

COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 26TH FEBRUARY 2020

VERBATIM

This page is intentionally left blank

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Held on

Wednesday 26th February 2020

At

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
CIVIC HALL,
LEEDS

In the Chair:

THE LORD MAYOR
(COUNCILLOR E TAYLOR)

VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

Auto-transcribed from Webcast

**VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL
ORDINARY MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 26TH FEBRUARY 2020**

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon everybody. Welcome to the Budget Meeting. Can I remind Members to please switch off your phones or put it to silent and also the meeting will be webcast today.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE LORD MAYOR: Ian Cameron who is retiring on Friday. Ian became a consultant in Public Health in Leeds in 1992 with a focus on mental health, physical disabilities and learning disability. Ian became the Director of Public Health in Leeds in 2006 and led the successful transfer of Public Health function from the NHS into the Council in 2013. In his role Ian has made an enormous positive impact on health of so many of people both here in Leeds, across the region, national and international. He will be missed and I know that you all wish him well with all his plans for the future.

(Applause)

On Friday 6th March I'll be taking part in a charity fire walk in Millennium Square along with Honorary Alderman Alison Lowe to raise money for my charity 2019/20 (SARSVL), please can I inform all members is the donation forms, sponsorship forms will be coming around shortly if you could spend some money wisely, I'm a very brave girl to walk on fire and it will be nice if someone will stand round me with a bottle of gin after.

(Laughter)

So I'm looking forward to seeing many of you there on the 6th May in the Millennium Square.

It is with great sadness that I notify you of the death of former Labour Councillor and Alderman Keith Burnley who passed away on the 22nd January. Keith represented the Morley South ward from 1980 to 90 and 92. His funeral service was held on 11th February in Scunthorpe. I would like to call on all Members to join me in expressing our sympathy and support. Please can we stand for a minute's silence.

(Silent tribute)

Thank you. We'll move on to the Council business.

ITEM 1 - MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD 15TH JANUARY 2020

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 1. Councillor Dowson.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: I'd like to move the minutes in terms of the notice Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cohen to second.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Second My Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: May I call for a vote. (*A vote was taken*) That's been CARRIED.

ITEM 2 – DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 2. I invite Members to make any declaration of Pecuniary Interests, anyone have anything to declare at this point.

Thank you.

ITEM 3 – COMMUNICATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 3 Communications and the Chief Exec have you any communications.

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you Lord Mayor. There are 2 Communication's to report. The first one Members have seen which was a response that was received to a Council resolution from Chris Heaton-Harris MP, Minister of State for Transport in response to a White Paper resolution in respect of Active Travel considered by Council in September and the second has come in this morning is from Luke Hall who is the Minister for Housing, Communities and Local Government and its in relation to the White Paper at the end of the year in relation to Local Government Funding.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. I'd like to inform Council that I have received notice that Councillor Andrew Carter would like to make a Communication to the Council. Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Thank you My Lord Mayor. Can I begin by thanking Alec Shelbrooke MP for alerting me to information covered on Leeds Live about the outstanding performance of the Gorse Academy Trust and indeed we should include adding Dixon's Academy Trust as well as they have both been named as two of the best performing Multi |Academy Trusts in the country. This being endorsed by former Schools Minister, Lord Agnew.

We should all be proud of the excellent performance and their achievements in turning round many schools in Leeds that means that thousands of Leeds pupils

are being taught in some of the best Academy Trusts in the country. I would like to think my Lord Mayor that everyone on this Council will join me in congratulating them but I have my doubts. As far as I am aware the Leader of Council has never visited a Gorse Academy nor met with the Chief Executive Officer, Sir John Townsley. So I ask her squarely has she ever met with Sir John Townsley to discuss the work they have been doing to achieve these results.

This shines a greater spotlight on the administration's attitude towards academies. In particular Executive Board recently agreed to spend £2.27m on the Cocburn John Charles Academy, I don't believe the Exec Board was given the full information, certainly the normal consultation process was not carried out and we were not told that the Council had also approached Bruntcliffe, part of Gorse, who had said they would help take extra pupils but asked the Council to match fund to the tune of £270,000 money to fund a new roof to provide extra accommodation. The Council apparently refused and then complained to the Regional Schools Commissioner that Gorse were, and I use these words, arm twisting. Why were we not given this information as part of the request to give £2.27m to Cocburn John Charles Academy. The Leader of course is a governor of that Academy.

I should also point out that Hillcrest School another Gorse Academy in 2013 when it was taken over was in dire straits it is now a world leading school and again the party opposite have not given any credit for this. Clue, the Labour administration are deliberately trying to promote a negative perception about academy trusts it's unacceptable it's time the Government intervened not least because the only member of this Council who was a board member of Gorse has recently announced he is voluntarily standing down from the Council and if you believe that My Lord Mayor you'll believe anything.

(Applause).

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Pryor to respond.

COUNCILLOR PRYOR: Thank you Lord Mayor. Councillor Carter I do, I was surprised you are bringing this item to Council particularly praising Gorse's progress eight scores when a recent internal document from Gorse which was leaked which was a document where they were looking at ways in which they could manipulate their progress eight scores in, and I quote, without ethical considerations. I think when such a question mark is over not even the entire Academy Programme but a single Academy Trust I don't think this was the right time to be particular praising of those progress eight scores.

In regards to whether Councillor Blake has met with Sir John, of course she has, she appointed him into the recent position in Otley Prince Henry's. I've met Sir John a number of times, I've been around a number of Gorse schools so it was just completely inaccurate what you said and actually I would like to thank Councillor Lamb and the whole Children and Families Scrutiny Board who are currently running an inquiry into the whole issue of fixed term exclusions, elective home education and off rolling and that is not complete yet and ...

(Applause)

And I think it would be wrong to go into the details of that while that Scrutiny Inquiry is still live and I do think it's right that that Scrutiny Inquiry goes wherever it needs to but if we are singling out schools and MAT's like you are I'm surprised you haven't chosen to single out Benton Park who have been through a horrific few weeks, I know they've really stepped up, Benton Park is one of the three schools which I have come to Council again and again saying we need money to rebuild and the Government refused. In some of the recent weather the roof of Benton Park was damaged so much that the school had to close and I really want to pay tribute to Delia, her staff and the rest of the children and even the ward Councillors who moved heaven and earth to get that school back open but make no mistake Benton Park closed because the Government refused to help and refused to fund what they should have funded. But which of the other two schools that need funding, Wetherby and Royds both in Alec Shelbrooke's constituency neither of which were mentioned in his communication and I just want to remind Councillor Carter that two of your Conservative Councillors resigned over Alec Shelbrooke's inaction on Wetherby and resigned over the Government's inaction on it and actually you know it's a shame Councillor Carter can't show that same level of backbone in standing up to his own Government.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dowson.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: I'd like to move in terms of the notice Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dan Cohen.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Second Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we call for a vote on that. *(A vote was taken)*
This has been CARRIED.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dowson, sorry.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: Lord Mayor I'd like to move that under provisions of Council Procedure Rule 13.2c that the order of business be changed in order that the Budget Items, Item 8 be heard immediately after the communications item.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cohen.

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Second Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Let's call for a vote. *(A vote was taken)* This has been CARRIED.

ITEM 8 – BUDGET MOTION

THE LORD MAYOR: We will now move onto the Budget motion which you can find on page 8.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blake.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: I'll now call for a vote. *(A vote was taken)*.
Councillor Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you Lord Mayor. I hope someone has got the clock ticking. Yes, the great annual sweepstake begins. I'm delighted to be standing in front of you to move our Budget motion for the year 2020/21.

Can I start by saying just how grateful we all are for the dedication, skill and expertise of our officers in our Finance team who help us to bring our Budget forward and particularly can I thank Victoria Bradshaw and ask her to pass on our gratitude to her team and I'm sure if you show your appreciation they deserve.

(Applause)

Can I thank all Members and of course particularly members of the Labour Group whoever last year have worked tirelessly towards putting this Budget together. Of course today it will be impossible to mention all the great work we are doing across our directorates but your work in here in the Council offices and out in our communities is much appreciated and I would like especially to thank my Deputy, James Lewis, for all his work on preparing the Budget over the past year and I'm sure you can give him a round of applause as well.

(Applause)

This is a Budget that puts protecting frontline services for the most vulnerable people in this city at its heart. It is a Budget that underlines how having a Labour Council means better services for the people of Leeds as well as protecting our most vulnerable citizens as much as we can from the devastating Conservative cuts. It is an optimistic Budget that takes on the big challenges we face as a city including poverty and inequalities, achieving inclusive growth and fighting climate change. Last year I underlined how much of this Council's work is against a backdrop of significant dysfunction at a national level. This time last year we had a minority Government. Can I ask whatever happened to five year fixed term Parliaments, we are now on our third Prime Minister in post since I became leader in 2015 despite all of the political upheaval of the last 12 months the uncertainty and disorganisation of Government at a national level continues. Many promises have been made who knows how many of them will be delivered. Yet again our provisional finance

settlement from the Tory Government wasn't received until almost the last second before the Christmas break and the final settlement only passed through the House of Commons this Monday, 2 days ago and because the settlement is only for 1 year this hinders our efforts to make long term financial plans. The settlement confirmed the financial climate, the Council's remains very challenging. Colleagues I have news. Austerity for this Council is not over. Since 2010 our core funding has been cut by £266m the cumulative total of the cuts to our funding is a staggering £1.7b that means the Tories have taken £1.7b out of services for the people of Leeds equivalent to £2,154 for each person living in the city.

Even though on paper this year it looks as though our budget is increasing by £9m don't let the Conservatives fool you. Do not let them tell you that under Boris Johnson everything is okay now. The failure of the grant we get from Government to cover increased costs and demand pressures means this budget still needs to find a further £28.4m in savings by March 20/21. Even worse these cuts all continue to push the financial burden for our essential services onto Leeds Council Tax payers. Take Adult Social Care where Councils have once again been told by the Government to use the sticking plaster Adult Social Care precept to prop up essential budgets. They have had a decade to sort out social care funding. Boris Johnson told the country he had a plan to fix social care but the Queen's speech showed us in stark reality he has no plan. They offer £1b nationally but this is far below the £3.6b a year the LGA says is needed and doesn't come close to replacing the £8b cut made since 2010. So we have no choice but to accept their Adult Social Care precept in full. Local tax payers carrying the burden of failure of national Government.

Council Tax will also go up by 1.99% to meet rising costs and demand pressures. A decade of austerity means 97% of Councils across the country are having to do the same including Tory Councils, Lib Dem Councils, Independent Councils at all levels of governance. Despite the increase Council Tax in Leeds remains low compared to elsewhere. Our Council Tax is lower than Manchester, Sheffield, Newcastle, Liverpool, Bristol and Nottingham. The County Councils Network representing mainly Tory Councils says even if all Councils raise Council Tax for the next 5 years there will still be a £19b shortfall in Council funding over that period, £19b. Our Budget is set in the context of our Medium Term Financial Strategy and continues the theme of building resilience and making the Council sustainable in the long term. Our Budget demonstrates our continued commitment to leading by example whether that be by tackling low pay, delivering inclusive growth, addressing the climate emergency and implementing nationally recognised best practice across all Council departments.

Our Labour administration has consistently year after year delivered a balanced budget in the face of damaging Tory cuts. Through sensible financial management we have found a way through stringent austerity and that theme continues next year. Just one example is our Treasury Management Strategy which takes advantage of record low interest rates to convert short term borrowing into longer term borrowing making savings of £2m in 2020/21. Compare this to Conservative Councils such as Northamptonshire that have

been bailed out because of poor financial management and a misplaced ideological commitment to privatisation.

Since 2010 we have reduced our workforce without compulsory redundancy. Can I take this opportunity to thank the work of our Trade Unions who do so much to support us through these difficult times.

(Applause)

We value our workforce's dedication to public service for the people of Leeds and we support them by tackling the scourge of low pay. Since 2015 we have worked towards becoming a real living wage employer and we implemented the Living Wage Foundation rate in January 2017. Now this Budget goes further from April we will pay a minimum wage of £9.36 per hour which is 6p above the real living wage of £9.30. Apprentices on scale point 1 will receive £9.30 for their first year only.

For commissioned services we have already implemented elements of the Ethical Care Charter for care workers and we will provide funding so workers under the Streetscene Grounds Maintenance contract is aligned with Council pay. We are also looking at the opportunities for in-sourcing wherever there is an opportunity to do so. Under Labour this Council will use all of its influence to encourage organisations across Leeds to pay the real living wage. Indeed we are working to implement a procurement strategy that explicitly encourages businesses to pay it. In addition this year I'm pleased to announce we are putting ourselves forward for formal accreditation as a Living Wage Foundation Employer.

(Applause)

I'm also pleased to say this administration is making progress on the gender pay gap. We still have work to do but the latest figures show the gap between women and men, men's pay fell to 5.9% in 2019 compared to 8.6% in 2017. Still work to do but progress in the right direction. As a Labour Council we are grateful to all Council staff for the vital services they provide to the people of Leeds and goodness me have we seen the best of that dedication to service ...

(Applause)

Through all of the work that they've done on the recent flooding episodes across Leeds. Can we all say an enormous thank you to them working through the night, dropping everything, all their personal plans at weekends to make sure that the people of our city are safe, they really are the fourth emergency service, let's show our appreciation for them ...

(Applause)

And of course our Council staff working on the front line who have to deal with the heartbreaking impact of austerity and poverty on our residents day after

day. Sadly it's typical that budget amendments here today are yet again destined to attack Council staff. The big difference with a Labour Council is that we are determined to protect frontline services as such over 61% of this budget will be spent on Adults and Children's Social Services. I'm pleased to confirm we are investing an additional £8.8m to meet that their projected demand pressures, £7.2m for Adults and £1.6m for Children's. In both areas we have improved services and outcomes for people through a focus on innovation, excellence and early intervention. For older people's care homes the investment in our Care Quality Team has seen the percentage of homes in Leeds rated good or outstanding increased dramatically from 66.9% in 2017 to 81.6% in December 2019. This has been a top priority for our administration going forward and I'm delighted that we are delivering on it.

(Applause)

We are investing an additional £668,000 on improved dementia services with the development of a Specialist Dementia Unit within the South Recovery Hub. In Public Health we continue to invest over £10m in services such as smoking and alcohol treatment, healthy eating and physical activity. This investment saves the city money while bringing benefits to the quality of life of many individuals. Our nationally renowned Neighbourhood Networks epitomise what can be achieved through early intervention and sensible investment. Under the new arrangements that came in last year funding for the network's increased by £864,000 and that continues this year. As a snapshot of how valuable they are to the city this winter they support around 3,000 people with dementia. With reports this week that national cuts to the NHS and Social Care have seen delayed discharges increase to their highest level since 2017, it is vital that we continue to protect and invest in frontline Social Care services to deliver the transformation we need to deal with this issue.

We have also gained national recognition in Children's Services as a model of improvement, innovation and success. The transformation has been praised by inspectors and confirmed by Ofsted with our outstanding rating in 2018. The department has improved the lives of children and families in many ways much of this based on a strategy focused on prevention and early intervention. This has helped Leeds build a national role in reform and sector led improvement as a partner in practice with Central Government. We have now worked with over 80% of Local Authorities in England to promote good practice and we have hosted visits from Local and National Government Leaders from both across the UK and countries as diverse as Turkey, Japan, and Australia. One of our biggest successes for children in Leeds is our safely reducing the number of children looked after. The number peaked in 2012 but fell by nearly two hundred by May 2017. This was through safely keeping children and young people with their birth families as the evidence is clear that this delivers better outcomes for children. Despite all of the pressures the increasing numbers of children living in the city we are keeping our position stable and at the same time the numbers of children coming into care from areas with high deprivation is now reducing. Compare this to the national position where the latest figures from the Department for Education show the number of children coming into care is at a 10 year high. Keeping open all of

our 56 Children's Centres is another big factor in our success. We've seen a thousand centres closing nationally that here in Leeds Labour in power has kept them all open and they are improving the life chances for many children in this city. They've helped us buck the national trend in reducing childhood obesity helping around 600 children with the biggest fall in areas of high deprivation, groundbreaking work with the Henry Charity and Public Health all playing a part. Children's Centres help give young people in Leeds the best start in life and under this budget I am pleased to confirm we are sticking to our commitment to protect them.

(Applause)

This budget continues our work to tackle inequalities and to make make Leeds a compassionate city. Last year I announced new funding to expand the provision of defibrillators. I am pleased to say 54 new life saving devices are being installed at pace. Every ward will have a minimum of 4 with additional allocations towards with the highest cardiac arrest and circulatory disease rates saving lives in our communities.

(Applause)

Our new Family Bereavement Service was commissioned from Child Bereavement UK and officially launched last summer. It supports children and young people with their families when they experience the loss of a close loved one. To date the service has provided support to 86 families with a 122 children and young people accessing the help they need to cope with their loss. Our Leeds Mens Suicide Prevention Grants Programme has so far awarded £133,000 to 9 Third Sector Organisations that run schemes in communities where men are at greater risk of social on isolation and suicide. These schemes continue next year with a third round of grants currently open to applicants. Last year I announced £500,000 for mental health support for young people I'm pleased to confirm this funding will continue and will include one to one support delivered by life coaches for young people with mental health needs.

One of the biggest challenges the city faces of course is the housing crisis. Housing remains unaffordable for many Leeds residents and we all know about the waiting list for council properties which currently stands at 33,077 with an average waiting time of between 16 and 29 months for those in urgent need depending on property type. Tory benefit cuts have made the situation much worse in some cases forcing residents to choose between food and rent and I know Councillor Coupar will say more on this in her speech. After much lobbying by Local Government in October 2018 the Government lifted the cap on councils borrowing to invest in new housing something we would all welcome. Since then we have quickly put together a programme of 750 new homes to help us deliver our aspiration of 1,500 new Council homes over the next 5 years. We will also deliver a further 300 homes for older people over the next 3 years. By any measure this is one of the largest Council house building programmes in the country today.

(Applause)

However we have one hand at least tied behind our back as Right to Buy introduced by the Conservatives in 1980 means we expect to lose over 600 properties next year if current activity levels continue. We are all doing what we can including an active buyback programme to bring homes lost to Right to Buy back under Council management. Many former council homes are now owned by private landlords national mismanagement has created the outrageous situation where higher rents are charged by the private landlord than their Council house and people living next door. This in turn means a higher amount of housing benefit finds its way into the hands of private landlords at a greater cost to the public purse, I think all of us would agree that Right to Buy is a mess crying out for Government reform.

(Applause)

Councils need powers to set discounts locally and to keep the 100% of receipts from homes sold so that we can reinvest them in replacement Council housing.

Another priority for this Council is achieving inclusive growth. The last decade saw the lowest level of wage growth for British workers since the Napoleonic wars despite there being no recession during that period and yesterday renowned health expert one of the absolute top of his field, Sir Michael Marmot, published his 10 years on Review of Health in England, his report makes shocking reading. Clearly showing the impact of austerity over the last 10 years on people's health how unforgivable that Tory cuts now mean women living in the poorest parts of the country now have a lower life expectancy than in 2010. These are clear examples of the lowest paid carrying the burden of the Government's austerity policies. Leeds has the most diverse economy of all of the UK's main employment centres and has seen the fastest rate of private sector jobs growth of any UK city in recent years. As a Council we do all we can to encourage that growth to continue but too many of our residents have been excluded from the benefits of that growth so our aim has to be to ensure that everyone in Leeds can contribute to and benefit from the city's economic prosperity. We continue our work to support businesses to create jobs in Leeds. Over the last 5 years over a thousand jobs have been created through the Business Growth Programme. We know companies are attracted to Leeds by our digital infrastructure and thriving universities and skills sector. Leeds continues to buck the trend in attracting foreign direct investment and we are now the third best performing city for this outside of London. Domestic companies are also moving to Leeds and I know many of us are excited by the prospect of Channel 4 moving into the magnificent Majestic building later this year. Around ...

(Applause)

Around 250 jobs will be based there, our TV and film sector continues to grow and create opportunities for the city's young people which is why we are doubling production space in the city through the opening of Leeds studios on Whitehall Road later this year. Sky have also committed to create a further 500

roles in Leeds at their Contact Centre. Our visitor economy supports over 20,000 jobs in Leeds, visitor numbers have increased by over 17% since 2013 and we are now the fourth most popular conference destination in the UK. High profile events last summer boosted visitor numbers including the Ashes Test Match, Cricket World Cup, Tour de Yorkshire, UCI Road Race, Triathlon World Series and of course Ed Sheeran at Roundhay Park. Our commitment to cut support culture and the jobs and opportunities it brings is paying off, Light Night last year attracted over 150,000 people with an economic impact of £4.1m for every pound invested in Light Night almost £6 is generated for the local economy. Our museums and galleries continue to perform exceptionally, visited by nearly 1.7m people last year up from 359,000 15 years ago. The Town Hall welcomed over 215,000 people last year to cultural events ranging from 1,853 weddings and international beer festivals and of course so much more. All of the events there generate important revenue that we use to support Council services. If you've been to the Town Hall recently you will have to agree that the building is looking rather tired, I think that's a polite way, but I'm very pleased to tell you that we won't have to walk round buckets at concerts any more because we have invested and provided money from the Capital Programme to fix the roof ...

(Cheers)

And officers are now working on a capital scheme to dramatically improve the building as a destination for visitors so that we can attract more conferences and more events than ever before. Our capital in programme includes investment to secure the long term future of Kirkgate Market with £5.8m to restore the 1875 block shop units within the most historic part of the market. From 2023 the new Apart Hotel on George Street, on the George Street side of the market we'll create better connectivity to passing footfall for the market and will allow the reopening of the famous Butchers Row. All of this activity stimulates our economy and creates jobs and opportunities for young people but we can't deliver inclusive growth on our own we need other organisations in the city to play their part and I am pleased to tell you that many now are. More organisations are taking on apprentices again, apprenticeship starts in Leeds increased by 18% last year to over 6,600. We have developed the Leeds Inclusive Anchors Network, Anchor institutions are big and locally rooted organisations with a long history in their place. They are unlikely to move and have a big impact on local communities and economies but the way in which they operate can have an even bigger impact. There are currently eleven organisations in our network and they include the Universities and Colleges, Hospitals and NHS organisations, the Council and Yorkshire Water. They employ over 57,000 people in Leeds which equates to 1 in 7 of the Leeds workforce. The network is already looking at opportunities to direct more spend locally, lead on healthy workplaces and help local people access jobs. One example is the Leeds Teaching Hospital collaboration with the Council to create a route into employment into the hospitals for residents in Burmantofts and Richmond Hill ...

