportunity to highlight the Community Safety things that me and Simon are doing in our area.

As I am sure you are aware we are encountering a lot of issues in our areas, all of us as Councillors are seeing these effects on social behaviour, particularly from our younger people, so what we would like to do is look at working with the police on these issues and actually getting those police officers out there, which we have had a little bit of success of and actually last night we had some success where we actually had some people arrested because a local resident said, "They are there now", the police went out and arrested them. We are working with that, there are police out there so we need to give them a pat on the back for that.

We are determined to work with this problem in our area and I am sure you want to work with this problem in your area as well. My Lord Mayor, as the Community Safety Strategy highlights, ASB is a priority for the Council and it is good to see that it is working; however, I would like to state that I think we need to bring back the Neighbourhood Watch schemes. If we could get our neighbourhoods and our Councillors to go out and start getting these working again - because I know in our area it is not working as good as it should do - if we can go out and get these advertised, start getting these schemes working again better. Yes, we do have some that are working; however, there are still some that are not working as good as they could. This will inform the police, this will inform ourselves which means we can work all together and this could help bring down the crime rates within our area.

My Lord Mayor, it is good to see these strategies are coming forwards. However, though it is right to highlight and it is done at local level, I think as communities and as Councillors we need to get out there and try and help these people get their communities better and bring it back to a local community. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton, please.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Most of the comments seem to agree that it is enhanced partnership that makes the difference in tackling complex issues and we have already had Councillor Lennox mention what is happening with our homeless strategy, where we have built on years of experience and focused on the areas where we think it will make the biggest impact and I think that is a great success story for the city.

Likewise, I know that in a related subject we are also working with Armley Prison to do work there which is all about reducing recidivism with vulnerable, usually

younger people who leave prison after they have served one sentence and we do not want to see them going back in and a little bit of focused attention from a partnership of organisations can make all the difference. Of course, that has an impact into the communities where those people come from because we have all had those conversations with our local Neighbourhood Policing team and they say “Oh, just to warn you, next week so-and-so is going to be released from prison and so we will expect to see a spike in that kind of crime that they were involved with.” Let us see if we can hope to reduce it; that is one of the big things that we should be focusing on.

Councillor Robinson mentioned the rise in knife crime recently. One of the things I did like about the Community Safety Strategy is that it also recognised that there is also a growing problem with speeding traffic and I know that we have heard about the antisocial aspects of damage that this can cause, but it is also now one of the biggest causes of death for our young people. We have all heard the headlines of several cases where young people out in a car have ended up losing their lives. We really do need to ensure that the partnership working there - because I do not think the police can actually have some kind of forecasting tool available to them, no matter how much money is given to them, but in terms of that prevention work that was talked about in terms of getting into schools, I think we really should be having a serious conversation with our Police and Crime Commissioner to ensure that money goes into that and we could do something just as innovative in this city around that subject as we have done around homelessness and around recidivism for offenders. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harrison, please.

COUNCILLOR C HARRISON: Thank you. I welcome this report, I think it is very brave and very innovative, but I just think there is something that I would like to flag up and that is the fact that for the majority of people fear of crime is just as important as the reality of crime, and it must become integral to this strategy.

Part of that are safer, well-lit streets. Ordinary people, particular this time of year with dark mornings and darker nights, they just want to go about their city, the villages, the streets, the towns doing the things that ordinary people do without having to worry that they or their loved ones are at risk. Some people do not have an alternative, with more and more people working antisocial shifts and that is why I believe that well-lit streets are an absolute imperative and should be integral to the Safer Communities Strategy.

The existing investment in LED lighting, which I do welcome, has already given Leeds a financial dividend, helping us to cut costs by £140,000 a year for the 1,500 streets that have already been converted. A further investment will save the Local Authority £3.4m a year. I think we are missing an opportunity, Councillor Coupar, in that rather than putting some of that money into smarter technology to turn the street lights off, we could be keeping the street lights on so that the majority of our citizens can feel confident and safe when they are going about the streets early in the morning or late at night.

It would make us very, very innovative; it would also touch the lives of just about every level of society around the city. Ordinary people are commonly not victims

of crime but darkness breeds fear of crime. People want to be able to take their children to after-school sports up until about eight o'clock at night, teenagers want to meet their friends, shift workers want to go to work and women want to be able to go out without having to ask somebody to accompany them.

Investment in LED lighting has already given us a financial dividend, so rather than using it to make more people frightened while they are out and about and turning the lights off, I would like us to consider leaving the lights on for everybody. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Coupar, please.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Yes, thank you, Lord Mayor. It is a strange position for me, I think, to have agreement from the Council Chamber - 99% agreement from the Council Chamber, actually, so I really welcome all the comments that have been made here this afternoon on the Safer Leeds Strategy. I would welcome conversations, discussions and emails from anybody who is really interested in feeding through further detail and information of what we have spoken about this afternoon.

Rather than singling out single people, there are a few common issues that were raised through your speeches this afternoon. One of them was the antisocial behaviour and, as Councillor Iqbal already said, we have implemented a review, a LASBAT review, and I am sure that Councillor Anderson's Scrutiny and the rest of the Chamber will keep their eye on that review and how that goes forward.

Road safety. Again, I know that it is a change that we made to the strategy because of what Members said, because of what Scrutiny said, so that is now included and hopefully pieces of work will go forward that will be all part of.

Communication. Again I think there is some responsibility on individual Members to go to meetings with the local Neighbourhood Policing teams and also with the local Council officers around antisocial behaviour just the same as I do at a ward level as well to find out really what is happening in the local area.

I do think that we are not taking our eye off the ball as far as burglary is concerned. We are just introducing new priorities that actually look at safeguarding but burglary will still be an important part of the work going forward.

Knife crime absolutely, we are all aware of the rise in knife crime and there are many projects that we are doing in this city to address some of the knife crime as well.

There was a mention about Neighbourhood Watch as well. I know in many parts of the city that there is health Neighbourhood Watch meetings going on and they are involved in it, so I am happy to pass out details of that.

I think the only discord that we have is around the funding of our police forces and Councillor Lowe rightly pointed out the amount of cuts the police force have suffered and, unfortunately, it is down to this Government cutting that funding that will make a difference to the policing on the streets of Leeds. That is why we prioritised funding the PCSOs with the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner to ensure

we have got neighbourhood policing in all of our wards and I hope you all appreciate that. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we now take a vote, please, on the recommendations as set out in the report. (*A vote was taken*) In that case that is CARRIED.

ITEM 6 – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD – GAMBLING
ACT 2005 STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

THE LORD MAYOR: We come to Item 6, Recommendations of the Executive Board – Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Licensing Policy. Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor and I move in terms of the Notice.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harland.

COUNCILLOR HARLAND: Thank you, Lord Mayor. My Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, in my role as Chair of the Licensing Committee I am pleased to speak on the updated Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Licensing Policy.

As a thriving cosmopolitan city Leeds has a diverse gambling sector which, for the majority of our residents, is a safe and sociable and enjoyable pastime. However, for some gambling can turn into a destructive and often hidden addiction with far-reaching emotional and financial repercussions not only for that individual but for their loved ones in the communities around them as well.

In Leeds there are thought to be 10,000 problem gamblers and a further 30,000 people at risk at harm from problem gambling. As is often the case, it is our most deprived and vulnerable communities who are hit the hardest. This is why we on this side of the Chamber are very disappointed and frustrated that the Chancellor chose to capitulate to the gambling lobby rather than end this destructive addiction – the crack cocaine of gambling – by delaying the legislation in relation to fixed odds betting terminals.

However, in order to combat this social impact it is important to stress all the multi-agency work we have done to address this across the city. Not only have we run the Beat the Odds campaign two years running at key times in the gambling calendar, we have also worked hard to build closer relationships with gambling support organisations and treatment services across the city. Last year we commissioned research by the Leeds Beckett University to lift the veil on problem gambling and identify the groups most vulnerable to it in the city, which they found to include younger people, adults on low incomes, ex-offenders, people with learning disabilities as well as those suffering from mental health issues and substance abuse.

All this work has informed our latest revision of the Gambling Act Statement of Licensing Policy which has a number of key objectives – to prevent gambling from becoming a source of crime or disorder; ensure gambling is conducted in a fair and open

manner; and, very importantly, protect children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed and exploited by it.

We have worked extremely hard to ensure that its updated content reflects feedback from a variety of stakeholders such as Citizens' Advice Bureau, Gamble Aware, Workforce Development and Public Health through the multi-agency Problem Gambling Working Group.

I would like to thank all Members of the Problem Gambling Working Group for their invaluable contribution, as well as the Financial Inclusion Team for their ongoing support throughout this process, and I must say special thanks to Sue Holden for steering this and bringing it all together, of course, all Members from the Entertainment Licensing Team and the committee.

Problem gambling is, of course, an incredibly complex issue and rarely the only difficulty that individuals face. However, the renewed Gambling Statement of Licensing Policy will play a significant role in reducing the social impact problem gambling and I therefore urge the Council to support its adoption. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Jenkins, please.

COUNCILLOR JENKINS: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. I refer to page 60 paragraph 3.3 about the maximum stakes in fixed odd betting terminals.

My concern about this issue came about when I was an advisor at the Citizens' Advice Bureau and advised a man who had lost £100,000 in one year on fixed odd betting terminals and became suicidal, so I referred him to Dial House but it was a devastating effect upon his life.

The Gambling Act 2005 classifies fixed odd betting terminals as B2 gaming machines; up to four machines can be sited on betting premises. Currently the maximum stake is £100 and the maximum prize £500. There were 33,611 B2 machines in Great Britain in November 2017. The gross gambling yield from B2s in that year was about £1.8bn. The gambling industry says that there is no link between the stakes in fixed odd betting machines and problem gambling, but in fact there are high rates of problem gamblers amongst players of these machines. About one in seven of players of gambling machines in betting shops are problem gamblers, the highest rate for any gambling activity, and we note the relationship between the location of B2 gaming machines and areas of high deprivation.

As Councillor Harland has said, the Government proposed delaying the reduction in the maximum stake from April to October 2019. This could put the lives of problem gamblers at risk. Tracey Crouch, the Sports Minister, resigned over the delayed implementation, claiming it was unjustifiable. William Hill, the bookmakers, have warned of lower full year profits following the Government's clampdown on fixed odd betting terminals, yet last year William Hill's made £291.3m and expects even after the effects of the fixed odd betting terminals and other matters, to make £240m this year. I have little sympathy because of the damage that these bookmakers cause.

John McDonnell, Labour's Shadow Chancellor, says the report on the Government's decision not to cut stakes on fixed odd betting terminals from £100 to £2 until October 2019 was influenced by a discredited secret report commissioned by bookmakers, so this has led to his view that the Chancellor's position on this issue is completely untenable and that the Opposition would now back the cross-party amendment to the Finance Bill to stop this delay.

We would urge that Leeds City Council writes to the Government with its support.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Jenkins. *(Applause)* Councillor Lewis, please.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. As Councillor Jenkins was just saying, I think we are all fairly concerned about fixed odd betting terminals and we are certainly taking the issue up. That is all I am saying in summing up, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. We now take a vote on the recommendations as in the report. *(A vote was taken)* That is CARRIED.

ITEM 7 – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE LICENSING COMMITTEE –
LICENSING ACT 2003 STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

THE LORD MAYOR: We come to Item, 7, Recommendations of the Licensing Committee. Councillor Lewis again.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I move in terms of the Notice.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harland.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Arif.

COUNCILLOR ARIF: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, I entered the world of politics because, like many sitting around this Chamber, I wanted to make a difference in my community. When I was first elected in 2016 I was struck by the sheer volume of shops licensed to sell alcohol in Harehills. To put it into context, along Harehills Lane and Harehills Road, 70% of the shops sell some form of alcohol and while it is impossible to point to a single store that has been responsible, it is clear that the sheer number of licensed premises has had a significant negative impact in Harehills.

Sharing my frustration it was my colleague Councillor Walshaw who pointed me towards the Cumulative Impact Policy – cheers, Neil. I will refer to it as the CIP. At the moment in Harehills, if someone applies for a licence to sell alcohol, all they need to do is make an application. The Licensing Committee then considers their application and

makes a case as to why that applicant should have a licence. The CIP turns this on its head; instead the Licensing Committee makes a case as to why the applicant should be granted an alcohol licence in a particular area.

We all know, and it is quite obvious, that Harehills is situated in the country's top 5% of areas of deprivation. There were 1,710 crimes recorded only just in 2016 and 2017. Most offences where alcohol was associated were recorded as violent crime.

Lord Mayor, that is just statistics and that only tells half of the story. The other half of the story is told by my residents. Responding to the consultation process, one resident said, "Drunkenness and antisocial behaviours associated with drinking alcohol are increasingly affecting the daily lives of local residents." Whether it be putting up with vulgar and salacious behaviour from large groups congregated around those shops and local green spaces, protecting children from having to listen to foul and inappropriate language, witnessing violent interactions taking place in your street and having to deal with the subsequent damage to property to clearing up cans and broken glasses from discarded bottles before tyres are punctured and children and pets are hurt, to hosing down sick and urine spattered pavements, the result of uncontrolled alcohol consumption is having an extremely negative impact on the local area.

Lord Mayor, it is crucial that the Council does what is within its power to control the situation and support its communities and this is why I have been committed to press the need for a CIP in Harehills over the last two-and-a-half years.

Let me make it clear, I understand the CIP is not the golden bullet and is not the only solution to all the alcohol problem facing our communities. Having said that, the CIP does give the most deprived and vulnerable areas of our city such as Harehills an opportunity to redress the current imbalance where premises licensed to sell alcohol have reached saturation point to the detriment of its people.

Although it has been a long and frustrating road, I am extremely proud to be at this point, none of which could have been possible without the help of our committed residents, partners that have worked tirelessly with me and of course the support I have received from my Council colleagues, Councillor Maqsood and Councillor Hussain, and Neil, thank you to you as well.

Finally, I request Council supports Harehills' final inclusion within the Renewed Cumulative Impact Policy and help make a difference in Harehills. Thank you.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton, please.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: I will demur, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harrison.

COUNCILLOR C HARRISON: I think that's a first, isn't it! (laughter) Lord Mayor, I welcome the Licensing Policy but for me it does not go far enough. My main issue is consistency across all of the Council functions because the policy clearly states that licensing should contribute to and improve the quality of life for our residents,

particularly those who are vulnerable or in poverty. This has happened quite effectively, clearly, in Harehills. However, it can fly very much in the face of another much heralded policy, the fact that Leeds is a child friendly city. For me, it should go without saying that Leeds is a child friendly city – what exactly does that mean?

However, there are times when I see the outcomes of licensing applications and wonder what the child friendly city status actually means. How can we herald our child friendly status when we are routinely ignoring it in the pursuit of commercial interest? How many times have licences been granted directly opposite schools, care homes, hospitals and other locations where people are working with precious few resources to improve the way of life for our most vulnerable citizens.

In my own ward recently a take-out was granted a licence to sell alcohol almost all day, yet it is directly located over the road from a large primary school. As children are playing out or leaving school, they are witnessing people drinking and smoking, two of the health risk activities that their teachers are advocating they avoid or pursue in moderation.

The message that this inconsistency sends out to people is that our high profile policies are worthless. If we are to remain credible as an Authority we must think laterally and broadly when endorsing applications and consider how they will impact on those most vulnerable in our city and live our policies, not just say them. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Flynn.

COUNCILLOR FLYNN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would just like to say first and foremost that there was a huge amount of work done on reviewing this policy and echoing Mary Harland's praise before of Sue Holden on the Gambling Policy, I would like to thank Sue and Robert Stirk, who produced enormous volumes of data which I am sure you all spent hours last night looking at. Not least the police, of course, around the Cumulative Impact Assessment Review, which they also have to do on a fairly regular basis. I will come back on to that one later.

Listening to the last two speakers, they are absolutely right, the granting of licences is very important. I am on the Licensing Committee and I can assure you that we take a great deal of care when applications for new licences or variations of licences are actually made, but we are limited to a certain extent anyway by the Licensing Act itself. Of course, we have to balance the prosperity of the city which, of course, is produced not least by the night-time economy but also day-time economy as well, and getting that balance right so that we are not penalising businesses too much while at the same time promoting the licensing objectives, is quite difficult at times. The licensing objectives are prevention of crime and disorder, public safety, prevention of public nuisance and protection of children from harm. No-one would argue with any of those and every company, every firm that has to or has applied for a licence has to satisfy the Licensing Committee that they will satisfy those conditions.

I would like to spend a little bit of time on the Cumulative Impact Area which I think Councillor Arif mentioned before. In the city there are six areas covered by this particular policy. They were introduced originally because there was a danger of saturation of bars, pubs, clubs, retail units selling alcohol until all hours of the day and

night and the presumption now basically is that they will not get the licence or a variation of the licence unless they prove without any sort of doubt at all to the committees that it will not impact basically on what has been provided there before.

Just in final, the enforcement of the Cumulative Impact Policy is upon the police, of course, and most of the Licensing Committee have been out on night-time patrols with them. I can assure you it is a job and a half. The night I was out we covered an attempted suicide, a lady disappeared for several hours and somebody was carried off to St James's Hospital, leaving the police stretched, to say the absolute least. I think they do a magnificent job and I think the Licensing Committee as well under the Chairmanship of Mary Harland does an excellent job as well, so thank you very much indeed, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Just in summing up that item, I think first of all I would welcome Councillor Golton not contributing at all. (*laughter*) Secondly, I welcome Councillor Flynn's comments. I think I would echo it and everybody would echo it about the diligent work that Licensing Committee Members do in terms of assessing licences that come forward. I know not just the meetings that take place of the full committee but the sub-committee meetings which I know take great care and attention to considering the licensing applications that come before us as a Council.

Turning to Councillor Harrison's comments, there are not many issues I can answer by saying, "As I once told the House of Lords..." but the issue of the licensing objectives is one where I can answer by saying, "As I once told the House of Lords..." I am not the kind of man that gets too excited by sitting on red leather (*laughter*) but it was a really interesting opportunity to consider a committee of the House of Lords was considering reviewing, on behalf of the Government was considering reviewing the objectives of the Licensing Act and, as Councillor Harrison says, there can be lots of concerns about the locations of premises, certainly lots of concerns that maybe the Planning system and the Licensing system do not always work together in our best interests. We certainly put those views forward on behalf of the Council. I think it is a serious view.

I am one of those people that has seen again, in my own ward, the change that happens on the High Street. My local corner shop is a Bargain Booze which sometimes comes in handy (particularly after afternoons like this!) but again it is the impact of quite often it can be shops selling alcohol are the only shops left open in an area. It is something as a Council we have taken seriously. I know the Licensing Committee are incredibly diligent about the work that they do and certainly we continue to press at every opportunity for the Licensing Act Objectives to really reflect the concerns we all have in our wards. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you very much. I now call for a vote to approve the recommendations of the report. (*A vote was taken*) That is CARRIED.

ITEM 8 – REPORT ON APPOINTMENTS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 8, Report on Appointments. Councillor Dowson.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: Move in terms of the Notice, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harper.

COUNCILLOR HARPER: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: May we have a vote. (*A vote was taken*) Once again, that is CARRIED.

ITEM 9 – REPORT – PLANS PANELS ANNUAL REPORT

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 9, Plans Panel Annual Report. Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am pleased to bring the Plans Panel Annual Report to this meeting. Firstly, many thanks to the Members and officers who have been involved in the Plans Panel process over the past year.

I could draw people's attention to the infographic if people do not want to read what is a very short report because I think that gives a flavour of the width and depth of what the Plans Panels have been involved in. I particularly point to the contribution to Best City Priorities that the panels have done.

A large amount of work has been carried out in moving forward the Site Allocations Process and the CSSR. This work has put the Council well on track for having a better position for having the best sites delivered in the best way for the city.

Alongside this work on finalising strategy and policy Leeds has been inundated with planning applications. This year as a whole has seen yet another rise in the number of applications that the Council has received to over 5,000 and the Planning Panels have reviewed, which is a lot less - 19. Leeds is one of the busiest Authorities in the country when it comes to planning applications, second only to Birmingham as a Core City in dealing with such a high volume of applications but covering a much wider variety than Birmingham does, given the nature of Leeds's geography.

It is worth noting the sheer scale of housing delivery the planning applications are helping to facilitate. More houses are being delivered by the Council than ever before. Record levels of planning approvals for new homes in 2016/17 and 2017/18 with 7,660 units approved in the last year and over 1,100 affordable units approved in the last three years. The forecast uplift in performance for 2018/19 is to over 3,500 on over 120 sites currently under construction, including a number of large schemes across all markets, including Dandara at 744 units, Hunslet Mill at 758, Seacroft Hospital at 503 and Spofforth Hill at 325.

A significant change in the types of development has been the growth in PRS, private rented sector, or build to rent, and student accommodation, both primarily within the city centre.

It has been positive working with the development industry through the use of the pre-application process, working with small and medium sized building sector representatives and with the Leeds Chamber of Commerce to develop a planning charter. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dowson.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: Second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor McKenna.

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to thank Members of the City Plans Panel who have put a great deal of effort and time into engaging and contributing to the work of the panel. We go through a huge planning agenda at most meetings every three weeks. It is a huge time commitment from Members and it takes real engagement to enact changes for Leeds to get through at all.

As Councillor Lewis has said, there has been a big increase in the number of houses built. However, it is also important that the quality of these houses – and we take that very seriously. We ensure to the best of our ability they are well designed and built in the right locations. Members of City Plans Panel engage fully in helping achieve this.