(Applause)

Including from the priority neighbourhood of Lincoln Green. This led to 28 candidates been directly offered roles within the Teaching Hospital.

The personal stories of how this has transformed those lives is overwhelming and this programme is being replicated in other parts of the city. We continue to use our purchasing power to benefit the Leeds economy. The Council is responsible for procuring over £800m worth of goods and services annually and each year just over half of our external spend is with local suppliers. In our Housing Growth Programme we have a target for 85% of the project subcontractors to be small and medium sized enterprises and for 40% of the total spend to be within a twenty mile radius and 20% within a 10 mile radius of our sites. However perhaps the biggest challenge facing this Council is the climate emergency. In declaring a climate emergency last March we were clear everyone has to help the city meet its carbon reduction targets and I am proud to say as a Council we are leading the way nationally. Last month we announced an ambitious plan to cut the Council's carbon emissions by more than half by 2025 in line with science base carbon reduction targets at the same time we outlined a £200m capital programme to reduce emissions and to help the city adapt against the potential risks of climate change. The Council's key sources of emissions are street lighting, council buildings and our fleet, we are make already making good progress to reduce their impact. Every department and service across the Council has a role to play and here are just some of the actions we are taking. We have committed to half the energy required for street lighting in Leeds by moving to LED, we have the largest electric fleet in the UK and we will double its size and will move to purchase only low emissions vehicles, we will reduce emissions from Council buildings by a further 40% by 2025 and we will move to buy 100% of our electricity from green sources immediately with the ambition to continually move to more locally produced renewables over the next 10 years.

The current works on the Headrow are installing District Heating pipes to help replace gas in city centre Council buildings. We will go further and double the number of properties to receive heat from the network over the next 12 months with the Civic Hall due to be connected in October this year. To help reduce food related emissions and to improve the health of pupils our school meals Service Catering Leeds has introduced a healthy and tasty climate friendly menu and I have tried these tasty menus before anyone asks, there being introduced at 182 primary schools across the city. We are building new Council houses to a very high energy efficiency standard and will continue to review how we can reduce energy costs for all our tenants, we are also designing housing schemes that promote a 10% net gain in biodiversity. In procurement we now seek tenders that reduce waste and increase recycling, adopt sustainable transport options and improve energy efficiency in buildings.

There are many more actions we are taking across the Council as we saw illustrated at our recent State of the City Council meeting and also our Big Leeds Climate Conversation showed the public support for our work, however we can't be complacent and know we have to do much more to ensure the public continues to support the work we are doing on climate emergency. I'm

delighted that we will be working with the Leeds Climate Commission to establish a Transport Citizens Jury to inform all of our plans around future mobility across the city. Also last month Executive Board approved an ambitious programme of tree planting and Woodland creation, this included support initially for 630 hectares of predominantly Parks and Countryside land to convert to woodland over the next 25 years this equates to 25 hectares a year and involves growing and planting some 2.8m trees. I am pleased to announce that this budget includes an extra £200,000 so that we can go much further, in fact so much further that I can say today that we will double our woodland creation ambition and plant 6m trees across Leeds with the conversion of 1,260 hectares to new woodland across our whole estate. We will quicken planting rates to approximately 200,000 trees every year starting immediately during autumn this year. The additional £200,000 is on top of the £350,000 announced in January and will be used to increase growing capacity at the Arium. Our proposal is ready to be delivered, everyone seems to be promising money for more trees but we are the only ones with a proper plan to make it happen.

(Applause)

We will launch a massive volunteering programme to allow every citizen to be part of this solution to the climate emergency. Partners can contribute by providing volunteers for planting as well as funding for tree provision, planting and woodland establishment. Details of how people can get involved will be available this spring. We have moved at pace since declaring the climate emergency and as a Council we are seen as a national leader setting the gold standard for what can be achieved at a city level with our partners. Can I pay special tribute to Leeds University and their leading role on the Leeds Climate Commission.

(Applause)

This budget also includes extra funding to provide additional resource to the climate change team in the Council and I think we should applaud the achievements of our excellent teams of officers supporting our members who are also doing a brilliant job in this area, let's show our appreciation for the work that they're doing.

(Applause)

Our actions will more than half Councils emissions but this isn't the only benefit from tackling climate emergency we will be looking forward to other benefits such as creating and sustaining green jobs. They will also help tackle inequalities through cheaper energy bills, cleaner air meaning improved health particularly in our inner city areas, there will be more transport options, more green spaces and more wildlife delivering social justice. We know we can't deliver this on our own and we will continue to work with other major public and private bodies and the voluntary and community centre across the city and particularly encouraging smaller businesses to play their part. We are also making it easier for residents for example through improved recycling services, we remain one of the few local authorities that continues to offer free garden

waste collections. In November we increased the number of items that can be put into our green wheelie bins to help recycle the 9,500 tonnes of plastic still needlessly put into black bins. We have increased eligibility for free collections of unwanted items so that residents in receipt of Council Tax benefit are now eligible for 4 free collections per household per calendar year. We have increased recycling on the go with over 1.2m coffee cups, 140,000 cans, 160,000 bottles recycled in the city centre through the charity hubbub over the last year. Our work has been used as a best practice example for cities like Swansea and Edinburgh to follow but we know the people of Leeds want to do much more, we want to help them but without support from Central Government it simply won't be possible to make Leeds a carbon neutral city. With additional powers and funding devolved from Westminster we could radically improve the city's housing stock and transport network to enable sustainable and inclusive economic growth. Of course we will continue to do everything we can to fight the climate emergency, we have made good progress with WYCA on improvements to help people move in a more sustainable way including bus priority, park and rides, new train stations and an expanding cycle network to name but a few. However until additional powers and funding are devolved by Central Government to a local level this city's ability to tackle climate change will continue to be severely hindered. The January Executive Board report contained a list of 17 actions we need Government to take and the upcoming Budget on March 11th is an opportunity for them to do so. We are using our Budget to take action to tackle the climate emergency, we are calling on Boris Johnson to use his budget next month to do the same.

The Government's Budget will be a test on many levels of whether the Prime Minister is serious about promises made in the election campaign. He talked about solving all sorts of major problems including both Social Care and Housing crises but his action in these areas has been very limited so far. For Social Care all he could come up with in the Queen's speech was a suggestion for cross party talks. In addition to climate action there are 3 other key asks for Leeds we want to see in the Budget. First it is vital that they give us a devolution deal, the Leeds City Region Growth Deal funding is coming to an end, without a devolution deal we will not have access to the same funding as other areas that already have a deal in place. Second flood defences, we had a really close call during the recent storms and we only just avoided a repeat of the devastation caused by Storm Eva in late 2015. The Tory election manifesto promised £4b nationally for flood defences and Leeds needs £22.5m to make up the shortfall of the money that they promised us for the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme Phase 2, the part that will protect Kirkstall and all of the communities going up the river Aire in that direction. We were promised the full amount we need to give Leeds citizens the protection they deserve and a major question we are all asking why won't the Government commit and deliver on their promise to us and those residents that was so badly affected in 2015.

(Applause)

Finally the Prime Minister needs to put his money where his mouth is and give Leeds the money that we need for mass transit. Many of us have lost count of the number of times he said Leeds needs mass transit in the election

run up, so we are a city that is expecting and we're hoping that he will use the Budget on the 11th March to announce in the first place that he will give us the £20m development funding we have asked for so that we can move forward at pace to enable construction to start from 2023 to 2024.

The Prime Minister also needs to use his budget to address the key national issues with Local Government funding. Since 2010 Councils have lost almost 60p out of every pound of funding the Government provided for local services at the same time demand for services has risen significantly, let's set the challenge, the stark truth is that Councils need £8b more by 2025 if they were just to run services at the same levels today. They need £3.6b to cover the Adult Social Care funding gap and £3.1b to cover the Children's Care funding gap. In Children's we have reached the point where councils across the country are discussing the possibility of taking Government to judicial review due to the crisis in the Special Educational Needs and Disability funding, how shameful is that. The lack of direct Government funding has also meant too much reliance is placed on the outdated taxes such as Business Rates and Council Tax increasing uncertainty in future levels of funding and penalising areas with a low Council Tax base. A key question remains how will the Government address this.

The Annual Local Government Finance survey of Local Authorities found 97% of respondents are unhappy with the Government's progress in delivering a sustainable funding system and 80% were not confident that the issue would be prioritised. Respondents wanted urgent clarity on the Government's plans for the Fair funding Review and future business rates retention. As we move further into the 2020's it's important we take action now to challenge what this Government has in store for us however the biggest immediate concern for this Council's financial future is the Government's supposed Fair Funding Review. Let me tell you there is nothing fair about it. We have heard a lot of talk from this Government recently about levelling up funding to redress some of the imbalances of the past, no one is quite sure what exactly levelling up means. It is clearly however the new buzz phrase of the moment and one we'll all have to get used to using.

We know that the Fair Funding Review is the very opposite of levelling up it seeks to move Council funding away from areas like ours and moving them instead to Tory controlled Councils mainly in the South East. The figures are stark it is estimated under the review that £320m would be shifted from areas of high deprivation and the South East would gain around £300m of that and in Leeds we could lose over £11 million a year. Without significant change we know already that we will have to deal with a budget gap of £124.9m starting the year after next through to 2024/25. To remove another £11m from us instead diverting funding to Conservative led councils in the South would be another huge kick in the teeth from the Tories to the people of Leeds, levelling up it most certainly is not. So what can we talk about when we talk about levelling up, let's talk about reversing the shocking statistic that over the last 10 years life expectancy has gone backwards. Let's talk about reversing in work poverty and the shocking statistics and the numbers of children living in poverty in our city and let's talk about the shocking disparity in infrastructure spend between the

North and particularly the South East and most of all let's talk about action to reverse austerity to pay back to Local Government and other public services what is owed delivering social justice and decency. As a Labour Council we will continue to fight and do everything we can to protect frontline services for the people of Leeds and our Budget this year does just that.

Lord Mayor we are proud of our great city, we are proud that we have the guts to stand up and fight for what is rightfully ours most of all we are proud to be setting a budget that gives people and especially young people hope, they have found their voice with regard to climate emergency it is a great privilege to be working with them to deliver a transformational agenda for the future, let's continue the fight. I move the Budget Lord Mayor.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR LEWIS: Thank you Lord Mayor. I second and reserve the right to speak which I'll be using later.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Carter.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Thank you my Lord Mayor. Can I begin by agreeing with the Council Leader in her thanks to Victoria Bradshaw and her Finance Team. I particularly want to thank Victoria for the clarity of the reports that we've been receiving which I think all members, or at least all those of us who bother to study the financial situation in Leeds, will have welcomed. I also want to thank the rest of her team for the advice they've given to my Budget Team in helping us to to put together what I freely admit is a series of fairly modest amendments all within the £1.35b net revenue budget in the Substantial Capital Budget that we have before us.

I also want to thank my Budget Team, most of whom I think will be speaking during the Budget debate, for their efforts in putting together our proposals. I have to say that as we've come to expect from the administration nothing that ever goes wrong is their fault and everything that goes right of course is due to them. I wish the world was as simple as that as I'm sure most of the rest of you do as well. There was one singular emission in the Budget presentation we've just heard there was no mention whatever of Minimum Revenue Provision. That was an exercise the Council entered into a few years ago that came with a very distinct health warning, a health warning that those of us who voted in favour of Minimum Revenue Provision took on board, regrettably the Council administration did not take on board the very clear warning of the then Finance Team of the city and that was that even though there was significant short term gains in entering into a minimum repayment against debt if we didn't control unsupported borrowing then we would exacerbate the position in a few years time when we have to start paying back the debt at a much higher level. A figure was mentioned, and this is extremely I think important, a figure was mentioned that this year we have to find £28.4m worth of savings, the debt has increased to such a degree

that virtually all that saving is to pay increased debt, not a cut from the Government, but increased debt incurred by the Labour administration, £27.6m, so of the savings you've been required to save, to make there's just an £800,000 difference. Now I'm sorry that's a fact you know it's in your own figures so this so called £28.4m worth of cuts from the Government is in point of fact £800,000 of cuts from the Government and £27.6m of increased debt repayments incurred by this Council. It's interesting to know that during the period in which the MRP policy was adjusted in every year between 2017/18/19 to 2019/20 your operational boundaries on debt increased from £2.2b in 17/18, to £2.85b in 2021. So let me be clear Councillor Lewis will undoubtedly blame everybody for agreeing to the MRP arrangement but most of us and I think I include opposition parties here, all opposition parties, did so with a clear message coming from the Finance Department that it was only a good deal and only sustainable if we controlled the level of borrowing and the administration haven't and a staggering figure is that debt repayment as a proportion of our revenue budget will be 22% by 2022 almost a quarter of the budget, their budget, our budget, your budget in 2022/23 almost 25% of it will be go in paying debt, not providing services but paying back debt. On overall terms we again see an increase in the net revenue budget for 2021 the budget's increased by £9m as already been said to £525m almost 526m and this follows increases in 2019/20 of £5.8m and £18.2m in 2018/19 and when one looks at the general fund gross budget over the period it's also clear that Leeds has been getting more funding and I am not for one minute suggesting that we haven't faced very significant savings indeed because clearly we have but the difficulty for the narrative that we've just heard is it focuses totally on Government cuts that uses questionable cumulative calculations to the figures to be clear the gross budget in 2019/20 stands at £1.35b and that excludes, excludes spending on Education and I might remind you that despite all the tales of woe you're going to underspend your revenue budget this year by £1.1m. Of course given cost pressures and demand pressures in Adult Social Care and Children's Services we all want to see more money coming to Leeds and I am on record on numerous occasions in calling for that. It was me I think a few years ago who called for a royal commission that you failed to support on funding to Local Government. I think a Royal Commission would probably have been a lot more beneficial in its outcome for the city than possibly the Funding Review that is currently taking place but you have, I have to say jumped the gun in predicting all these figures because as yet nobody knows the outcome and certainly in the light of all the changes currently being made I suspect you're pretty far from the mark but I want to draw Members attention to income to the Council in two key areas, it isn't in your budget calculations because it's not part of that revenue budget. Since 2010 over and above everything in your budget Adult Social Care has received £115m in revenue grant and Children's Services £211m so when you talk about the gross savings you have to make what you should be talking about is the net savings which shows in those two Departments alone a further £300m of income not insignificant sums.

The return to 50% Business Rate Retention is disappointing particularly given the additional funding that Leeds will receive as the result of the 2019 spending round which of course provides an extra £11.5m but because of the return to 50% retention much of this has been lost. We hope this is only

temporary because as we all ought to know and I'm sure certainly some of us do, it is highly likely progress can be made the devolution deal will be announced in the Budget.

Talks are ongoing at almost every level and the Government have made it very clear that they want to announce a deal so hopefully Business Rate Retention could be 100% but on this subject let us remember that the deal that's currently on offer to Leeds is virtually the same deal a West Yorkshire Combined Authority that was offered to the previous Council Leader, Keith Wakefield, by George Osborne in 2015 and it was pretty clear to most of us even then, even those like myself who have always favoured a city region deal, that this was going to be the Government's preferred option particularly with all the opposition there was elsewhere in Yorkshire particularly in North Yorkshire despite the denials from West Yorkshire Leaders that there was a difference of view, we all know and some of us have been able to see some of the communications through Freedom of Information requests that the picture given to this Council of every Council Leader in Yorkshire been in favour of one option was a million miles from the mark, so if we'd accepted the deal on offer 5 years ago this Council would have been a minimum of £50m better off so the dogmatic approach, actually I have to say in fairness, taken by both the Labour Leaders in West Yorkshire and the Government, both sides of the argument for One Yorkshire, all that did was to blow smoke in the face of a deal that was always there to be done and we'd have seen this Council already part of a devolved deal and I freely admit not the one I would have liked to have seen because I continue to favour a city region deal because the economic footprint of the city region is what is best for this city but I have always accepted that that requires a level of legislation that the Government has not been prepared to undertake and indeed a number of the Local Authorities to the North East and West of here were unlikely to support. So we will undoubtedly get what there is on offer the tragedy is we could have had it 5 years ago.

My Lord Mayor we await the National Budget is it has been referred to with interest as Leeds residents will because of the unprecedented election victory which some people seem to have forgotten, achieved by Boris Johnson we now have a Government that signalled that major infrastructure schemes in the North will be at the top of the list of priorities. This presents a major opportunity to deliver, I hope, a mass transit scheme for Leeds because let me on that point say that it was a Labour Government that turned down Supertram and I keep on repeating this because I was there when it happened. It was Alistair Darling who said no we are not going to fund your Supertram proposals despite the fact that we'd already got the land purchases in place, go away and think of a bus option. So when you talk about us not having a mass transit system let's put the blame where it lies and I hope, make no bones about it, I hope that in the Budget will be the funding we need to start to undertake the raft of work that's necessary to get a mass transit system up and running and preferably in my lifetime. If the Treasury Green Book is revised as we've been told it's going to be and the time is now to get Leeds on the front foot for major funding allocations to finally break the gridlock in this city and it is essential therefore that we have an effective working relationship with Government and a lot of what I've heard so far today does not bode particularly well in that respect.

The filing cabinet in Whitehall marked White Paper correspondence from Leeds is full to overflowing and my Lord Mayor I'm afraid a new approach is desperately needed if we in this city, this great city, we are to realise both our ambitions and our potential.

Let me turn to the situation currently in play with the £173.5m agreed following the NGT fiasco which I notice interestingly forgotten by the administration. As many Members already know we're suffering from schemes being delayed such as the King Lane roundabout in Alwoodley, there is now significant pressure to actually get the money spent, the 2021 deadline isn't helpful but I wonder how much pressure you've actually put on Government to extend that and you have had this money for 5 years and we find ourselves in a situation where there are scheduled to be 2 full years of city centre disruption with the possibility of the Headrow works, those on Infirmary Street and The Corn Exchange not to mention the bridge on Regent Street all been in progress at the same time. Anyone who earns their living in the city of Leeds and travels by car or by bus should be extremely concerned about the delays and I hope that this Council is going to work harder than ever before in minimising that disruption let alone the increased congestion and pollution it is going to bring in its wake. I really think the expression you can't make omelettes without breaking eggs is not very helpful to the people of Leeds trying to get to and from work, we all know there is going to be disruption, it's inevitable is it been minimised is the question and I think a lot of residents would say to you right now we are not doing enough to minimise the congestion or to keep them informed.

There is however a real opportunity, the best opportunity we will probably have for 20 years to secure major and transformative infrastructure investment in Leeds. We have to get on and deliver it but we have to bear in mind that people need to move around this city during the period of time which could be a number of years, more than 2, when life could be very tricky indeed and I hope we're working closely particularly with the bus companies. They quite rightly in many respects get all the criticism but one thing they can't do anything about is shifts coming to an end prematurely, drivers suddenly telling people on buses I'm sorry my shifts over I'm going back to the garage off you get because Leeds has closed a road without any notice, it simply is not beyond the wit of man to try and avoid that sort of disruption whenever possible.

Turning to my Group's amendments we've a number of clear priorities this year my Lord Mayor and we want to respond to the climate emergency and I'm delighted to hear of the further measures outlined a few moments ago. We want to do more still and I'll come back to that and my colleagues will touch on it when they speak. We want to see more preventative measures introduced in Children's Services to save future costs to both the Council and the wider public purse but also to benefit recipients of the service most particularly of all. We want more local infrastructure investment, more funding for Community Committees, new facilities for those who suffer from dementia, more support for Local High Streets, additional funding for Flood Alleviation, additional funding for Highway Maintenance along with a new approach and an end to charging for Inert and Bulky Waste. We want to invest to save as much as we can and

ensure that Council Taxpayers get a fair deal from this Council and for their Council Tax. These amendments are costed and as the robust report reflects entirely deliverable. Designed they are limited in scope and designed to limit prudential borrowing but to invest to save criteria. In the past 5 years alone it has cost Local Authorities £22.2m at a minimum to clear fly tipping and in most of those cases charges are levied. They've done nothing except to see the incidence of fly tipping increase, in Leeds in 2017/18 the year before charges were introduced there were 1,866 major fly tipping incidents, in 2018/19 it increased to 3,217 incidents, in 2011/12 there were only 237 incidents so it's clear that under your administration fly tipping incidents have risen enormously with a 1,257% increase between 2011/12 and 2018/19. The charges haven't worked they've made the situation worse and the Council Taxpayers are left picking up the tab through their Council Tax because it's costing this Authority thousands of pounds to clear up this this plague on our society. If we really want to make environmental improvements work then there has to be carrot as well as stick or we will start to lose the support of the people we serve.

Returning to the theme of punitive charges My Lord Mayor you continue or this Authority continues to increase charges for those living in sheltered housing. In the past you've used the Government's rent reduction policy as an excuse, well that's not available this year in essence you're choosing to charge self payers in sheltered housing, often those who are barely keeping their heads above water, another increase in fees, reversing that policy altogether from its inception would cost about £600,000. You've been charging older people to the tune of hundreds of thousands of pounds and every year you've had the opportunity not to do it.

Through my Group's Budget Amendments on each and every occasion you have repeatedly refused and I'm afraid My Lord Mayor it's nothing short of disgraceful. Again we hear the mantra of Inclusive Growth, it doesn't quite fit does it, for those 1,160 elderly people who live just above the place in which they begin to get benefits and this year will be given a £5.05 basic rise in the state pension and pay £3.50 of it to Leeds City Council but the very fact that these people are living in our sheltered housing, they are hardly millionaires, why on earth are the Council and we've heard for how long over an hour that how we're caring for the most vulnerable. Sorry, sorry this gives the lie to that, 1,160 people who are just above the rate at which they get benefits and £3.50 of their £5.05 pension increase goes to this Council, it is not right or fair. I think we're all aware and it's been said already and I do agree that climate change is urgent and rightly at the top of the Council's agenda. The declaration of a climate emergency was the right thing to do, we fully supported you in doing that however words are one thing but we also need actions at every level. We all realise that it's a global issue but we can do precious little alone about the global situation so we have to think globally, act locally and the Conservative Group Budget Amendments contain a range of measures that move this agenda forward and even given the extra that you have announced today we go further than that.

There is a major opportunity to produce and deliver more trees in Leeds using the unique facility that is Arium. Very few Local Authorities have such a

facility and we would want to make maximum use of it in order to tackle the climate emergency. Small levels of investment would enable us to deliver even more trees and offer opportunities for resale to Local Authorities who have the same problems as us but do not have the same unique facility for dealing with them. This is clearly an invest to save measure and can free up time and revenue for other environmental priorities. Remind you again that it was in 2016 that we first moved a resolution in the Budget debate for more tree planting which you voted down. 4 years have gone past it's a bit hollow for you to try to claim all the credit now when you could have started this 4 years ago. But we also look to increase the investments of the Capital Programme in tree planting and we would make an additional £350,000 on top of your Budget to start planting trees now and where possible we'd tie this to a carbon offsetting scheme the ultimate aim would be for more private investment in addition to that in the city's budget.

And can I also say here the one area which you've completely failed to recognise is that for all the land there is in Council ownership there is a great deal more in private ownership and you have mentioned nothing about how we engage with landowners and we may have to sign legal long term binding agreements with them to enable us to plant trees on their land because actually some of the land that causes the biggest problem in terms of flooding isn't our land, its privately owned land and again I really worry, I really worry in the planning system that we are not, we are not anywhere near robust enough in making sure we get planning conditions enforced on all new building sites that actually deliver the trees that we need and whilst the numbers we talk about seem very high let me tell you nothing that any of us have said actually replaces all the trees that have been lost over the past 20 years so we are starting from a very low point to get back to where we need to be.

My Lord Mayor we also noted with alarm the amount of annual mileage by Council staff travelling on Council business. It totals a staggering 4.2m miles a year, now some of this is essential car useage but 1.7m costing £740,000 a year is casual car usage. We believe this needs to be addressed immediately so we would establish a new car pool scheme that will enable staff to use electric vehicles to get around the city on Council busines. This will build on the good work that's already been outlined and I accept and would ultimately result in a reduction in payments and therefore the borrowing costs of this investment would be paid for. We can see no reason why this scheme cannot be piloted in 2020/2021 with a full launch in future years. What does concern me and should concern other Members of Council is that we appear to not be making a very good job of installing electrical charging points, I am told they are not fully compatible with all hybrids and electric vehicles and indeed the number that we've got does not efficiently mean that we can recharge our own fleet of vehicles in a timely fashion, this has to be resolved. We're also mindful of the need to deliver our new charging network in an ethical manner. We absolutely must use ethically sourced cobalt. I'll not go into detail but I'm sure a number of you will have heard that some cobalt is sourced in Africa using child labour, it quite clearly runs against any environmental policy that we should fall into that trap and on a completely separate issue I would like reassurance, as I'm sure all

members would, that as we move as we need to do towards more electric vehicles we are clear about the sourcing of the required cobalt.

Back in 2018 the Council signed up to working towards banning single use plastics in Council buildings. Last year we allocated further money to this in our Budget Amendment that you rejected, we want to do the same again but more. You used the phrase put your money where your mouth is we talk again and repeatedly about single use plastics, well it's time this Authority put its money where its mouth is and let's get it sorted out. We also believe there's a better way of improving the city's road network. The firm Tarmac have a much cleaner way of producing their product, warm mix asphalt or WMA is produced at much lower temperatures than conventional tarmac which saves energy therefore carbon in the production of the material and we would look to prioritise the use of this product and we provide an extra £1.5m for highways improvements and resurfacing based on using it. Over the longer term we believe savings are possible in terms of highway maintenance as WMA is known to be much more durable. We want to move forward with this and we think you should seriously take the suggestion on board. We also believe that investing in green infrastructure can also play a part and potentially be much more transformative across all our local communities that is why as part of these proposals we want to launch a Leeds Green Infrastructure Bank. There's £30m of unspent 106 balances. Thankfully you're not propping up your revenue budget with these as you have in recent years but My Lord Mayor it's still a fact that these lie unused and we believe that through careful negotiation with developers and by establishing deeds of variation this money can be accessed and used for new local infrastructure projects in communities across the city which and we have included £10m for this purpose which is about 25% of the balance and going back to the point I made about engaging private companies and private landowners in tree planting what better idea than to use this for that purpose but to use it in the wards where it has been contributed. Now we're not talking about grading one area's 106 to pay to another but we are saying we should be using the money and not leaving it, you can't on the one hand complain there's no money and on the other hand leave £39m lying there year after year after year until you reach the point when actually you have legally to pay it back to the developer. We don't want that situation to arise.

As a Council many of us in opposition have said time and time again that the administration needs to take responsibility and whilst yes we need robust conversations with Government and I have to my Cost engaged in those with all three political parties over the years, let's not forget that we have a significant gross revenue from budget of £1.35b, there is room for local initiatives. The terrible weather over the past few weeks and the increased risk of serious flooding have underlined how precarious and vulnerable many parts of the city are and we are of course are entirely in support of lobbying the Government to fully fund the gap that exists on Phase 2 of our Flood Alleviation Scheme, indeed we met with Rishi Sunak who was then the Chief Secretary to the Treasury within 10 days he became the Chancellor and when he spoke with me privately I put this at the top our list I'll be quite honest because I think the risk of flooding is here to stay and we, if the Government and Local Authorities don't play their full parts we are going to have disaster after disaster year after year so

in our budget we have allocated a further sum of £5m to add to our funding commitment. No one can have failed to notice over this past few weeks that the first thing to happen in the heavy rain was the overflowing of the gutters wherever you went in Leeds the gutters were overflowing in next to no time. Now I accept that it was very heavy rainfall but to be frank if anyone in this Chamber believes that the gully clearing system in this Authority works or indeed has ever worked in anybody's lifetime is living on another planet, it doesn't work and I'll tell you why doesn't work, the excellent men who operate the 5 machines for a city the size of Leeds, 5 gulley emptying machines, only 4 of which at a maximum work at any one time. But those men who do a great job they let the Highways Department presumably know when they can't clear a gully what happens then, how many times do you see engineers from the Highways Department cordon off an area round a gully and excavate, very very rarely and thereby hangs the problem and we can't just go around blaming all and sundry and take no responsibility for a basic Local Government service and we have got now to tackle this. My goodness if we can't clear the drains or you can't clear the drains how the heck are we supposed to deliver multi million pound highway projects and there's going to be more to come as we build on more green field or you build on more green field and green belt land that drains directly into the rivers Aire and Wharfe. There has to be a review of every single green field and green belt site in the Site Allocations Plan given that we now know, we've declared a climate emergency since you allocated that land and we now know there's going to be more flooding so those sites before planning permission is given on any more of them have to be thoroughly reviewed on the basis of what we now know about flooding in this city.

Moving on My Lord Mayor very quickly now we want to emulate a model that's been successfully trialled in other Local Authority areas to invest in a new state of the art 60 bed dementia care facility. If other Authorities like Liverpool for example can do this so can we, it will help to drive up standards of care for older people and it's a key issue and you're right it's a key issue facing us all in the years to come but please please don't try and lay the blame for all this at the present Government, the last Government, the coalition Government or indeed Brown's Government or Blair, this has been a problem for 20 years growing and growing in seriousness and nobody in any political party can throw stones. It should have been tackled a long time ago and we all know it's a massive hot potato and that's why Boris Johnson and he didn't just say it in the Queen's speech and he didn't you just say it in our manifesto but over and over again and I've said in this Chamber only at the last meeting, said we wanted an all party group to discuss a way forward and your current Leader, I gather he's still hanging on, over and over again refused. Unless the major political parties in this country get together and try and come up with a solution it will be a political football for years to come to the detriment of the people we're supposed to be trying to help but please you can't place the blame for this on any one Government you must as ever take responsibility for the failings of your own party.

My Lord Mayor as ever we're keen to support the Area Committees and have pledged extra money in our Budget for that purpose and I've already mentioned devolution but it works two ways devolution, you can devolve power

from here to the Area Committees and I have to say that some of the stuff that's been discussed on environmental issues, local schemes better delivered by Area Committees. In the last 5 years your administration has devolved no other functions to the Area Committees, none at all, furthermore the Area Committees small as their budgets are have borne an unfair share of the reductions and while other budgets have gone up this last couple of years the budgets for the Area Committees have remained the same. Well if you believe in devolution it works both ways in this place it only works one way and that's to the centre and I think we serve the residents of this city very badly if we don't devolve more power to Area Committees and I for one have trust in Area Committees of any political persuasion to deliver services on the ground where people most notice them and you have done nothing for 5 years, you need to get on with it as fast as you can.

We also want to create community planning teams with 5 new offices directly answering to Area Committees to keep local Members updated on planning issues and to take on board the serious planning issues that all of us face in our own localities. It's a resource to support our local communities who quite rightly have the keenest interest in planning and the shaping of our future city. We also prioritise local funding for our Town and District High Streets, thankfully you've included no disastrous proposals to introduce parking charges this year so at least you are capable of learning lessons sometimes. So we want to see money invested in our local towns across the city, towns and community hubs such as Crossgates, Halton, Tingley, Farsley, Horsforth, Pudsey, Guiseley, Wetherby, Otley, Garforth, Kippax to name but a few they all need support and hopefully the Government will give help in dealing with the vexed issue of Business Rates. Of course we support your programme, your Local Centres Programme particularly because it's a carbon copy of the scheme that I introduced or rather we introduced as a joint administration and praise from yourselves or acceptance that we got something right is always welcome from whatever source it comes. So we want to see that expanded as well.

Our Budget proposal has set out a series of initiatives to help families and individuals facing specific problems, mental health difficulties, drug and alcohol abuse, 2 year old nursery provision and other colleagues will expand on that shortly.

Moving on to Housing I merely want to reiterate the fact that we still believe we should be setting up a housing company. We're entirely in agreement with other groups on the Council that's the trick we are missing for reasons which quite frankly completely escapes me.

So My Lord Mayor what we are proposing is a further investment in acting locally, on the climate emergency, investment in care services for older people, investment in prevention and early years services, more money for the green infrastructure, investment in our Highways, added flood protection, more money for local communities and high streets, funding for school initiatives, commitments to prevent anti social behaviour, more money for changing places facilities which we were promised was going to happen hasn't happened and a strong commitment to new home ownership for those who most need it and at

the moment can least afford it. These are the commitments we would make and we do make to the people of this city and we believe they are entirely deliverable for Leeds residents.

We are entering into a dynamic new political period. People of this country made a decisive choice at the General Election and we will now see how Leeds and the UK fares but it's a time of significant opportunity. The Government are planning major investment in the North of England, I support that and I will be the first to be critical if it doesn't happen but all political parties in this city should grasp whatever opportunities this creates, the scales need to fall from your eyes and you have to accept that you've lost touch with the communities that you have long claimed to be your own. They want to see the politics of aspiration, a Government that delivers, new opportunities and a Council that transforms local communities and towns and not just the city centre.

Leeds has to take advantage of these opportunities, if we don't the people of Leeds should not let us forget it Lord Mayor. My Lord Mayor having listened to Councillor Blake and I think that's the first time I've mentioned your name

(Laughter)

Well I hope it is. I've tried to do a speech without mentioning you at all but I found it almost impossible. My Lord Mayor it's only 6 weeks since the people of this country decisively rejected socialism ...

(Cheers and applause)

Socialism is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly and applying the wrong remedies. My Lord Mayor that Marx not Karl, Groucho. I move the Amendments.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lamb.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you Lord Mayor. I thought you were going to offer a decent break for those listening. What I will promise for those that are listening is my appreciation because actually you've had to sit quiet for a long time. I will assure you that this speech will not be quite as long as Councillor Carter's however. First of all Lord Mayor I'd like to thank the Finance Team, Victoria Bradshaw, Richard Ellis and Naomi Eastwood who have been very indulgent for the Liberal Democrat Team when we've putting together our ideas and the resulting Amendments thanks to them are able to be signed off as being economically robust and I now offer them to the Council.

Lord Mayor the Budget is traditionally the most creative of Council meetings offering hope as planning is made for the future year. It concentrates opposition minds to demonstrate how alternative administrations would prioritise investment, offering credible costed alternatives to the electors of Leeds. We definitely live in interesting times suffering the latest chapter of Government imposed austerity yet on the threshold of a Budget that promises to deliver a levelling up of the North South divide. Lord Mayor experience tells us that we should be very wary of spending promises made during an election campaign especially when they are combined with promises not to increase taxes. Experience tells us that a chancellor whether he's new or not can give with one hand and take with the other. Experience shows us that your face needs to fit and that despite the greater Leeds economy having just as much potential as that of Manchester because we do not have an Elected Mayor we have our Business Rates reduced from 75 to 50% while Mayor Burnham keeps 100%. He enjoys hundreds of millions of pounds of guaranteed transport spending whilst we are sent to join the transforming cities fund queue. This city has equivocated for too long on too many issues whilst waiting for the Central Government funding cavalry to come over the hill to save the day and the Liberal Democrat Group will spell out what some of those areas are, why we cannot wait for Government Ministers to get their act together on areas we say are important but where we refuse to put our resources and ingenuity into action to start making a difference ourselves. Adults and Children's Social Care have been waiting for a Government Green Paper on future funding for 2 years, promised universal recycling schemes still have yet to leave the drawing boards in Whitehall and as for funding our mass transit system that Mr Johnson committed to, radio silence so far.

Lord Mayor the Liberal Democrat Group's Amendments as always seek to complement and enhance the core offer from the incumbent administration. We hope to offer direction where it has been lost, focus where it is lacking and initiative where it is needed. Our intention is to enable the Council's different service areas to be more responsive to community needs and to enable every citizen to play their part in the bigger agendas facing our city. Throughout we want to be a more self sustainable city from caring for our vulnerable children, reducing our waste and carbon footprint, travelling around the city and enhancing community assets.

Lord Mayor although consistently opposed every year by the ruling group at the Budget debate some amendments have not been reproduced this year in recognition that the administration has actually adopted our ideas retrospectively. I speak of course for example of our call for replacement LED lanterns for the city street lights to reduce costs and save carbon and of course last year's amendment calling for the creation of a Council owned housing company to build affordable new homes, although not accepted at the time it did not need resurrecting this year Lord Mayor as the Council has ended up implementing it a matter of months later whether it implements it in the manner that we hoped is another issue. Lord Mayor we will also not be reproducing our perennial amendment to introduce a public health approach universal period poverty scheme in Leeds schools regrettably though this is not because the

Council has chosen to adopt it after all, this Council has continued in its misguided bespoke Leeds product contrary to the advice of period poverty charities only to see it now superseded by a superior Government produced Universal Scheme for all schools which now thankfully makes our amendment redundant. However Lord Mayor one amendment that will be repeated from last year is to deliver the funding necessary to build a brand new home for children looked after here in Leeds. The Children's Commissioner for England and Longfield this Christmas released a report called Pass the parcel: children posted around the care system which called for investment in care accommodation to avoid sending children far away from friends and family which can be detrimental to their wellbeing. This followed on from an all party parliamentary group report calling for authorities to avoid placing children outside their area as their isolation makes them more vulnerable to exploitation by county lines organised crime. Leeds City Council places a significant proportion of its children looked after outside of the city many more than the few that require a distant placement due to child sexual exploitation. These outside placements may tick all the boxes necessary to fulfil the requirements of due diligence but they are 30% more expensive and they do not maximise the wellbeing of those children placed far away from support from family and from friends. We show in our Amendment Lord Mayor how this Council like others around the country already can invest in local accommodation, increase the wellbeing of our children and also save money that can be spent elsewhere to support children. Our Amendment also calls on Children's Services to carry out a feasibility study to develop an employee Buyout Fostering Agency. A similar exercise in Adult Social Care has led to the setting up of Aspire, a social enterprise that delivers the lion's share of services for adults with learning difficulties in the city. This organisation does so to a high standard and with good value for money achieving a surplus on its Council commissioned contract which has been paid back to us over consecutive years. Leeds Children's Services year on year has been unable to match the need for fostering places with a sufficient number of its own foster carers. This leads to a reliance on private fostering agencies that charge over 30% premiums to fulfil commitments to provide shareholder dividends. This leads the service to overspend itself on its care budget each year meaning other parts of Children's Services have to make cuts. An asset transfer of this service will make it more responsive to the foster care market, able to commit to invest and attract more carers from the private sector leading to lower costs for the directorate overall who can invest the difference into more preventative services.

Lord Mayor Amendments 2, 4 and 8 from the Liberal Democrat Group is where we feel that the city can be more responsive to the city's transport needs than under its current plans. Let us begin with rail, this Council has already shown its ability to deliver new train stations at Apperley Bridge and Kirkstall Forge with further plans for White Rose and the Airport. The desire to enable greater access for commuters on rail lines that already exist is a sound one. We believe that there are 2 very obvious candidates for the next stage of such rail station expansion and although the Labour Group rejected the idea last year we hope that they will see the light this year. Methley has seen 3 rail stations closed and if this administration has its way for over 5 years in the future this community will see serious disruption of its transport infrastructure thanks to the

construction of the HS2 line. It would be just if this community could be reconnected to the Hallam line that already runs through it by a new station, similarly Woodside Quarry offers opportunity for greater use of the Harrogate line with both schemes relieving pressure on nearby Woodlesford and Horsforth stations.

Lord Mayor the Leeds Transport Plan is spending millions improving the public transport facilities in Leeds city centre to encourage people not to use their car by offering attractive alternatives. However our Town and District Centres often have poor public transport and are the preferred shopping destination for many elderly and disabled people. As such parking is essential to allow equitable access. Our proposal to end car parking charges in Otley Town Centre is because this city should be able to promote that we have free parking in all of our town centres to encourage people to shop local, keep our high streets thriving and encourage their use as social hubs to reduce isolation. However as I have mentioned before Leeds city centre is the apex of the Leeds public transport system and current transport investment. It is therefore appropriate that measures be taken to encourage people to use the car less to get into Leeds. We are therefore proposing a feasibility study to introduce a workplace parking levy similar to that already in operation in Nottingham. This scheme has raised millions of pounds for transport investment in that city, has seen no depletion in business investment in the city centre and helped get them there tram system built, imagine what it could do for Leeds.

Lord Mayor as you can see from these two proposals Liberal Democrats do not believe in waging wholesale war on the car and recognise that not all journeys are achievable or appropriate via public transport or active travel especially for issues of personal safety and disability. However the low pollution benefits of electric cars are not accessed equitably across a population because of the currently inflated cost of the vehicles, on average around £26,000 and the household infrastructure needed to charge vehicles is often unavailable for all households. The Liberal Democrat Group is uneasy that a relatively well off section of the community are currently accessing subsidised fuel from Council sponsored recharging points recently installed across the city. We wish to spread the benefit of access to electric vehicles through two new initiatives we wish to try in the city. The option of having electric vehicle is currently hindered if you do not have a driveway to safely recharge your car. Our proposal to install 100 charging points on residential streets would be aimed primarily at terraced properties who would now have the option to recharge vehicles on the road through shared lamppost style charging points. Our second proposal recognises the fact that many of our poorer families live in deprived neighbourhoods that are often isolated and suffer poor public transport. Because of increasing disincentives to owning conventional vehicles through measures such as car tax these families face increasing costs as vehicle owners. Although active travel can be encouraged and public transport improved there will still be some activities that require a car like the weekly shop. We propose to set up a pilot community electric car share scheme to ensure that no family is priced out of access to a car to help them maintain family life we would hope that if this proves successful it can be rolled out to

other communities in future years through income generated from the city centre parking levy mentioned earlier.

Lord Mayor Amendment 3 on your order paper from the Liberal Democrat Group is about the city delivering a responsive waste service to our citizens. We often talk in this Council about strengths based decision making an asset based community development, what greater community joint endeavour can we point to in our city than the hundreds of thousands of dedicated households that week in week out divide their household waste, wash out empty tins and present their rubbish on the street on an agreed day so that this city can recycle as much of its waste as possible. Our residents are our community assets when it comes to managing city waste. They are enthusiastic recyclers and want to do more which is why it is counterintuitive that this Council sets out to penalise people who want to dispose of their waste responsibly and surrenders its ambition to improve and excel its recycling back to the Government of the day. the DIY tax on inert waste at Council dumps, the bulky waste collection fees and the replacement bin charges imposed by this administration are blunt punitive money raising ventures that our amendment seeks to end. This is not only because these fees disrespect and undermine the relationship that this Council's Waste Team has with its key partner, the public, but also because it is counterproductive and has led to this Council recently being identified as the worst Local Authority for reported fly tipping incidents.

Lord Mayor I talked earlier about Budget Amendments that get recycled year after year but there must be some record that this group can claim when it comes to our Amendments calling for citywide food waste food waste recycling. It is over a decade since this Labour administration took over from the joint administration that carried out the food waste recycling pilot in Rothwell thanks to the forward thinking of its Lib Dem Councillors.

(Laughter)

Annually since then, annually, we have placed proposals before the ruling group to expand food waste recycling to other parts of the city that have been rejected every time despite the city's recycling rates going backwards under their leadership. Since then of course this Council has declared a climate change emergency, to ignore once again the role that food waste recycling can play in reducing the city's carbon footprint would be irresponsible. To do so in expectation of an avalanche of funding associated with a Government led Universal Scheme would be naive and disingenuous. To postpone the inevitable need for investment in anaerobic digestion whose waste products could both nourish the land and fuel our next generation of Council vehicles would be wanton procrastination.