I am sorry to say, Lord Mayor, many of the positions recently granted have failed to ensure that the roofscapes have chimneys, that I know is so dear to your heart; however, that may change next year.

I would like to thank the officers involved in the process. They carry out their work with professionalism and dedication. They are a credit to the Council and help the whole process of Plans Panel run smoothly.

As I said earlier, it is always a busy agenda for the panel I chair and this year has been no different. We have had some planning applications of huge changes to the city centre. It is a real sign of confidence in the city and the Council. The majority of planning applications approved this year have already begun construction. For example, the Leeds City College building has already started work on site. It is a great project that will help grow the city centre and is already promoting investment in the Quarry Hill area.

We have approved plans for a new Creative Arts building for Leeds Beckett University which we can see from this building. It too is well under construction. The same with the multi-disciplinary physics and computing building incorporating alterations and extensions to the old mining building at Leeds University. Just a quick snapshot, but fine examples of how Leeds is an exemplar in supporting education and turning the city even more into an outstanding city of excellence when it comes to learning.

Of course, we are not just building for students but the whole of the city area and its citizens. I am thrilled that the application for a new Leeds Inner City Park, alongside a swathe of other developments, has been approved. It has been a longstanding ambition for a park in the city centre, a vibrant green space that everyone can be proud of and enjoy.

Recently we have received plans for the upgrading of the LGI which includes a children's hospital and a new innovation hub. These are the next steps in the work to transform the whole area. Once again, I would like to thank everybody who has contributed to the City Plans Panel and thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor McKenna, I am very pleased to know that you are missing me, or the roofscapes are missing me anyway! Thank you. Councillor Walshaw.

COUNCILLOR WALSHAW: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Three minutes to talk about the work we have done on North and East Plans Panel over the last Municipal Year and so far this year. I would just like to thank all elected Members and officers for your efforts. Although you should not really pick out individuals, I would like to thank David Newbury, my Lead Officer, for all his support and guidance over the last couple of years.

On our North and East Plans Panel we try to make our decisions based in law and in policy and infused with a sense of social justice and I think we have been doing that.

A couple of themes we picked out this year. We have seen a real growth in areas where large buildings, large single dwellings are now becoming flats, particularly in the ward of Alwoodley in North Leeds we have noticed this. That is becoming a real theme in North Leeds. We have seen some really interesting one-off modern designs and I want to see that continuing. Members will know my predilection for contemporary architecture. It is not really about that but I would say to applicants, if you are building your own homes, you have got the resources to do that, be bold but be sustainable, be low carbon, look at the UN report about climate change and take that on board when you are thinking about building your own home.

Just a couple of really interesting schemes we have done this year. First I would like to mention on Roundhay Road where the Chapeltown Housing Scheme, the ChaCo scheme, it was a real pleasure to give planning permission for that. That is a really interesting, innovative way for people to live and I look forward to seeing that coming to fruition.

Now, I trust all elected Members in this room have gone on to the high wires at Go Ape at Temple Newsam, right? Some nods, excellent; I am not going, I suffer from vertigo, I am not going anywhere near it but it was nevertheless a place to give that planning permission and we are very, very pleased about that. Just to show that we are not all about reckless planning permissions, I would like to point out one where we absolutely said a hard "No" to as a panel. It was Bramham estate wanted to develop 140 homes in Bardsey but on a site in the green belt and we said you cannot just cherrypick a

site in the green belt and want to develop it without looking at all your options first as an estate. Hopefully they have taken that on board.

In six years of being a Plans Panel Councillor and four years of being the Chair, I have to say, Members, I do not think I have ever seen a scheme that has not benefited from your attentions across this Chamber. I would like to point out a few areas where North and East has really worked hard this year and the previous years.

Space standards. Getting applicants and developers to adhere to national space standards has been a *cause celebre* for us and rightly so. We have made design improvements. Councillors, that is part of our role. You should not overdo it, you should not over-reach but it is important that we make those efforts because planning decisions last lifetimes, don't they?

We have also worked on the fundamentals and an application in Chapel Allerton ward where the work of the Plans Panel made sure that the green space was no longer a dark corner that would have been an attraction for antisocial behaviour but was a really usable space that people could use, and also we doubled the number of affordable housing use – very proud of that.

Lastly in the time I have got left I just want to talk about consent. We spend a lot of time in this Chamber arguing about planning, and we do argue although there is more agreement than perhaps we think in this room. The planning system is one of the areas where we experience a lot of change in society and it comes to the planning system, of all places. What we really need, Lord Mayor, in just two sentences, we really need a new comprehensive Town and County Planning Act that puts community and local democracy at the heart of building the communities and homes we need. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Development Plans Panel has overseen in particular this year the examination in public of the Site Allocation Plan and I want to thank all those Members who attended and all those who are in the Chamber at the moment who attended. I note that some people have left early yet again. Those people who went I think spoke constructively, even if they did not necessarily agree with everything that the Council is putting forward. We are now at the cusp of hearing from the Inspectors and hopefully all of us want to have a Site Allocations Plan in place.

The good news of the most recent statistics on our analysis is that we now have 4.76 years of land supply – nearly five years, nearly there. It gives us much more strength in defending appeals against avaricious and greedy developers and we shall do that. We are very close to giving full, significant weight to our planning policies.

Sadly, the most recent review by Sir Oliver Letwin was, as I described it this week, a mighty mouse. He has come to the conclusion that there is no land banking. He clearly does not live in the North of the country. He spoke to 21 Local Authorities, a dozen of them in London, another five in the South East and two in the North. Once a

Cabinet Office Minister, always London-centric. We will need to plough on despite of that.

There was mention in the previous debate about new homes having proper locks and being security conscious. That debate goes on throughout the Council and I think we should give permission to all of Planning Members to say we will not accept any more shoddy developments which do not protect people in their homes. It is a few quid difference between putting a safe, snap-proof lock in and not and we should simply say it is unacceptable, we will not stand for it.

The same with quality of design. We should lead the fact that there are a lot of houses going to come, no matter what the numbers are and we want them to be well designed, quality designed, quality space, a Leeds standard and if you do not want to produce that, developers, get on your bike and go on to Doncaster and Barnsley but do not stay here. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: We now have Councillor Carlill who is giving a maiden speech.

COUNCILLOR CARLILL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I wish to speak on the Plans Panel Annual Report which shows how the important work of these panels delivers high quality outcomes for the people of Leeds and, through a number of large and important schemes, contributes to many priorities in Leeds's ambition to be the best city in the UK.

Among these priorities is that of 21st Century infrastructure – helping to deliver improved infrastructure for Leeds to support growth and improve connectivity, providing new homes, jobs and opportunities for businesses. An essential piece of new infrastructure to support the economic future of Leeds is Phase 2 of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme currently being reviewed by these panels.

This forward thinking and innovative scheme combines traditional engineering solutions with use of nature and the surrounding landscape to provide one in 200 year protection from floods, such as those seen across the region in 2015, including the planting of hundreds of thousands of trees as well as, in my ward, repeated the innovative movable weirs used elsewhere in the city and a new water storage area in Calverley capable of holding 3.5m cubic metres of water but also available to the community as a public wetland managed by a wildlife trust.

I was dismayed by the letter received by the Environmental Agency in July rejecting the Council's proposed flood defence scheme and only offering to fund a much lower cost scheme with a much lower reduced level of protection that would not have prevented the devastation caused by Storm Eva, even though the Chancellor and Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs at the time promised that Leeds would receive the funding to prevent a reoccurrence.

I would have liked to have welcomed decision-makers to join me, on the day after Boxing Day 2015, as myself and residents of our city and beyond joined the team led by Kirkstall ward Members and our sorely missed colleague Lucinda Yeadon as I was led down into the stench into the basement kitchen of the Sheesh Mahal restaurant

on Kirkstall Road which saw ten feet of sewage water in the basement, to clear out 15 kilogram bags of rice that had been expanded and bloated into huge piles by dirty flood water and sewage. It took days for teams of volunteers to clear the mess and over a year for the restaurant to re-open. Or, into the warehouse of Age UK where donations destined for their shops across Yorkshire to support their important work for elderly and vulnerable people in our communities were instead condemned, bagged up and sent to waste sites. These are the real costs of these floods - those are businesses that never returned, the jobs that were lost, those families whose lives were never the same again.

Last month a cross-party delegation from this Council went to meet the Flood Minister to once again put forward the argument for funding this all-important scheme for this city. I implore the Government to give the funding Leeds needs to protect its residents, to grow and to show their commitment to our part in the Northern Powerhouse. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR: Well done!

THE LORD MAYOR: I call on Councillor Dye and this is another maiden speech.

COUNCILLOR DYE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. What I would like to comment on is the vital role that our Plans Panels play when it comes to considering planning applications, but particularly applications for large things such as housing developments. One of the issues that the panels need to take account of when they are doing this is the level of infrastructure that will be required by those applications; so, for example, what the impact will be on the highways network, what the impact will be on providing GP services and dentists' surgeries and whether there are going to be enough school places.

It is school places that I want to comment on now. I want to think about the fact that we have to provide school places for all our children that are adequate for all the needs of the young people of Leeds. We as a Council have created about 12,000 additional primary school places and yet we are still facing pressures across the city. Unfortunately this pressure is compounded by the restrictions placed upon us. You will all be aware that as an Authority we cannot open and run new schools. That means that we are restricted to looking at where we can expand existing schools and sometimes this is in areas where there just is not room to expand.

An additional problem that we face is the lack of funding from Government for the provision of those places. The gap between what we are given and what it will cost to provide the number of places that we now need is estimated to be over £120m. We have repeatedly asked Government for proper funding but we are yet to see any improvements. The Government claims that their spend on education is the third highest in the world. Well, my own experience as a teacher is that on a daily basis cuts are impacting schools. Of course, the claims that the Government makes have been shattered by the UK Statistics Authority who have highlighted that the spend that the DfE so often quotes actually includes fees that are paid to private schools and university tuition fees. I think this is a disgraceful example of the Government deliberately and shamelessly misleading the public.

The Local Government Association is reporting that secondary schools are facing a crisis in the next five years and more than half the Local Authorities in England are unable to meet demand, with an estimated shortfall of 134,000 places. This is compounded by the fact that two-thirds of secondary schools are now academies and that means as Councils we have no authority to direct them to provide those required places.

I urge everybody in this Chamber to support the LGA's call for Local Authorities to be able to open new maintained schools and to have the power as well to direct academies to meet demand and then ensure that all Leeds children are able to access the education they deserve. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR: Well done.

THE LORD MAYOR: Now Councillor Brooks, with another maiden speech.

COUNCILLOR BROOKS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I have to say, as a new Member it has been wonderful to be on a Plans Panel going on site visits all over the city and learning about the planning process. I would like to wish Councillor Gruen a very speedy recovery and thank her for her kindness and patience with all of the new Members.

I welcome this annual report. I am glad to see it highlights a link between the Plans Panels' work and good health and wellbeing. In particular, delivering high quality homes in safe communities with access to green space where people can enjoy active lives. As an elected Member of a city ward I recognise how precious our green space is. Our constituents in Little London and Woodhouse are lucky to have Woodhouse Moor, which is the second most visited park in the city, with an estimated three million visitors a year – including me, as it is my local park.

It is crucial that any large developments across the city contribute to green space, which is beneficial to all residents' health and wellbeing. It is our ambition, as outlined in the Inclusive Growth Strategy, that Leeds will be the best city for health and wellbeing. Every part of the Council's work can contribute to that, including Plans Panel because housing has a massive impact on people's health and wellbeing. Shelter says adults who live in bad housing are more likely to report poor health than people who live in good housing, and are 26% more likely to report poor mental health. Further, adults above retirement age living in bad housing are a third more likely to report ill health than those living in good housing. Children in bad housing are 50% more likely to have sleep problems due to wheezing. Sleep deprivation affects all aspect of life but especially educational attainment. Bad housing impacts on our already stretched health services and affects everyone's ability to reach their full potential. The Plans Panel can help towards making Leeds the best city to grow old in. We want there to be a left shift, the Leeds Left Shift, towards more prevention and early intervention as well as more care to be delivered in the community and people supported to remain in their local communities for longer. Therefore it is important that every community in Leeds is a place where older people and people with disabilities can live comfortably.

I also look forward to seeing progress on extra care housing schemes such as those being developed in West Ardsley, Woodlesford, Adel and Seacroft. With the

projected increase in the older population these housing schemes will help older people stay active and live independent lives for longer.

All of these aims are achievable but they are only achievable with a Labour Council who believe in proper planning, proper funding of services and protecting our most vulnerable citizens from the effects of austerity. Imagine how much more we can achieve under a Labour Government. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Knight please, and this is a maiden speech.

COUNCILLOR KNIGHT: I am pleased to speak to you today on the Annual Plans Report for this year and in particular to share with you some of the work that is being done to promote development that takes into account the natural environment across the city.

Plans Panels help to deliver the Council's Best City Priorities and one of these is for Leeds to have a 21st Century infrastructure. An important element of this is to improve the natural environment and so it is essential that planning pays close attention to environmental factors when considering their applications.

One way that this is happening is through our work with Citu on the new Climate Innovation District, which is set to be the largest sustainable development anywhere in the UK. This scheme will deliver 530 low carbon homes that meet the highest environmental standards, alongside a variety of new, environmentally friendly manufacturing, leisure and office developments.

We are also working hard to promote home energy efficiency across the city and we have introduced the Leeds Standard for new Council house construction. The Leeds Standard puts greater emphasis on achieving levels of air-tightness and thermal insulation which will not only reduce energy consumption but also minimise running costs for tenants and address fuel poverty.

Planning also takes biodiversity seriously and makes sure that it considers the various wildlife in Leeds. For example, any developments that may affect a designated habitat of priority species must carry out a preliminary ecological assessment as part of their planning application. We also issue special guidance on how to provide new bat and roof nest features in new developments across the city.

As well as preserving space for the different flora and fauna in the city, Planning is also committed to creating green and communal space for our many residents so they can lead happy and healthy lives. By making sure we have enough green space available we can support the growth of new grass roots community initiatives, like one in my ward at Weetwood where residents are working towards creating a communal vegetable garden that promotes organic growing and healthy eating.

As we all know, Leeds is a thriving city but we want it to grow in a manner that takes the environment into account so that future generations can enjoy living, visiting and working here. The Plans Panels play a fundamental role in making this happen. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Andrew Carter, please.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. It would be churlish of me not to congratulate my new colleague on his maiden speech, if not his geography. The water retention area - always question officers. The water retention area he refers to from the paper that says Calverley is in fact in Horsforth ward. Originally it was, according to the officers, in Bradford. I pointed out to them it was in Leeds; they then went away and decided it was in Calverley. I then told them it was in Horsforth and told them they should brief the local ward Members and the residents who live adjacent, none of whom live in Calverley.

Apart from that, let me move on to what I think is a very serious issue. I would like some reassurance from Councillor Lewis and that is, I would like an assurance that administration Members of Plans Panels are not separately briefed, other than the Chair, on planning applications immediately before they come before a panel at meetings to which other Members from other parties of the Plans Panel are not invited. It is a crucial area and goes to the heart of probity in the planning process and the decision-making process and I would like an assurance on that from Councillor Lewis today.

Can I then briefly comment on Councillor Gruen's lifting of my comments of yesterday. I notice Councillor Nash is laughing as she was present (Councillor Lewis was not) on the issue of the safety measures put in by house builders in new developments. Councillor Gruen is quite right, and imitation is the most sincere form of flattery so thank you for introducing it today. He is right, as I was right yesterday. I was less than impressed with the half-hearted response we got from officers. I think it will fall to Members to ensure at Plans Panels that speculative builders put in place the best possible available locks on windows and doors in new properties and, to be frank, and I realise you, Councillor Lewis, are taking steps in this direction. I would ask you this: is it not possible for Plans Panels to be informed quarterly of those speculative house builders who have not put in the right quality of locks on windows and doors in new developments? It cannot be beyond the wit of man. I do not believe it contravenes any planning regulations and I am well aware that the fitting of locks falls under Building Regulations. I see no reason why we cannot have a list of those particular developers. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Barry Anderson.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Plans Panels – yes. I personally, I have said it before and I will say it again, we are leaving the public behind. They have not a clue when some of the debates are going on where some of the suggestions and where some of the views are coming from, because they put forward coherent arguments as to why applications have issues and they are at a stroke basically forgotten about. Let us not even bother discussing it; let us not even bother debating it.

We do need to start communicating back out to residents, explaining what the roles of Plans Panels actually are. I know that there is a speech that goes on at the beginning of every meeting that explains but people do not understand. They sit in the audience and a number of times after a meeting has finished they say, "What was all that about? What happened to this?" They do not actually understand what has been going on. They need explanations as to why certain things have been missed out. What is the

logic behind it? Why isn't a comment that they have looked into, got evidence on, being totally ignored in terms of taking things forward?

Residents are genuinely feeling disengaged and ignored in terms of the way that they are doing things. We have all been through the SAP and there is general disillusionment in a lot of communities at the way that they have put time and effort into it and it has counted for absolutely nothing. At the end of the day, despite good arguments, local communities have been ignored.

Councillor Dye was perfectly correct in what she said about infrastructure. If you come along to some of these Plans Panel meetings, I can assure you a lot of Members do not even mention the word "infrastructure", do not even care about infrastructure when we are passing housing out around.

COUNCILLOR: Rubbish.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: We do not question officers enough to make sure that adequate infrastructure is put in place when we are improving – I am all in favour of improving them, improving the applications, but we are not forcing officers to go back and ask for the necessary infrastructure before we actually take things forward. This happens time and time and time again in Plans Panels. We are not getting the infrastructure throughout the whole of the city – that is not just in any particular wards, that is throughout the city. If you just sit and see what is happening, it is not good enough in terms of what we are doing.

It says in the report that we are going to try and have safe and strong communities, we are going to have community innovation. As I have said, communities are losing a bit of faith. We have got neighbourhood plans that are coming along slowly.

What I would say is please, please, start communicating better with the public out there.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Anderson. (*Applause*)
Councillor Campbell.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Planning always used to be – or Plans Panels always used to be - the Cinderella subject within Council and I have often heard Labour Members say to their new intake, "Avoid it if you can because if the Whip says put you on a Plans Panel, try and get out of that one". I am impressed – I am impressed – that attitudes within the new intake have changed so dramatically. We have got no less than five new Members of Council who have chosen Planning as a subject to make their maiden speech on.

COUNCILLOR WALSHAW: Sensible people, evidently.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: That warms the cockles of my heart and some of the old anoraks among us who sit on Planning to know that there is that much enthusiasm for Planning nowadays within particularly the Labour Group. I initially put it down to the training that we are giving them. I am not actually sure it really is the

training because looking at the subjects they raise, I suppose they have been trained in that they have used an opportunity to have a go at the Government in particular for not funding flooding or education or the poor quality of the existing housing or the poor infrastructure and environment, and all power to your elbow because it is a point you should be raising.

It is also useful that you have been so fulsome in your comments relating to a report actually which relates to a year when you were not on the Council.

Having said that, can I touch upon an important element within this report and that is the fact that in the year in question the Plans Panels between themselves gave out planning permission for 45,000 houses – 45,000 houses. Actually if you use this year's figures it is a much higher figure but I ask the question, where are they? Where are those 45,000 houses?

If you look at a City Plans Panel, a housing application in the city centre we reckon now requires seven planning applications, so developers come forward on at least seven occasions – you are saying no, is it five? Certainly it is a significant number of planning applications, so I echo part of what Councillor Gruen said. There is an element of land banking within this city and there is an element where developers are letting down the people of this city and they are letting down the city as a whole because they are applying for planning permission, increasing the book value of their land, increasing the value of their company but they are not providing houses for people in Leeds to live in. I think if there is anything to be taken away from this report it is the fact that the Council should have powers to compel.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Campbell. (*Applause*)
Councillor Leadley.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, this report is on the work of four panels rather than three as it covers Development Plans Panel. Without doubt the historic event of 2017/18 was Leeds giving way on housing targets on 29th September last year, almost on the eve of the Site Allocations Plan Inquiry, after some work had begun towards reducing the numbers earlier that summer.

It is important to get the housing targets within a reasonable range. It is not a matter of arguing about how many angels can dance on the point of a pin or dogs returning to their own vomit, as Councillor Richard Lewis once claimed. Leeds spent millions of pounds and countless officer hours on large green field planning appeals which it began to lose in 2009 because of the high targets. It did not begin to win any until earlier this year, a few months after the clearly signalled change of direction in September 2017.

Appeal Inspectors in theory are still working to the old numbers but they must be influenced by the forthcoming reductions. At the Dunningley appeal at the turn of the year we made sure that the Inspector knew about them, even though the City Council made clear that they were not part of its case. A green field housing appeal virtually for 1,100 houses was dismissed, despite everyone agreeing that Leeds did not have a five year land supply based on the old numbers. It would have been unthinkable a year earlier.

Planning works on an assumption that land take for housing always advances. Reducing land take sets an unusual problem as it means turning against a ratchet rather than with it. Officers devised a cunning plan in which the excess would be shunted temporarily on to broad locations in green belt which would be reconfirmed as continuing green belt once the numbers had been reined back. Doubt was cast on the propriety of that but it was worth a try and there did not seem to be any clear precedent which might be followed to escape from the Leeds housing numbers mire.

What the Site Allocations Plan Inspectors have done is rule out the broad locations but reduced land take by proposing to allocate enough land to tide things over until 2023, by which time the new numbers should be in place and a proper review should have been done to match land take numbers to new numbers and carry us forward until 2033.