Lord mayor I've also already discussed how our citizens are our greatest assets, Amendments 5, 6, 7 and 10 all involve this Council being more responsive to the needs of our citizens in the context of sustaining the vitality of neighbourhoods that are active citizens operate in. The Leeds Health and Wellbeing Plan wants more of us outside engaging in healthy exercise, social activities and committing to active travel like walking and cycling. Lord Mayor

none of those ambitions are met if our citizens are put off venturing out to streets and open spaces blighted by irresponsible parking, litter and dog muck. The Dog Warden Service has been dissolved and enforcement is too often concentrated on the city centre. Our proposal for an extra 9 mobile Civil Enforcement Officers dedicated to the areas outside of the city centre is an attempt to level up the attention our communities receive from enforcement with a particular emphasis on out of core hour 9 5 activity.

Lord Mayor our Community Centre's should be buzzing with activity instead too often they are poorly maintained, underused and generate low income at the same time community groups, families and small businesses are frustrated that they cannot easily book a room or turn up to a locked building when they have paid for an event. The centralised Community Lettings service under our Amendment will be absorbed into the Communities Team to enable a reengineering of Community Asset support to enable and increase social and cultural activity instead of impeding it.

Lord Mayor our Amendments also seek to increase the number of teams that are involved in clearing blocked gullies and tree management where we seek to redress years of neglect and which are 2 areas that cause some of the most frustration for ratepayers and are also at the forefront of tackling the effects of climate change. Last year I was told that there were 1,200 identified blocked gullies within Leeds and this year my colleague Councillor Campbell has been told that there are 1,500 so the number is rising as our Victorian drainage system creaks. As there is only currently a 2 person team unblocking at a rate of 2 gullies per week this means that there is a 15 year backlog for clearance. Flooding is a greater threat with each passing year of climate change while this administration concentrates on bigger Government funded schemes on the Aire we think that it is only fair that the valiant efforts of the Blocked Gully Team to avoid localised flooding throughout the city is recognised by funding an extra team to work alongside them and avoid the serious disruption flooding can cause to our communities. Similarly are small Forestry Team suffers from an often overwhelming workload that means that there is a 3 year wait for non-urgent tree works. Lord Mayor if we are to increase our tree cover in response to the climate change emergency we must ensure that people and trees can exist sustainably alongside each other, that means showing a commitment to building the skill set and capacity within the city to not only increase but also to maintain effectively the trees that we will see increasingly on our streets and open spaces.

Our Amendment is just the start to the arboricultural investment this Council needs to make year on year if it is to match the environmental ambition or the people it deserves which brings us Lord Mayor to Amendment number 9 from the Liberal Democrat Group which despite being the most ambitious is perhaps the most likely to receive consensual support in this Chamber we would hope. Our amendment seeks to add an extra 1% rise onto every household's Council Tax bill for a ring fenced £3m fund to tackle climate change in this city. A 1% precept for climate change to join those for Adult Social Care, the Police and Fire Service would demonstrate both the immediacy and gravity of action we need to take now to fulfil our climate emergency declaration. The fact that

this would need to go to a referendum could be viewed as unhelpful and expensive bureaucracy. However Lord Mayor it is also an opportunity for the people of Leeds to affirm their ambition for this city to achieve carbon neutrality and the Liberal Democrat Group trust the people of Leeds in making that decision. We believe how this money is spent should be citizen led but it would be down to the ruling administration to create that apparatus. We already have good infrastructure with the official Leeds Climate Change Advisory Committee and the unofficial Leeds Climate Change Commission Citizens Jury who have already published a 12 point plan they believe the city should pursue. This climate change fund offers the opportunity for some of those ideas to be investigated further and maybe deliver a Leeds green new deal.

To conclude Lord Mayor Leeds Liberal Democrats believe that our citizens are our greatest assets and our amendments seek to enable all of us to play our part even more effectively in creating the best city thanks to a Council that is responsive to putting communities in control.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Campbell.

(Background talking)

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: I'm not as tall as I used to be as I've got older I've shrunk. I will second Lord Mayor and reserve the right to speak.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Finnigan.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you Lord Mayor my group have been told that if any of them stand after this there going to be deselected so let's watch with a certain level of interest shall we say ...

(Laughter)

Sit down, sit down. On moving the Morley Borough Independent Budget Amendment can I pass on my thanks and the thanks of the MNI group as others have already done to Richard Ellis and the rest of the Finance Team whose patience, good humour and straight talking is most appreciated and helps us all to appear to be competent and coherent politicians. Historically like Councillor Carter the Morley Borough Independents have called for a Royal Commission to investigate and deliver recommendations for future Local Government funding. The present system misused and abused by Labour, Conservative and Coalition National Governments who have consistently manipulated the financing process to bring cash into the towns and cities who vote for that year's National Government. It has been nothing more than a cash driven gerrymandering process for years where local politicians of all persuasions blame the others, claim unfairness, political bias or spite. The system of Council funding is broken and needs fixing. Whatever recommendations come from such a Royal Commission must be so watertight and agree that at a cross party level that they are impossible to dismantle and fair to all, not an arrow of spectrum of political

interest. This year's financial settlement from Central Government includes a further significant cut. The comments from the previous Chancellor that austerity is over seems like empty rhetoric when we face a further cut on top of the cuts we have faced since 2010. This Council has met those challenges, has become a leaner and more efficient organisation but there no further fat to cut from this Council. We are facing the inevitable conclusion that the Council will need to stop doing some of the things it presently does if we are to make ends meet and this is a bleak prospect as it will mean quality of life issues, libraries, sports centres, local community action, youth work, parks, public rights of way and community safety, support for younger and older people all face reduction or elimination as we crystallise around providing those statutory services we are obliged to provide. That would be a grim future for the communities we represent and we will call on all our colleagues on all sides of the Chamber to use the influence they have at a national level to get a fairer deal for Local Councils.

We welcome the increase in the minimum wage, the national living wage as well as this Council's continuing commitment to do better than this and support those who work for the Council but are on lower wages. We welcome the additional support from Central Government for Adult Social Care but would note that significantly more needs to be done if we are to offer all of our residents a dignified life in their older years should they need adult social care support. Successive Governments, Conservative, Labour, Coalition have all avoided confronting this ongoing problem providing financial sustainability to support people living longer with more complex needs. This is a national disgrace and a long term solution needs to be found. We would propose a hypothecated tax on income used purely to finance Adult Social Care adequately.

We welcome the loosening of the cap on borrowing through the Housing Revenue Account and our Budget proposal will see the opportunity to build new Council homes in Morley as well as other communities across Leeds, the first Council houses have built in our community since 1981. 2,000 people on Morley's Housing waiting list are being let down by successive Governments, Conservative, Labour and Coalition with no proposals to change the almost 40 year gap from the present administration. We can bring new affordable homes and a social rent to all our communities and I trust colleagues will support that Amendment.

The administration's Budget is a fair one indeed, all opposition Amendments confirm this with whatever differences we have relating to a tiny percentage of the overall budget often less than 2% of revenue spending and we would say at this particular point in terms of tree planting, we've heard a lot about it this afternoon, while there are plans and proposals to treat plants in autumn from this administration we're actually planting 7,000 trees in Morley next week. As ever Morley ahead of the game.

We welcome the increased spending on Adult Social Care and recognise the need for an increase in Council Tax to provide this additional finance. We still believe the social care levy on Council Tax is a blunt instrument and that

additional work needs to be done at a national level to resolve a long term sustainable and significant increase in Adult Social Care funding.

We also welcome the increase in spending on Children's Services and applaud the excellent work that Department has undertaken to protect all our children and provide them with the best start possible. We know the increase in the Schools budget but would question if this is enough to cope with the challenges schools face.

We note the further reductions in rent generated by the Housing Revenue Account which is the inevitable consequence of the sale of additional Council houses we have lost under the Right to Buy this year. The Right to Buy legislation needs to be abandoned if we are ever to cope with the demand for affordable housing as many of these homes are purchased purely for speculative gain. We can all find such properties in our wards that have been bought under the Right to Buy which then blight estate as they become run down and we all end up paying exorbitant levels of housing benefit to private landlords invariably benefit most from the Right to Buy legislation.

(Applause)

Turning, thank you you can stand at the end.

(Laughter)

Turning to our modest Amendments we are proposing reducing Special Responsibilities Allowances to Councillors by just over 30%, ending the undemocratic bodies that are Community Committees, proposing the construction of 100 new homes in the Morley area on brownfield sites that the Council already owns. As a pilot project to be rolled out across all other wards if successful.

All these Amendments have been scrutinised by officers within the Finance Department and found to be practicable, affordable and today sustainable. There is no doubt that all Councils work hard and we are not proposing any reductions to Councillors Basic Allowance. However we believe that over £700,000 spent on Special Responsibility Allowances is excessive and mainly there as a payroll vote to keep Labour Councillors loyal to the Labour Party Leadership. It is entirely fair, entirely fair that those Councillors should accept two thirds of their allowance as a commitment to finding the savings they are requiring of others. Labour should show leadership, not demand that others find savings without Labour Members contributing a penny and it doesn't need any independent budget advice on this.

Our second proposal would see Community Committees withdrawn, staff absorbed to other roles and staff savings used along with the SRA savings to provide an enhanced Mice and Ward Improvement Scheme all under the control of Ward Members elected to serve their communities. It does not make any sense and it is clear sign of the democratic deficit as Community Committees have little influence on the decision making process. The abolition of

Community Committees will liberate communities from the shackles imposed by a Labour administration keen to control what happens even in areas they are not elected to represent. The net result of these actions would be to give every Councillor an additional £5,500 to spend in the communities they represent to address community priorities as well as all Community Committee capital and revenue funding passed down to ward Members. There's more don't worry about it, it gets better.

Our third proposal would see the abolition of the rubble tax or the charge for inert waste as it is called by others, widely despised across the Leeds City Council area. It is our view that a record number of fly-tipping incidents across Leeds are directly the result of this administration's decision and theirs alone to introduce charges for such waste including that from DIY projects which adds to the level of fly tipping across Morley and the wider Leeds City Council area.

We have identified the finance for this proposal by trimming the facility time offer to trade unions at Leeds City Council. For over a decade Councillors and Leeds City Council employees have had to find savings across all departments, it is unfair and unreasonable then that the Leeds City Council trade unions should be immune from finding similar savings from its facility time which is charged to Council Tax payers across the Leeds City Council area. Council Tax payers already have concerns that their Council Tax increases year on year and needing them having to find personal savings to pay their increased Council Tax bill. They take a dim view of having to find additional Council Tax to cover the £730,387 required to finance trade union facility time. I would accept as reasonable and even for the trade unions at Leeds City Council to undertake the same approach they have had to to find savings still leaving the trade unions with almost half a million pounds in public subsidy.

Perhaps our most exciting proposal would see the building of the first new Council homes in Morley since 1981. There is no doubt at all that communities have been let down by Central Government of all persuasions for decades whether it was the Thatcher era, the blown brown, sorry the Blair Brown boom and bust era or the Cameron Clegg axes of austerity era. Our communities saw housing lists increase as successive Governments fail to grasp the challenges facing them and abdicated responsibility to provide affordable homes across all our communities. Recent announcements on building new council homes by this administration again leaves Morley along with other communities out in the cold with not one of the 750 new proposed homes coming to either the Morley North or the Morley South ward.

Our amendments which would work well in other wards proposes the construction of 50 Council houses for both the Morley North and the Morley South wards on brownfield sites owned by the Council. As a result of the removal of the cap or the loosening of the cap on HRA borrowing we can finance such construction at a rent of around £75 a week at today's prices. This will mean the provision of high quality homes to some of the 2,000 people on Morley's housing waiting list, paid for at an affordable rent. The figures show that such a proposal would pay for itself over 30 years. The most recent Council house built in Morley was built in 1981 at Birch Court, it has already paid for

itself, has been generating a surplus for 8 years. Most Council properties in Morley are older than this and are therefore contributing positively to the HRA. We will go further than this and look to see if the affordable homes contributions of new developments could be used to provide the land for the Council to build new Council homes on rather than passing these homes to a registered social landlord. The figures add up and we would see a renaissance of Council house building across all of Leeds City Council areas financed with a combination of develop at land provision and prudent borrowing via the HRA to cover genuinely affordable homes. The mass works in Morley and would equally work as well in Garforth or Kippax or Pudsey, it brings new Council homes to Morley and potentially to other surrounding areas.

We look forward to the support of all Members for this part of our amendment especially the lonely and solitary Labour Member in Morley who we are sure we can count on to vote for new Council homes for Morley families or not as the case may be.

(Laughter)

I suspect I shall be disappointed and I will have to share that disappointment with the voters in Morley obviously.

(Background talking)

On a final note, on a final note, if you don't shut up I'll go on longer. On a final note we will ...

(Laughter)

We would turn, it's your own time your wasting. We would turn to our Conservative colleagues, this administration despite its rhetoric has little if any influence over Central Government. Regardless of the present post morton that the Labour Party are undertaking of a distinct possibility of a dream or is it the nightmare ticket of the election of Rebecca wrong daily and Richard Burgon ...

(Laughter and applause)

To drive the policies so many voters, including Morley voters, rejected will mean Labour out of National Office for over a decade. That puts a large responsibility on each and every Conservative Councillor across the country to persuade this Government, this Government who stated aims is to lever up opportunities to deliver a genuine blue collar Conservative Government to give this Council, all councils the fair financial settlement they need to deliver this project. Without a radical overhaul and a significant increase in funding for Councils then all those promises will be nothing more than empty rhetoric. Responsibility for the future success falls on you as much as it does from the present administration. You have the savings from getting Brexit done and the Foreign Aid budget needs revisiting. Some of these savings from these budgets need to come to local Councils so we can do our job better. We commend our amendments which relate to a small percentage of overall spending, all our

amendments are fully costed and sustainable and we look forward to receiving the support of colleagues across the Chamber.

Turning briefly to other opposition colleagues Amendments we will, as is traditional, vote on them on their own individual merits. Some are good ideas, some are interesting and some are entirely barmy, the anaerobic digester revisits time and time and time again. We will listen closely and carefully to colleagues, weigh up their arguments and vote accordingly. I formally move the Morley Borough Independents Budget Amendment. Thank you Lord Mayor.

(Cheers and applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hutchinson.

COUNCILLOR HUTCHISON: Thank you Lord Mayor. Second the Amendment and reserve the right to speak. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dobson

COUNCILLOR DOBSON: Thank you Lord Mayor. A Budget speech with a difference because it won't be a speech cause I've not made any notes. I've been looking round the Chamber this afternoon inspired by colleagues who have got copious amounts of notes but actually I want to do something a little bit different today because I've become aware over the 12 years I've been here that we talk less to one another and more at one another and I'm trying to avoid doing that this afternoon because actually I think it's fair to say in setting any Budget it's probably the single hardest task of any Council and any Council administration so for that reason alone I think it is absolutely fair to say that within what we've heard today from all parties including the administration there are points of great credit to this Council of which have to be acknowledged.

What also has to be acknowledged is the work of our officers, Victoria Bradshaw, Richard Ellis and Naomi Eastwood have already been mentioned numerous times but we would like to echo our thanks to the work that they've done in supporting us into put forward a series of very simple amendments this year but nevertheless they have given us their time and their energy with good grace.

Being the joint smallest group on the Council with our colleagues in the Green Party our main interface with officers these days tends to be at a community level so we also wanted to take this opportunity to pay tribute to officers who work with us week in week out in our communities. I'm talking officers within Housing, within Environmental Services in particular but also staff on the ground who deal day in day out with complex care needs for our older residents and with our more challenging youngsters so we wanted to take a very community focused approach to how we thank officers who are at the coalface doing an incredibly difficult job week in week out with often little to no praise.

Cuts then, we've heard the figure £26m over 10 years. You'd have to be up there with climate change denial to say that isn't a massively substantial amount of money that this Council has had to deal with. I remember as a as a

newcomer to the Council one of the Leader's biggest challenges was how to manage may be a 1% or 2% increase to Council, you've been there Andrew I've seen you nodding, and we entered an entirely new reality in 2010 onwards and again I think some of the decisions decisions that have been made hard as they have been have been the right ones but I'll just temper that remark by saying I still think within an extremely restricted position we do have choices and some of those choices are what I will touch on when I speak specifically around our Amendments. I also think there are massive financial implications for this Council that if we don't act collectively and speak with one single voice we'll be letting down the residents of Leeds. We must act collectively to get the Phase 2 money for flood alleviation and I think it's been fair that all parties have raised that including the Conservative Group, we need that money. We've just come through another phase of flooding and they used to call them 100 year events what are the now yearly events, 5 yearly events, I don't know how they've been redefined but I know they're happening regularly and I think this time in Leeds we've got away with it by the skin of our teeth but we might not going forward. So collectively that Phase 2 Flood Alleviation money has to be delivered.

I'm going to talk about some of the successes that I think the Council have had and I think it's so heartening when we talk about climate change that we're seeing real positive actions around that and I'm thinking district heating.

Everybody knows that was a project so passionate to me from the early interception and delivery of the energy from waste facility but moreover that is the real practical sensible measure that's not only going to address the use of fossil fuels but also it's going to give people often our lowest paid and the poorest people in our society that's living in Council accommodation that should have been addressed decades ago from antiquated things like electric underfloor heating.

To move away from that and I know we're starting with some of our own commercial buildings but to start that journey of travel is absolutely superb and the administration have to be commended. Similarly the Dementia Hub that we've heard about today, again a very important piece of work the fact is even though health equalities do exist in this city and it's still startles me that if you live in South Leeds and every mile you travel to North East and North West Leeds you get an extra year on your life so those inequalities are still there but by and large through good interventions and good linked up work between the Local Authority and the NHS we do now see an increase in life expectancy but that also has its problems because the reality is, I speak from personal experience with my own mother, people living longer have a propensity to develop dementia conditions because you can't really say that dementia covers only one thing there's a number of reasons that causes demensia in later life. So again whilst we think the hub is good we want to see and I'll touch on it later. More investment from a Council perspective in dementia provision and I'll go on to explain why.

One thing we won't be doing , sorry Robert, is supporting any move that impacts negatively on our workers rights to trade union representation and I'll tell you why because actually if we want to be an exemplar as an employer in this city with a massive workforce then I believe and my Group believes that we

are our workers the very best in the right to access good representation and actually I think it's a feather in our collective cap that we do support our trade unions to do their work looking after our members and our employees. It's essential and we would never support any move to move away from that position.

The Social Care crisis is very real it's been touched on, I think it's fair to say and I don't think anybody would disagree that it has been the hot potato of Government for decades. Who remembers Frank Field telling Tony Blair there was going to be a crisis in Adult Social Care and what we're talking 20 years ago and for his sins he was sacked for stating what was going to happen but actually no successive Government of any colour or coalition has really addressed the issue of the social care crisis that is coming our way and that is why I'm moving on to our Amendments, we believe that the Council needs to be much more proactive in the way it addresses people living with dementia. I think one of the jewels in our collective crown was some of our dementia care homes that have now gone to the private sector. I also believe that the the way forward for dementia provision which is going to be fast in the next few decades is through a mixed position of private and public facility, I think it's the only way it can be achieved but I think we as a Council need to be integral to that process because the reality is this, the provision of care in Leeds is too mixed to say hand on heart we feel that we have confidence that everybody needing dementia care long term provision is getting the absolute correct level of care. I've mentioned it before in Council but our group have actually had to intervene directly with people living in substandard care and have been extracted from those facilities close to death, so I don't think it's an exaggeration to say that the Council's role needs to be looked at again and that's why we've put forward again our very simple Amendment around a feasibility study about what capital could be invested in bringing back dementia care provision in house.

Again Robert I don't want to just keep upsetting my colleagues in Morley but actually the Community Committee system, flawed as it is, isn't everything. We think is actually a better vehicle for delivering some of the high level services that the Council provides simply because the reality is, and I say this for everybody in this room, the one thing we have in common is the fact that I believe we know our communities better than anybody else. We eat, sleep, live, breathe our wards and I can tell you where the dodgy roads are in our ward, I'm sure you can. So our Amendment that the £24.5m Highways Maintenance budget is devolved to Community Committees we believe has teeth. Who's had

...

(Background talking)

I get on with Highways Officers just as much as I'm sure every other Member of Council does. But who's had that experience when Highways Officers have come to Community Committees and said there will be a greater degree of conversation with ward Members about which roads get done within your ward and then the schedules produced and you go, what, well where's such and such and such and such and then of course there's a million and one excuses rolled out as to why they're not on the list. I believe that Members

should have that interaction at a local level to devolve that funding and spend that funding where they think the maintenance programme needs to go.

Right over things that have been well covered so I will be very brief on these issues. We've spoke about bulky and inert waste. If a Budget process is to mean anything it's to balance the books and its to make sure what's put forward holds muster in terms of it either adds a cost benefit or it breaks even in terms of delivering a service. I am not convinced that charging for bulky inert waste ever does and Councillor Rafique when I had your job I've said this before the red line always went through that proposal at Budget setting time rather than under it because I can't see where the savings lie. We've spoke about the percentage rise in fly tipping, we've spoke about the cost to the Council and that's got to be the bottom line for me, when your setting a Budget if something isn't holding water in terms of robustness, jettison it. I don't think anybody in this room would have a problem with that you know in political life none of us get it right and I think it's important just to accept it, move on, tried, failed and we could all accept and live with that.

We do however have worries about our older residents and particularly tenants living in our communities. We hear all the time who is to blame I've lost track, is it the BBC, is it the Government, is it somebody inbetween you know actually at the moment people are having to pay for TV licences, the cost of living is going up, people are living in often very very tight budAet situations so again we've put forward a simple Amendment to zero the net increase on rents for tenants living in sheltered accommodation. I don't think that's an unreasonable proposal and it is fully costed.

Our Amendment that Councillor Field always speaks so eloquently about regarding the Managed Zone, the £310,000 we want to use that money to realign the approach that is taken currently to move those women out of the area through schemes such as drug rehabilitation, other rehabilitations, pathways hopefully into employment and different lifestyles.