This mechanism is the same as the one I put forward in 2015. I said that enough land should be allocated to get to 2020 on the old numbers, by which time the targets should have been reduced, so limiting any green belt inroads needed to get to 2028. The SAP Inspector's mechanism is exactly the same as mine; only the dates are different because of slippage since 2015. We could have been where we are now a lot earlier.

My Lord Mayor, it is important to get the numbers right to avoid throwing endless amounts of money and officer time into propping up the impossible and let us concentrate on bettering the quality of life in our city rather than trying to outgrow Birmingham, which seems to be the driving force behind some of the most influential figures in this field a few years ago. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lamb.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, planning is difficult. It is highly subjective and often controversial. For that reason especially we need to make sure the public can have confidence in the process, particularly and especially when they do not like the outcome.

Increasingly on this side of the Chamber we are concerned that public confidence in the planning process is being eroded precisely because it is not being applied equally. In recent times I have seen different applications – some refused where accessibility, for example, was said to be essential and a vital policy that had to be met at all costs, and other occasions where accessibility could be treated flexibly and it was not that important and we could kind of brush it aside. When the same people, the same members of the public have sat through and seen the same arguments presented to achieve different outcomes by officers, is it any wonder that they start to lose confidence in the process?

In all of the communities that we represent people have been working very hard to produce Neighbourhood Plans. Similarly, they are concerned that they are coming to hear applications in their areas that have little regard given to the Neighbourhood Plans they have put so much time and effort into, and they go away asking, well, what was the point? If we have gone to all of this trouble, we have been to referendum, we have

consulted and then when the actual tests are applied they are given little weight. Something needs to be done about that.

I would echo the comments Councillor Carter made earlier. It is vital that panel Members behave properly and I would reiterate that we need to hear the assurance from Councillor Lewis today that no Members are getting private briefings immediately prior to panels other than the Chair of the panel. It is crucial we have that reassurance, it is crucial that we retain confidence in the planning process, otherwise increasingly we are going to find ourselves faced with call-ins to the Secretary of State at judicial reviews by local residents' groups. That is not helping anybody, it does not help to deliver the homes that we need across the city and it does not help to inspire confidence in our planning process. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cohen, please.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am going to confess, my Lord Mayor, when I saw this report I looked at the date and I was very much confused because while the Plans Panel Report was 2017/18, the picture of Councillor Lewis on the inside is certainly not so recent. I think there is some poetic licence that the Executive Member is taking there (*laughter*) misrepresenting...

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: Bit of vanity, Dan!

COUNCILLOR COHEN: If we cannot get that right! My Lord Mayor, on page 4 of this report there is a figure that tells us that four decisions contrary to officer recommendations – just 3.3% of the total number of panel decisions – went against what officers were saying. In other words, on only four occasions - and I will take a wild guess that most of those were the recommendation is to grant permission and the panel on only four occasions has overruled that.

I think, my Lord Mayor, that we are not subjecting matters at panel to sufficient rigorous challenge. Matters have gone to panel very often because local ward Members from right across the Chamber have sent it there because they and local residents have a genuine concern. If it is not rooted in a planning issue it does not actually very often get there but when it is there, I have seen too often not sufficient – insufficient – rigorous challenge given. It seems to me very often the officers have said it is OK and it goes through. That for me cannot be right.

Alwoodley has a Neighbourhood Plan. I have seen at recent Plans Panels where the Neighbourhood Plan was on all fours with an application, Members say “Oh well, this is an issue that currently exists anyway in the ward.” Yes it does but that is why there is now a new Neighbourhood Plan in an effort to change that and I think that as these Neighbourhood Plans, wherever they are, as we get more used to them as planning Members – and I too am a planning Member – as we get more used to them we will be better able to give more effect to what local residents are concerned about.

We say at page 3 of this report, “Community involvement in the planning process” and, Lord Mayor, that is exactly what Neighbourhood Plans seek to do and we, Lord Mayor, should be absolutely trying to give effect to that. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Buckley.

COUNCILLOR BUCKLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am not on a Plans Panel but a matter was drawn to my attention recently which interested me. It was actually – and I have it here – the Minutes of a Joint Plans Panel from 26th July. This mentions that because of the so-called GDPR regulations, members of the public can no longer see objections or comments on the public portal.

This has caused a little bit of consternation, particularly in Neighbourhood Planning circles, a little bit as Councillor Lamb just said, and Councillor Cohen. It says here that this has been evidenced by the problems at Basildon Council, for example. We are not Basildon, are we? Basildon is a small town. A city, a big city like Leeds should be able to do a little bit better than that.

Would not Councillor Lewis in this particular case agree that some kind of simple form of words explaining that this is a public document would suffice and that any information put on there goes into the public domain and, come to that, that any obviously vexatious comment could be taken out fairly simply.

Surely neighbours deserve to know what others think about proposed developments. Decisions need to be seen to be taken fairly and openly and this is all about, surely, localism and transparency. What about Parish Councils, as some of my colleagues have said, and what about these Neighbourhood Plans? People need to see local opinion with their own eyes, otherwise people will think there is some kind of secret process in train and what is the point of allowing them to think that?

Then speaking specifically about Neighbourhood Plans, as Councillor Cohen recently referred, Alwoodley now has its own plan – months and years of work by a volunteer group, a 92% acceptance rate on the referendum, but at the first test one of its major planks in there, which was to say we oppose the demolition of family homes and their replacement with blocks of flats, was simply effectively ignored.

Councillor Walshaw referred to that particular aspect of it but like my colleagues I would just like to ask those concerned with these matters that Neighbourhood Plans – what is the point in having a plan with a specific requirement like that, and people are genuinely concerned about the effect on the local community of this because whatever you say, a nice, large family home built 80 years ago is a different thing in the community to what is essentially a quite anonymous and transitory block of flats and so forth.

I would just ask that some kind of clarification is urgently brought, please, to explain what weight a Neighbourhood Plan must have. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Stephenson.

COUNCILLOR STEPHENSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. In the past few months I have had the pleasure to substitute on City Centre Plans Panel under the expert stewardship, if I may say, of Councillor McKenna, and I am afraid that is where my pleasant comments on this report will end.

I note in the report comments made about Section 106 in there and also on Development Plans Panel and I want to make two comments on that.

In the Harewood ward my colleague Councillor Robinson found out the other day that of all the Section 106 moneys committed in the Harewood ward, £355,000 is left to be spent and £688,000 is yet to even be collected by the Council, so we would like some assurance, please, that that money will be collected and come into the Council's coffers so we can start to enact some of those projects.

In terms of the Development Plans Panel and the dreaded Site Allocations Plan which we have all been through, I learned this week that the Council has now submitted its draft main modifications list to the Inspectors. Many community groups in our area are now asking why can't they see it, so perhaps by way of reply Councillor Lewis could commit to make that public because when you try to keep stuff under the radar people naturally get suspicious about what is being proposed.

I would also like to just extend on some comments made by Councillor Anderson earlier, because Councillor Anderson was right that when we go to Plans Panel or Site Allocations Plans or inquiries, there are normally a huge number of people that come to those, residents from the areas. They are motivated enough to come down to the Civic Hall and listen and take part in that debate, and for many it is correct that following what is happening is very difficult and having access to all the information that is there is very difficult, but we should not forget either that there are people who lead action groups in our area. We have many which have been abbreviated. We have the Save Parlington Action Group, in Wetherby there is Thorp Arch Action Group. Councillor Lamb looks on with surprise when the Spofforth Hill Action Group started up – and you can work out what the abbreviation for that was.

The point there is, these people who are leading these organisations, they are not experts in planning. Some of them are gas fitters, engineers, working mums – they spend hours trawling over policy and some of them actually become better experts in planning than some of our Councillors in this Chamber. I think that it is right that when we talk about Plans Panels we do pay reference to those people who have given up their own time - some thought they had already retired and have come back to lead their action groups, to work hard with us on behalf of their communities to get the right outcome for their local areas. I think it is right that we put that on record, Lord Mayor. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Now we have a maiden speech from Councillor Shemilt.

COUNCILLOR SHEMILT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It has certainly been an interesting year for me as a new Councillor and Member of a Plans Panel, in particular with regard to those Plans Panels but for a variety of reasons and, indeed, planning policy more generally, so the annual report that has been presented provides a further insight.

Today I would like to highlight two housing matters in Horsforth ward – one an example of how the planning system can deliver what is needed for an area, and the other an example of how things can potentially go wrong. I will start with the latter.

We know new housing is an emotive issue and can cause angst in our communities as people worry about major housing developments and the often ill-thought out impact on creaking infrastructure, schools and services.

A recent example of this of which you may be aware is the so-called Strawberry Picking Field site, reference HG241, which was slipped into the SAP process after initial consultations and presented a threat of up to 777 new houses based on out-of-date statistics. The site is, of course, a green belt site and so we were elated to hear only last month from the SAP Planning Inspector that she had seen fit to blow it a raspberry as a broad location. To many of us who campaigned against that site that news was hugely significant and proved that we had been right to fight the proposals from the outset.

It is notable since the Inspector's post-hearing notes that the administration have been claiming they have been trying to protect the green belt all along. Were it not for the Government consultation, planning for the right homes in the right places, all of the sites that became known as broad locations would have been allocated and would at some point have been built on.

Turning to the other development to which I referred initially, it is, of course, vital to develop homes in the right places and on the right sites, and in the Plans Panel Annual Report there is reference to the land at the former St Joseph's Convalescent Home in Horsforth. This is an example of how planning can work for the better. There is a good mix of affordable provision on this site which will enable people to access the housing ladder and own their own homes. It is also pleasing to see that the design elements of the scheme reflect the characteristics of the conservation area and it is also an example of delivering new homes on brown field sites – a priority that I think we all agree on.

In Horsforth my ward colleagues and I are determined to protect the green belt but we also welcome new homes delivered in the right place that will benefit the local community and meet local needs. This scheme clearly does that and we would welcome more of them in the right location. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis, please.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I notice that two of our Tory colleagues were pushing for assurances. I do get frustrated when Members pop up with these kind of dark hints about dirty goings on in the administration without providing us with any examples of what is happening. All these meetings – I do not know if any meetings have been taking place. My colleagues have all shrugged their shoulders at me, so I am not going to make assurances about something that has not happened.

What I will do is, I will have a conversation with the Chief Officer about what you said and I will come back to you in due course, but please do not try and do your usual style of ambushing in Council meetings, because really it does not wash with this side.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: When you don't know what you are doing.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Andrew, if you told me what you think is happening I could clearly get back to you in an appropriate way but as you restrict yourself to these mutterings and hints I cannot really do that.

Councillor Shemilt, thank you for your maiden speech. Do not listen to Councillor Carter's version of history – it is not true. He is very assiduous at putting it into the local press but it does not make it any more accurate than if it were not printed.

Ryan Stephenson, I do not know about your Section 106 moneys. I shall clearly look at that. I do not carry that information round with me and I shall take advice from the Legal Officers on making modifications.

I forgive Councillor Cohen clearly for being rude about me – that picture was only three years old! (*laughter*)

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Three years – good God!

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Yes, three years! Bernard Atha was the person who always used photos that were probably from the 60s and I think we are both being polite when we say that!

On more serious matters, I think there was a wide range of comments. If I can pick up on the issue of quality and the hard work of the panels, I think that is really important, particularly when mention is made of Quarry Hill and Leeds City College. Can I say that Leeds City College is on Quarry Hill, it is not in some fictional location called SOYO, so Quarry Hill sticks with us.

I will just make a few comments about Oliver Letwin. Let us remember that Oliver Letwin is the man who said we should not have any planning regulations in this country and look at quite where we are on that one.

Many useful comments across the piece. Neighbourhood Plans – people are suggesting that there is not a confidence. I was here for a conference on neighbourhood planning only a couple of weeks ago on a Friday, I think we had about 100 people in here from across the country who clearly look at what Leeds is doing on neighbourhood planning as being absolutely fantastic and many more people from within the city who actually want to have their own plans, so look at what is happening rather than what you think is happening. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: We will now take a vote on the Plans Panel Annual Report. (*A vote was taken*) That is CARRIED.

ITEM 10 – QUESTIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: We now go on to Item 10, which is Questions. We have 30 minutes for questions. First, Councillor Buckley.

COUNCILLOR BUCKLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Does the Executive Member for Regeneration, Transport and Planning believe that public consultation should play an important role in the development of proposals for the A61 Harrogate Road through Alwoodley, to which over 2,200 people have signalled their opposition by signing a petition against the plans?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The Connecting Leeds plans to transform the bus network were developed following the Leeds Transport Conversation in 2016 when 78% of the 8,000-plus respondents to the city-wide consultation exercise indicated that they wanted to see more people travel into the city centre by public transport and, indeed, some 56% of respondents indicated that they supported giving public transport priority over cars on main routes into the city centre.

This work and subsequent work has informed the ongoing development of scheme packages to realise the ambition of transforming the quality and levels of use for our bus services.

Initial draft proposals for the A61 corridor north of the ring road were shared as part of the wider consultation exercise for five major routes in the city. Two of the schemes involved proposals for bus lanes along sections of the A61 Harrogate Road through Alwoodley and were prepared to address identified issues for buses using this route at peak times as part of a wider contribution to developing improvements along the route into the city.

The consultation plays an important part in the process of developing schemes and seeking public feedback. In total 601 people have responded to the formal consultation and during the public events. Officers are now reviewing all the comments that have been made from the several engagements that have taken place for a number of proposals across the city in order that further decisions can be made in terms of scheme options which can contribute to the achievement of the wider desire for a better public transport network.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Buckley, do you have a supplementary?

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: I have not got there yet, Lord Mayor, can I finish off, Lord Mayor? Can I apologise.

THE LORD MAYOR: I thought you had done.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: The petition that has been received – this is the bit he was waiting for – will, of course, be taken into account as part of this process along with the many detailed comments and it is essential that this happens. It is important that we weigh up properly all the issues arising from our public transport programmes, including the impact both positive and negative on local communities alongside the wide benefits for mobility and travel choice within the city. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Now do you have a supplementary?

COUNCILLOR BUCKLEY: Well, I would like to thank Councillor Lewis for that brief response! Does he therefore give his personal guarantee that, given that 2,200 - now actually 2,300 people – have signalled their complete opposition, local residents' complete opposition to these two sections of south-bound and north-bound bus lanes taking away standard traffic lanes, that because of that situation and because literally a handful of people said they were in favour, 2,300 against, will he give a guarantee that this plan will be abandoned and that completely different plans will be brought forward?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I was having a look at the petition only today and I was amazed at how many people were signing it from Tel Aviv and from New York and all sorts of places (*laughter*). Absolutely. However, there may be justification for that. I certainly saw one person who I have met on a number of occasions who is currently in Saratoga Bay in New York and I do know he is a proper resident of the area.

I do think we need to consider all the evidence that we have got on both sides. I do have concerns when I see on Facebook certain Tory activists winding up people across the city to register their opposition to this particular scheme because I think that is – it has happened, that is people trying to distort something. I do believe that the views of people who are really affected by any scheme should be taken into full consideration. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Campbell.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Given this year's repeated failure of the brown bin collection routes in Otley and Yeadon ward, would the Executive Member investigate the failures with a view to preventing their repetition next year?

THE LORD MAYOR: Colin, we could not hear that. Could you probably get nearer your mic or speak up?

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Sorry, Lord Mayor, I cannot hear you.

THE LORD MAYOR: We could not hear what you were saying. Could you possibly repeat, getting nearer the microphone.

COUNCILLOR: We did not hear that.

THE LORD MAYOR: With the greatest respect, Lord Mayor, you are very faint yourself (*interruption*) but perfectly formed! I am not holding that against you, it is all right, Lord Mayor. I will read it again for the benefit of those Members on the other side who cannot read. (*laughter*) Given this year's repeated failure of the brown bin collection routes in Otley and Yeadon ward, would the Executive Member investigate the failures with a view to preventing there [*sic*] (and for Councillor Nash's benefit that is mis-spelt, it should their") repetition next year?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Rafique.

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, this year there was a period of disruption to this service across the city due to a combination of extreme weather events and a wet and warm period of weather, resulting in large quantities of vegetation being presented for collection.

There are 6,500 residential properties in the Otley and Yeadon ward that currently receive this free service which equates to 117,000 scheduled collections in the ward which the service re-started in March this year. During that period we have recorded 170 missed bin complaints or contacts from customers, bearing in mind some of those are from the same street. In a ward that provides some challenges to the service in the form of hard-to-reach properties and narrow streets with parking and access issues, this is a very low figure. Where there have been street collections missed on the scheduled day of collection, most streets were visited within the 48 hours of service commitment. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Do you have a supplementary, Councillor Campbell?

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Yes, Lord Mayor. I would have settled for a “yes”. Can you therefore explain why, when members of the public and Councillors request of Council officers a reason for the failed collection – and I will use one particular route, or one particular road which goes by the interesting name of Football – where during this year there have only been two collections of the brown bin. Could you actually explain to me why as a Member you have got a very good response there from officers, why they are unable to provide any Member with a rational reason why these routes have been missed?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Rafique.

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: Can I just first of all say this, that Leeds continues to be one of the minority of Councils who provide a free garden waste collection service for our residents. In fact, two-thirds of Local Authorities across the country charge for this service and in addition to that we have actually been rolling out the garden waste collections across our city.

I find it hard to believe that streets have only had two collections since March until now. If you have obviously any particular issues I am more than happy to look into it. Those colleagues across the Chamber who have actually written to me will know that I usually respond to their complaints within hours if not minutes, so I am pretty happy to do that. Can I just reiterate that the excellent job our crew do, given some really difficult issues faced in terms of access, narrow streets, sometimes vehicle breakdowns as well bearing in mind we have got an ageing fleet and something we are looking to replace next year as well. If you have got any specific examples or streets, I am happy to look at that. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I know this is a difficult question so I will speak slowly. In welcoming the major boost the Channel 4 announcement brings to the city of Leeds, please could the Leader of Council update Members on what it will mean for the creative sector in the city, including the impact on jobs and opportunities for young people? (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blake, please.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: I think you can do better than that. Let us really welcome Channel 4 into Leeds. (*Applause*) Thank you. Honestly, it is hard to believe it is actually only two weeks ago today that we got the really momentous decision from Channel 4 that Leeds has been chosen for the national HQ along with London.

I think it is fair to say it is a massive endorsement for the city and the reaction that we have had has been absolutely phenomenal, particularly when you think back to the origins of the bidding process where we were up against every major city outside of London. As Lord Mayor of you know, we came down on to the shortlist for Manchester, Birmingham and Leeds and I think Manchester and Birmingham actually got to a position where they were absolutely convinced it was going to be themselves or the other. It was just a phenomenal result for us when the announcement was actually made.

What I think has really taken us by surprise in a way is just how this has reached every part of every community across the city and beyond. It is not just the communities of Leeds. The real strength of the bid to Channel 4 from Leeds City Region has been the support from the other Local Authorities and particularly Bradford and York who have done an incredible job to really convince such a prestigious media broadcaster that Leeds City Region is the future and is the place to locate.

I think the really exciting part of the bid is how we really galvanised the support from our creative and independent sector; so the support of Screen Yorkshire, independents like True North and all of the creative industries through the All in Leeds Initiative has been really phenomenal.

I think you really go to the point of the issue. The really exciting part of the bid is the opportunities that this is going to bring to our young people across communities and it is really down to all of us to make sure – we have one of the youngest profiles in the country when you look at the whole of the City Region. It is down to us to really work now to make sure that young people growing up across our area are able to take advantage of all the opportunities that the development will bring.

It is building on what we already have – and I think that is what Channel 4 recognised, that they were really coming to an area that is a leader in this field and the fact that we already have almost 53,000 people in the creative industries sector with an annual turnover across Yorkshire of £242m. The sector here is growing at a faster rate than anywhere else in the country.

The immediate provision, Channel 4 are moving 300 jobs from their London operation out to the nations and regions and 250 of those jobs are going to be in Leeds. What Channel 4 does that is so different is that it is a commissioning model and it

anticipates that by 2023 the amount it spends on shows outside of London will rise by over £250m and we believe that will support over 3,000 production jobs.

Early estimates are of an additional impact of £1.2bn to the Leeds City Region economy over the next ten years, so let us really grasp this opportunity, continuing to work with our partners and reflect that since the announcement has been made, three different organisations in the TV and film sector have announced moves to Leeds in the last week alone. This is the impact. *(Applause)*

One of the really important aspects is that Leeds is going to be a co-anchor for the national News every night on Channel 4. This is so important. We talk so often in here about how the north is not heard. To have northern voices speaking on national television every night based from our place in Leeds and in Yorkshire is a phenomenal opportunity. We are anticipating that more businesses from a range of different sectors really responding to the confidence that Channel 4 has given us and to really go further forward in their bids to move out of London and to relocate to cities like Leeds.

We are at the forefront of Government departments moving out of London and we will do everything we can to maximise other businesses moving here.

I believe this is a game changing moment for our city. A real sense of pride in everything that we do and I would like to pay tribute to the many, many people and all of our partners who have made this possible. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield, I have to ask.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Yes, Lord Mayor. I did not hear all of that. I wonder if she could repeat it! *(laughter)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Leadley.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, what steps have been taken to protect from demolition or other harm City Council buildings identifiable as non-designated heritage assets before they are sold to others?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The National Planning Policy Framework says that local planning authorities may identify Non-Designated Heritage Assets (NDHAs) which are defined as buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas or landscapes identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions but which are not formally designated heritage assets, such as listed buildings.