None of this is revolutionary stuff, it's quite low key it's quite low level. It all passes muster in terms of the financial implications. Yes they are the same Amendments were put forward last year because there remain our priorities. Our priorities for this year remain community driven, very locally focused but actually when I talk about communities I also talk about Leeds because Leeds is incredibly diverse but there are some things we all have in common fly tipping, dirt on the streets, potholes in the roads these are the common denominators between us all and we think our Amendments reflect those concerns that we can all share so on that basis Lord Mayor I move the Garforth and Swillington Independent Amendments. Thank you.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor McCormack.

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor David Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you Lord Mayor. As we've said this is year 10 or beginning of Year 11 of austerity which was supposed to stop and if you look at the Budget Amendments from us all you go back prior to 2010 when we was in the coalition and look at Labour's Amendments there and look at our Amendments when Labour was in power you could see distinct differences and these Amendments are only scratching the surface. The fact is this Council is underfunded and we need to do something dramatic or Central Government needs to do something dramatic to address it. We're asking our Council Tax payers to pay a far too much part of it and the social care issue means that that is going up each year beyond inflation and I say to the Government in the Budget please please have some sense and redress the balance because we can't go on this way. The tax that we have at local level isn't good enough, isn't fit for purpose it needs changing but what we need is we need proper cash from Central Government to all Local Authorities to make any sense of this at all so the arguments between us are limited. The Budget whichever one of the parties was running the Council would be pretty much the same, it is only little individual differences to play with.

Can I just and we mentioned about climate change and the climate emergency and I'd just like to add to what Leader said when she, cos I would congratulate the administration on the movements they've made forward, there's a lot more we can do but in terms of lots of other authorities we are one of the leading lights in that. As Members know I chaired a Nuclear Free Local Authorities Steering Committee and one of the issues we deal with is renewables and reduction in carbon into atmosphere as well as nuclear and clearly amongst that Leeds City Council is one of the leading lights in addressing that. In fact actually I must say that I defended this Council strongly because Dundee were claiming to have more electric vehicles than we were and I got that changed so I'm on your side on that one but I think we have gone a long way, there's a long way to go, there's much more we can do, some of the issues are to do with policy, some of them are outside of our control and we need Central Government help on that and we need resources from Central Government and as I say I hope in the Budget we might see some change there I doubt if we will though but we can't go on as we are. On climate change our colleague, Councillor Golton, is putting in an Amendment which normally I would have supported of setting up a climate change fund but as I said I think our residents have been taxed enough. I think our Council Taxpayers over the years have been taxed enough, they do not need another 1% to pay and the fact is if we're doing climate change properly the idea of doing it, the idea that motion we passed last year was that we would embed that in all Council policies so each department should be spending it's money according to that and we don't, shouldn't need another fund outside that so I cannot support that I mean the fact is I cannot see actually the electorate if it goes to a referendum actually passing that, that's why nobody's ever, nobody every passes, Council never passes one of these because they know they're going to lose you know so I wonder if it Stewart's answer to saying oh well we'll be kamikaze pilots and lose all our seats at next election but that's up to them. But as I say that won't, that

can't do so clearly while I think climate change is important that is not one area we will be giving support to.

With regard to our Amendments what we've tried to do there is to keep it simple and concentrate on what we feel important and that is the charges that Councillor Dobson was on about which we fully support that these should be ended and also the increased money to Parks and Recreation and to Streetscene clearly are one of the motion.

One of the Amendments you will not be happy and I expect we may get three or four votes as usual where we seek to reduce allowances. I have got to say that I will put while ever I am here, while ever have the opportunity to put on a Budget Amendment I will always produce the allowances because I do think they are too much and if you notice in the report that goes there which refers to Councillor Finnigan's Amendment as well it says there that it should be referred to Independent Review Body and I thought I've got to make a point about this the Independent Review Body make suggestions, we make decisions and they decide if a new post comes about we will refer it to them, they'll make a suggestion that it comes back to Council and we pass it. It is our job the Budget, its our job how much those allowances are not the Independent Review Body and on previous occasions when we first introduced the scheme the review body came with a, what I would say it was an outlandish amount of money to everybody and the Labour administration at that time to it's credit amended that to a lower level. When the coalition came into power Councillor Carter and myself and Liberal Democrats reduced Special Responsibility Allowance by either 5% or 6% and that didn't get referred to anybody it is this body who decides that. I don't expect you to support me on this one on this Amendment but what I do expect is this Council to support me on the fact that when it comes to how much we spend it's us that makes the decision not some Independent Group.

(Background talking)

Anyway moving on. On the other Amendments that's there clearly we'll be supporting anything which deals with charges for the inert waste or bulky waste and we'll be supporting those that end that. But we're not prepared to cross the red line where we start attacking trade union facilities in this place, that is too far. So we will be supporting the Conservatives Amendment 1 and 2 from the Conservatives and Amendment 7, 9, 10, 12, 16 and 17 and of course the ones that we are putting. We are consistant on this, we believe that allowances should come down, that charges should be ended and we believe we've got 4 or 5 there that are actually possible and we should go forward. I move my Amendments. Thank you.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ann Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Second and reserve the right to speak Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Chapman. Could I remind Members that this will be Councillor Chapman maiden speech,

COUNCILLOR CHAPMAN: Thank you Lord Mayor. There has been more than one mention today about Community Committees and I'd like to continue on that theme. I'd like to talk about the local community groups and the way in which they are currently supported and how community funding is utilised. To be frank both as a member of a community group and as a Councillor our processes are a mess, they are opaque and they don't always deliver best value. As a member of a community group and is over 10 years since I first became involved in local events in Rothwell my frustration at the application process for funding to use Council sites and to use community buildings has only grown. As community groups we are trying to preserve much of the traditional events within local communities. Our events are inclusive and aimed at strengthening community cohesion by bringing the community together. To do that we need support and practical help instead we have complicated application forms lengthy reimbursement processes, overcomplicated and at times unexplained requirements made on us. It's also made very clear that whilst the Council teams want to be supportive we the community groups are very much responsible and accountable for anything that goes wrong, any and all of these issues are reasons that community groups struggle to engage and attract new volunteers. As Councillor I'm frustrated and I have to say still frequently confused by the various funding routes available to local communities. I'm even confused as to what actually is meant by local. To me it means my ward however many funding requests seem to be provider led rather than driven by community demand and the activity been funded covers at least the whole community area if not the whole of Leeds. We then have the match funding issue, how on earth did we get to apply this where a funding requester can go to one Funding Committee and getting approval for a project then take it to another, even to a third saying they need match funding to proceed. I have on occasion even in my short time as a Councillor seen the same activity been funded from 3 separate funds. The bureaucracy, lack of transparency and time wasted, not to say money wasted is frustration to say the least.

Turning specifically to the funding of community groups and community activities, should we be providing funding for the same items year after year after year. One way in which we could potentially save money would be to establish central pools of equipment which are regularly used are all events and talking about things such as generators, gazebos, marques, deckchairs and so forth.

From personal experience of the last 10 years I can say that in Rothwell we would have spent £3,500 higher in just tables and chairs for our carnivals. We could have purchased them for £1,700 or less at the time, we could spend less, we can support more activities, we can share equipment if we just are a little bit more creative in the way we approach our community events and our community teams.

Finally I had to ask, do our Community Committees, which I appreciate they are very committed and they work really hard on our behalf, but do they really and genuinely engage with our local communities and our local community groups. How do we make this work better, how do we encourage the sharing of ideas, activities, experience and best practice and bring the people that do not volunteer together to support each other. Do we need to look further at devolvement of Community Committees, as Councillor Carter said devolvement works both ways. Whatever we do do we have to do something and my ask is that we attempt or we look at how to simplify the bureaucracy, increase transparency and ensure that the funding that we do have is delivering best value and truly supports and engages with our local community groups. If we don't there is a real danger that local communities are going to lose their identity, their local heritage and fragment. Thank you.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: I will now adjourn for a comfort break so ...

(Background talking)

I do keep my promise. Can all Members please return back into the Chamber at quarter past. I'll be starting exactly quarter past.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Please be seated. Right Councillor Coupar.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Thank you Lord Mayor. I am delighted to be speaking in support of Councillor Blake's Budget Motion this afternoon and during our brief break there I was just thinking back to times gone by when I remember sitting in those opposition benches when we had a rainbow coalition who at the time kept saying to us that our Labour Government wasn't given them enough funds to deliver the services they needed to deliver. Well can I remind Council that since those times we've had £1.7b cut by their Conservative Government so when we talk about having to make some tough decisions and difficult choices in this Council that's exactly why.

So I'd like to just pick up a couple of points that have been raised by some of the groups in particular around the Sheltered Housing charges and I just want Council to be aware that we have capped any increase on charges to £3.50 and without us making those set charges we wouldn't be able to maintain and improve those sheltered housing provisions, so for those that are amending it to zero I hope you realise you're amending the maintenance of them as well. I think we've also protected our Community Committees over the last 3 years with our funding to those and you know that there are an absolute priority for this administration in the way we do business. I think the housing companies being mentioned as well and it's been through several Executive Boards where we as an administration are committed to looking at a housing company to help us to build accommodation that's needed in this city that we wouldn't be able to

otherwise do and that's already in the process of being looked at and Councillor Finnigan just to talk about your housing that you were looking at for Morley indeed we've got an ambitious housing programme of 300 houses a year and it depends where the land is suitable and available at the time but please come and see me I'm more than happy to talk to you about that going forward if you want to.

Our ambition is to be a compassionate city with a strong economy where everyone can benefit from inclusive growth and I'm proud of that ambition but it is clear that the Government does not share our vision they instead seem intent on pushing more and more people deeper and deeper into poverty. Around 173,000 people in Leeds live in poverty with 70,000 of these being people who are in work. Clear evidence that the Tory mantra of working to get out of poverty simply isn't true. I think it is worth taking the time at this point to remind you of exactly what it is that Tory policies have done. Recent analysis by the Institute of Fiscal Studies show the poorest 10% of households with children have seen losses to their income of up to 18% while the most affluent 10% have seen losses of just 4%. What that means is that the poorest families with children, families who are already struggling have lost a fifth of their income. More and more people are finding themselves in the position where living in poverty is a daily reality. We've been working incredibly hard in this city to bring people out of fuel poverty, our Affordable Warmth Strategy is ambitious but it needs serious national investment. We have undertaken Area Renewal Schemes in Cross Green and Holbeck, the Warm Homes Fund has helped over 500 households with first time central heating. The Leeds Pipes District Heating Scheme provides controllable central heating to around 2,000 high rise flats. Charities and organisations are even considering working on a fuel voucher that might be issued to people in need.

Let's turn to the national shame shall we of food poverty. Just imagine for a moment that you can't afford to feed your family, you have children who rely on you as their parent for absolutely everything and yet this most basic of needs you can't meet. But is it your fault, have you failed them, no. Is it the fact that you've been forced to wait a minimum of 5 weeks for a first Universal Credit payment pushing you further into debt, I probably think so. You know Theresa May said the reasons people are using food banks are complex, let me tell you they're not. They're going there because they can't feed their families and the children, it's simple. There are 33,000 children in Leeds who are in this situation of poverty. Generations of these pushed into the cycle ...

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Coupar.

Of poverty and debt and I urge you to support the Budget Motion in the name of Councillor Blake.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Rafique.

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: Thank you Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor the Government is falling sorry starting on another thing. Lord Mayor I'm particularly proud of the measures we are taking to tackle the climate emergency across Leeds including support for more recycling on the go and sport and our green bins as well as tree planting and woodland creation. On top of that we are working with Environment Agency to plant trees upstream along the River Aire catchment. Councillor Carter I know you mentioned about a lot of the land which causes flooding is actually private ownership and Councillor Blake's already mentioned about the the extra funding on top of the £350,000 which we approved at Executive Board but I can also assure you that as part of the Fast 2 Scheme there are £7m part of that money which will go towards tree planting which equates to about 2 million trees both in Leeds and beyond Leeds a lot of those areas are working with private landowners and Yorkshire Water and National Trust to plant trees. Whilst it's been sad to see the destruction caused by Storm Ciara and Dennis across England and Wales I am pleased that the impact of recent flooding Leeds wasn't as bad as 2015. This is because the recent flood defences built in Leeds were operated and worked well and like Councillor Blake I like to echo the comments made by Councillor Blake that our frontline services, particularly those who are working in Waste Management, in Refuse Services, Cleaner Neighbourhoods, Forestry and Highways who actually had to work round the clock to provide vital and crucial services to our communities. Phase 1 of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme was operated fully for the first time lowering both weirs closing the Holbeck gates Lord Mayor which lowered river levels in the city centre protecting thousands of properties from flooding. We also called flood schemes in other parts of Leeds such as in Garforth and Kippax into action which would reduce the flood risk in those areas too. Nonetheless the Flood Alleviation Schemes under development in Otley and along Wykebeck and Wortley who were actually hit by flooding and properties close by were very close to being internally flooded. I find it ironic that the Flood Alleviation Schemes we are constructing to stop flooding are been held back because of flooding but that just shows how urgent it is for the Government to fund these schemes so we can get them finished as soon as possible. On that note it's disappointing that more than 4 years after the huge damage caused by Storm Eva in 2015 there is still a £23m or close to £23m shortfall in funding for Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme Part 2.

The Government is failing provide the funding needed to protect our homes and communities particularly in the North and Midlands. The requirement to provide funding Lord Mayor, match funding, before alleviation schemes go ahead means that's easier for richer areas primarily in the South to raise the funds to build these vital flood defences. The Leader has written to the Secretary of State, George Eustice, to urge him to address the funding shortfall in Leeds. I note that he's the 7th Secretary of State, 7th Secretary of State Lord Mayor for the Environment in the last 10 years and this is supposedly a strong and stable Government. Under the last Government, a Labour Government when the Secretary of State was Hilary Benn, spending on flood defences increased by 10% in 2008/9 another 10% on the following year. This Government hasn't spent nearly as much as that, the average increase over the past 10 years has been a pitiful 1.2% despite the increased risk of flooding our communities face due to climate change. Lord Mayor this Government doesn't

seem to care about flooding. It hasn't provided the funding we need to build the defences our communities, particularly our poorest communities need. It's never had a DEFRA Minister in place long enough to set out and follow through a proper strategy to protect our residents from flooding. Derbyshire Council Leader and including several Tory MPs have actually been critical of the Government's policy and response so far. The Prime Minister can't be bothered, can't even be bothered to visit the people affected by flooding now that the election is over instead he's actually ducking and hiding and working from a grace and favour country house in Kent. How can he be more out of touch than that Lord Mayor.

Lord Mayor I welcome the Leader's Budget but it's at this point that we still don't have the Government funding we need to protect Leeds residents from from flooding more events and can I just show you finally this headline for Yorkshire from Yorkshire Post today and that is do the right thing and give us the money so we can complete Phase 2 Scheme. Thank you Lord Mayor.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Ann Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you Lord Mayor. I'm just speaking to second the Green's Budget Amendments. Some of this is of course things that we say that we always want to do and I don't know that the Council ever will do it but you know we live in hope as they say and of course one of these is to do with our view that the Councillors should take a deduction 9%, all Councillors. We're not asking people to do what we don't already do and in fact have been doing for ages and when I first started with the Council I didn't even, I deducted more than that but you know so we think 9% so as I said we're not asking anybody to do what we don't do ourselves on that one and of course with, we also believe that Executive Members should take a reduction of 27%. Again someone who's getting the Council Allowance which we all get and then Special Responsibility Allowances should be able to do that, we wouldn't ask for that if we didn't think that it was possible, we know that it is.

Now I come on to one of the things that at least has been mentioned twice this afternoon by other parties and independents and that's to do with the bulky waste. Now it's all very well saying that you want to charge for people to remove bulky waste, some people may pay it but I know what I see every day and I think everyone else see's it in their ward aswell is that they don't want to pay it, some people can't pay it, some people tell me yes well there's some contingency there for those that can't pay it if they're on benefit and whatever. I'm not saying it is all them on benefit all I know is that suddenly fridges, I've seen the odd couple of microwaves, furniture suddenly appears and we're not now talking about on spare land, not that I'm saying that you should put it on spare land. I see it actually on the pavement and it isn't from the people there, the're saying it's not us. I had an old lady ring me the other day somebody had thrown something in her garden you know and it can be on the pavement, on the street corners and it just makes area's look uncared for, it's ridiculous and yes people shouldn't do it I totally agree people shouldn't do it but they are. We

didn't get all this when we had 4 free collections a year of you know a few item's and those 4 collections. We didn't get it, it's not my imagination it's a matter that this is what is happening. Yet yet when it does happen what do we do, we ask the Council to come and move it if it's on the pavement you know and they do so it's costing the Council money to remove it anyway so you know I think that we need to go back to what we did cos as I said cos I just don't think this system works.

Again same with the inert waste. How many times do we see piles of rubble and that again there many a time are on pieces of spare land and our cleansing, rightly so, doesn't want to come and move them so we have a just, well we just have areas looking a mess and yet before this charge you didn't get that so much. So again you know I'd say please think about doing this, think about collecting it or letting people, in case of inert waste, take it to the special site ...

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Sorry, sorry.

THE LORD MAYOR: Times up.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Oh right. OK then well I hope that you'll support us. Thank you.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mulherin.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you Lord Mayor. It's been 11 months since we declared a climate emergency here in this Council Chamber, since then we've seen a number of actions led by this Council across the Council to make our target of becoming net zero a reality. Of course we've a long way to go in a short amount of time but we've started positively to make big changes here in Leeds. The climate emergency is a priority not just for the Council but for the people that we represent living and working here in Leeds. Last year we began the Big Leeds Climate Conversation and over 8,000 Leeds citizens responded to that supporting our endeavour to become carbon neutral by 2030.

Nearly everyone agreed with the scientific consensus that the climate is changing and that the earth's warming is due to human activity. People are worried that what that means for them, for their families, for their friends and for the planet. With that concern was an overwhelmingly clear voice that something needs to be done and that needs to be a priority for this city. As Councillor Blake has already said the Budget sees us investing over £200m in projects that will reduce carbon emissions in the city from energy we use to the meals we serve we are making sweeping changes that will cut carbon from the Council and help to decarbonate this city. We're also involved in truly visionary projects to make our net zero carbon targets a reality. For example the H21 project which is studying the disabiiting of, from a technical and economic viewpoint, of converting the existing natural gas network in Leeds to 100% hydrogen and

other such projects to decarbonate network which I helped to launch here in Leeds last year bringing together groups from across the City to design innovative ways that we can take carbon out of transport network here in Leeds which could be deployed rapidly and at scale.

I'd also like to welcome the Budget commitment to tree planting in the city that Councillor Blake announced. Doubling our tree canopy is crucial to offsetting emissions and mitigating against the climate emergency here in Leeds. Indeed it's crucial for the world, recent research shows the impact trees have on carbon dioxide and estimates that a huge worldwide planting programme could remove two thirds of all the emissions from human activities that remain in the atmosphere. With the additional investment the Leader has announced today we can make sure that Leeds is doing its part however even with the investments we are making there's still a need for Government to act. As a nation and as a planet we have passed the point of having the luxury to ignore the challenges we face, these actions cannot just be dismissed as nice to have any more they are necessities. Our target is driven by scientific evidence and it's imperative that Government approaches these needs with a sense of urgency and action too.

Councillor Golton calls for an increase in Council Tax to create a climate emergency fund. I agree we need more resources and I welcome the Leader's announcement for more funding for this but I do disagree with Councillor Golton pushing that obligation on to Leeds Council Taxpayers. Just because the Government will not tax big business or prevents or stops subsidising the fossil fuel industry to make the proper funding available to prevent irreversible climate damage doesn't mean we should indiscriminately pass that responsibility on to people who are already struggling after 10 years of Tory and Lib Dem austerity.

(Applause)

In Leeds we are actively pursuing more innovative ways of raising funds and attracting investments than forcing those already struggling to pay more. The Council would be bringing a paper to Executive Board soon about the work we're doing to introduce green bonds as recommended by the Leeds Citizens Climate Jury that will unlock investment for projects to reduce carbon emissions here in Leeds. The link between the climate emergency and transport is clear and this is an area that we need urgent action on. We need a Government commitment for significantly increased, long term, sustainable funding for active travel and public transport including funding to design and deliver an urban mass transit system and for Leeds and for the wider city region. We'd also like to see more train stations reopen in our city and Councillor Groves and WYCA are already working on this with partners across the city. We need greater control and influence on public transport services at a local level so that we can help people move out of cars on to a regular affordable and reliable public transport network. We need the funding rule to change for transport schemes we can focus on the climate impacts rather than putting more vehicles onto our roads. We need national policy changes on planning and housing standards so that they are more sustainable and need better Government funding for waste management including funding to enable us to expand food waste collection and

the reintroduction of deposit return schemes on plastic and glass bottles. It's not a shortlist of Leeds and it's by no means complete but this is not a small issue it's one of the greatest challenges we will face in our lifetimes. We need the Government to step up their game and stop hiding behind their ...

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Mulherin.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Net zero ambitions which are 30 years away and we hope that they'll be doing so in their Budget which comes up next month.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Charlwood.