Most NDHAs do not meet the high threshold of listing, but it is possible that an asset that is first identified as an NDHA is subsequently designated as a listed building. The NDHA designation does not in itself provide the building with any further protection from demolition. Subject to prior approval, which only takes into account the means for demolition and making good the site after demolition, demolition of an

NDHA is permitted development. However, the Council recognises the importance in terms of properly considering, where appropriate, protecting NDHAs.

However, the most important aspect is to understand which buildings are worthy of designation as an NDHA and there is the potential for Councillors to identify some NDHAs as locally listed. Whilst this is not something that Leeds has done to date, in part due to the associated resource implications, a pilot is being run in the Mabgate area. Subject to the outcome of this process a decision will then need to be taken about the potential and extent to which this could be rolled out either city-wide or to other geographic areas.

However, in the absence of local listing the Council has endorsed local communities who wish to identify NDHAs in Neighbourhood Plans as long as they include the criteria for selection and the commitment for regular review.

As the Council vacates buildings it is important that a view is taken about whether they could be deemed to be an NDHA. This is determined through joint working between Strategic Asset Management and Conservation as part of the process of exploring future use options or disposal if the Council does not have any requirement for the building in the future. Equally, robust procedures are now in place to ensure that ward Members are consulted prior to decisions being made around any demolition works commencing.

Where the Council chooses to dispose of a building which is designated as an NDHA there is the potential to include covenants on the title to provide an extra layer of protection to the building, with the Council only agreeing to the removal of the covenant should these prevent the delivery of a sustainable refurbishment or redevelopment scheme.

However, this will have implications on the value achievable and is reliant on future owners proactively contacting the Council because they want to make changes to the building, as the Council does not have resources to continually monitor the properties it has sold. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Leadley, do you have a supplementary?

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: Is the Executive Board Member aware that last year we had a problem along those lines in Gildersome and that the Director of City Development eventually conceded that mistakes had been made and agreed to take steps to clarify and co-ordinate procedures within the Directorate? I do not think the microphone came on but did anybody hear it? Did everybody hear the question? No. It is a supplementary one so I had better start again then.

Is the Executive Board Member aware that last year we had a problem along those lines in Gildersome and that the Director of City Development eventually conceded that mistakes had been made and agreed to take steps to clarify and co-ordinate procedures within the Directorate?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Yes, Councillor Leadley, I have been provided with the full content of Martin Farrington's reply on that. Clearly there were mistakes made. I think we just have to, as he said, tighten up the procedures to make sure that those do not happen again but I am sure you will agree with me that what I said earlier is good news in terms of our future procedures and our ability to do more in this area than we have in the past.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hamilton.

COUNCILLOR S HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Member for Communities please provide an update on affordable housing and schemes in place for this?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Coupar.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I welcome the opportunity to respond to the request for information on our plans for delivering more affordable homes in Leeds.

It is a good time to reflect on the progress we have made to date but we are now moving into a period when Councils like Leeds can once again look to meet their aspirations to deliver a large scale housing programme across the city that fully supports our Best Council Plans and our commitment to inclusive growth.

Firstly, delivery to date. Despite the Government-imposed cap on borrowing within the HRA (the Housing Revenue Account) that has been in place in recent years, and the impact this has had on Councils' ability to build around the country, Leeds has successfully delivered a large scale programme of approaching 1,000 high quality affordable homes for rent in the last few years through a variety of funding programmes and delivery approaches. We have shown how we can use our land and property assets to help to regenerate areas and taken opportunities to secure additional funding available through Government programmes like PFI, grants from Homes England, and ensure that we recycle and use receipts generated by the stock we continue to lose under the Right to Buy.

We have shown our ability to meet a wide range of housing needs across the city with many homes being allocated to local people under local lettings policies. The homes are of an extremely high standard and the high specification we have developed ensures that tenants will not fall into fuel poverty.

I want to talk about some of the homes we have developed for families and couples and over 55s. In the General Needs area 388 homes were delivered across ten development sites via the Housing PFI Scheme at Little London, Beeston Hill and Holbeck over three-and-a-half years with the new homes completed by 2017.

This contract also enabled us to support a large scale training and apprenticeship programme and employ a significant number of local contractors and sub-contractors, ensuring support for the Leeds economy. 58 further homes have been delivered through a number of schemes across the city including Railway Close, Cross Green, Cardigan

Green and Bramley the Plantation, Swarcliffe, the Squinting Cat. The majority have been hard to develop sites and supported regeneration activity in those communities.

Our most recent scheme is a partnership delivering three sites in Beeston, Bramley and Whinmoor with Kier Construction. 58 homes have already been completed and the remaining 13 homes will be completed by the end of this month.

The Empty Homes Programme. We have also been able to provide 129 homes through our delivery of the £11m Empty Homes Programme, which has been recognised by Homes England for its success in acquiring problem or long-term empty properties and converting other buildings, like former housing offices and community centres, into much-needed homes. Over 25 wards have benefited from this additional capacity and we look to repeat this approach to support our aspirations to bring more affordable housing to Leeds.

This programme acquired and brought back into use a range of property types that had been empty for six months or longer, including one, two and three bedroom flats, bungalows and houses – mainly properties sold through the Right to Buy areas where the Council already owns and manages stock. The programme also converted former housing offices, community centres and former school caretaker properties which had been left empty for some time into new homes. It targeted acquisitions in regeneration areas such as the recreations in Holbeck and also acquired and refurbished a former Leeds Bradford Airport property at Victoria Avenue in Yeadon which had been derelict for over 20 years and was jointly owned by a number of Local Authorities.

We also acquired properties through CPO on Lea Farms in Kirkstall and in Chapeltown. These are currently being refurbished.

As well as increasing Council housing stock, this programme has also had a wider impact on the Council's strategic aim to reduce the number of long-term empty properties across the city. Properties included in the scheme have been empty on average for 578 days at the point of purchase. Transfer furthermore records show that 960 of the 1,257 properties we approached are no longer empty, demonstrating far-reaching impact beyond the 129 units.

To touch on extra care housing for older people, the Council's first flagship extra care development for older people was completed in December 2016 at Wharfedale View in Yeadon. The development replaced the outdated Haworth Court Sheltered Housing Scheme which was made up of apartments and bedsit accommodation. The scheme, which consists of 45 self-contained extra care apartments and associated facilities, won the Local Authority Building Controls 2017 Inclusive Design Award.

The scheme consists of one and two bedroom apartments and includes a range of communal facilities and outdoor spaces. The development provides older people with contemporary, spacious, state of the art living accommodation with the confidence of care and support when needed.

It was developed in accordance with the Leeds model of extra care housing with a high specification of rooms and flexibility of multi-use communal areas. The scheme is well positioned to adapt to the changing needs and demands of future generations.

The Council secured funding from the Care and Specialist Supported Housing Fund grant from the DCLG to support this development. The scheme was delivered as a mixed tenure scheme, with ten homes provided on a shared ownership basis and the scheme is managed by Housing Leeds.

Affordable housing through our partners. The Council recognises that we cannot achieve all our affordable housing requirements on our own and has supported registered housing providers and developers to provide a range of affordable rented and mixed-tenure homes. Affordable housing providers continue to identify new sites to fulfil the current and new funding programmes, an overview of which I am just going to provide you with.

Some larger providers are exploring opportunities to enter in a strategic partnership with Homes England to access grant funding, which could potentially increase delivery by an additional 20% over and above current business plans. In order to support the delivery of new supply affordable housing through registered providers, a Kier account management approach was put in place from June 2017, with the focus on being to provide support required to progress delivery at pace and unblock any matters quickly. Feedback from providers has been really positive on this approach and they have welcomed the work the Council has done in this area.

We have committed £18m of its Right to Buy receipts funding since 2015 to support the delivery of 474 new affordable housing units through registered providers and third sector schemes. I hope you are taking all this in!

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Are there examinations at the end of it?

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: I have forgotten what the question was.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: 250 starts on sites have been achieved to date. Another recent example of our collaborative working has enabled the development of affordable extra housing to proceed at the former Cookridge Hospital.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: She can still ask a supplementary!

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: This has enabled delivery of 50 new homes which had been stalled for five years and has now recently started on site.

I am prepared to email Members the remaining information I have got here as I see the red light, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hamilton, I have to ask you, do you have a supplementary?

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Please ask a supplementary!

COUNCILLOR S HAMILTON: Changed my mind, Lord Mayor!

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Right. We have reached the end of Questions – or should I say we have reached the end of Answers. Any questions that are unasked will receive a written answer.

PROCEDURAL MOTION TO EXTEND SPEAKING TIME
ON ITEM 11 THE MINUTES

THE LORD MAYOR: We do have a Procedural Motion so I will call upon Councillor Dowson.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would just like to move in terms of the Notice.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cohen.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: So to vote on that Procedural Motion. (*A vote was taken*) That is CARRIED.

ANNOUNCEMENT BY THE LORD MAYOR

THE LORD MAYOR: First of all in a few moments we will break for “tea” and today that will be tea and some biscuits, as you know, because we had the meal at midday, and we will break for 15 minutes, which we can regard as a comfort break with a cup of tea.

Prior to that, I do have an announcement to make. This is the last Council meeting that Jill Mason, the verbatim recorder, will be attending before she retires. Jill has taken the verbatim for full Council meetings in Leeds for over 12 years and in that time she has attended almost 100 meetings and, believe it or not, somebody has recorded she has written almost four million words.

I am just going to go down now and on behalf of the Council present Jill with a civic gift.

(Presentation by the Lord Mayor and standing ovation)

(Short break)

ITEM 11 – MINUTES OF THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD AND THE
EXECUTIVE BOARD

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now moving to Item 11, Minutes of the Health and Wellbeing Board, and to receive comments on the Minutes of the Executive Board as there are no Health and Wellbeing Board Minutes at this meeting. Councillor Blake.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dowson.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: Second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you.

Executive Board

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, we now consider comments on the Executive Board Minutes for a period of 45 minutes, including the summing up time for the relevant Executive Members and the Leader of Council. Councillor Garner. This, by the way, is a maiden speech.

(i) Communities

COUNCILLOR GARNER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak on Minute 53 of the Executive Board meeting in September, the report of Street Support in our city centre.

This is a step change in how we as a city support street users and deal with the problems associated with street use through the new Safer Leeds Street Support Team. We have not seen a significant increase in those on the streets in Leeds and comparable cities, but we are not letting that stop us from being groundbreaking in our plan to give immediate as well as lasting support to people on our streets.

We have a vision for Leeds to be a healthy and caring city for all ages and it is quite rightly agreed across the Council and the NHS in Leeds that we have to concentrate on becoming a city where the poorest improve their health the fastest. We cannot do that without tackling street use.

The Council and partners continue to offer emergency and longer term supported accommodation to those in need and there is always sufficient availability should any rough sleeper wish to take up that offer. However, the needs of the person we are trying to get off the streets must also be taken into account.

In light of the often complex and varied needs of street users I particularly welcome – Councillor Carter mentioned this earlier – the multi-disciplinary approach in the Street Support Team now being set up, including nurses, social workers, mental health workers, substance misuse workers and others to help tackle the problems which can be linked to sleeping on the streets, including the vital issue of mental and physical health problems - problems that the Council, local NHS services and West Yorkshire Police must deal with whilst facing significant budget pressures by this Government.

Working in our NHS as a pharmacist I was pleased to see that the healthcare needs of street users have been built into this service with plans for street medicine, bringing healthcare workers and services directly to people on the streets and building up the great work done by York Street Health Centre for street users and other vulnerable people in our city. Through this we can help those on the streets in Leeds

engage with and, more importantly, maintain access to the kind of services provided by the Council and the NHS. We cannot do this alone and I also welcome the linked Big Change Campaign mentioned by Councillors Lennox and Iqbal before, in changing the way people think of and support people in our streets in the city. It is only through partnership working such as this between public and private organisations in Leeds and the people of Leeds that we can fulfil our shared ambition to be the best city in the UK. Thank you. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR: Well done!

THE LORD MAYOR: Now Councillor Shahzad, with another maiden speech.

COUNCILLOR SHAHZAD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on Minute 54 page 158 and 159, Right to Buy Replacement Funding, investment to support the delivery of new supply affordable housing.

Housing, as we all know, is a serious issue not just for Leeds but for the whole country. More and more people are finding themselves shut out of the housing ladder with the Government doing little over recent years to really help the availability of affordable housing. This Council has acted to resolve this as best we can, even with our hands tied by rules that hamper and restrict us. What little funding has been sent to Leeds under the Right to Buy funding has been used to create a new supply of affordable housing across the city. This report shows how we are working with the third sector to deliver affordable housing to those who need it. I am proud that another 50 homes will be available for the people of Leeds.

It is a shame that it comes down to the Council to pick up after the Government's dereliction of duty. As always, Leeds is willing to act to make sure the people living here get what they need, but it is a constant battle to get any support from Central Government and has been for the last eight years. Not only has Council funding been slashed through punishing austerity, we have seen little change in policy that could support us in its place.

It was recently announced by Prime Minister Theresa May that the Housing Revenue Account Cap was to be lifted – something we and other Councils have been crying out for. I think everyone would welcome that announcement but again it has come ponderously slowly after creating lasting damage to the housing market that will take years to fully address. This is a running theme of the Government's affordable housing strategy – too little too late.

My Lord Mayor, I welcome this report and would like to share my thanks for the hard work this Council has done, is doing and will do to make sure we have the homes we need for this wonderful city. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Drinkwater, with a third maiden speech.

COUNCILLOR DRINKWATER: Chair, Councillors, citizens of Leeds. I am speaking on Minute 55, Community Assets Transfer.

In 2008 there was a global economic crash which was caused by the trading of financial instruments based on sub-prime mortgages and debt which turned out to be worth significantly less than speculative traders and markets were led to believe. I would like to remind Council that this is the root cause for the agenda of Local Authority Central Government budget cuts that we continue to face. The Labour Party was not, as some people in this Chamber would choose to believe, responsible for a global economic crash. The responsibility for this lies with greedy hedge fund managers, the malpractice and unlawful actions of international banks and bankers and Governments of the world relying on the frailty of world markets which trade simply on confidence and the perception of value.

Our resources are suffering in the misguided belief that cuts to public services are an essential part of rebalancing our economy whilst tax cuts are bestowed on those who are still increasing their corporate and personal wealth, despite the crash.

Under the Government agenda to shrink the public sector we find that community interest companies can find funding that is otherwise starved from our Local Authorities. We made the pragmatic choice to support our communities and encourage and develop these companies.

Leeds Community Spaces has been created to manage facilities on the community's behalf by trustees with a track record of effective community work in Leeds, ensuring that our residents can and will continue to benefit from these assets and that they have a greater say in the administration and priorities of these centres.

I would like to thank the trustees for their commitment and public service. Kentmere Community Centre is about half a mile from my house, so I have a particular interest in it. It sits within an area identified as one of the most deprived in Leeds. The new supervisor of the facility, Rachel Dodson, has already secured more local users to add to the original users of North Seacroft Good Neighbour Scheme, which provides activities for older people.

Seacroft Select Boxing Club has moved in from the basement of a derelict pub next door. The club is doing outstanding work with young people in the area. Dave Zubrzycki, an inspirational role model who runs the club, lives in Seacroft and deliberately targets young individuals who are causing antisocial behaviour in the area. He has been very successful in turning young lives around. Other user groups have been identified and there has been a great response to the new community centre management.

As ward Councillors we are already involved in supporting Leeds Community Spaces to maintain this vital asset in the community, as well as supporting the local user groups who are using the space. It is essential that we work together to provide a more asset-based community approach, doing things with our communities and not to our communities. Thank you. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR: Well done.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor David Blackburn, please.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on Minute 53 page 158, supporting Street Support.

I have got to say, I welcome these changes. I think this is the right way forward. People who have problems who are living on our streets are there for many reasons – not because of their own personal wishes but because they get themselves in a situation. While we have to look after those people who are not in that position and make sure that they are not troubled, what we have got to do is, we have got to help people overcome their disadvantage and I think this is the best way forward.

I think one of the things, though, is we have got to make sure this is city wide and not just city centre because we do not want to just shove it somewhere else and push it on somebody else. These people deserve our support and I welcome this very, very much. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on the Right to Buy Replacement Funding, the Community Asset Transfer and Safer Leeds Strategy.

On the Right to Buy Replacement Funding, there has been some indication from Government that there will be greater leverage for Local Authorities to spend and to raise money to deliver affordable housing. I know we had a very comprehensive report on the Council's Affordable Housing Strategy. However, do not be fooled into thinking that everything is solved thanks to the hard work of Councillor Coupar and her officers. There is still a lot to be achieved in this city and there are still many vulnerable communities. There is one in my own ward in particular where they are currently under private landlord ownership and they would very much like to have the access to local affordable housing in the Rothwell area but there simply is not any available to them and we need to make sure that when we are expanding into affordable housing, we are not just doing it in the easy to achieve areas which might be more central and we are looking to the outer areas to deliver that as well.

In terms of the asset transfer, yes, fantastic work has been done by Leeds Community Spaces and it is right that Councillor Drinkwater should be drawing attention to it. We do want to make sure, though, that there is a level playing field across the city for people who wish to have community asset transfers in their communities as well and the Council should not just be encouraging those buildings that they do not see much value in and then try to hold on to buildings which they see as being of high commercial value and we should actually be making sure that, as you said, it is a community asset based approach and it should not be done to and should be done with and we hope for that approach from them to do with Rothwell Council offices and its conversion to a community asset transfer.

Finally, on to the Safer Leeds Strategy. I am afraid I did not get to ask my question so I am going to have to mention it now. It is a dereliction of duty on this Council to actually agree with the Liberal Democrats finally - a few years too late – to actually install LED lighting into our street lamps, which will save you 30 million quid

over 20 years. It should have happened when we had six million quid from our PFI contractor and it should have been invested then, but it just went straight into reserves.

To then propose to spend £5m to introduce technology into those lamp standards to enable you to switch them off or to dim them is actually going against what the contract was for the PFI in the first place and is mentioned in your paper to Executive Board which says, “Improve road safety and reduction in the fear of crime and any proposals to reduce energy requirements need to be balanced with the continuing ability of lighting to meet these objectives.”

Reducing the light on our streets is dangerous and actually for you to spend taxpayers’ money to achieve it is innocuous. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Barry Anderson, please.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. As you can see I am down to speak on a lot of Minutes. How I am going to fit this into three minutes is going to be fun. Anyway, as you can see Councillor Coupar has been very busy since we last met but to look specifically at some of the strategies that we are talking about, the Street Strategy, this new Big Change. This is totally welcomed. This is a good, innovative programme and homelessness – I do think as well the administration does have to be congratulated. Yes, one person homeless is one too many but this administration has actually done a lot to keep the numbers when you compare it with comparative cities. Yes, I am not feeling complacent about it but I think we have got it right.

The only thing – and it was referred to earlier on – what might be one of the unintended consequences is you might end up displacing certain individuals out to other parts of the city and it is whether or not the support structure is going to be there in order to help them when they get there without being seen to be chasing them around, because sometimes we end up chasing people from one location to the other and that is not going to solve the particular problems.

In respect of the Right to Buy I do think as a Council we need to start looking more innovatively at a number of options by using the market more sometimes to try and bring forward more affordable and social housing, and we heard prior to the tea break the massive amounts of work that are being done by the administration. I am not trying to say that it is not being done.

However, probably there are people all round this Chamber who have got some ideas about how we can improve affordable and social housing and it might be an idea if we did come together in some group and explore the various options. We are not going to agree on absolutely everything but if we can get a number of things it would be good.

The other thing I want to say is that if you have not read the response that the Council submitted on the right to buy consultation paper, you should do so because it is vitally important that we are allowed to retain more of the money, that we are allowed to spend it over a different period of time as well because it is holding us back as a Council in terms of what we are trying to do.

Just briefly on the Leeds Community Strategy, as I said beforehand, I think this is something that will deliver for the city and let us hope we can all get round it and let us hope that we get our partners all buying into everything we are doing, because sometimes some of the partners want to go off in *this* direction, the Council are in a different direction. I am not saying which is right and which is wrong but we have got to start working harder to keep our partners on side. Thank you, Lord Mayor.
(*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wray, please.

COUNCILLOR WRAY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak on Minutes 53 and 54 on pages 158 and 159 in relation to the Right to Buy Replacement Fund and to congratulate the Council on using some of those funds to build extra affordable properties for the rental market via our partners.

I think as we have heard in today's Council, there has been a lot of talk of the importance of housing and how it changes communities and how it makes our communities more sustainable and the health benefits, and anything that we can do as an Authority with our partners to extend that to more families is important.

I am going to use a personal story to highlight the importance of this. I remember growing up in my Council house with my parents when I was younger – I know, the normal story from a Labour politician, you grew up in a Council house. I remember when times were hard and my mum had to work four jobs and she had to worry about keeping food on the table. We never feared having a house because it was a Council house and I do not use the words “social housing”, I use “Council housing” – provided by the public for the public, irrespective of their background, irrespective of their need.

We do need to go back to the days where it was not just a manual labourer but it was doctors and teachers and nurses, firefighters and police officers who lived in Council houses and had that pride in a system that provides for people. (*Applause*) It is this Council being innovative with the funds it has – the restricted funds (and I echo the comments over there that we need to retain more of the right to buy funds.) We need to build more, we need to build more now and sooner.

The Prime Minister, in her good grace of allowing us to borrow more, has clearly not done enough because until we fundamentally change the broken mechanics to make sure more of that money stays, we cannot do the innovative work that is being done by Councillor Coupar and her colleagues to build more homes in this city. We should be proud that we are building homes, we should be proud that we are taking the initiative and we should do more. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hamilton, please.