COUNCILLOR CHARLWOOD: Thank you Lord Mayor. I want to support Councillor Blake's Budget. I'm very pleased to be able to speak specifically about the Adult Social Care and Public Health and health generally aspects of it because we get, I get to, real privilege to be able to politically lead the departments in the Council which covers around 40% of our spend and it really is about the delivery of a compassionate city and the Adult Social Care challenge is a real one and we've mentioned it across party today. The funding challenges, the future sustainability of it and I know everyone in this Chamber really cares about the people aspect of everything we do and making our communities stronger through asset based social care, through our innovation that we've delivered and we get a lot of support around that cross party. I think what we'd like to see is a long term funding settlement and I think we've talked about the Green Paper many many times in this Chamber and I'm pleased that Councillor Carter was saying that he would push for more certainty on funding as well. I think with that, having said all of that we have done and managed to do an awful lot with what we've got and I think we're really proud of some of the achievements we've made, if we had more money we could do more things that we really want to do. So a couple of those things might be that we really want to pay better wages for staff both in our home care services and in our care homes around the city. In order to get care homes and the private sector and other care facilities to pay higher wages we need legislation changes, the issues that Councillor Dobson was raising and others about the market and the types of market that we have, again would need some legislation changes which again is that future planning that we really need from the Government and we'd be really willing to help them with that if they wanted to speak to us and you know we could give them our experience as the second biggest city outside of London. I'm sure we can help genuinely about what what we could do to change but we want to pay better wages and help home care get on a more stable footing for example. We do have a transient workforce in home care and we want it to be have stronger links to the health and care system more generally whereas at the moment we do struggle to do that. We deliver care at a good level and that the Leader mentioned that we have now got 80%, over 80% of our care services that are registered in the city both private, voluntary sector and Council services, the whole range above 80% of those are rated good and outstanding and that is a real, I'm really proud of that because few years ago we had some serious

concerns in this Chamber about care quality in the city and we've put a number of things in place to improve that care. In fact the case that Councillor Dobson was talking about, which we won't go into the detail of, was in a care facility which has been supported with our Care Quality Team that we have funded to support services to get better at delivering care and provide better care and it has done. So we have funded a dedicated Care Quality Team, they work with care providers raising the quality of care and that has worked. We also yet are going to put another £668,000 into dementia services including a new Specialist Dementia Unit at the South East Recover Unit, really important that we can do that, discharge to assess, also help people to be in a better place than in a hospital environment when their suffering with complex dementia. We've also got plans of the CCG to look at whether we need and can fund dementia facility in the future, we have been talking about that for the last year or so and how can we commission that together in partnership so that if you look at it as a system the costs to the wider system as people being in hospital versus been in a care facility that's better for their needs, surely there's a way of commissioning that together which saves the system money in total because putting people, getting people the right care package who have complex dementia and are currently on a ward is extraordinarily expensive and very difficult to do. So we have got the money available to do that. We've had some significant positives in public health, we've got our integrated Sexual Health Services which is commissioned by Public Health that's an outstanding service and so are Suicide Prevention Action Plans also been rated outstanding. We also secured a £2m investment from Yorkshire Cancer Research to set up a Cancer Screening and Awareness Programme in our more deprived areas of the city so that's bringing in funding from philanthropy and elsewhere to help with our aims in our Health and Wellbeing Strategy. So I think we've done a huge amount within the constraints that we have so I just would ask that we could support Councillor Blake's Budget and also work with Government to help them to get that Green Paper going.

Thank you.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Robinson.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: Thank you Lord Mayor. I wish to speak to the Amendments made by Councillor Carter today and cover 3 particular areas, one of them is our Amendment around our Community Committees the second around flooding and climate change and the third looking at debt levels in the city.

Firstly the Community Committees Amendment. It's Amendment that I encourage Members across this Chamber to support I think we all believe in the harnessing the power of Community Committees and the devolution of taking subsidiarity that they are use to be (**inaudible**) of taking decisions at the lowest possible level and as close to the residents who were affected as possible. The £250,000 towards Community Committees has been suggested that it can be used to tackle antisocial behaviour, knife crime and and such areas. I think that's something that we all have a priority to look at I know that if it went to the Committee Committee that Councillor Graham chairs, I almost promoted you

there Councillor Gruen, the Community Committee that Councillor Graham chairs there is a lot of anti social behaviour issues that are going on locally, that money could be well spent to work with partners and target efforts locally and particularly when we look at the fact that by the Police and Crime Commissioners own figures there has been an increase in offences of possession with a knife or with a banned instrument of 19% that's far too high and whoever is the Police and Crime Commissioner after May needs to make sure that they're targeting those efforts across this city.

On the area of Flooding and Defence there's an Amendment been put forward by this group and we spent lots of time looking at where the money could come from because, like Councillor Rafique, I read that from page, I read that front page of the Yorkshire Evening Post and I thought it's now time that Leeds put its money where its mouth is, if we believe in devolution and we believe that there are problems here in Leeds we need to step up and make the efforts to tackle them and the funding that's available in the Amendment to deliver the Flood Alleviation Scheme is one that actually will make a real impact on the lives of so many people. We cannot simply blame Westminster and London and say we're going to ignore it and just go cap in hand looking for more money. If we truly believe it will make a difference we are going to have to put our money where our mouth is and that's what that Amendment does.

Similarly the Amendments around increasing tree planting across this city. It's to be applauded the figure of 2 million trees that seek to be planted over the next 25 years but it's not enough. I know Members opposite will say it's the right start and I agree with them it is a right start but we could go even further. Actually if you look at the Arium, the Arium has already has plans for 120,000 trees this year and potentially 600,000 trees next year. So I think the Amendment, the proposal in the Budget actually slightly undersells the capacity of what the Arium could do and what we could deliver in this city and what we could deliver for other Councils around us too taking a real West Yorkshire approach as opposed to just a Leeds approach.

Finally I want to touch on the debt figures. Councillor Charlwood just mentioned that her pride in 40% of Council spending been in her Department and the onus that that places on her and the responsibility that she has for that. I'm keen to know which Executive Board Member takes responsibility for the 22% figure that will be attributed to debt repayments in this city. So that's, we're getting to a stage where for every 20p in every £1 of Council Tax is going to service the debt, it is the third biggest spending area in this Budget going forward and to give you a little idea of the figures, our external debt interest charge is going to be £78.3m, our external debt level, our total debt level would be £2.2b. The cost of servicing the debt will go up by £14.4m in 2020/2021. Our authorised borrowing limit, so that's the maximum level that this Council can borrow in this Budget period, is £3.7b and the operational limit is £3.4b. To give you a little perspective members in 2010/11 external debt was £1.4bn, it has gone up £800m in 10 years and I reckon if you go out there and ask the Council Taxpayers of Leeds if they've seen £800m more investment or they feel £800m better off in this city they will not be able to say that they are. This Council has a debt problem and it needs to get a grip with it as soon as possible and just

kicking the can down the road and dealing with MRP year on year simply isn't good enough we need to make some serious decisions now, stop servicing the debt and wasting money on servicing that debt and deliver for the frontline services and the hard working people of Leeds. Thank you Lord Mayor.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Stephenson.

COUNCILLOR STEPHENSON: Thank you, thank you Lord Mayor. I would like to touch on an area that the Council Leader skipped over in her speech earlier which is Children and Families. I heard very little reference to that from the Leader of Council and I think it's quite, it says quite a lot actually that nearly a third of the Amendments from this group refers to Children and Families Directorate compared to very little from the administration and that's £1.18m more going into Children and Families from the Amendments put forward by this group in the name of Councillor Carter and it's really important I think that as the Principal Opposition Group we put that front and centre of our manifesto if you like for the forthcoming Election because if the last General Election is anything to go by and the votes are replicated in seats like for example Crossgates and Whinmoor, Temple Newsam, Kippax and Methley perhaps ...

(Background talking)

Then actually it could be very very relevant indeed. I just want to take some of the Amendments in turn Lord Mayor and talk about why they're so important.

First of all we'd like to put an extra £245,000 into what we've called a Leeds Pupil Music Premium this follows the Government's National Plan for music education. A lot of studies show that there's a direct correlation between the skills you get in music to increase attainment in mathematics and we think that by the end of a child's school career every child should have the opportunity to play an instrument and learn to read sheet music and that would deliver that level of attainment rise Lord Mayor.

The next investment we would make is £500,000 into the Family Drug and Alcohol Courts. In recent Exec Board reports it was noted that there's an underspend in terms of the need in this department, it's been failed to be addressed by the administration and our Amendment would address that. We would also put a small amount of money, £5,000, but actually would deliver a real benefit for parents in the city on a school admissions website. I'm sure many Members in the Chamber will, when the school admissions is going on, they'll hear from parents saying that the current system it's very difficult to navigate your way around finding where the nearest school is etc.

(Background talking)

Various schools, your nearest schools are so that a website where you can just ping in your postcode and find the nearest schools would be very helpful indeed and it can be delivered at a very low cost and will be welcome by parents.

The next 2 policies that we're proposing Lord Mayor is around early years and this follows on from our fantastic initiative by the Duchess of Cambridge recently on the 5 big questions. We all know that actually if you improve, if you can improve a child's life chances by improving education under 5, so early years is vitally important which is why we will put in £280,000 towards Early Years Service and crucially increase in the number of nursery places for 2 year olds as well. The gap in this city of attainment between disadvantaged/ advantaged children in early years is growing under this administration and they can't use money as an example because they're currently underspending the Budget by £1.8m.

Finally Lord Mayor exclusions and attendance in the city is something the Children's Scrutiny's Children and Families Scrutiny Board is currently investigating as we've heard but we think actually there's more to do here from the administrations point of view and £150,000 would expand the Exclusion Attendance Team to be able to deal with the fact that in the city some of the Council run schools in the city are in the highest proportion of schools that are excluding pupils. They liked to think, say all the time it's about Academies if you actually look at the detail the third worst offender in the city is a maintained school.

So in total Lord Mayor this raft of Children and Families policies that this group have put forward in the name of Councillor Andrew Carter really does deliver a child friendly city for Leeds because we believe that a child friendly city is one that backs aspiration and equality of opportunity and all of these policies here Lord Mayor would do just that. Thank you.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Harrington.

COUNCILLOR HARRINGTON: My Lord Mayor I'm delighted to be speaking in the Budget debate in support of Councillor Carter's Amendments. I would like to focus my comments on 2 main areas, dementia care and flood alleviation which are both highly relevant concerns for the area I represent in Outer North East Leeds.

First dementia care, I'm pleased that Councillor Carter's Amendment would look to establish a new 60 bed dementia care facility which would greatly enhance dementia care in the city. Whilst he hasn't said where this facility will be located I'd like to start the lobbying early for it to be in the Outer North East of the city. Currently people in my ward are referred to services in Harrogate and Knaresborough or sometimes worse still other further away areas of Leeds which are even further away than the North Yorkshire areas, none of which are as near or as convenient as we would like and when it comes to provision for

vulnerable older people with poor public transport connectivity. If we're really serious about tackling dementia then we need to improve access. A new Centre of Excellence nearby would give those people living with dementia in Outer North East a greater choice and a more convenient option. The funding model been proposed would also make it possible to consider delivering more of these services depending on need. I understand that Liverpool has established 2 such facilities so it's certainly more than possible for us to do it too.

My Lord Mayor turning to Flood Alleviation, I think we can all agree that this is a timely Amendment from Councillor Carter given the extreme weather we've seen in Leeds and across the country in recent weeks and I'd like to add my thanks to people who have helped with floods especially in the Wetherby area even though they haven't been able to dredge the drains. This Amendment would use CIL moneys and funds from rephasing the Capital Programme to provide an additional £5m contribution to Phase 2 of the Leeds Flood Alleviation Scheme. CIL monies have already been used for this purpose as noted in the Capital Programme Budget Papers so the principle has already been established and we're just proposing to increase the amount used. The idea is this would clearly demonstrate to Government that here in Leeds we are willing to do our bit towards protecting our residents and businesses. Don't mistake me Lord Mayor we expect Central Government to do its bit too as they have already provided substantial funds. We think it can be persuaded to produce the rest of the funding necessary to get this scheme completed but as I say this gently to the Members opposite there is a sense out there sometimes that when things go wrong in Leeds we're too quick to look to Central Government to sort everything out instead of been ready to live up to the responsibilities we owe to our own residents. On this side we think there's more we can do in Leeds to take this scheme forward and that's what this Amendment is about. Flood Alleviation is as important in Outer North East as much as in the inner city in my opinion. A comprehensive plan looking at the impact of work on all areas and improve prevention in the uplands is vital so we don't push the problem somewhere else. We need to be looking for example at how discharged and sewage treatment works is being pumped into our rivers and the consequences of this. Planning developments in flood plains should also be actively discouraged, a sentiment echoed by the Head of the Environment Agency only this week. Our Amendments around additional tree planting are also critical to helping to prevent future flooding events.

My Lord Mayor these amendments represent sensible and achievable proposals to make improvements for our residents and I would urge all Members to support the Amendments in the name of Councillor Carter. Thank you.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Amanda Carter.

COUNCILLOR AMANDA CARTER: Thank you my Lord Mayor. As we know devolution is one of the biggest issues of the day and the Budget in March will reveal more terms of the scope and size of the deal coming to Leeds to

West Yorkshire. However one of the things I want to talk about is local devolution My Lord Mayor, as our Amendments show we would like to have much more of a focus on devolving powers and funding to Community Committees of local areas. As the Chair of Outer West Committee this year I've seen first hand just how much the local Budgets Council services from the centre, try to get hold of the Community Committees funding. Sometimes this can be for good schemes that we are happy to support and where appropriate we do sometimes but quite often these projects and schemes should be centrally funded.

My Group's Amendments and indeed our general approach would to trust our local councillors and colleagues much more, allocate funding where appropriate, additional powers too for them to prioritise on local initiatives. This year like last year we would allocate additional funding for the Community Committees to spend on community safety initiatives. These would total £250,000 in 2021 and will be aimed at delivering local solutions through partnerships with neighbourhood policing teams to combat anti-social behaviour hotspots which I'm sure that we all suffer and indeed on the Police and Crime Panel we discuss across the board where anti social behaviour is a problem and it's there because of a multitude of different reasons. We'd also like to tackle the scourge of knife crime which is not just in Leeds and West Yorkshire and nationally but it's in globally, it's here in France and Germany and even Australia, we're seeing rises in violent crime. The Government has really stepped up in this area and provided major new investment in frontline policing. Last spring West Yorkshire Police were able to access just over £4m in funding to tackle serious violent crime through up a nation gem lock. This has enabled higher visibility patrols and reactive work based on demand and intelligence. Up to July 2019 it led to a hundred arrests and linked to violent crime and a further 39 to weapons. We all know that violent crime has been a major issue and a real source of public concern. This funding has been vital as the police have been able to fight back on this issue. In addition to the £4m there's been another £3.4m of funding for Dedicated of Violence Reduction Unit and again money directed from the Government and here spent tackling issues in Leeds and of course my Lord Mayor there is also the pledge to deliver 20,000 new frontline police officers with a funding commitment of £750m nationally. There are major interventions and they show again that the Government is prepared to listen to the public and introduce policies that people are calling for a higher police presence and more measures to tackle violent crime and police and knife crime.

There is now a people's government in Westminster and we like them would want to know we listened to people's concerns and address them. Additional funding for local committees and communities, local high streets and for community safety is a key element in our agenda and I support the Amendments in the name of Councillor Andrew Carter. Thank you.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor James Lewis.

COUNCILLOR LEWIS: Thank you Lord Mayor. I've been listening carefully to what the opposition have been saying this afternoon and I don't think I've ever heard so much rubbish in my life I have to say.

(Laughter)

There's just one thing, there's just one thing there's just one thing I think it's really worth clearing up, Councillor Carter invited me to comment on debt, now given I was browsing the Office of Budget Responsibility Public Spending figures recently and this year the tenth year of austerity and let's not forget austerity was supposed to bring down Government borrowing the Conservatives will be borrowing £9.2b more this year predicted than they were last year so normally I wouldn't take any advice from the Conservatives about public sector borrowing however on this occasion I will bite on it and just look at it so in terms of minimum revenue provision and Councillor Carter did at least have the integrity to say at the point where they saved frontline public services the Conservative Group were all in favour of it. They could have voted instead of putting money into debt repayments, they could have voted money away from frontline public services and put it into debt repayments and not supported minimum revenue provision but they brought forward no proposal at the time so the approach had their full provision. So their concerned about the Council's debt then they could easily bring through any amendment, they could not support any further capital programmes or they could have amended the capital programme today to remove schemes which have increased debt and let's just run through some of the things which they could have removed, they could have removed highway repairs, they could have removed adaptations for disabled people, they could have removed for devolution schemes or they could have removed our new Council House Building Programme, the biggest council house building programme in the country. So I won't take any lectures about debt about the Conservative Group when we have quite clearly delivered prudent public finances in this city but we're also delivering the outcomes we want and let's not forget and let's not forget their record on record high Government borrowing. It's a figure that's often being quoted in this Council Chamber that the last 10 years of Conservative Government and sometimes it's worth remembering they have been running this country for the last 10 years as things like knife crime and what not has gone up, we've seen flood spending comedown as Mohammed Rafique pointed out earlier, we've seen the increase in food bank use as Debbie spoke about earlier and the whole premise of their Government was that they needed to, is that they would borrow less and what we've seen is public service decimated but we've also seen Government debt go up and up so I for one won't be taking any lectures from the Conservative Group about public finances. We as a Labour administration are delivering in straitened times with £1.7b taken away from us over the last 10 years and if anybody on the Conservative Group doesn't understand that figure we've added up all the cuts in each of the last 10 years and that's where we've got to that figure, if anybody doesn't, if anybody on the Conservative Group doesn't understand addition I'm sure Councillor Prior can find them a course ...

(Laughter)

But these are not dodgy cumulative figures these are the hard facts of 10 years of Conservative impact on this Council. We are delivering the priorities of a Labour administration, we are delivering fairness, we are tackling inequality and we're taking all the right things. I speak in support of Councillor Blake's Budget.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Campbell.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you Lord Mayor. You can always rely on Councillor Lewis for a calm and mannered well thought out response to any debate. Actually I would say Lord Mayor that this afternoon we've actually had what I think I would describe as a democratic debate. Members have generally stuck to the point, generally, not spendt their time slagging off each other but actually made an attempt to put forward constructive suggestions that they would like the opposition, whichever side you want to look at that, to support and that's slightly unusual in this Chamber but it's a welcome change I think. I would however just like to raise a couple of points from our Amendments. I am slightly concerned, Councillor Mulherin, that given your portfolio, your speech every single sentence said the Government should do this and actually particularly in relation to climate change which was the point I think you were making we all need to do something. So we are suggesting and I am mesmerised by the Leader of the Green party opposing a climate change fund for Leeds, I'm almost speechless at that point. The bottom line is we are saying to the people of Leeds look there is a mechanism here where we can put £3.5m into a pot of money which we can use to improve the climate or mitigate against climate actions in Leeds. That is quite a reasonable request to say to the public, would you support that, if they say no that's depressing but I think it's a feature it should be our responsibility to persuade them. We've talked a lot about climate change, a lot about climate change and quite frankly the Leader of Council in fact the Leader of all the parties have put forward very constructive proposals about what we do but that's about what we do and I think it's about saying we have to do a lot more than that. I appreciate the fact that we're planting heaven knows how many thousand trees but that isn't in itself the solution. We all have to change, we all have to change quite dramatically and the only way to minimise that impact on the general public is to be able to fund that in a constructive way. Now it would be nice if the Government would give us a lot of money. I have stood here for oh 30 odd years listening to Leaders of Council and Councillors. I have never known a Leader of Council say we've got plenty of money we don't need any more we're doing fine. Every single Budget debate the Leader of Council gets up and says we haven't got enough money and it's probably true today, it may have been less true in the past but yes we need to pressurise Government, yes we need to do things ourselves but we need to be that flag bearer for climate change within the population and we need to bring the population along with us and the way to do that is to ask them sensible questions and give them sensible solutions that they can support as in line with our Amendments and I'd hope you'd support them.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lamb.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Thank you Lord Mayor. I'm proud to speak in support of the Amendments in the name of Councillor Carter and I'm sorry if this disappoints Councillor Campbell but as ever the Leader of Council backed up by Councillor Lewis opened by taking credit for all that is good in Leeds and either ignoring or blaming others for things that are going not so well. I'm pleased Lord Mayor that their fixing the roof of the Town Hall it's just a shame the Labour Party failed to fix the economic roof while the rain was, while the sun was shining all those years ago ...

(Laughter and applause)

And we will never let them forget Lord Mayor that it was the financial incompetence and fiscal incontinence of the last Labour Government that is why we don't have enough money in this city today and why we've had the challenges that we face for the last year. Imagine the difference for our schools and hospitals if they weren't saddled with the PFI debt that's stretching them year in year out, decade after decade that they have to spend instead of spending on frontline, imagine what they could do with that money today and Lord Mayor Labour's addiction to debt continues here in Leeds. We've heard repeated starting with the Leader, the two deputies and others this £1.7b figure and yes we know exactly how you calculated it Councillor Lewis and I'm going to use exactly the same mechanism and calculation to put something back to you because it's about, as somebody said, what you do with what you've got, so you're decisions and if we cumulatively calculate what you've done with MRP, what you've done with your underspend, what you've done by failing to deliver the route rationalisation year after year you have denied this Council £454.8m that could have been spent on frontline services in this city, that's your policy made in Leeds by your own calculations Councillor Lewis. If you can't work it out come and see me and I'll show you how we've done it.

(Applause and laughter)

Lord Mayor that could have been delivering services, it could have delivered all of our Budget Amendments from every party, we wouldn't need to put Council Tax up to have a massive climate levy we could have done everything and much much more besides, it's about what you do with what you've got. We could have been delivering that investment in family, drug and alcohol courts which incidentally would then save £1.78 for every single pound we invest, we know that as fact we simply should be doing more of it. Not only does that make economic sense not only does that save money for the city it means we are protecting more children and families from the scourge of drug and alcohol across our city.

Lord Mayor we've heard a lot about education, at every opportunity it seems as an attack on Academies and a wish on the opposite benches to have full control of every school in this city ...

(Background talking)

But something else we will not let them forget is what happened the last time a Labour Council in this city had full control of education. Do you all remember. Some of you were not around at that time, your own Labour Government, a Labour Government had to come and step in and take control from you because of all the political interference in our schools. The last time you had control of our schools it was a mess, it was a disgrace and quite rightly your own Government took that away from you so remember, remember that. We should celebrate the success of every school in our city ...