COUNCILLOR S HAMILTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors. I am speaking on Minute 53, page 158. The Executive paper covers our Street Support that we are providing to safeguard those in need in our streets.

Let me paint a little picture for you. Alone on the street with nowhere to go and unsure of what the future holds at that moment in time. The street is far from the safest place to be in this situation but for many people this and the behaviour it brings with it is all that they know.

As a city our Street Support approach is just one area of the compassionate approach we are providing in response to each and every vulnerable individual on our street. The Street Support Team allows for working together with a range of services to ensure everyone receives the care and attention they need. This work would not be possible on our own. We have multiple partnerships with an incredible number of organisations and third sector partners, without which it would be impossible to support the sheer numbers of people in need.

On World Homeless Day, 10th October this year, the Leeds Homelessness Forum gave the green light to the new Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy. We looked to update our strategy following the Government's national rough sleeping strategy in August this year, focusing on prevention, intervention and recovery. Following a lot of hard work by our partners and service users, the homelessness forum provides the ideal opportunity to ensure that as a city we are in touch with what matters the most and how we can support those vulnerable individuals in the best possible way.

Our Homelessness Forums are imperative to establishing the way forward for addressing homelessness in the city, creating a living document, ensuring it is flexible to the needs of others.

Let me tell you just a little about one organisation, St Anne's Centre. They provide a flexible and open door policy for those who are homeless, rough sleeping or vulnerably housed, six days a week. The Resource Centre provides a breakfast club with access to advice on mental health, housing issues, toiletries to name but a few – things we may take for granted. There are simply not enough words to explain how wonderful this place is and this is...

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Hamilton.

COUNCILLOR S HAMILTON: That is not three minutes! (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ragan, please.

COUNCILLOR RAGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am also speaking on Minute 53, page 158. Thank you for allowing me the opportunity to speak today on Minute 53 around the collaborative partnership work we are doing as part of our Street Support Team.

We understand as a city Leeds faces significant challenges and pressures to improve the health and wellbeing of our street users. Over the course of the last two years we have seen multiple deaths of rough sleepers and during this time of the 4,000 calls West Yorkshire Police received, approximately 20% of these calls have been regarding homelessness. This needs to stop before the situation gets any worse.

The partnership work we have across the city is simply phenomenal. Every method of contact counts, meeting the needs of those people who need it most. We understand that each individual we support has different needs, sometimes more complex than others. It is about much more than finding a solution that means that on paper there is one less individual on the street – another box ticked. It is more than a quick fix or simply through signposting to another service. The wonder of the Street Support Team is that it looks to develop the individual, instilling the confidence into them, providing the boost they need towards a better life. We need to support somebody through their time of vulnerability, ensuring that have the information and support they need to leave this time of trouble behind them.

The positive impact of the Street Support is that we can use our services and partnerships to build that integrated approach that these people need. Recognised as one of the Local Authorities with the highest rough sleeper numbers, it is a relief to say that we can bring more people on board and reach the ultimate goal one day of prevention rather than reaction.

We remove the area of unknown and uncertainty by teams who no longer have to delay their support due to waiting on an update from another team – immediately they know what level of involvement is needed. The shared briefings and knowledge are critical and imperative to the work we do, receiving an update from another team. Street Support Team provides that wraparound care, letting somebody know that there is support there and they are cared about.

If I can share this success story from the team, Lord Mayor. There is one man who has been on the street for over 20 years, with complex mental health and substance issues as well as physical health. The Street Support Team has been able to engage with him. He is now off the streets, in residential care, thriving, putting weight on (like myself!) and on the road to recovery. As a Council we vow to keep safe from harm, protecting the most vulnerable and building thriving, resilient communities. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cohen, please.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I must confess I was not sure I would get to speak on this item and it is good that we have motored through this part of business; perhaps Executive Members could remember that when answering questions, how to move apace!

I would like to speak, Lord Mayor, on Minute 53, Street Support safeguarding people in need on the streets and addressing criminality and antisocial behaviour in the city centre. I think this is a really important report, Lord Mayor. It says a number of very positive things about the work that we as a city are planning to do to reduce homelessness and tackle some of those entrenched problems of rough sleeping.

There is no question, Lord Mayor, that the new Street Support Team does indeed sound very promising and it is probably only through this kind of targeted, specialised level of intervention that more long-term rough sleepers can be reached and helped, and I think it is to be applauded, therefore, that that is something that we are looking to do.

Lord Mayor, also I would say the report makes some very astute observations about why it is people remain on the street when there is as a city much we try to do to move them off the street, or support them to move off the street, and why it is that rough sleepers do not always take up or, indeed, they take up and renege on the offer, as it were – offers of help from the city.

Lord Mayor, the sense of community that some find on the streets is something that is incredibly difficult for them to replicate in isolated tenancies. I think there is a real piece of work there on how we ensure that people moving off the street who have that feeling, albeit a feeling of community and hardship, how we ensure that when they move into those isolated tenancies that we are able to build that wraparound support so that they still feel part of a community – that they do not feel they have got to either go back on to the street to get their community back or how we ensure that they are part of a positive community experience.

In many ways, Lord Mayor, this is going to be one of the more difficult problems, I feel, to resolve and the challenge is that the report does not really offer a solution. How can we guarantee to someone that someone is going to have that social support network in a new tenancy? So, a good report but some really difficult questions that need answering. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Buckley, please.

COUNCILLOR BUCKLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. As Councillor Cohen said, I did not think we would get here and so although my name was on the Order Paper, I did not think I was going to speak at this point.

However, Councillor Wray has actually goaded me into saying a few words because he took us on an interesting trip down memory lane by saying that doctors and nurses and professionals should be living in Council houses with all sorts of other people.

If it ever happened at all – if it ever happened at all (*interruption*) in this golden land that they all seem to remember, it certainly is not going to happen now. It is just not going to happen.

COUNCILLOR: Why not?

COUNCILLOR BUCKLEY: A lesson for Members opposite is that they ought to deal with the world as it is (*hear, hear*) and not as they think it should be.

COUNCILLOR: Quite right.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: What's the point of being here then?

COUNCILLOR BUCKLEY: Council housing should be a way of giving a helping hand to those who need it, which is exactly what happened to my parents because they lived in a back-to-back going back to about 1950, 1951, 1952, and then they got a Council house but they always aspired to do what they eventually did which was to buy their own property and get on in the world. (*interruption*) By buying

property you actually take part in the property owning democracy. Property ownership provides opportunity, freedom and the ability to get on and not be held back by dogmatic socialism.

Council housing, Lord Mayor, is a safety net...

COUNCILLOR: Rubbish.

COUNCILLOR BUCKLEY: ... and there is absolutely nothing wrong with that, but people who can afford it are actually doing harm by staying in Council houses. It should be for the people who need it who can then get on in the world and buy. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I now call on Councillor Coupar to sum up.

COUNCILLOR P GRUEN: You should have prepared your speech.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Can I say, Lord Mayor...

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: How long this time? Ten minutes?

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we have a bit of order, please.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: ...I am actually starting to sum up much earlier than I expected to do so, given that so many Members have withdrawn from making comments about my Minutes from Executive Board.

I would also like to reassure Members that this item is timed and I only have six minutes to produce a response in! *(laughter)*

Actually, there was a lot of broad support, I have got to say, for the Minutes that went to Executive Board and particularly around the Street Support project that we have implemented in the city centre.

Councillor Anderson is quite right and I do really appreciate the working with Scrutiny before we move into strategy or policy because it makes a difference for us to get it right for everybody in this Chamber and for everybody that we represent. I am committed to continue in that vein, I have to say.

The mention of Street Support, we have 21 dedicated people working in a team, an integrated team that is sited in the city centre dealing with all our vulnerable street users. They are not all homeless, they are not all rough sleeping. Some people just want to come into the city centre and be among their peers, but quite rightly, as has been pointed out by many Members in this Chamber today, what we need to do as a Council – and we are doing, that is the point of the Executive Board Report, I am glad you all read it and picked up on it – actually we are providing that wraparound support for all those vulnerable people that really need it, including mental health support, including support tenancies that was talked about quite a lot from the other side of the Chamber, I have to say.

I am really pleased that you are all supportive of that and quite right, too, I will also be keeping an eye to make sure that displacement does not occur from the city centre to the outer edges of the city centre, because actually what we want to do is to support these people and get them into the right project and help them to a better outcome, not just displace them out of the city centre – that is not the aim of what we are doing.

Can I thank everybody who mentioned the Right to Buy receipts and being that I gave an answer to that earlier I do not intend to talk about... (*interruption*)

COUNCILLOR: Not much.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: I can if you wish but maybe next Question Time.

I also thank many of the speakers who made their maiden speeches today, particularly on this side (*Applause*) and who are supporting a Labour administration in developing our policy, implementing our policy and making a difference to the people out there that we represent, so thank you. You did extremely well, I have to say, on a lot of issues that were involved in the Minutes because there were two Executive Board reports there so a lot of Minutes, a lot of policies, a lot of work. Quite rightly Councillor Golton says I have been busy – I have. You can see from the Minutes in the Executive Board Report and so, I have to say, have the officers who are delivering this as well and I have to thank all of those for the excellent work that is going on in the Department of Communities and Environment and in the Street Support Team. Thank you so much, you are making a difference to those people outside in our communities.

I have to say, Councillor Golton, about your life issue that you brought up and I happen to have some information that has been passed to me about the issue that you raised about street lighting. Whilst I appreciate there may be reduced fear of crime by some in well-lit streets, I am not aware of any evidence that suggests that streets that are lit after dark are any safer than those that are not. I am happy to speak to you outside this Chamber if you have a real issue, although my colleague, Councillor Richard Lewis, is the one responsible for street lighting, as well you will know.

Again, I would like to thank everybody that raised the issue, I would have to say, apart from Councillor Buckley who again completely missed the mark about what social housing was and perhaps that is a lesson in preparing before you speak in Council, Councillor Buckley. (*laughter*) (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Judith Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Just to echo some of the comments that Councillor Coupar made. I think we have had some really insightful discussions and debate today about areas that are really of such importance to us on this Council. I am really pleased with the comments that have actually come in on the Street Support programme going on.

I would like to actually ask everyone to show their appreciation of the maiden speeches from across the Council today. I think the quality has been phenomenal. (*Applause*)

So there have been quite a number of themes running through today and different members of you have picked up on the same themes. Obviously the whole issue of funding, austerity, all of the things we know right across the public sector is one theme running through everything we have been talking about today but also one thing that we are trying to do in Leeds and actually getting success and traction in Leeds from the work we are doing on a whole range of different areas, is working on prevention and actually recognising that the cost to the public purse of letting problems develop and not intervening early is so much higher than actually putting in the investment that we need to stop the developments taking place.

I think it was Councillor Anderson who gave us a bit of a lecture about not letting our prevention and partnership agenda slip. I would just ask you to look at the press coverage from the Chief Constable of West Yorkshire, Dee Collins, on the impact that the police cuts are having on her service, on our communities. How on earth are they going to be able to deal with the fact that they are not expecting to see any extra 50,000 crimes committed each year across the county with steep rises in domestic abuse and 999 calls. How are we going to work with them to make sure that they can fully commit to all of the work that we know they want to do, though we know when we work together we deliver phenomenal results. Sorry, Councillor Golton tells me I used the word phenomenal repeatedly, so I thought I would just put that one in for him!

You know, this is such a serious issue and just look at what we are facing. 21,000 fewer officers since 2010 and 6,800 fewer PCSOs, all of those positions that need to go together to support the Street Support initiative that we are running. If we do not actually take this on board and actually go out and talk about the cuts not only to ourselves but to the police, to Health, we are not going to make the progress that we need to make.

I really believe, and I think the papers and the debate today has shown how Leeds is way ahead on this agenda, actually understanding the reasons why people are choosing in many cases to be - actually they feel safer on the streets than if they are in their own tenancies. There is something profound and fundamental going on there that all of the issues around mental health, around isolation, are not being addressed.

Councillor Buckley, I do want to pick up on what you are saying because you seem to tell us not to be living in the past but I just do not think you have any real understanding of what is facing people living in our communities today. What we know is that for every Council let that we have in this city, on average there are 86 bids coming forward. What we know is that 61.2% of households cannot afford open market prices on the lower quartile rate. You do not seem to understand what it is that is holding people back. You do not seem to have any understanding of what it is to be faced by a situation where housing is just simply and utterly unaffordable.

One of the areas that I want to pick up on is the whole area – what we have to look at, the latest thing that has come out and what we have to understand is that the housing market in this country is broken – absolutely broken. If we can understand that very simple fact, then we can come together and move forward but when you have a situation where we have a range of different funding streams coming into local areas – and I am talking about Housing Infrastructure Fund, Estates Regeneration Fund, Short-

Term Home Building Fund, Small Sites Fund, Land Assembly Fund, and when you actually look, because of the way that Government works the funding streams around funding the areas that have the highest affordability pressure. That means that 80% of Government funding coming out to Local Authorities from Government is going towards the south-east and away from communities in the north, leaving communities like ours to share 20% of the overall money that is coming out of Government.

This is simply not good enough and we have to pick up and make sure that we work together to highlight just how unfair the funding streams on issues that really matter to our communities actually are. If we can get that message across, the way that affordability is defined for too many people means that so many people are excluded from the housing market.

I think in Leeds we have demonstrated through the programmes that we have put in place, the issues that we have talked about today, the Street Support work earlier, the Community Safety Strategy, all of those issues, all of the areas that Councillor Coupar outlined around affordable housing and what we are doing in a very, very limited area of operation.

Yes, we welcome the lifting of the cap on building Council houses but really and truly, have we seen the detail, do we know how much of that money is actually going to be able to be translated into bricks and mortar and homes for the people that most need it?

I would like to finish again by paying tribute to the partnerships in Leeds, by paying tribute to the elected Members who do put a phenomenal amount of time into these areas on our behalf and I look forward to the different programmes that have been outlined today moving forward and really making a difference, but we must not stop having that focus on pointing out, particularly in the run up to the Comprehensive Spending Review next year, just how badly dealt to communities in Leeds actually are by some of the most unfair funding formulas that this country has ever seen. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: We will now take a vote on the motion to receive the Minutes. *(A vote was taken)* That is CARRIED.

ITEM 12 – REPORT ON DEVOLVED MATTERS

THE LORD MAYOR: We move now to Item 12, Report on Devolved Matters. Councillor Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I actually feel it is appropriate today to mark the passing of another very well-liked and respected member of Local Government and it is particularly relevant in this context. The former Leader of Bradford Councillor died I think it was on Monday evening. I hope we can show our respects to him.

Ian Greenwood many of you will have known as Leader of Bradford Council. He was instrumental in helping us work towards moving towards working on a

Combined Authority footprint and many of you will have been aware of him through the work he did on the West Yorkshire Pension Fund. He was absolutely assiduous in his work and he had just recently, in May, been re-elected on to Bradford Council and I think had taken up a position on the Transport Committee as a result of that appointment.

I would like to pay tribute to him. I know many of you in the Chamber will have worked with Ian over the recent and longer term years.

I just want to update Council quickly – and I know a few people are down to make comments so I will be able to come back. You are aware, of course, that the One Yorkshire case has been put together. An independent report into the economic benefits has been commissioned and run through Hull City Council. The findings of that are in the paper. I urge you to have a look at that and the financial benefits of working across Yorkshire are indicated in that report.

This was a request from the Secretary of State's person, who tends to talk to us, Jake Berry, who is the Northern Powerhouse Minister. They also asked us to send forward a paper on governance. We submitted this on our behalf, all the Councils that are signed up in Yorkshire, on 10th October, at the same time asking for the Secretary of State, James Brokenshire, to meet with us. I think he is about to come on his first visit to Yorkshire since he got the position but unfortunately he has not approached us as the group of Leaders to have a meeting to talk about this, but we understand that this work is reaching a range of different people, particularly different parts of Government but also the business community and we will keep going and get the audience that we know we deserve in terms of how we move the best interests of Yorkshire forward and Leeds within that.

We are going through a process of the LEP review and there is a real concern as well as to how we are going to make sure we continue the funding that we are currently getting from Europe.

One of the things I have to say to you is that we announced that there was going to be a joint review into the rail disaster over the summer in the north and the person I was working with was the Minister for Rail, no other than Jo Johnson, who has just resigned. I was hoping to come to you in a position to say that we would be taking the results of that review to the next Transport for the North Board meeting in December. Andrew Jones has been announced as his successor. I will arrange to meet him and then we can look at how we take the review forward putting forward some really important changes that we need to implement on transport across the north. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor James Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I will be brief in seconding this and referring to the section in the paper around people's prosperity and poverty. If anybody thinks that sometimes we sit here and our words do not have consequence, Councillors Harland and Jenkins spoke earlier about the impact that fixed odds betting terminals have on people's lives and since we have been sat here the Government has committed a U-turn and will bring that forward, so it shows that our words have an impact and it shows that we can make a difference. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor David Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: I have got to say the report has got many good things in it about what WYCA is doing because I believe we are proving certainly on a sub-regional basis that working together with the other Authorities is a good thing and a good thing for this region – region and sub-region. It does not mention about what the Transport Committee does, which we got a briefing on yesterday, but the things that are coming forward are quite, quite exciting.

We seem to be getting nowhere on devolution. I have to say, the Brexit negotiations are like express compared to these. Will we see devolution in our lifetime? I doubt it. The thing is, what we have got to be careful of is – and maybe down in London over the Brexit negotiations the leader of this country may well be finding that difficulty – we have not got to make too many compromises. I think we have got to stand by our guns and move forward. I am not saying that we do not engage with Central Government, I think we need to engage with Central Government, but we have got to stand by those basic principles that we started out with.

It is important, I believe – I believe a country that has not got devolution is a country that has not got a democracy, really. You have got to get decision making down to the lower level and that is the problem, has been a problem for long enough with this country.

As I say, you have our support. We may come to some disagreement when we get to the end of the process about what is actually there but the fact of the matter is we need devolution in this region. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Andrew Carter, please.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Councillor Blackburn has hit the nail on the head, really, hasn't he? We have got the "B" word and we have got the "D" word and we do not seem to be getting very far.

I said I think at the last Council meeting and probably at ones before that, my concern is that whilst we are obsessing about One Yorkshire, the Government is giving more and more money to devolved Authorities and we are bidding for what is left in the pot with other semi-devolved Authorities, i.e. Authorities with Combined Authorities like we have in Leeds.

I worry that whilst we are looking at the longer term and the One Yorkshire deal we are not putting enough effort in as we should be on the funding streams and the great worry is that our funding streams, as Councillor Blake is well aware, are drying up and we are having to bid for these top-ups whilst Manchester and Birmingham, because they have devolved Authorities, are getting more and more money without a bidding process.

I would hope that we are going to start putting a lot more effort together, hopefully, into lobbying Government to ensure that we are treated as an Authority which wants to move towards devolution at some level or another and that we are open minded about what that devolution should be.

I have said over and over again and I will repeat it again, as somebody who chaired the City Region Partnership for four years, I remain completely committed to City Region devolution. I do not believe it is beyond the wit of man to come forward with a package of measures which will resolve the problem of having a devolved City Region which incorporates Authorities which are not all Metropolitan Authorities, but most of all and most important of all is that we lobby very strongly about the way the funding is distributed not around the country particularly but in the north, because now the fully devolved Authorities are getting more and more funding and we need to make sure that our progress is recognised if, indeed, we are making progress and that is why I again sound a warning about obsessing about one particular model of devolution. We should be obsession about making sure Government understands that we are serious about devolution in a pragmatic way and that is what the business communities in this City Region want to see in a pragmatic way. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I completely disagree with Councillor Carter. One of the things we do have to do is we do need to obsess about our model of devolution and we need to make sure that that model that we choose for our area is irresistible. What I have to say, Lord Mayor, is I really welcome the Devolution paper because it highlights that we are finally getting it but we need to create the evidence that is presented to Central Government but also is accessible to the general public, so that when we are going and we are saying One Yorkshire can deliver £30bn of extra value in our economy, that is a figure that the man on the street or the woman on the street can understand and can go, “Yes, I want some of that. I want Yorkshire to be a little bit greater than it is right now. I am going to get behind this call for it.”

The only people who are obsessing about their version of Yorkshire devolution is the Government and it is basically, “You have our model or nothing at all and it is all City Region”, when they cannot even create a City Region in the Sheffield area. It is two Councils – that is not a city Region and yet they are still carrying on as if everything that they have thought of is the right way forward. They should listen to the people and the people culturally identify with Yorkshire; they do not identify with a conglomerate of different Councils that have pulled together because some of those people might actually go to work in Leeds or might go to work in Sheffield. Culture matters and for us Yorkshire is the important way forward so I welcome that.

I also welcome the work that the Leader of the Council has done to get Channel 4 here in the city. *(hear, hear)* She was right to go on about what the benefits were because it is going to be something that will build and build as the years go by. Hopefully what you were talking about in terms of that regional voice being projected through a national broadcaster will make the difference and for us, going up to 2023, the more that our culture can be broadcast to the nation in a very natural way, and not being seen as they are doing us a favour, it is very important how we are viewed by Government so that they do not think they have got a sweetie jar and they can just toss a few to us and then their mates that get elected in Birmingham, well, they can have a few more. It is ours by right, it is not just the Government giving it out when they want to.

On the other hand, I have to say the Combined Authority has recently talked about a transport paper. I applaud Councillor Groves to getting it out to all of the local Councillors in our area so that we can all participate from the very beginning. What it did miss out, though, was the map that was discussed at that meeting which was all to do with the future possible mass transit for our area. It mentions Woodlesford. What a fantastic thing, for the first time I think they have actually appeared on a transport map.

What I will say to you, though, is do not just think that HS2 is an opportunity for transport because for our area when that is being constructed we are going to be potentially strangled through that level of construction work and the ability to build that transport system might actually be obstructed by it. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Golton. Councillor Blake, please.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Yes, thank you. The Transport Committee only met last Friday and I think it will be a feature in this debate at the next Council on some of the details around that. I think it has been very well received as you highlighted.

Do you know, Andrew, I am really dismayed by what you have just said, actually, because it seems like you are giving up before we have actually even got to the point and I hope that is not the case. I really do, because I think we have got a very strong case and actually we are not talking about long term. In the governance papers it shows very clearly, if we get to Government, if everyone agrees with what we are doing we could move at pace with this and deliver it.

I just want to say, we are not alone in our frustration with this Government's response to devolution. If you go around the country there are areas like us that have got counties involved in our regional make-up that have got the same problems. I had a meeting with the Core City Leaders and the Mayoral Eight, the new Metro Mayors, and the Metro Mayors had had a meeting that morning and they were saying how frustrated they are with the Government, and this is cross-party, because the devolution model has absolutely ground to a halt. This is a problem, Central Government versus Local Government. Whatever colour you are in Local Government this is where we have got to get back on track and get out there with a very strong lobby.

We have got a steering group co-chaired by the Conservative MP Robert Goodwill, John Grogan, Labour MP, business communities, the Greens represented by Martin Hemingway and Liberal Democrat peers from the House of Lords, so very much cross party.

It will not stop us lobbying for money. I just want to say, James Lewis very right, under Communications he raised an issue about the Clean Air Strategy and the shortfall in funding. Andrew Carter responded talking about flooding. I do not know quite...

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: The same Minister.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: The same Secretary of State but the letter that she has written us, Andrew, is actually remarkably positive and she is very positive about our

approach, the work we have done so far, recognising that she has got a problem with the funding going over into the next funding period but in the meantime she recognises our ambition for a one in 200 year scheme. I thought you were having a real go at us in that and I want to just tell Council, actually we are getting our act together, we are going down to Government, we are lobbying for things that really matter to the people in our city and we will continue to do so. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: We will now vote to receive the Report on Devolution. *(A vote was taken)* That is CARRIED.

WHITE PAPERS

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now moving on to White Papers. We have two White Papers for discussion and one not for debate, and each of the White Papers will be for 45 minutes. I would draw your attention to the fact that in the corner over there we have the Calendar camera. I just think you should be aware of that before the debate starts.

ITEM 13 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – MANAGED APPROACH

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 13, White Paper Motion, the Managed Approach. Councillor Amanda Carter, please.

COUNCILLOR AMANDA CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Let me make it clear from the outset that we accept there was a major problem which residents were rightly concerned about prior to the introduction of what was the managed area and has now become the managed approach. They raised their concerns persistently with the Council and ward Members. All parties on the Council agreed to the introduction of the trial. However, I remind Members of Council that it was a trial and a series of significant assurances were given, in particular to the Opposition Councillors with regard to the package of measure to be introduced, not only to protect the women sex workers in the area but to support them in their mental health issues and their drug and alcohol issues, but also, Lord Mayor, to protect local residents and local businesses. These assurances have not been forthcoming and the statistics certainly support the concerns of most of us.

From January to October this year there have been over 6,000 items of, let us call them waste, and there have been found over 500 needles inside the zone and more outside the zone. Residents report this waste being found in parks, alongside the river and it impacting on the day to day lives of the people who live there, not to mention the children. If only half of what is said in the newspapers yesterday is true, then what they have had to contend with in that area is horrendous and beyond acceptable.

We have an ambition to be the child friendly city but in this part of Leeds I think residents must wonder what this means for them. Certainly in the Conservative Opposition we would argue that this is being put at serious risk.

The situation cannot continue in its current form and it has taken far too long for the administration to accept that further steps must be taken and they need to take responsibility.

The purpose of this White Paper is therefore simple: to tell the administration if it wants to maintain any level of party support, to live up to the pledges it made when it first introduced the managed area. If it cannot and cannot improve the situation, then yes, the managed zone should be suspended and a complete rethink of how the issue should be tackled.

A former Executive Board Member who introduced the scheme has openly admitted on a number of occasions that it is not working and now a Member of Parliament for Leeds Central has spoken on the matter also and called for an independent review, which we would support. It is good that Councillor Coupar's amendment now acknowledges this.

The initial intention was a good one and the assurances have not been lived up to. Most of the women are controlled by pimps and they need to be dealt with. Much more support is required to encourage these women to break this cycle and to encourage them to make their lives better. There is much, much more to do. Residents and business, you should not have to put up with this current situation. It is absolutely appalling. Even if part of what is true has been said in the papers, nobody should have to face what they face day in, day out.

Finally, it is quite clear from material that we have obtained through the Freedom of Information that not enough has been done and the issues have not been properly shared with either Opposition Councillors or the public. You cannot go on ignoring these problems and concerns of residents and business, or continue failing to put the proper amount of support in to help the women involved, to sort out these dreadful situations that residents and local businesses are facing, so the action must be swift. I move the paper, my Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lamb.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Thank you, Lord Mayor, I second and reserve my right to speak, which I will be exercising.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Coupar.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Yes, thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to start by welcoming local residents who are in the Chamber today from Holbeck who I know, I have met quite a few of them in the past when I go out and visit and look at the issues that they have raised with me on numerous occasions.

I would also like to reassure those residents and this Chamber that Safer Leeds, West Yorkshire Police and Leeds City Council are committed to working with local residents, sex workers and businesses in Holbeck to reach a solution that meets all of those needs, which is why we set up a working group of representatives of all to enable them to have influence and a say on this issue going forward, many of whom are in the public gallery today.

It is important to say that we have not created a red light zone; rather that we have invested funding and resources to better manage the problem of street prostitution. It is also important to say that we did not introduce street prostitution to Holbeck. This was already happening in residential streets, as Councillor Carter has acknowledged in her White Paper. It was causing no end of nuisance as the media coverage at the time bears out.

I am the first to acknowledge that the managed approach has had its problems. However, recently when speaking to local residents they are reporting that things are an improving position. Extra police and environmental resources have been implemented to address the issue of any encroachment into residential areas.

I have to say that this White Paper demonstrates the extent the Tories are prepared to go to play politics with such an important matter. (*interruption*)

COUNCILLOR: Rubbish.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Lord Mayor, I wish Councillor Carter had joined me and the team this weekend visiting the areas both at night to see the extent of the street prostitution and in the morning to see the dedicated team there cleaning up.

We have always been committed to an independent review and it is not just from this White Paper that we have said so. We have said so all along as part of our process addressing concerns and introducing improvements. We are still committed to that review and intend to conduct that review with local residents so that they can be a part of shaping that review and influencing things going forward.

If we withdrew the managed approach as Councillor Carter says, I fear the street prostitution would revert to the residential areas making things a whole lot worse for those residents.

I have to say that some of the media reporting of this issue, I have asked police to investigate those allegations because I certainly have not been informed of those being reported to the police.

I move a detailed amendment hoping that this Chamber will support the way forward to enable residents in Holbeck to move forward on a proper footing together in partnership with the local police, with the local Council and local organisations and businesses. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*) (*Boos from public gallery*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Scopes, and this is a maiden speech so please observe the proprieties.

COUNCILLOR SCOPES: My Lord Mayor, I am delighted to second Councillor Coupar's amendment and I would also like to welcome residents who have come here today to hear this debate and put on record my appreciation for their continued engagement. We absolutely recognise the concerns of some residents and are committed to work to resolve them. That is why we have committed to an independent review.

Unfortunately within this debate it is too easy to lose sight of the fact that the women who work in the zone are one of the most vulnerable and marginalised sections of society. It is too easy to see inflammatory headlines and demonise people.

The most fundamental change since the zone was introduced is that women feel safer. If you examine the history of sex work in Leeds it is a litany of abuse, assault, rape, murder and those are the ones reported. In 2014 only 7% of crimes against women working in that area were reported. Now that rate is 50%. Women feel able to report crimes against them, they feel that they can seek justice because they are seeing men prosecuted for their attacks. This is a huge step forward.

A great deal of work has been undertaken by various partners, including the charity Basis Yorkshire who work tirelessly to support this group of women. Basis has reported that since the introduction of the managed approach they have been able to work with women for longer and have been better able to offer support and help.

I would like to give you one example of a situation where this has borne fruit. Amanda – that is not her real name – she was involved in an altercation in the managed zone. She had many other issues as well including homelessness, she had violent attacks against her, she had drug issues and she was separated from her family, and on top of that she is working on the streets. Amanda was approached by Basis and they got her emergency accommodation and treatment with their service. Amanda was housed in a Basis First project and four months later she is not on the street, she is in treatment and drug free, she has her own home and is building up a portfolio of work. Further, Amanda is seeking to reconcile with her family. Wow. If the managed approach had not been there, Amanda would be in prison.

Like Councillor Coupar of course I am not saying the managed approach is perfect – it is not and we all recognise that. It is constantly evolving and it is likely that discussions involving all parties continue. For example, we are working with the police to find ways to tackle the so-called punters and this will come live in December. However, we must not lose sight of the fact that this is a vulnerable group of women who deserve the same level of respect, the same level of protection and the same level of compassion as everyone else in our city.

Strategically, what do we want to do? We want to minimise any impact of prostitution on residents and businesses. We want to ensure women in Holbeck are as safe as possible and we want to help those involved in prostitution find alternatives through drug rehab, through training and through help with their self esteem. We will work constructively with all parties to find a way forward to bring lasting change.

I would also say this, that as mentioned many times in this Chamber today on both sides of the House, we have recognised that complex issues need a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency approach if they are to be successful and I would draw parallels between homelessness and on-street prostitution and I would ask all Members of this Chamber to consider that when voting on this motion. Thank you very much.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Barry Anderson, please.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Let us be clear, this policy has no magic bullet to resolve this. It is something that is very, very difficult to resolve. No matter what side of the argument you are on, it is very, very difficult. We do need compromise and understanding on all sides. It is vitally important that we work together and that means all the residents but it also means cross-party as well because we are all equally as concerned about this and we have all got a role to play in supporting initiatives that are going to be coming forward.

We need to look at how can we reduce the way that it is branching out and leaking out into areas it was never intended to go into. Why is that happening and what are the causes of it? I am not expert on this but we need to look into this, we need to investigate and find out what was the rationale and reasons for it.

Probably most importantly we need to safeguard the women, the sex workers. As we said earlier, a lot of them do have mental health, drugs and drink issues and we should be putting near the top of our priority what we can do to help them to get away from the need to do it in the first place. That is where we have got to start working from in terms of what we are doing.

We need to look at how we can reduce the impact on the communities because there are heartfelt problems by the communities. We cannot just keep ignoring their views. They really are hurting and some of them in the area do want to work constructively to try and find a way forward and we have got to utilise and get these people speaking to us.

Most importantly, how do we go about reducing the demand for this service in the first place? (*Applause*) Why does anybody – that is something that is vitally important.

PUBLIC GALLERY: Criminalise the men, that will stop it.

THE LORD MAYOR: Excuse me, Councillor Anderson, could people up in the gallery there please refrain from interrupting. We are happy for you to watch but you must not raise your voices. Thank you.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: We also need to have concern for the residents and the businesses and the schools. Again, I have never heard it face to face but I have heard it anecdotally that some of the parents and some of the teachers who are going to local schools have been approached. To me that is totally wrong. People who are doing proper, going around their legal business, trying to live normal, standard lives. If they are being distracted or taken apart it is not good for anybody.

We also need to ask for an explanation from the administration about the rules that were set out and why they have not been getting complied with. We need to ask those questions. We need to look at the amount of public indecency that is taking place there. Nobody should be looking, approaching their own house and seeing sex acts being carried out outside genuine houses. We need to look at those types of things.

If what we saw in the media recently, if it is partly true it undoes all the good work that Councillor Blake pointed out this afternoon that she has been doing to attract businesses like Channel 4 and other ones to the city. Unfortunately, let us say 100 good headlines is ruined by one bad headline, so we need to be careful in terms of what we are doing because we are trying to get this city to move forward.

Finally, it is my understanding that Mr Money has come forward with some plans. They have been passed to the Director, the Director has looked into them and they are now, if they have not already been given to the Exec Member they are going to be given soon. Can I ask that these be brought to Scrutiny to try and see if we can inform it. Just one other thing.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Barry.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: Can we have a time bound way of delivering this. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Cohen, please.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to also welcome residents who have been so impacted by this managed approach. I would say, my Lord Mayor, I am disappointed that Councillor Coupar felt the need to strike out straightaway with what I think is frankly political point scoring. This is not from our point of view.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: It absolutely is and you know. It absolutely is.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: This is not about making cheap political points. This is absolutely about doing something that frankly we think every Councillor should be doing, which is supporting our local residents and making sure that Leeds is a fit place for the people that are living within it and, as the Shadow Member for Children and Families, the people growing up within it.

I actually used to work, my business used to be based very near where the managed approach is, so I am no stranger to the type of activity that used to go on and, indeed, does go on across Holbeck. Many a time when I would leave work of an evening there would be ladies plying their trade and indeed punters looking for prostitutes for hire. This is not a new problem.

However, this managed approach has been going on for four years and, frankly, it is not going well. Matters have deteriorated and clearly the levels of support that were supposed to have been built into this, the level of policing that was supposed to be going into this, the level of street cleaning that was supposed to be going into this, these things do not seem to have been followed through to anything like the degree that we as elected Members were assured they would be, and certainly nothing like to the degree that residents were assured they would be.

Looking in the newspaper in recent days and listening to some of the things that local residents feed back to us, are frankly shocking. Girls of ten being asked how much and offered a tenner. Thirteen-year old girls waiting at a bus stop with her mother on a

Saturday morning asked, “Are you working?” by a man looking to hire a prostitute. Twelve-year olds seeing ladies being raped at four o’clock in the afternoon. Three weeks ago a lady walking home with her four month old grandson when somebody allegedly asked, “How old is it? Give it to me for an hour and I will bring it back.” We should not be tolerating this going on in our city, and if even half of that is close to the truth it is unacceptable. *(Applause)* The managed approach has become unmanageable.

How we can ask residents to tolerate that is frankly beyond belief from my point of view. We need to balance the need of local residents with what is a challenging situation but until we really get to grips with that, until we look into why it is failing so badly and truly take into account the real difficulties and outrageous situation that local residents are having to face, I fear, Lord Mayor, we are not doing our duty by our local residents in this city. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor David Blackburn, please.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. When Councillor Mark Dobson was an Exec Member, I have got to say I took a fairly neutral position on it. Something needed doing, it was worthwhile taking that chance.

When I learned about this motion the first thing I did, being what you might say neutral on it, was I rang a few people I knew who live in the area where the managed area is and spoke to them. What they told me was that in their opinion the area is not being managed; it is just being left as it was before.

Now, if you are going to have a managed area, you manage it. That is, you manage it well for the residents, you manage it for the young ladies who are plying their trade there so that they are safe. If it is not being managed, well, we should not be calling it a managed area. I think we need to look at that.

As I say, I have no axe to grind on this at all but my view, after speaking to a few people who live in the area, after reading Amanda’s motion, is that I think I must support Amanda’s motion because I think that is the way forward. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Field, please.

COUNCILLOR FIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I will get straight to the point. Buying women and children for sex is unacceptable and we need criminal sanctions to stop men from doing it. *(Applause)*

I note that in her amendment Councillor Coupar refers to sex workers. This is a necessary fiction to normalise the legalisation of prostitution – normalise it as just another consumer activity and normalise the position of men as merely clients. It obfuscates rather than highlights the harm of prostitution and completely ignores the executors of that harm.

This language of sex work assumes that there are divisions between various forms of prostitution, such as between child and adults and between forced and so-called free when, in fact, all these facets are contingent upon and encompass one another.

Enormous sums of money are made from the monstrous trade in women's and children's bodies, leading inevitably to sex trafficking.

When we refer to sex work we are subscribing to a notion that it is ordinary work based on a bizarre notion of equality of opportunity when, in reality the vast majority of prostitution does not fit this picture in any way whatsoever. It is not sex work. This euphemistic and sanitised language appeases the consciences of those who fail to acknowledge that prostitution damages women and children, it can never be made safe and it fundamentally thwarts women's rights to equality with men and their liberation as a class from systematic oppression.

To anyone who is happy to call transactional sex legitimate work I would ask if they would be happy if it was the career choice of their daughters, wives, mothers and sister and would they be happy to see sex work careers advice in schools.

To quote feminist author Julie Bindel, "Any Government that allows the decriminalisation of pimping and sex buying sends a message to its citizens that women are vessels for male sexual consumption." If prostitution is sex work, then by its own logic rape is merely theft. The inside of a woman's body should never be viewed as a workplace.

It seems to have become widely accepted that prostitution can never be eliminated. Have we really set such a low bar? When five prostituted women in Ipswich were murdered in 2006 what did Ipswich Council do? It completely eradicated prostitution from its streets. Ipswich did this through serious investment and multi-agency dedication to the Nordic model.

I am calling on this Council to learn from Ipswich, visit them and work with their police force. I am calling for this Council to abolish the shocking and scandalous managed zone and commit to the Nordic model, which seeks the following: decriminalising of those who are prostituted; high quality services and ring-fenced funding for those in prostitution; buying sex to be made a criminal offence; procuring, pimping and sex trafficking legislation to be strengthened; and the police need these crimes to be fully resourced and prioritised; a widespread holistic approach of information campaigns, education programmes in schools and training for the police.

Leeds has become a city where women cannot even meet to discuss changes to Government legislation but where men are openly raping women, soliciting for sex with children and offering to buy babies. Our city has become a notorious illustration of misogyny and this scourge must be stopped immediately.

Our women deserve better, our children deserve better, our communities deserve better and the only way forward is to end this sanctioning of sexual violence that should be morally despised. In memory of Tania Nicol, Gemma Adams, Anneli Alderton, Annette Nicholls, Paula Clennell and, of course, Daria Pionko. Thank you. (*Standing ovation*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor C Harrison, please.

COUNCILLOR C HARRISON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Following that, I am not even going to try. All I would say is, I support this motion. No woman makes a career choice of prostitution and we need to look at a far more viable option than this and to end this misery in south Leeds. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gabriel, please.

COUNCILLOR GABRIEL: Thank you, Lord Mayor, ladies and gentlemen, fellow Councillors. In May myself, Andrew Scopes and Gohar Almas were duly elected Members to this Council from the community Beeston, Holbeck and Cottingley. I first became a Councillor in Holbeck in 2004. It was the year of the all-out election. When I first started going round Holbeck I was appalled at the amount of street prostitution. At the time there was 127 working women working in that area. Myself and my colleagues at the time, David Congreve and Adam Ogilvie, constantly badgered the police because they are the ones that have the enforcement to get the women off the street and all it did was push women from our area to Wortley and back again. The women were frightened, they would not talk to the police, there were dangerous men in our streets that were attacking the women and therefore could attack any normal woman.

After ten years of trying this we then, myself and Adam, went to see the Exec Board Member at the time, Mark Dobson. We said there had to be a better way of working and Mark Dobson agreed with us and we brought a pilot scheme in with no extra resources from litter or from the police, we consulted with the community, we went out at all the Residents' Associations, we went to the Neighbourhood Forum and it has never been a managed zone, it has never been a safe zone – it has always been a managed approach because it is the approach that the Council uses to deal with women who are prostitutes. It is not a zone, so if everybody gets their language right, and they are not girls, they are women.

We did consult with everybody and then it was taken to Safer Leeds without local Members knowing. The Exec Board Member at the time did it behind our backs. We did not know and we never voted on it – don't look like that, Mark, I was there.

COUNCILLOR: Shame on you.

COUNCILLOR GABRIEL: Shame on you because you did take it in the January, you took it to Safer Leeds without our knowing. You did not even take it to the Exec Board.

Then we had a meeting, a public meeting and Mark Dobson did not even come. It was conducted with myself chairing it, it was a horrendous meeting, Paul Money was not there, it was Sam Millar and Neil Evans and out of that meeting came the Batmobile and further consultation with residents. Every resident in Holbeck got a consultation. It was the people of Holbeck – not Beeston, not Wortley, nowhere else, just Holbeck and they all then had to fill in this consultation. We then had ten meetings to say “Come and talk to us, what do you think about this?” and out of that consultation came 30% of people were against prostitution, 30% of people were for prostitution and 30% were not bothered, so we then continued with the approach.

Unfortunately the promises that we had from the police that the area would be better managed – because the way the police changed how they worked, we lost Community Inspectors and they had other priorities did the three Inspectors we have had since then and it was like a revolving door and became less of an importance to them. Now after all this time we are actually getting to the point that it is working and, I have to say, quite thanks to Save Our Eyes who helped us do a third public meeting and that was another public meeting that Debra Coupar came as the Exec Board Member, Paul Money and James Rogers. At that meeting we all pledged that we would work harder to get this resolved.

I can only apologise that it has not happened as quickly as it should have done but I think now is the wrong time to say let's stop it, because if anybody has got a Plan B please let us know. We are supporting women, we are putting money into women getting out of the trade. We are supporting the community, we work with the Reference Group and Save Our Eyes to get out of the trade. (*Applause*)

PUBLIC GALLERY: Lies. They're your residents.