COUNCILLOR: Here here.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Not talk them down continuously. We have got some fantastic schools whether they're Academies, whether they are mainstream across all parts of the city we should be proud of them, what message does it send to the children that go to those schools every time you attack them. Let's stop doing it, let's talk them up not talk them down,

Lord Mayor this is a Budget Amendment which shows that you can do more, that we can make a difference, that a different approach can have different outcomes. Yes we accept the funding challenge is tight but it feels like you've forgotten what has happened in the last few weeks, months and years and so I'm going to leave the final word, Lord Mayor, to some of those supporters that have deserted you from the red brick wall up and down the land. What did they say about the Labour Party, you'd do well to remember this in 10 weeks'time. The Labour Party they rejected could not be trusted with the public finances. Look down on people who disagreed with it, was too leftwing, failed to understand or even listen to the people it was supposed to represent. Was incompetent, appallingly divided, had no coherent priorities, did not understand aspiration or where prosperity comes from, disapproved of their values and treated them like fools. Not Councillor Gruen, your former voters. Plus ça change. Thank you Lord Mayor.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blake to sum up.

(Background talking)

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: I could, I could, I could but I won't. There's one thing that's just brilliant following Councillor Lamb. Do you know what if they had their way we'd have no services left to protect in this city that is the absolute truth ...

(Applause)

It must be so galling to them that we've managed to circumvent the most horrendous attack and pressure from their Government indifferent guises over the last 10 years but I'll tell you as long as we have got any say in this city we will continue to defend public services delivered locally for public people in our

city. I have to accept that I am a bit disappointed because one of my games over the last several Council, it's been a few Budget speeches I've delivered has been counting up the number of personal mentions that Andrew has made about me and I did make reference to it I think last time so thank you for taking notice of that.

COUNCILLOR ANDREW CARTER: Perhaps you won't make any about Boris Johnson in the next speech.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: I've spoken about Boris, I am very happy to meet Boris and I have met him and will discuss things with him but I just have to say with regards to your comments Andrew I don't think I've ever quite experienced such an attempt to rewrite the history of devolution in this area, I cannot quite comprehend, I'm a bit concerned actually about how you've misremembered so much of what has actually happened and I think the great thing for us is that Lord Jim O'Neill who was put into the House of Lords by George Osborne to progress devolution is on public record as saying that devolution for Leeds City Region including West Yorkshire in that period didn't happen because he got taken into a room by West Yorkshire and North Yorkshire Tory MPs, said if you think you're going to deliver a devolution deal for this area on its own it's going to be over your dead body and he's actually said that so let's just be very clear that that is why that deal fell apart and what's more they told us to go away and come up with a devolution deal that would work for our area given the fact that we don't replicate Greater Manchester, we haven't been working at that footprint for 30 years in the way that Greater Manchester has so we did that and we went and we met all of the Leaders from across Yorkshire and we came up with a robust One Yorkshire model which we in this Council have talked about at length and has received support from parties opposite. Lots of heads shaking now, it's very clear since this new Government came in in December that there is absolutely no way they are going to entertain discussing that during this parliament so we are talking to them as you as you all know we've mentioned this before about how we can come up with a deal, but it's you know, we will work with them to come up with, to try and achieve the very best we can, the best settlement that we can for Leeds within West Yorkshire but that is the background and to try and attempt to say that it's us that scuppered it before. The other issue that I would just ask you all to be very wary of looking at these Amendments, be very wary of the funding sources that they are looking at using for ongoing expenditure. Reserves, one off payments, borrowing against income streams that haven't even been resolved so that's why I said there our tree proposal is ambitious and we're going to deliver it because we have put the funding in place to do it. I'm afraid your suggestion that you will borrow against the CAZ scheme is deeply deeply flawed and anyway what we actually want is for the income stream from that source to reduce to zero. We want cars, buses HGV's, taxis, everyone to be coming into the city centre and not emitting the toxic fumes that are causing so much damage to the population of Leeds never mind the the carbon climate change agenda.

So where to go next I just want to pick up on some of the the issues that you've raised Councillor Stephenson and Robinson about Children's Services.

There can never be any doubt of the commitment of this Council to improving the life chances of children in our city.

(Applause)

I have to say the really disappointing thing about the way you keep throwing out these things about academies is that you are trying to write the narrative about our approach to academies. Actually some of the academies in the city work very closely with us, Councillor Gabriel and I were at a fantastic meeting last night and as a result of action of this Council and the change of the sponsor of a transformation in the inclusion and all of those things that we've been talking today is absolutely incredible. It can be done but it's about partnership and not setting up in isolation and that's the difficulty that we have with some of the schools in the city and at the end of the day the reason this is so important and the thing that you have failed to recognise is every single one of the children in those schools is our responsibility in terms of safeguarding, health and wellbeing all of those issues and those schools that do not allow us in, that refuse even the the Head of Community Safety to go in I understand, what is that all about, what is the problem with us actually working together. So I'm really pleased that some of those schools who actually might not have wanted to become academies in the first place but they are, they had take it on as a responsibility, they've been forced to academies by the Government against their will, against the will of their parents sometimes but they continue to work with us. Surely that is the model that we should all be working towards and I just want to draw attention again to the Marmot report 10 years on and it is damning, damning about the impact of your Government's policies over the last 10 years on Children's Services and on Education and on Youth Provision you ought to read this and hang your heads in shame. So just a snapshot to take on this in terms of giving the child the best start in life, the rates of child poverty have increased since 2010/11 with over 4 million children affected. Funding for Sure Start and Children's Centres and other Children's Services has been cut significantly particularly in more deprived areas, more deprived areas have lost more funding for Children and Youth Services than less deprived areas even as the need increased over that time.

Less positive experiences in early life particularly experiences of adversity relate closely to the many negative long term outcomes, poverty, unemployment, homelessness, unhealthy behaviours, poor mental and physical health. Funding for Local Authority Children Young People's Services fell by £3b, a 29% reduction with cuts in the most deprived areas and it's estimated as we know the significant number of Children's Centres that have closed that were set up to deal with these issues. But what really, I cannot understand I absolutely fail to understand when you see the levels of youth crime of all of those things and you cannot somehow make the connection of the decimation of Youth Services and youth funding in this country. How can that be ...

(Applause)

So there is a clear issue about exclusions and off rolling and I'm really pleased that, Alan, that you're picking this up and I hope you really do a

thorough job, it is shocking the great is, the great thing is, the great thing is there's going to be a change because even the previous Government recognised how shocking this was and they've now made it the responsibility of the schools that have been off rolling they will keep the responsibility for the exam results now that is when we might be able to start seeing a difference and why some of these practices have gone up across the country but what we have and this is where it becomes really shocking and don't you ever criticise us for our work on inclusion and young people. So where we have exclusions DFE data revealed that in 2012 children eligible for free school meals were more, 4 times more likely to be punished by permanent exclusion than children who weren't. I mean what is this. Pupil numbers have risen while funding has been cut by 8% per pupil, post 16 funding has been particularly hard hit we know about the assault on further education, we know that that has been seen as a second class route for young people coming through. Spending on Youth Services now just get this, has fallen by 66% since 2010 and violent youth crime has massively increased in that period, so don't give us , come and give us lectures about our approach here I'm very proud of our policies that are actually delivering for young people and I'm proud that we've got national recognition and that is why we are being asked to go and talk to so many authorities around the country and the first thing that the Government did when they came in, the coalition Government did was to cut the early intervention grant, mid year, cutting off all of those programmes that were going to work with young people, it was so easy just cut that grant and that is so unforgiving and what we've managed to do by the policies we put in place to safely reduce the number of children coming into our care we've been able to use that money to invest in family group conferencing to keep more children safely in their family environment leading to better outcomes for children and their families and what we have never really got to grips of is the true cost to society of the failures of your Government since 2010 and the additional costs in the Youth Justice System, in the Health Service all of those areas where your failure of policies has actually made such a damaging impact on people's lives.

I just want to pick up about the issue about music education. I completely agree that we should have more arts education in school it's one of my passions I absolutely believe in it and we are actually now working at a city level to actually get the extra curricular arts education that our kids so need and deserve. The impact of it on attainment is incredible, just look at the attainment, the school where Councillor Groves is a governor in our ward, where in harmony has gone in, with Opera North, every child's learning to play a stringed instrument in that school and then put that against the improvement in parental engagement is off the planet, it is just phenomenal. So what we know is that since 2010 there has been a 38% decline in the number of young people studying arts GCC's, there's been a 4% decline since 2018, there's been a 22% fall in arts teachers to between 2010 and 2018 and there's been a 23% fall in arts teaching hours between 2010 and 2018. Doesn't that speak volumes in terms of the type of curriculum, the imposed curriculum coming down and the fact that the way that schools are measured in terms of performance of our kids is so narrow and so debilitating and is not fit for purpose in my view. We will take the initiative, I'm really pleased that were supporting our 2023 the impact of

cultural life in our city pays absolute dividends. I'm proud to move the Budget today ...

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: And I hope that we will go forward, deliver the Budget and really demonstrate how we are making a difference for everyone in this city. Thank you.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dowson.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 16.4 I'd like to ask for recorded votes on all Amendments on the Budget motion.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cohen

COUNCILLOR COHEN: Delighted to second My Lord Mayor

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now going into a series of votes and the Budget Amendments and the Budget Motion so sit back and enjoy.

(Laughter)

THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE: Thank you Lord Mayor. This is an important football match on tonight so I'm hoping Members will bear with me here.

(Background talking)

Thank you for that support. So I'm not going to read out my very memorable little script for every single Amendment. I'm going to have confidence in you but I will do it at the start. So would all Members please ensure they are in their allocated seats, members have requested a recorded vote on Amendment 1 in the name of Councillor Andrew Carter. Please could Members refer to your desk unit and press the button marked P, lights will flash then press the plus button to vote in favour, the minus button to vote against or the zero button to abstain. So that's Amendment 1 Councillor Carter.

(Recorded votes were held on Amendments 1 to)

Amendment 1 - in the name of Councillor Carter

91 Members were present, 30 in favour, 6 abstentions, 55 voted against.
The Amendment was LOST.

Amendment 2 - in the name of Councillor Carter

92 Members were present, 34 in favour, 3 abstentions, 55 voted against.
The Amendment was LOST.

Amendment 3 - in the name of Councillor Carter

92 Members were present, 34 in favour, 3 abstentions, 55 voted against.
The Amendment was LOST.

Amendment 4 - in the name of Councillor Carter

92 Members were present, 31 in favour, 5 abstentions, 56 voted against.
The Amendment was LOST.

Amendment 5 - in the name of Councillor Golton

92 Members were present, 36 in favour, 1 abstention, 55 voted against.
The Amendment was LOST.

Amendment 6 - in the name of Councillor Golton

92 Members were present, 32 in favour, 1 abstention, 59 voted against.
The Amendment was LOST.

Amendment 7 - in the name of Councillor Golton

92 Members were present, 10 in favour, 27 abstentions, 55 voted
against.
The Amendment was LOST.

Amendment 8 - in the name of Councillor Golton

92 Members were present, 7 in favour, 8 abstentions, 77 voted against.
The Amendment was LOST.

Amendment 9 - in the name of Councillor Golton

92 Members were present, 30 in favour, 7 abstentions, 55 voted against.
The Amendment was LOST.

Amendment 10 - in the name of Councillor Golton

92 Members were present, 35 in favour, 2 abstentions, 55 voted against.
The Amendment was LOST.

Amendment 11 - in the name of Councillor Golton

92 Members were present, 31 in favour, 3 abstentions, 58 voted against.
The Amendment was LOST.

Amendment 12 - in the name of Councillor Golton

92 Members were present, 8 in favour, 29 abstentions, 55 voted against.
The Amendment was LOST.

Amendment 13 - in the name of Councillor Golton

92 Members were present, 5 in favour, 7 abstentions, 80 voted against.
The Amendment was LOST.

Amendment 14 - in the name of Councillor Golton

92 Members were present, 31 in favour, 6 abstentions, 55 voted against.
The Amendment was LOST.

Amendment 15 - in the name of Councillor Finnigan

92 Members were present, 4 in favour, 31 abstentions, 57 voted against.
The Amendment was LOST.

Amendment 16 - in the name of Councillor Dobson

92 Members were present, 15 in favour, 22 abstentions, 55 voted
against.
The Amendment was LOST.

Amendment 17 - in the name of Councillor D Blackburn

92 Members were present, 14 in favour, 23 abstentions, 55 voted
against.
The Amendment was LOST.

Amendment 18 - in the name of Councillor D Blackburn

92 Members were present, 14 in favour, 22 abstentions, 56 voted
against.
The Amendment was LOST.

Amendment 19 - in the name of Councillor D Blackburn

92 Members were present, 9 in favour, 5 abstentions, 78 voted against.
The Amendment was LOST.

Amendment 20 - in the name of Councillor D Blackburn

92 Members were present, 9 in favour, 28 abstentions, 55 voted against.
The Amendment was LOST.

Amendment 21 - in the name of Councillor D Blackburn

92 Members were present, 37 in favour, 0 abstentions, 55 voted against.
The Amendment was LOST.

Budget Motion in the name of Councillor Blake

92 Members were present, 55 in favour, 35 abstentions, 2 voted against.
The Amendment was CARRIED.

(Applause)

ITEM 2 – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD - BEST COUNCIL PLAN 2020-2025

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we now can we now go back to page 2, item 4 on the paper. Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR LEWIS: Thank you Lord Mayor and thank you for all those that are leaving just as I start to speak I know I can often have this effect on an audience. Now we've moved on to, now we've moved on from the earlier items onto the most important item we're all here for today which is agreeing the Best Council Plan 2020 to 2025. I won't say a lot in introducing, on the paper because there is a lot of speakers on it but the Best Council Plan as we know is the document sits alongside the Budget and sets out the Council priorities for the year ahead. The documents already been published for consultation alongside the Budget and has been considered by every Scrutiny Board as part of that consultation and amended to come back to Full Council. As again I won't repeat some of the speeches that have already been heard this afternoon but our ambition as an administration to the Best Council Plan sets out in terms of tackling poverty and reducing inequalities and that runs through everything or tries to run through everything the Council does. I think the big change I will highlight in moving the report is alongside the Inclusive Growth Strategy in the Health and Wellbeing Plan, we've added a third pillar to the Best Council Plan which is the Climate Emergency we agreed some 10 months, 10 / 11 months ago. So on that I move the report Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dowson.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: Second Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Barry Anderson.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: Thank you Lord Mayor. Sustainability unsustainable infrastructure. Well what I will do is I'll start by congratulating Councillor Mulherin who has listened to us on this side for the last two or three years and finally she got it at the last Plans Panel when she accepted that the sites in the Site Allocations Plan were unsustainable and they need to be taken out and I certainly welcome her conversion to the way that we've been arguing for years and years and years ...

(Applause)

And more importantly I think the residents in Robin Hood and Ardsley particularly people will see that the Conservatives in that place were right all along that that site should never have been included and I thank her for the support that she's given to our candidate there. Now what I would also like to do and as Councillor Carter started I think as a result of the climate change and also the comments made by Councillor Mulherin that we need to revisit the Site Allocations Plan and to make sure that the sites that are going to be affected by flooding otherwise we are not going to be able to deliver the Best Council Plan and in terms of Planning again why is it so many of our planning applications are only barely being policy compliant and officers are willing to accept second class applications when they're making recommendations. We should be going for the best, we should be getting the best design, we should be asking for people to exceed the sizes of gardens, we should be asking them to exceed the sizes of bedrooms and various other things like that. We are not ambitious enough as a city in terms of looking after the houses that our citizens need. We need to do more in that respect.

Now today, oh Councillor Walshaw's gone, but we had our Climate Change Transport meeting today and we had people talking about active transport and a document was brought to our attention by the residents that were there, transport for new homes and the person that was there representing the Active Travel said was I aware that our Chief Planning Officer was not aware that this document existed and should be taken into consideration locally and so I would ask the question are the Exec Board aware that this is a document that you should be working alongside in terms of what you're doing.

The other thing is it will be interesting to see what your responses to the Joint Scrutiny Board that took place recently in terms of trying to get improving parking around the area because we've got significant problems going to happen here and we need to get hold of money particularly some of the Community Infrastructure Levy money to get some of these Traffic Regulation Orders in place in terms of what we're doing and we also need to get a policy in place ...

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Anderson.

COUNCILLOR B ANDERSON: Parking on the grass verges as quickly as possible because we are ruining the city by the amount of grass verges that are being dug up. Thank you.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Flynn.

COUNCILLOR FLYNN: Thank you Lord Mayor. I will be speaking today with particular emphasis on supporting children with additional needs into employment. We all appreciate the value of a fully rounded education from preschool to post 16 for all our children but I think it's even more important for children with additional needs so I welcome the Council proposal to establish a specialist pre school at Rose Court. It's equally important that we give our less

fortunate children the right to support to help them in their move into into employment in due course. Members will recall the excellent presentation by the delegation at last month's Council asking for support in improving the meaningful employment prospects of children and adults with additional needs.

This is also a recurring theme at every takeover event here in the Council Chamber. The sad fact is that nationally only 6% or less of many learners with additional needs including those on the autistic spectrum are likely to get into employment. People with a disability are twice as likely to lose their jobs as those without a disability, that's just unacceptable in the 21st century in this city. It's essential that employees are aware of the value and benefits of employing people with additional needs. The Minister for Children was due to address the national SEN conference been hosted here tomorrow on that very subject, it's also a national priority and as long as 3 years ago the DFE plan Post 16 Skills Plan called for all young people with an educational health and care plan to go into supported internships where that was possible. The city's current SEND strategy is very clear that there's a need for a new collaborative post 16 college to provide specialisms and better outcomes for children. Lead Members will know that the Lighthouse Futures Trust also hoped to acquire Rose Court just before the Council decided to take it over to expand their very successful post 16 specialist college which aims to bridge the gap between education employment with children with additional needs. The Lighthouse Trust is now hoping to acquire another building close to Rose Court to expand their post 16 provision. This project has the full support of SIL's across the city who've been actively participating in the planning of a new college, its curriculum and cohorts. I hope the Council will provide all the support the Trust needs to get this sorely needed project off the ground. The Trust itself has done amazing work with regards to expanding the employer network to probably dozens with many major employers in Leeds taking part and their also delivering a talent recruitment project in partnership with the Council which will mean more young people will have a strategic programme to bridge the gap between education and employment. Thank you very much indeed Lord Mayor.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Firth.

COUNCILLOR FIRTH: Thank you very much Lord Mayor and today we're talking about the Best Council Plan which is obviously this city's or this Council's plan to make this city the best city to live in, to grow old in, to smash health inequality in our city and ultimately for people to be able to develop and sustain an active lifestyle and therefore some news that came out in the past fortnight has particularly alerted the Conservative Group which is to do with golf clubs. Now in the terms of why we're bringing up Templenewsam Golf Club is because this Best Council Plan is contravened by a current consultation with the one proposal that says in cast iron that this Council is looking at closing Templenewsam Golf Club. Now we had a debate on it in November and it was blamed on austerity and Budget cuts despite the fact that we clearly showed that over £1.35m was going to be borrowed by this Council to add to the debt that we've already discussed this afternoon to pay for the proposals that would come afterwards. Now the simple fact of why this flies in the face is because I

have also another proposal that's come to our attention as I said and that's of Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council which many of you will not know is the Council that covers Bootle and Southport in Merseyside. Now what's happening there, well Bootle and Southport Golf Clubs are both receiving over the next 2 years £500,000, sorry £500,036, £536,360, over half

(laughter)

Over half a million pounds, over half a million pounds in funding to invest in golf and the reason why because of the fact that it clearly states in that Labour controlled Authority and long controlled Labour Authority that the benefits of golf to the health and well being of people of all ages and abilities is to there positive and as a result they want to invest and see over a million pounds in revenue over the next 10 years and it wasn't about choices to do with funding it's because of the priorities that they set in train. The case is clear, the priorities for this administration are not the same as that of the public and neither are they even financially competent and that's why I hope that the consultation clearly comes back and we defend Templenewsam Golf Club from the Labour Party and their closure. Thank you very much Lord Mayor.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Robinson.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: How do you follow that, I don't know.

(Background talking)

Councillor Heselwood #be kind, alright.

(Laughter and applause)

It's not on.

(Laughter)

THE LORD MAYOR: Coulc you please, just a minute Councillor Robinson. Could you please be quiet and listen please. If you want to stay here to 8 o'clock carry on, if you want to go home please be quiet and listen, respect the speakers.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: Thank you Lord Mayor and joking aside on that point there is something to be said and I know Members all around this Chamber, Councillor Graham and I have had many conversations about this about the conduct of social media and the way people interact with each other in there is something to be said for been kind. I believe that we are all public servants in this Chamber, we may disagree on politics but I do not believe that the intentions of any Member in this Chamber insidious, vicious or anything close to and we ...

(Background talking)

COUNCILLOR: Oh come on.

COUNCILLOR ROBINSON: Let turn to the ...

(Background talking)

Let's turn to the Best Council, let's turn to the Best Council Plan, part of this Best Council Plan talks about unemployment and about the increase in job prospects in this city particularly looking at skills. I applaud that and think it's a great innovation of one of the recommendations to look at employment across different sectors in this city and it's well worth bringing forward as we debate this in the future. We know the unemployment figures are dropping there at record lows since figures began however there is always more to do to make sure that we reach the divides in this city to make sure that those who are the lowest earners or those who are out of work can have improved job prospects and can have the best opportunities in the future and I believe that this Best Council Plan starts to go down that track at looking at opportunities for the future too. The Council Plan also talks about having a child friendly city. I was very fortunate Lord Mayor, to visit Dixons Trinity Chapeltown just yesterday, what a fantastic school that is doing so much for diversity in this city that is improving outcomes, that is making great strides in progress 8.

I'm aware that times running out Lord Mayor but I would finish with saying this. That school and the Headteacher that school has parents who are coming from communities not just in Chapeltown but far more widely seeking to be able to join the school in the future and it's doing great things and great innovations and I really hope and wish them the best success because actually if we give kids the best start in life in this city they'll go on to have jobs, around the unemployment point I just mentioned, they'll go on to have opportunities and they will go on to stay in this city, a city that we find is getting ever younger and wants to make sure that is the best city in this country. Thank you Lord Mayor.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor C Anderson.