COUNCILLOR GABRIEL: I know they are my residents. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Lamb.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I start by congratulating Sarah Field on the excellent speech. (*Applause*) She spoke far more eloquently than I will be able to.

Lord Mayor, this is an age old problem. It is not unique to our city; there are no easy answers. You have to give some recognition that it was brave at the time of the administration and Councillor Dobson to try something different. (*interruption*)

COUNCILLOR M DOBSON: You'd run a mile from your own scheme.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: To try something different but, Lord Mayor, when four years on not a single other place in the country has decided to follow suit and it is clear from the response of residents, from the numerous letters, from the articles in the paper that it is not working, it should not have taken four years to have a review. It has been clear for several years that it was not working. The really brave thing to do is once you have made a decision, to recognise when it is not working and to do something about it.

Lord Mayor, Councillor Coupar's response is disappointing and I have to say we have given serious consideration to supporting the amendment she has put forward. A couple of things I would say. She said in her remarks she wishes Councillor Amanda Carter had gone with her at the weekend to see all of this for herself. Why didn't you ask her?

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Why didn't she make arrangements herself?

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Why didn't you ask anybody else? If you really wanted people to work with you on this you would ask them.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: We've been – don't look like that.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Lord Mayor, the main reason we cannot support the amendment is because, as Councillor Anderson said, there are no time limits. There is nowhere identified when this independent review will take place, who will conduct it, how long will it take, who will the outcomes be shared with? That is no good; it needs to happen now. The independent review needs to happen now.

Lord Mayor, when this was set out there were a number of key rules that were developed and for those who say it is working, keep at it, keeping doing a bit more, the key rules were these: no offences will be tolerated at any time within residential areas; no offences will be tolerated between 7.00am and 7.00pm; no offences will be tolerated outside businesses which are operating. I think the residents would say none of those assurances have been met.

It goes on to say, "Business will be respected and litter disposed of responsibly." Councillor Carter has shown that is not the case. "Drug use, trafficking, organised crime and coercion will not be tolerated at any time." There are many times it is being tolerated. "Crime, public order and antisocial behaviour will not be tolerated." It is being tolerated. "Indecency will not be tolerated at any time." It is being tolerated at times and it is not acceptable.

I would like to read something else to Members:

"I think we all understand this is a very complex and difficult issue with no easy answers. If the managed area was scrapped today, what would happen tomorrow? I also recognise there have been some benefits from the innovative approach that has been taken, in particular improved relationships between the working women and the police, but my strong sense is that we cannot carry on as we are. I would therefore like to propose that the Council and the police commission an independent review of the managed area and ask it to make recommendations about its future and changes that need to be made."

That was Hilary Benn. I agree with every word of that. The only line that is missing is that review should happen now. We owe it to the businesses, we owe it to the residents and most importantly we owe it to the young women who are some of the most vulnerable in society to get this right and get it right now. I am not happy to support the White Paper, Lord Mayor, I am disappointed that I have to support the White Paper, but I second it. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Bentley, please. No. Councillor Campbell? No. Councillor Lay.

COUNCILLOR LAY: Nothing to add.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton, something to add.

COUNCILLOR: Can't resist!

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: To tell you the truth, Lord Mayor, I feel completely inadequate. I do not live in the area, I am not a woman and I am certainly not somebody who uses sex services. However, what I can say is, when this was brought in and Councillor Dobson was the advocate for it, I stood alongside Councillor Dobson because I wanted a dignified existence for people who were taking part in the sex trade in this city and the idea of having a managed zone in an area which was primarily an industrial zone with the argument that it can be made safe because it will be managed and there will be a partnership between the police and the Council and the voluntary sector to make sure that anybody who is working in prostitution and feels a need to do that, I appreciate that Councillor Field feels that nobody needs to be in that position but I am sure she recognises that some do find themselves in that position. I do not think that anybody here would like their daughter or indeed their son – because there is male sexual exploitation going on in this city in the city centre as well – to go into prostitution. However, if they do find themselves in that terrible position, you would hope that the authorities would try and do whatever they could to try and make that existence as safe as possible.

That is the reason why a managed zone is something which should be supported wherever it can be delivered and the debate today is about its deliverability.

We have had people from the Conservative side saying it is unmanageable, it is not possible to manage it and therefore...

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: No, that is a complete misrepresentation.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: It sounds like that is the position from some Members on your Benches. On this side it is how can you criticise at all, we are trying to do the best for those women that find themselves in that position...

COUNCILLOR GABRIEL: And the residents.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: ...if you criticise it then you are criticising them directly and making a judgement on their life. I would suggest that there is a middle way which is, actually, you have had four years. Your motion which we were looking at in being able to support unfortunately does not recognise at any point in its wording (and it is quite long) that there is any problem and the solution that you put forward is one where you internally review the position.

I had an email from Dr Kate Lister and she is an academic and she is from the – I have forgotten what it is called now but it is the Sex worker Support Hub or something. She was very keen that we did not go out of this Chamber actually rejecting the concept of the managed zone and to tell you the truth I thought, I don't need academics to talk to me about an issue where the residents have expressed very emphatically what their issues are with the project, but actually it is a very important piece that she has sent to us as Councillors, because the very key of it is, it is all about resources.

I do not like to use the word "funding" because to some it is about austerity, to some it is about Council prioritisation. One of the things that we do have to demonstrate

and what is missing from your motion is a willingness to accept that and to say actually we need to give more money to groups like Basis that work on the front line with sex workers, to recognise the increased activity in the area in sex work, to recognise that the police service on their own are not going to be enforcing this because they are suffering their own funding problems, and that actually this Council needs to invest more if they are going to go forward with this.

If you had come forward with an amendment which said that, I think you would have had far greater recognition that your side took this seriously and not just defensively. Please make that commitment. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: You clearly have not read it.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Golton. Councillor Dobson.

COUNCILLOR: Come on, Mark.

COUNCILLOR M DOBSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. What I am not going to do is try and reinvent history. When the managed zone – call it what you want to call it today – was implemented, it was on my watch. My name was over the door. I consulted with the Safer Leeds sub-committee several times over, including the Beeston Members. Councillor Ogilvie at the time and Councillor Gabriel were very vocal in support, and actually I am not going to try now and dodge the bullet and say, “Not me guv, wasn’t here guv, it was somebody else guv”, because the reality was something needed to give. Before the managed zone ward Members in the area and myself were getting numerous complaints almost on a daily basis about the unmanaged approach – people soliciting acts in residential areas was a regular occurrence and I am not prepared to stand here and reinvent history and somehow abdicate myself from responsibility for that decision. How anybody else can do that frankly baffles me, but there we are.

However, over time it has become clear, it has become very, very clear to everybody concerned and I do take the issue around resource that Councillor Gabriel made which is a good one, it was never resourced properly, it was resourced on a shoestring and again, you know what, I hold my hand up. I think we could have done more and we could have done more better, but four years in there are fundamental problems as to why it is not working. Do you know what, I do not blame the administration, the current administration in one way, shape or form for trying this and continuing to try, because actually when Councillor Coupar, when I hear she has gone out and looked at the issue, all credit to you. Work like that needs to be done.

However, there is one thing that has become clear to me over the last few days. I do not know enough about this and actually it is listening to the voices of women who do know more about this than I do, and I am referring specifically to my ward Councillor, Councillor Field, who has got me by the scruff of the neck and said, “Mark, you’re wrong. I think you’re wrong.” I respect the administration’s position, genuinely, but Councillor Field, who is a feminist, says to me, “You are completely wrong, we are not doing enough, this is what I am going to say in Council” and I said, “Fair play to you, you crack on and say it.” I think we need more of that open and honest debate in Council.

I am not going to stand here and reinvent history. My name was over the door. I am going to say one thing, though, and I am going to say it clearly; I think I got it wrong and I apologise to the people who are here today and actually apologise to women, and especially the poor young woman who ended up losing her life. I am going to completely demur to my ward colleague on this matter who has actually, at my somewhat jaded time of life, educated me in a way this week that I feel I have genuinely been educated on an issue I do not know enough about. I am completely behind my ward colleague and while she said so much today that I have got so much respect for, I simply cannot add any more. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Amanda Carter.

COUNCILLOR AMANDA CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am not going to trade political insults because this is about people. It is about people who live in this area and it is about the people who work in the area and it is about the women who are forced into prostitution for whatever reason. It is multiple, different reasons, mostly mental health I suspect, and no woman should have to do that.

I do not accept that it is acceptable these days for prostitution. We used to have slaves years ago, we used to send children down mines years ago, we do not do that any more and nor should we have prostitution. However, we have to support these women to get out of this situation and the pimps do have to be dealt with because they are controlled by these men who are quite evil. (*hear, hear*)

We are here today, I am here today and I suspect most of you are because you wanted to make a difference to your communities. I want to make a difference to these people up here because they have had enough. (*Applause from the public gallery*) I was planning on being quite measured but after I have heard what I have heard today, this is not Pretty Woman, it is not Hollywood, there is no Richard Gere round the corner and actually there are no easy answers to this either, and I do commend the administration and you for starting something they did not know would work. We had to try something.

What I am saying is, and what is clear, it has never been properly resourced and it should have been. How can it possibly work if it has not been resourced properly? This has been rumbling on now for four years. Do you know what four years means to a child? Can you imagine when you were eight years old and all of a sudden you are twelve and you have to put up with this kind of thing day in, day out? Not acceptable on any level whatsoever.

What we are saying on this side of the Benches is, put in some extra resources, stop saying it is a managed area approach, whatever you want to call it and rethink it. Let us try something that will work. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Right, we will now go to the vote and we vote first on the amendment in the name of Councillor Coupar. A recorded vote.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: There are 95 of us present, those in favour 59; those against 31; abstaining 5. The amendment was CARRIED and becomes now the substantive motion. Please can we have a vote on the substantive motion.

(A recorded vote was held on the substantive motion)

THE LORD MAYOR: The vote on the substantive motion, there are still 95 people present, 58 in favour; 5 against; and 32 abstentions, so the substantive motion is CARRIED.

ITEM 14 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – UNIVERSAL CREDIT

THE LORD MAYOR: We now move on to the White Paper at 14 in the name of Councillor Coupar.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I do hope I can be heard over the din of people leaving the Chamber at this current time. I am putting forward a White Paper to Council that is extremely important to our residents.

I am moving this White Paper because I believe that the Conservative Government, by pushing ahead with Universal Credit, are continuing to demonstrate their utter contempt with which they view the ordinary people in this country. This ill thought through and damaging policy is pushing some of our most vulnerable citizens further and further into poverty and will have a lasting impact not just on them but also their wider family.

Universal Credit is being rolled out off the back of £12bn in cuts to benefits and it is the poorest sections of society who are being hit the hardest. We have already seen how payments in arrears and punitive sanctions have led to families struggling. I would like to be able to give you more detail on the levels of sanctions but the DWP is currently investigating discrepancies in their data. Convenient timing for them, I have to say, when food banks across the country are reporting increases in the numbers of people asking for help as they struggle every day to literally put food on the table.

It is estimated – I will continue, Lord Mayor and raise my voice, if that is all right.

THE LORD MAYOR: Just give me a second. If you have to leave the Chamber can you do it quietly, please, and cut out the talking.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Lord Mayor, I do hope that you will add slightly more time on for my speaking because of the interruptions that I have had to suffer here today.

THE LORD MAYOR: Please can we have a bit of quiet.

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: There's a lot over there.

COUNCILLOR: Can you ask them to have a meeting outside?

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: Go outside, Colin.

COUNCILLOR: That shows how much you care about the meeting.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Exactly. We have already seen how payments in arrears and punitive sanctions have led to families struggling. I would like to be able to give you more detail on the levels of sanctions but the DWP is currently investigating discrepancies in their data. Convenient timing for them when food banks across the country are reporting increases in the numbers of people asking for help as they struggle every day to literally put food on the table and yes, Lord Mayor, I did repeat that bit because I fear that it went unheard.

It is estimated that 10,000 people will claim Universal Credit in the first year in Leeds. However, as of 21st October the DWP advised that 515 claims for Universal Credit have been made. That is only 5% of the estimated total for the city. I would like to know what has happened about the other 95%.

The level of uncertainty and lack of information surrounding the implementation is quite staggering. Too many people are confused and unaware of the changes, what they need to do and how they will be affected.

It appears that the Government is admitting, at least in private, that many people will be worse off. Esther McVey has been reported as telling colleagues that many people could lose as much as £200 a month. She claims that the Government is putting money into helping people affected by the transition to the new system. However, the Resolution Foundation says that less than 20% of affected families are expected to receive support. It is a disgrace.

They go on to say that they have calculated 3.2 million families will be an average of £2,400 a year worse off than under tax credit, with 600,000 of those mostly two parent families losing all benefit. It is simply not acceptable and we are talking about hard working families who will be pushed further into poverty through no fault of their own.

Enough is enough. Moving away briefly from the injustices of the programme I would like to talk about how Universal Credit is applied and paid for. You cannot do it face to face, you cannot do it over the phone; you have to do it online. This in itself is restrictive and, believe it or not, not everyone has access to a computer in this city or a smart phone. I suppose it is all part of the Government's push to dehumanise those on benefits.

You may not view this as a problem but it is systems like this that limit the financial independence of women. Additionally, women experiencing domestic violence or abuse will find it much more difficult to leave those relationships if their financial support is cut off and controlled. It is not just us that feels this way. Many Conservative MPs and others have spoken out against the roll out, including Heidi Allen and the former Prime Minister Sir John Major. Unfortunately, as she demonstrates time and time again, Theresa May is just not listening.

This roll out has to stop right now.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Coupar, I have given you extra time so would you please draw to a conclusion.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: The Conservatives are condemning millions of families to poverty and are too arrogant to recognise the damage they are causing. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mulherin.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am proud to second Councillor Coupar's White Paper and I would urge all Members to support it.

Already more than one in five children in Leeds are living in poverty. Over two-thirds of them are living in households where at least one of their parents are working. We should all find that a shameful thing to say in a country that is the fifth richest country in the world.

Members may be aware that we are now in the second week of a visit to the UK by the UN's Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights. Special Rapporteurs for Extreme Poverty are mandated to visit and investigate countries with high levels of deprivation and then report their findings to the UN. They have historically spent most of their time in the developing world but the impact of unrelenting austerity begun by the Coalition and continued with glee by the Conservative Governments now sees the UN's spotlights for extreme poverty and human rights being focused here in the UK.

Yesterday the New York Times ran a leading article on the visits. Today, the Guardian has a comment piece on it. They singled out one woman's story from the north-east of England in the New York Times and her story was reported because she spoke to the UN Rapporteur in Newcastle. Her name is Denise Hunter and the New York Times documented how she and her family were driven into debt by the six week wait for Universal Credit when her husband became seriously ill. The couple went into rent arrears, unable to pay for electricity, food and heating. As the article states, only the generosity of their landlord prevents their eviction now and only the existence of the food bank keeps them fed.

The article goes on to say that to provide the regular online updates that she has to send for her search for work, she has to walk three miles to the city's main library and back to use the free internet because she cannot afford a mobile phone, regular home internet or the bus fare to and from the library.

Mrs Hunter's situation is far from unique, with the number of food parcels being distributed by the Trussell Trust having doubled since the summer of 2013. The Child Poverty Action Group wrote a submission for the UN's Rapporteur and his unprecedented visit to the UK. They pointed out that the number of children living in poverty is increasing UK wide and that children who are living in poverty now live on average further below the poverty line than they did ten years ago.

Government austerity and welfare reform shows no concern for protecting children's rights, with unscrupulous blanket policies that have forced millions of children below the poverty line with no assessment of their individual need. When fully rolled out, Universal Credit will affect around 870,000 families in the UK with at least 2.9 million children, and these policies disproportionately affect larger families and lone parents.

A decade of austerity is condemning children and families across the UK and here in Leeds to worse outcomes than their parents. In 2010 UK child poverty was at a 13 year low and 1.1 million children had been lifted out of poverty by the right Government policies. There is no question that Government policies now are responsible for the rise in child poverty and it is within this Government's gift to reverse it should it choose to do so.

I urgently call on the Government to put an end to this injustice and to put a halt to the roll out of Universal Credit without delay. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Barry Anderson will now move an amendment.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: Lord Mayor, is Universal Credit perfect? No. Are there still issues with its implementation? Yes. Has the Government listened? Yes, they have moved. (*interruption*) I am sorry, but they have. We started with a big problem and they have moved significantly to address the issues. Have they gone far enough? No, but they have listened. Maybe you should take a bit of a lesson when you get something wrong, accept you get it wrong. The Government has. You might not like that they have gone as far as they have done but the Government are doing what they can just now. Yes, I want them to go further; yes, a number of other people do but the Government has listened. Take a lesson on that; when you do something wrong you change the policy, you try and improve upon it.

Now, I am very, very upset at what I have heard today in terms of the criticism that you have actually made of your own Council officers. Your Council officers have been working hard to speak to people who are going to be affected by this. They give them advice. We have actually got some of our officers to go out and help people against the iniquitous actions that are taken against them. You have good officers. Give them the credit for doing the hard work in order to help them. It is you that's done it. You might not be aware of all the good work that your officers are doing to help you but you have got officers who are trying to help you and to do things. Have some respect for their hard working officers that we have got there who are taking their time to get it right.

Housing, you have put in a lot of hours into housing offices in order to try and address these problems. Are you just going to conveniently forget the work that has been done?

COUNCILLOR PRYOR: They are doing it to protect them from your Government's policy.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: If it is not being done properly, you need to ask are you giving them the wrong message? You maybe need to ask some of those questions.

You are also being very disingenuous to the civil servants who are working in the Job Centres. They do not go into work on a morning and say, “Right how many people can I upset today?” They go in there thinking how many people can we help to get it right and these civil servants are getting it right. They are doing everything they can. You are being very, very disingenuous to people in this country who are hard working in order to help other people. (*interruption*) You do not like being told this because you have got an agenda all the time, an agenda.

THE LORD MAYOR: Quiet, please. Quiet.

COUNCILLOR HESELWOOD: You are the one with an agenda – reverse it.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: I have got no agenda. I might not have an agenda. What’s my agenda? My agenda is to help people get back into work, make work pay. That is my agenda. That is what I want, that is what most people want around here. You might not want – you just want people to be down there the whole time. Bring people up. This is what we believe in, bringing people up. You want to keep people down the whole time.

Within the 30 seconds that I have got left, you are also wrong on what you are saying about child poverty.

COUNCILLOR HESELWOOD: What? What?

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: Yes, you are. The Government is doing things to address it. You just want to listen to the blurb you get from down south.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Anderson, would you give me a moment, please. Now then, you do not like it when a noise is made about counting you out – do not do it to other people. Honestly and truly, we are supposed to be behaving ourselves in here. We got upset about people in the balcony making a noise; we are no better down here if we carry on like this. Please. (*Applause*) Thank you, Barry.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: Universal Credit is not claimed if the family has more than two children. Old-style benefits are claimed, so those people are not going to be affected by this wonderful thing you have got but you keep complaining.

COUNCILLOR PRYOR: Only because the computer systems cannot cope with it.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: Universal Credit claimants who have previously been in receipt of housing benefit now get the same amount for housing costs as their current housing benefit, so what is wrong with that? Are you going to be against that? Are you wanting them to actually have reductions so that you can make your case the whole time?

At the end of the day this is not a perfect system but we have got what we have got. The Government is listening. You are doing your bit – although you do not want to accept that you are doing your bit – to actually help people. Thank you. (*Applause*)

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

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: I second and reserve the right to speak, which I will be exercising, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Almas, and this is a maiden speech so try and contain yourselves.

COUNCILLOR ALMAS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. As a Councillor for an inner city ward I have already seen the impact on families and individuals in my area as a result of Universal Credit. They are now suffering financial hardships as a result of claiming Universal Credit and through no fault of their own as their payments are being delayed.

Just to give you an example, only today on Channel 4 News it was reported a family of three was actually forced to live for ten weeks for £34.40 a week. Can anybody live in a country, in the fifth, sixth largest economy in the world known as Great Britannia to the world, on £34.40? That is the answer, that is the example to your Universal Credit that is working.

Over the next twelve months we are expecting 10,000 of our citizens in Leeds to be switched on to Universal Credit. Universal Credit is a scheme that has already had billions of pounds invested into it and for what? A disjointed system failing the lives of those not only in Leeds but across the country.

The latest announcement from the Government that they are to invest a further £1.2bn into Universal Credit is simply papering over the deep-rooted cracks. The problems are already starting long before the claim has been made. Non IT literate claimants are already at a severe disadvantage. Thankfully – here is the credit to the officers – Leeds City Council has identified this and support is being provided by customer service at Community Hubs to enable people to get online and make a claim for Universal Credit.

In Leeds since 10th October 154 people have already been supported to make a Universal Credit claim online and 13 people have been supported with personal budgeting support. Some of our citizens have never had to consider online banking before, arranging payments for their rent. Not only is it unacceptable to assume that they will know how to do this from the start, for them to receive a sanction as a result of this is simply heartbreaking to witness.

Support is also on hand to help people manage their online account and where needed will also be referred for digital awareness and upskilling training as necessary.

It is already a vulnerable and stressful time for these citizens and they are being put under further stress by a flawed system right from the beginning.

Once the application is made we know payment is not immediate. A short delay, maybe a couple of weeks until you receive that all-important funding. That is not a lot, I hear you say, but try being a family who now has to decide between providing food on the table or the rent for the four walls around them. Perhaps they skip a meal to ensure children do not go hungry or restrict developmental activities for their children to participate in as they cannot afford it. It is of no coincidence and does not surprise me at all that we are seeing an increase in rent arrears and the use of food banks across the city.

I fear for my own ward, Beeston and Holbeck. I fear for those already in a high level of deprivation facing rent arrears, facing visiting a food bank just to ensure they can put food on the table. I fear for these people. Universal Credit will increase the level of deprivation and level of fear – fear of the unknown and for what lies ahead of them.

We are a matter of weeks into the roll out across Leeds heading into the further unknown without full knowledge of whether we can truly support those who need it the most. It needs to be about more than numbers on a page. These are real people and real lives that are being affected. While I have no doubt the intentions perhaps are meant well, I must call on the Government to stop the roll out of Universal Credit without any further delay whatsoever. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Universal Credit used to be universally supported, I seem to remember. There was a great deal of agreement between the parties that this was the way forward, that the current benefit system is far too complicated and needs to be simplified, we need to reward people who want to work but you should not penalise them for moving from the world of benefits into the world of work – a principle that everyone can agree with. The problem is that as soon as the Conservatives were allowed to implement it in their own style by having their own Government when they saw us off, the first act that George Osborn does is take £2bn out of the budget. It had already identified that the scheme would cost, if it was going to work, a certain amount of money. That money gets taken out so it is not going to work. The pilots that then take place once that money has been taken out do not work. It shows that people are far more likely to be in rent arrears than they were under the old system.

You are talking about how this side were denigrating their Council officers in some way because of all the fantastic advice that the officers were giving them.

COUNCILLOR: We have never done it. We have never done it.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: All I can say is that advice does not pay your rent and actually by increasing the amount of problems that there are in the system you are actually ensuring that people like Leeds City Council have to employ more officers because there is such a huge demand for advice to try and make it work. There is a huge demand on the voluntary sector in terms of those people that find themselves in debt. There is a huge demand on families in the city to try and support their relatives who might find themselves in a very invidious position.

There was a survey done recently and it showed that a third of the population have less than £500 in savings. When all of a sudden you are confronted with a system which decides that you are going to live like everybody else who lives in the economy and earns a wage and you are going to get your benefits paid monthly and in arrears, that was sort of projecting your lifestyle on to somebody else's and saying "You have got to work like we do" but unfortunately it meant that those people were not able to live and they went into arrears and then went into debt.

We have to overcome that attitude which is everybody who is on benefit is somehow using the system, working the system and it is only by getting out of that system that actually they can be fully functioning human beings and participants in society.

Well, actually, the majority of the people in that system, most of them are already working and those that have not got to the heady heights of British industry and become managing directors or whatever, a lot of them have been let down by the education system which has been looked after by both parties or whatever, but they are in the position that they are in and the more that we can do to support them to raise their families, the better.

Universal Credit is actually becoming an impediment to this society being able to function and the sooner that it is realised and the sooner that it gets stopped or the sooner that actually it gets some decent investment in it other than £1.7m, which actually helps 200,000 people out but not the three million that are already due to be affected by it. We just need to accept the fact that it was done badly and it needs to be rehailed completely. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Leadley.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, one thing should be made clear about Universal Credit and that is that the present system of benefits is so complicated as to be almost beyond understanding. It has been said that Frank Field MP is the only living creature who understands the current regime and he does not think much of it, so there is a need for reform.

Another thing to be made clear is that many Universal Credit claimants are not unemployed. They are in work part-time, temporary or full-time but their earnings regularly fall below what they need to live and so have to be topped up directly or indirectly by various benefits. We talked about this at our Group meeting last Friday and said that a fundamental problem with launches of Universal Credit is that payments are substantially in arrears. A system has been set up by well-heeled politicians and bureaucrats who did not understand that there are many who, out of necessity rather than choice, live hand to mouth. They have no savings or any prospect of building any as they are trapped between low wages and high rents. They have no wealthy parents or other relatives or friends who would bail them out or tide them over if money was short.

It is as if Marie Antoinette had been brought back as a Conservative Junior Minister at the Department of Work and Pensions. *(laughter)* The 18th Century advice that those who have no bread should eat cake has been updated by borrowing a few

thousand from daddy or granny or pawning the Lamborghini if the benefit payments are a bit slow in coming.

It is not just Universal Credit that shows these problems. Earlier this year long-term disabled people were moved from Disability Living Allowance to Personal Independence Payments, from DLA to PIP. By and large pre-existing claimants should be getting much the same money under a different title. In quite a number of cases the transfer from DLA to PIP has been overruled, often on trivial technicalities. There is a right of appeal and nationally around 70% of appeals are proving to be successful. However, between PIP being disallowed and the date of the appeal many PIP payments are suspended. The current average waiting time for appeals is more than 30 weeks during which appellants have to live on fresh air, borrow from friends or relatives or use savings if they have any.

The benefit system does need reform but that should not be done either by creating a climate which is uniformly hostile to deserving and undeserving claimants, or by working a cash flow fiddle at the expense of genuine claimants.

Stopping the roll out of Universal Credit would be a bit late as it has already been brought in in many parts of the country and it is a fact that reform simplifying the benefit system will have to be made. What is needed is a pause in its introduction so that the adverse features, in particular the waiting time for first payments which has been reduced once already, can be brought to an end before going further. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Stephenson, please.

COUNCILLOR STEPHENSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think I probably speak for many in the Chamber when I say I have sat here for an hour and a half now with a sense of, I could feel my temper rising through the debate before and this one as well because what we do when we have conversations in this place and slag one another off politically about issues that are important to real life and real people, we actually do them a disservice in trying to deal with the issue before us.

I say that because I am the first to recognise as many have, as many Conservatives have and Ministers have as well, that Universal Credit as it stands today is not perfect and that is why the Government has recognised now in the Budget and is putting more effort in as well, but that does not mean you have to scrap it.

I cannot fail to sit here, we have just had a debate on the managed zone and the argument by the ruling administration is we cannot scrap it because it will be worse for the people affected; we have to make it work. Then we move on to Universal Credit and the political argument is we have got to scrap it. What about the people actually, the poorest in society who are in receipt of State support because it will be them that will be hit the hardest by just scrapping something altogether mid way through.

I have to say whilst trying to keep calm, Lord Mayor, do you know what, you do not have the preserve in this Chamber or in this country of being elected politicians with experiences. Just because we do not often wear our heart on our sleeve does not mean that we don't have experiences of parents who had to make those decisions between

feeding themselves or feeding their children or having ice on the windows in the mornings because they could not afford to pay the heating. You do not have that preserve. There are many people in politics as well who care passionately who have had those experiences. That is why now as you know as well and everybody knows that by scrapping something like this, Universal Credit, now is going to impact the poorest the hardest and we have to look at the positives that come out of Universal Credit.

When I was at school – I was at school with people who were second, third generation on benefits that were their parents and do you know what, for many of those people who have not had the chances that I have had from my parents since, what Universal Credit gives them is an opportunity in a growing economy to actually have a job and when they get a job the taper that their benefits decreases is much better for them. Under the old system we had under the last Government where they were taxed 98% in every pound because they were going to get a job, this now means that it is more beneficial to be in the workplace and not have your benefits stopped, because as we have said, many people are in work who are receiving benefits but the taper is much better for those who are in work, so it promotes work.

Lord Mayor, they say a rising tide raises all ships and that is true here as well, but by stopping this now what we are doing is returning to a situation where the tether that ties that ship to the banks is bringing that ship down as the tide rises and what Universal Credit does is it loosens that tether so as the tide rises those, the poorest in society, can benefit with the rest of the economy as well with some State support.

We do need a sensible conversation. I am not standing here and defending Universal Credit. I am saying to you there have been mistakes and the Government is trying to rectify them but let us not have the political conversations about why we should scrap it which will damage the poorest in society and do not sit there and pretend you have the preserve on having stories and experiences that people on this side of the Chamber do not share as well. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Robinson – Matthew Robinson.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It is interesting, I have been listening to this debate as well and it appears that on different sides everybody seems to be running with a similar theme and hearing Councillor Leadley saying there is a universally accepted complexity in what the previous system was, and hearing Councillor Golton saying actually Universal Credit used to be appreciated by everybody but actually now we are in a stage where it just needs some more money perhaps into the system to make it better.

Councillor Almas as well, thank you for your maiden speech, I thought it was very interesting and actually what you were saying was very heartfelt. I disagree with some elements where you were saying you felt that the extra investment in the budget last week was a sticking plaster on a system. I think it is essential that it is injected into the system so I hope you would agree that that extra money is going to be very, very beneficial for many, many people.

I also want to take this chance to thank the officers and the civil servants who are working on this. I do not think there is anybody who thinks that Universal Credit is

perfect. I do not think there is anybody who thinks that it has worked for everybody and that is Ministers right the way through to Councillors in this Chamber, but actually we need to try and get to the bottom of what the intent behind Universal Credit was.

I was hearing Councillor Almas saying some people have never had to access online banking. That is quite true and we need to actually make sure we train people who are civil servants to engage people so that they can open online bank accounts and people say why does this matter? What does it matter? Actually when you see those news stories that say that those branches are closing, that is because people are going to have to start using online banking. When you see that you are looking at, this Council is looking at its own budget portfolio and its own resources and is starting to say we need to make sure that we do far more online and people are able to access online, that is because we are doing exactly what Universal Credit is seeking to do as well. We are trying to make it easier to access a 21st Century system and a system that actually is flexible enough and resilient enough to move with the times.

What we need to also try and understand is that Universal Credit seeks to make sure that people can manage their own finances. I do not agree with everything that was there in Universal Credit and still is there. I actually think that moving to a system as quickly as we have that takes six benefits and puts it into one was enormously ambitious and this is not going to be decided in eight years or this Government or the next eight years, actually, it is going to be a project that we look back in 20 years' time and say has this worked?

At the moment the idea of scrapping Universal Credit tomorrow, and I have not heard an alternative being suggested around this Chamber or in either the White Paper or the amendment, is sheer folly. What we were doing is, we are throwing people out to the wolves and we are saying we have no system that will work and we have no idea of what will work in the future. I speak as somebody today who accepts the criticism of Universal Credit.

The National Audit Office's own report from June this year actually said there is no practical alternative to continuing with Universal Credit. They are acknowledging this and if any party is coming up with a serious alternative and can suggest that and actually take it to the country and it keeps in mind what Councillor Mulherin was saying that we have poverty in this country, we need to acknowledge that and we need to make sure we acknowledge the fact that work is the best way out of poverty and that we encourage that and train people to be resilient and able to access resources in the 21st Century and the jobs of the 21st Century, we will be delivering something that matters that is far bigger than Universal Credit; it is societal change. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ann Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Speaking on Item 14, the White Paper on Universal Credit. I am concerned about the delayed payments which can lead people into debt and in some cases people having to go to food banks. I know I would not want to go to a food bank. It would be embarrassing for somebody. It is totally wrong. People should be able to receive their benefit on time. They should not have to wait. If they have filled things in (I will come on to that in a minute) they

should not have to be waiting. It is as if they were punishing people is the way I look at it because they have not got a job or they have got a low paid job. What are we doing? What sort of society are we in if we do that? It is wrong.

Add to that that people who are waiting for the money coming in, they go to the food banks and then you get money lenders. Yes, if you are desperate, if you have got a kiddie that has got a birthday coming up you want to buy them something, you might take out a loan. I had a money lender put a card through my door and a lot of you will not know but I live in a back-to-back house. I like to live in the middle of my community and I am happy doing that. A card comes through, a ridiculous percentage to pay and they are preying on the fact they think that people in that sort of housing might want to take them up on their offer.

What problems are they causing? If people are short of money and juggling the money they have coming in, how many will choose to spend the rent, thereby leaving themselves in rent arrears. At the end of the day they could be thrown out of their house. It is just driving people down and though I appreciate that if it was funded properly and that maybe it would be better but this is the situation we are in.

The whole system is reliant on people being reasonably IT literate as they have to manage their Universal Credit claim online. When I was looking into cases that have happened outside Leeds, I noticed that one working lone parent had to make five separate trips to her local library before she managed to fully complete the form and the lack of a Save and Continue function meant that she had to start the form from scratch each time.

I believe that our welfare section are doing what they can to help people presently on Universal Credit but as it is likely to impact on about 85,000 people, families in Leeds, when fully rolled out, I am concerned how many people are going to suffer hardship through it. I therefore agree that the Government should stop the roll out of Universal Credit in Leeds without delay. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor J Gibson, and this is a maiden speech.

COUNCILLOR J GIBSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. A lot of what I am about to say has actually already been put very articulately by my colleagues Councillors Coupar, Mulherin, Almas and also Councillor Blackburn as well, but since it is my maiden speech I am going to say it all, actually!

Council, in 2011 the Liberal Democrat and Conservative Coalition Government legislated for a new benefit system. Six existing benefits would be scrapped and replaced with one benefit called Universal Credit. The aim of Universal Credit was to simplify the benefit system, make it more efficient and increase incentives for people to work. On the face of it these aspirations seemed reasonable but the design of the benefit was flawed from the very start. Timescales for its full implementation were massively over ambitious, the IT systems did not work and claimants had to wait between six and twelve weeks for their first claims to come through. The result was that people already on low incomes were plunged into rent arrears, debt and, in some cases, homelessness.

Six years on Universal Credit is still flawed. People still have to wait a minimum of five weeks for their first payment. This is simply too long and does not replicate working life, the supposed aim of the benefit. People are still not getting enough help when the system fails them. A recent survey by the Trussell Trust found that 63% of UC claimants were offered no help. Local Authorities that have seen their budgets slashed in half since 2010 are forced to fill the gap left by Government.

Leeds City Council, for example, will be providing support at Community Hubs to enable people to make a claim for UC and manage their monthly payment to UC. Housing Leeds have set up a dedicated team to provide intense support to UC tenants that require help to manage their money and maintain their tenancy. Council, it is chilling that, despite recurrent concerns raised by the Joint Committee on Human Rights in Parliament, Universal Credit still leaves people vulnerable to domestic abuse. This is because Universal Credit is only paid into one bank account – that has always been the case since it first came up, paid into one bank account. No doubt this makes it easier and cheaper to administer but it also is a gift to the abuser that wants total control over their victim's finances. (*hear, hear*)

Despite the rhetoric following Phillip Hammond's Budget U-turn, the Resolution Foundation says that three million working families will still be worse off on Universal Credit than the current system. Those that stand to lose the most are single parents that work and second earners in families. This is at a time when two-thirds of children below the breadline are in families where somebody works. That is over two-and-a-half million children, one of the worst rates in the industrialised world.

As a social worker I support hard-working families that have been hammered with cuts to their services, a fall in their wages in real terms and will now face a cut to their in-work benefits.

Councillor Anderson, you said that your party does not have an agenda. I will tell you what your party's agenda is – both you and the Liberal Democrats stubbornly ploughed ahead with the roll out of UC in order to reduce the cost of the Welfare system and make room for tax cuts to millionaires. That is why you did it. (*Applause*) Ex-Conservative Prime Minister John Major sums up this benefit very well: "Operationally messy, socially unfair and unforgiving." The Government must stop the roll out of Universal Credit. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lamb, please.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to start by congratulating those who have made their maiden speeches today. It seems we have dispensed with the tradition of them not being controversial but if we have not, I look forward to the speeches when you are being controversial.

I do not think there is anybody in this place that thinks Universal Credit is perfect, but what seems to have been unsaid in the debate is the impression that somehow what came before Universal Credit was perfect. It was far from it. There were millions and millions of people trapped in poverty and trapped on benefits. The intentions of Universal Credit are good – to try and help people to get out of the challenging situations. Work helps people; being able to take responsibility for

themselves is good for people and that is what most people want to be able to do. That is the intention of Universal Credit and, as Councillor Golton said, it was supported by pretty much all parties including the Labour Party.

I remember going to briefings not too many years ago with officers from this place who were extolling the virtues with concerns but felt that ultimately it would be a better system than the myriad of benefits that were available to people before. Let us stop pretending that what came before was perfect – it was far from it.

Lord Mayor, what is in place now is far from perfect. There are many of us on these Benches, as Councillor Stephenson said, there are many of us, myself included, who could stand here and recount stories of our childhoods. There is not a monopoly on that side of people who have been brought up in hardship and difficulties and challenge and there is not a monopoly on that side of people who have constituents that are facing those issues day in and day out. We have it as well and we do understand it. I resent the challenges that have been made that we somehow do not understand these issues. Some of us have lived it personally and we do understand and none of us – not one of us – came into politics to try and make the poorest and most vulnerable people in our society poorer and more vulnerable and I doubt very much there is a single person in Westminster who went into politics with that intention either.

The problem we have, the White Paper put forward proposes abandoning Universal Credit straightaway. As Councillor Robinson said, nothing suggested to replace it. How is that going to help? How is that going to help anybody if you just scrap something with all its imperfections, all its failings? Councillor Golton was right, it was a huge mistake to take the £2bn out of Universal Credit. There have been many mistakes made over this but just simply pulling the plug – the challenge here is that as with the NHS and many other things, the Labour Party has chosen to weaponise the benefits system rather than coming forward with solutions for how to fix the problems. That would have been a good debate, that would have been a useful White Paper if we had been talking about what we can do in the city and what the Government could do nationally to make this system work better to help the poorest and most vulnerable people in society.

We cannot support a paper which simply says abandon something with offering nothing to replace it and that, Lord Mayor, is why I will be supporting Councillor Anderson's amendment. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Coupar.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Thank you very much, Lord Mayor. I have to say I thank everybody again for their contributions to this White Paper. Councillor Anderson, you do disappoint me – we were getting on so well! Then you turned tail and talked about Universal Credit as if it is some sort of saviour from the Government. Well, let me tell you, it is not some sort of saviour from the Government and I do not doubt what people have said on that side about the intention of every person in this Chamber. Absolutely, that is why every person came into politics. That is why I would urge you to support this motion in Council today and show your Government the right path to take about Universal Credit.

Now, a few of you pointed out that Government turned tack in the Budget. Well, let me tell you this, they did not really. All they did was slow down the roll out. It is still going to have the same impact, it is just going to take longer to do it.

You say that you recognise poverty and austerity in your wards. Well, if you did you would be lobbying this Government to do something about it instead of standing in this Chamber trying to defend the undefendable I have to tell you.

Councillor Mulherin, I was really pleased to hear you speak and to talk about children in poverty. We recently had an OBA where a lot of Councillors actually spoke on the issue and far be it from the Conservatives having a right to know this issue first hand – many of us on this side of the Chamber also recognise it first hand too.

Councillor Golton, quite rightly actually, and you surprised me, there is going to be a huge demand on the voluntary sector and charities and the impact on people in crisis is going to be huge. How you cannot recognise that I just do not know.

I called a year ago for a halt in the roll out of this Universal Credit. Your Government did not listen to us at that point, they did not halt the roll out of Universal Credit so now we are calling for it scrapping and yes, it is the right thing to do. You cannot have your cake and eat it – want to scrap something in the previous White Paper and it is all right on whatever happens (*Applause*) and the implements of that and then when it comes to Universal Credit and people living with as low as Councillor Almas said £30 a week or sanctions. Did you not hear what I said about people on sanctions and not having any money? We are going to have raised debt, raised use of food banks and you seem quite OK at defending that. Well, shame on you. (*Applause*)

I would just like to say, how many times do you need to hear about families forced to choose between food and rent? How many times do you need to read about children arriving at school without clean uniforms, having not been fed and with no prospect of things being any different the next day? Just how many times are you going to sit and listen to that? Enough is enough.

Let me also tell you, we received a letter from the DWP recently and for all our partnership work that we are doing in our community hubs, that we are trying to mitigate the worst of the impacts of this unsavoury benefit cut, I have got to say, telling us that that work is no longer needed. They do not want us to work in partnership with them any more and from March they will be withdrawing that, so there you do, that is your Government for you.

I urge you all to stand up and be counted and vote for this White Paper.
(*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: A recorded vote has been requested.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: We have 95 present, 21 in favour; 5 abstaining; and 69 saying “No”, so that amendment fails. LOST

We will now take a vote, a recorded vote.

(A recorded vote was held on the substantive motion)

THE LORD MAYOR: Voting on the motion in the name of Councillor Coupar. Those present 95, in favour 69; against 21; abstaining 5. The motion is CARRIED.

ITEM 16 – WHITE PAPER MOTION – NOT FOR DEBATE - IHRA

THE LORD MAYOR: We will now proceed to Item 16, a White Paper in the name of Councillor Blake which is not for debate. I would ask Councillor Blake to formally move the motion.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Could I formally move the motion in the terms of the Order Paper. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Would Councillor Andrew Carter formally second?

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Yes, my Lord Mayor, I have pleasure in seconding the resolution in the terms of the Notice.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: I formally support on behalf of my Group, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: In that case we will have a vote. Recorded vote requested.

(A recorded vote was held on the White Paper in the name of Councillor Blake)

THE LORD MAYOR: There are 95 present and 95 in favour, therefore the motion is well and truly carried. *(Applause)* CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY

Just before you all dash out of the Chamber, I have been given something which I am requested to draw to your attention. I have to announce that today is National Diabetes Awareness Day and this is raising awareness of the disease throughout Council. I can hardly read the handwriting here but the basic principle is that Town Halls and Civic Halls are showing blue lights in support of this and the Civic Hall and Town Hall do have blue lights shining today, so we are well and truly supporting National Diabetes Awareness Day. *(Applause)*

Thank you very much and thank you for behaving after I asked you to.

(The meeting closed at 7.26pm)

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