COUNCILLOR C ANDERSON: Thank you Lord Mayor. The Best Council Plan 202 to 25 has many ambitions that reflect what the people in this city want to see. For the majority of people living and working in Leeds they wouldn't even know that the council has a Best Council Plan at all, however they do know when things go wrong. They know when their bins don't get emptied, they know when their streets aren't swept, they know when they see litter blowing about all over the place, they know when the drains are blocked and the streets get flooded, they know when an unwanted housing development goes up next door to them, they know when their children can't get a place at a local school, they know about the numerous potholes that never get fixed. For most people that is what's important. They want to know that their concerns will be taken seriously and acted on.

Since the climate emergency was declared where is the vision to put measures in place to show that you understand what that means. Unless we put tangible things in place that people can see it's just words. Where is the revisiting of planning applications to ensure that climate change is been taken seriously. Yesterday there was a call for any new development to steer well clear of floodrisk areas, in my ward we currently have sites earmarked for development and where outline permissions are already in place that we know are serious flood risk areas. It certainly won't be the best city to live in for people who get flooded due to new developments concreting over areas where water should be absorbed. We can prevent this happening but who is going to be bold enough to say enough is enough. So what, sorry. Where is the action to tackle the air quality issues. Some years ago now Main Street in pool was declared to have serious problems with air quality. What has been done about that, nothing. The word emergency in climate emergency doesn't seem to mean anything to you. What about putting some policies in place that show we are committed to acting on climate emergency, it would appear that departments in the Council have been very slow to translate this into action. We should be speaking to developers even where permissions are in place but not yet built, to put energy saving features into every new house, solar panels, water butts, better insulation, decent sized gardens that people can grow vegetables in and that children can play in and planting more trees within these developments, however this is not happening. The answer will be well we can't force them Councillor, but as far as I'm aware it's not even been discussed. If you don't ask you don't get, they will keep their heads down and hope that nobody notices.

Our dismal public transport service is another issue that needs tackling and quickly and again tree planting, residents are really keen to see more trees been planted but Parks and Countryside are been overwhelmed with requests.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Anderson.

COUNCILLOR C ANDERSON: I could go on Lord Mayor. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Buckley.

COUNCILLOR BUCKLEY: Thank you, thank you Lord Mayor. I went to the same meeting, the Transport Sub Committee meeting that Councillor Anderson attended this morning and in addition to the item that he picked up there was another very interesting presentation made by an organisation called Living Streets and I've heard these people speak before the very interesting and a lot of what they say is common sense and it's a good thing and one of the main factors in all this ties in with the walking strategy in the Best Council Plan and obviously the plan calls for more walking, people, certain types of people are doing less walking, walking has all sorts of health benefits, environmental benefits, climate benefits and even some economic benefits and these are all to

the good but this is the problem now because all this talk and all the meetings about walking and benefits and so on and the work that these people are doing comes up against reality because the example which exemplifies this whole point is a footpath from, in my ward which is about half a mile long, which joined Councillor Anderson's ward and goes to the side of Golden Acre Park is in a state of disrepair and is dangerous. People are frightened to walk on this because it's eroded away, it's on an angle of 45°, it tips you into the traffic, you certainly wouldn't want to walk along there with 2 children and that kind of thing. It is dangerous. My wife and I walked along there the other day, we're fairly confident walkers, we walk a lot but if you are not quite so confident, at one particular point traffic's coming by all the time, it's a main rat run. Vans are coming by at 30 miles an hour and one went past my wife about 2 feet away. Now there's new housing going to be put quite near by and there could be a fantastic circular walk of about 5 miles. We've had Highways onto this footpath twice in the last 2 years and they say Councillor we agree it's our legal responsibility to maintain this path and guess what we ain't going to do it, and that's it they just will not do it. Now quite apart from the legal obligations and what on earth would happen if somebody was tipped into the traffic and the liability on the City Council but it just defies belief that we're actually saying this when it's completely at variance with the Best Council Plan and all the plans of these people who feed into these things. Thank you Lord Mayor.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wadsworth.

COUNCILLOR WADSWORTH: Thank you Lord Mayor. I'm speaking to the Best Council Plan and its the piece at the back which say's 21st Century Infrastructure and the little bit in the middle that it's probably something you've never read cos it's right at the back and it's a little piece and you're probably not really interested in it but I'll tell you about it anyway as I say it's public transport and it does include rail so I expect that people across the way there will embrace the fact that the government are taking over Northern next month and we'll see some significant improvements there and that they've increased the new rolling stock that is coming on stream as well, but really I want to talk about buses because not everybody has rail and a lot of us rely on buses and the bus network and it says that there's going to be a high frequency bus network and that 90% of buses will run every 10 minutes and delays will be reduced and that all buses will be Euro 6 to improve air quality standards. Now on the high frequency network in my area that's not quite what I see. My local service of 33 was being reduced from 3 an hour down to 2 an hour and the 34 is now only 2 going through to Otley instead of 3 going through to Otley an hour and it's not just those services the 51, 52, Councillor Dawson will know has also been reduced from originally a very frequent service some years ago down to every 10 minutes and now down to 1 every half an hour in some parts of the day and the 49 out to East Leeds that's also been reduced. So it's across the city is the fact that services are being reduced but the plan says that we're going to get higher frequency and every 10 minutes on those routes, so I think we're a little bit at odds with the plans there.

Reducing buster ways through signal technology now this is something that I have got in my ward been put in called scooped, it's an acronym I won't tell you what they are but what I will tell you is that it hasn't increased the technology that buses are getting through, they're getting held up with everybody else that's getting held up because of traffic light signals apparently have to learn the traffic patterns. I don't know how long it takes them to learn it but they're not doing too well at the moment and I can see the amber lights come on and I've got a lot more to say.

The other problems are at Kirkstall and Horsforth roundabout, they don't seem to get improved in this plan, there's nothing about them they just seem to be ongoing and the city centre. We've talked in the Budget about the city centre and the improvements there, so called improvements, certainly not improvements to buses. I mean First told me that there is a variance of 5 to 50 minutes on buses getting through the city centre to the west. How can you run a time table when you got that sort of a variant and you'd think we'd have learned from our mistakes in the Headrow scheme but now we started on Monday with Infirmary Street so we don't appear to have learnt we seem to be just adding to it. There's been a 5% lower loading since the Headrow scheme started on buses in the city centre, the only growth in this city is park and ride and park and ride which is expanding but it involves using the car to drive to somewhere to park and we should be trying to avoid this, we should be getting more services that run in our communities ...

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wadsworth.

COUNCILLOR WADSWORTH: Thank you Lord Mayor.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Smith.

Thank you my Lord Mayor. It's a pleasure to speak on the Council Best Plan. The updated version of the plan rightly refers to climate change as one of the key drivers for our Best Council Ambitions and the forward refers to the extensive tree planting scheme that the Council is progressing along with other projects. The benefits of tree planting are well known among them of course we have had a timely reminder in recent days that trees can help to prevent flooding. I'm pleased that the Council has recognised this and made more tree planting part of, more tree planting part of the plans to tackle climate change. On this side we think the Council could and should go still further. We have advocated for a 20 for 1 policy planting 20 trees for every one that is lost but having said that the plans the Council has developed are to be welcomed and I want to see all parts of the city benefit including my own ward. As much as I think we can all see the sense in planting more trees we also need to make sure that they are planted in the right locations, that they are sustainable, manageable over the long term and providing the greatest environmental benefit for us all and for future generations.

In the spirit of working with our natural environment I also think it's worth looking at more ways we can maximise the resources already available to us particularly in terms of self seeding trees. I was pleased to read the report that went to the Exec Board in January about woodland creation. Countryside Rangers in Parks and Countryside already work with local schools to gather seeds which is sent to the Arium for stratification, growing on and subsequent replanting. There is potential to encourage children and communities to contribute ideas on how more seeds can be collected and used in this way. Our Parks and Countryside and Forestry teams are out there carrying out work in conjunction with local friends groups and in the process of doing that they come across seeds and saplings that are growing in sometimes inconvenient or inappropriate locations. Instead of discarding these we need to harvest more of them especially species such as ash that we come across. I know in our own cemetery in Pudsey we have ash that are now resistant to the dieback. These are the species that we need to save and to protect and replant for future generations. We should start to transplant these to the Arium, grow them on and then we can replant them in the areas where we need them, where they can do the most good. By doing this we would be reusing what nature has provided, repurposing it towards our environmental goals. This would also reduce pressure on the area and we wouldn't need to spend as much money purchasing saplings because we already have them.

My Lord Mayor I hope that this is something that can be taken forward ...

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Smith.

COUNCILLOR SMITH: With more vigour and purpose in the months and years ahead as we strive to meet our climate change challenge. Thank you.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Collins.

COUNCILLOR COLLINS: Thank you Lord Mayor. First I would like to say huge thank you to the teams of officers who have been out trying to clean up after this year's horrible weather. An unprecedented number of gullies have been overflowing, trees and branches have come down and big chunks of tarmac have lifted. The team's quick responses to all the issues the delluge's have caused have greatly reduced residents fears and have kept the panic to a minimum. I think all of them, all of our officers behaved superbly.

(Applause)

I don't think it would be wise however for us to think that getting 3 storms in quick succession will be a one off and unlikely to happen again for a while. I fear the levels of rain we have been seeing since October last year could easily become the norm and we need to prepare for it now. We need the next stage of our flood defences on the River Aire now, we have the plan it just needs implementing. Its our responsibility to the residents of Leeds to get this into place. We take enough money from them and I am sure that they too would see

this as a high priority for the city. Just telling them that we are waiting for the Government is not enough and looks like we are burying our heads in the sand.

I had an email from a resident this morning, a gentleman whose home was flooded Christmas 2015. I would like to read you some of his words. Flooding is a real thing and is devastating to those who experience it. Not only that the mental stress of sitting waiting to be flooded as we have experienced in the last 2 weeks is not good for wellbeing and creates great anxiety. Even in people like us who have been through it and are well prepared with flood resistance and resilience systems in place. We also need to address the fact the majority of our gullies underground are old are made of pot and are weakening. When gullies collapse the only solution is to dig up the road. The funding we have currently is not enough. If the cost of digging up the road is £15,000 that only provides for 17 gullies every year that's throughout the whole city. Our gullies need an overhaul and we need to change our approach to the problem, when our gully cleaning crews tells us that there is a problem underground and they've collapsed and are broken we need to get on and fix it, not just wait for the next rainfall and send them out to empty the same gully again. Thank you Lord Mayor.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you Lord Mayor. On a different matter I want to turn to Inclusive Growth. It's one of the cornerstones of the Best Council Plan and I wanted to ask if there'd been any progress in the Council's proactive application of the values behind it. I mention it because I have raised concerns before for instance that Leeds City Council in its commercial property speculation did buy industrial units on the Leeds Enterprise Park and within one of those units housed Amazon who is an organisation which, as Councillor Heselwood will know, several union organisations are not happy with, perhaps with some of the ways that that company organises its workforce and one of the things that we asked at the time when this happened because it was a couple of years ago at least now, is would the Council consider having an ethical landlord policy so that anybody operating under its roof would actually fulfill the goals that the Council had set itself for the delivery of inclusive growth. Now I know that the Council says that it wants more jobs, good jobs, what I have failed to understand over the years is how they define what a non good job is. However in this document it does go forward to talk about how it will measure in its KPI for inclusive growth the percentage of Leeds' residents and Leeds workers earning below the real living wage. Might I suggest that for those organisations that are trading in Council buildings that they actually ensure that there is some kind of audit of their own workforce to ensure that they are perhaps complying with what the Council is measuring as part of its understanding of what good growth is and there is also a section on inclusive growth on page 754 which says as part of our inclusive growth strategy many businesses across all sectors have pledged to offer support for our city setting out what they will do more of or to do differently to promote inclusive growth. Added to this we now have 12 inclusive growth ambassadors in post to help us deliver our strategy and a wider

delivery partnership working with communities, business and stakeholders. Might I suggest that Councillor Lewis might be able to give us an update in the work that he is being able to do with Amazon as one of our tenants to take forward this agenda.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Forsaith.

COUNCILLOR FORSAITH: Thank you Lord Mayor. It's laudable that this Council has the ambition to be the best Council in the best city in the country and it's only right that the third key driver has now been added namely acts of climate, the climate emergency. But this is just a refresh of the Best Council Plan and that makes it look as though we're still going in the same direction at a somewhat increased speed despite being in an emergency situation. I'd be the first to acknowledge that a lot has been achieved by the Council in the last year and I'd like to particularly thank the officers who have been tireless in their work on the climate emergency since it was declared nearly a year ago.

This is the Council Budget Meeting so I thought we might have a think about the carbon budget that Leeds has. For those of you who've not attended the carbon literacy training, the carbon budget is the amount of carbon dioxide equivalent that we can admit as a city between 2018 and 2050. If we are to play our part in keeping global temperature rise within 1.5° centigrade. Leeds per capita share of the global budget is 42 megatonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent and that needs to last us until 2050. We've already used some of that since 2018 and if we carry on emitting carbon as we are doing at the moment this budget will be used up in 9 years. Yes we need to plant trees but as Councillor Mulherin says what we need to do is to double at least double the actual canopy cover. The small trees that will be planted it'll take a long time, decades before they get to that so we need to think about decarbonising and decarbonising fast. Leeds is already ahead of the game compared to many other cities by creating the Climate Commission in 2017 that was also laudable. We've already had a Citizens Jury ahead of almost everywhere in the country that includes the national one. That group was chosen to reflect the demographics of Leeds and were informed about the climate crisis that we faced and then they came out with 12 recommendations. The first one made it absolutely clear that we need to get private cars as the last choice for our transport system but I've not heard that message today at all. The Leeds carbon budget does not also include the emissions from aviation and as you all know there will be a plan put in for the expansion of Leeds Bradford Airport so I would urge everybody to think really carefully about that plan and whether agreeing to the expansion of Leeds Bradford Airport is really something that a best city needs. Thank you.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Prior.

COUNCILLOR PRIOR: Thank you Lord Mayor. I had originally intended to speak on some of the school funding issues, school building funding issues but obviously we covered that earlier so I'll make a more general comment about some of the speeches we've had from the opposition. There seems a wilful misunderstanding of how the Council works we've heard speech after speech from Conservative Councillors who say, stop asking Government for money just get on with it, not understanding this is how Local Government works we are funded predominantly by the Government, if the government does not give us the money we cannot do these things and a prime example of that is Councillor Flynn's speech about the need for post 16 college provision for kids with Special Educational Needs and disabilities. I completely agree with you that we need this, I completely agree with you but the Government has literally cut money from disabled children, hugely, when we've had plans in before we simply cannot afford them the money does not exist because it's been taken away. When Boris came in he restored some of the money to the High Needs block which the High Needs block is what funds children with disabilities and he funded it to half of what the gap was. I mean several things are funded through this including school transport for children with special needs and at the moment 83% of Councils have overspent on this. We're having to move money from other elements of education funding to support the High Needs block because the Government has cut it. Now you can say, oh well stop asking the government to do it just get on with it. That is not how this works the money simply does not exist and the Government needs to look again at this because sustained, a sustained look at how we fund this and how much is needed is the only way that children in Leeds are going to get what they deserve because at the moment we can't do it without Government cooperation. Thank you.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Venner.

COUNCILLOR VENNER: Lord Mayor I'm delighted to speak under the Best Council Plan and specifically with regard to Children's Services and our Child Friendly Leeds ambition. Since 2012 Leeds has had the ambition to be the best city for children and young people to grow up in and Child Friendly Leeds was launched. 7 years later we've made great leaps forward in that ambition. Leeds is united in its child friendly aim with the support of all Councillors, it is something that genuinely crosses the political divide. We have a whole Council approach it's embedded in the inclusive growth strategy for the city and it's aligned with priorities in the Children and Young People's Plan as well as the Best Council Plan priorities and it's not just the Council we have over 900 individuals and organisations and businesses from across the different sectors of the city who have signed up to be Child Friendly Leeds Ambassadors and who work with us every day to deliver our child friendly ambitions. By working together we've been able to provide a fantastic offer for children who are looked after, their foster carers and young people leaving care and this desire to create equal opportunities for all our children and young people has really brought the city together.

As the Leader referenced in her Budget speech we've also seen huge success when it comes to safely reducing the number of children who become looked after at a time when across the country numbers of looked after children have been increasing at an alarming rate we have seen something different here in Leeds. We've seen big reductions from 2012 and although recently there has been a small increase when this is compared to the rest of the country we are still well ahead of the curve and what's most pleasing is that something quite remarkable is happening here in Leeds that the biggest reduction in the number of children who are becoming looked after has been in our most deprived areas, areas that traditionally have seen higher rates because we all know the well researched links between poverty and children becoming looked after and it is not a coincidence that the number of children becoming looked after has grown exponentially during these times of cruel policies of austerity. The reduction of the number of children who are becoming looked after in Leeds shows that our relentless focus on bringing these numbers down has really paid off, it's paid off financially but more importantly it's paid off in outcomes for children and families. Targeting our resources at the families most in need has really worked, it is testimony to our restorative approach and our commitment and passion for early help and prevention. It's something I'm so proud of Lord Mayor and I'm looking forward to taking Leeds on the next stage of the child friendly journey. Thank you.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Groves.

COUNCILLOR P GROVES: Thank you Lord Mayor. As the Best Council Plan states Leeds like most cities faces deep rooted issues in a number of areas including transport. Like the rest of the country we are now running a Council that has seen its budget cut on year since 2010, a reduction of £266 million in real terms since 2010. This is at a time when we have more pressures, more needs are more vulnerable people that need our help. We are told to do more with less across every department and at some point that passes as unreasonable and becomes impossible. Transport is no different, funding for transport has fallen in line with other cuts. In the last 10 years Leeds had to dump hallway for ongoing funding compared to other core cities. Instead we have to bid, we have to react to funding as it arrives rather than something that would be sustainable. We really need the government to think about joined up funding and central Government makes it really difficult for us to deliver schemes because of the timescales that they've put on them. In Leeds we have an ambitious vision for what transport should look like and how it should help improve many people's lives, that can be through connecting people to work, helping people see friends and family, helping people get to or stay in education or even allowing people see the many wonderful sites across Leeds and West Yorkshire. That means we need a local service that is reliable, interconnected and integrated and that also needs links into the national network and projects like the newly named High Speed North.

We are pushing at pace with a raft of improvements. Bus priority measures, Park and Rides, new train stations, an expanding cycle network to

name just a few and I am 100% convinced that the people of Leeds and West Yorkshire will benefit from this in the long term. There is disruption and we are managing it and we are planning well. These are all designed to help people get around Leeds, moving them in a more sustainable, and dependable way.

Even with the new fantastic bus corridors or cycle network we are building there remains a missing part of the jigsaw when it comes to the transport in Leeds. The city and the wider region is crying out for a mass transit system, its absence is keenly felt by anyone that lives here. When you go to other big cities or in Europe we can all see that a mass transit system is a cornerstone of working integrated transport network and we need it here. We currently have a bidding for funding for £20m to develop the scheme, I truly hope that the Government delivers for us. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Garner.

COUNCILLOR GARNER: Thank you Lord Mayor. Put simply the Best Council Plan is a clear declaration of what we want to do as a Council and how we plan to do it. It underpins and explains the choices we make on how we continue to grow Leeds as a compassionate city with a strong economy. The Best Council Plan has previously been built on two pillars, Health and Wellbeing Strategy and Inclusive Growth Strategy. However since the last update at the Best Council Plan I would declare the climate emergency as Councillor Mulherin mentioned again earlier today and this is a huge priority for us in this Chamber and in a similar fashion to the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Inclusive Growth Strategy cuts across all parts of the Council and where we interact with the lives of everyone in the city and other organisations in the city. I'm pleased to see this recognised in the Best Council Plan, establishing the Climate Change Emergency as a third pillar of the best city ambition. It's crucial to everything we do and it's important to acknowledge the aim to further embed sustainability considerations into all aspects of our decision making. But it's important to realise that in the same way as the Health and Wellbeing Strategy and the Inclusive Growth Strategy don't include within a vacuum. They support and complement each other and the response to climate change emergency also supports and complements our pre-existing 2 council priorities. Combatting climate change and the climate emergency is a serious challenge but it's also a chance to create new jobs and new opportunities for high quality sustainable economic growth in the city.

The work being done by the Climate Change Commission, the partnership between this Council and University is unlocking investment in a low carbon economy. This supports positive growth helping everybody including our most disadvantaged communities benefit from the economy to their full potential and this aligns with our aims in the Inclusive Growth Strategy so not in isolation. You see with some of the works that I've mentioned with the Headrow and such we're building a 21st century infrastructure that helps the climate emergency, that's the district heating network down the Headrow currently expanding and this will connect 2,000 Council homes as well as corporate Council buildings providing thousands of tons of carbon saving a year. We've also secured funding for the transformational insulation for back to backs projects allowing us

to save an average of 687 kilograms of carbon co² every year per household. A total of 515 tonnes of co² every year of the project. Again not in isolation as these 2 schemes allow for deprived communities in Leeds to live warmer and to live in warmer, more comfortable homes and lifting expected 200 households out of fuel poverty linking our 3 pillars together. By including the climate emergency as a third pillar of the Best Council Plan we can continue to make sure it's embedded and intertwined for all of the work we do. We'll carry on making these positive changes to our environment for the residents of Leeds and the good of the planet and I think we should all welcome that. Thank you.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Garthwaite:

COUNCILLOR GARTHWAITE: Thank you. So austerity is cruel. The way Universal Credit is administered is just wrong and even evil. Zero hours contracts don't suit the majority of people who are trying to make their living. In combination with an insecure jobs market, low wages, increase in the cost of living, it all plays its part in rising food poverty and insecurity. We believe food should be available for everyone, I don't think anyone here thinks no no it shouldn't. But every day people across the whole of Leeds are without the money to provide enough nutritious food to fuel their daily lives. What's most frustrating is that we as a city we are working hard to rectify this situation because not being able to eat is bad for you in so many many ways but there is really only so much that one Council can do.

Keeping people safe from harm and protecting citizens at risk is vital. This is a key priority in our Best Council Plan but welfare reforms have led to an unprecedented level of people seeking advice. The Local Welfare Support Scheme provides emergency provision of goods and services for those in need.

So last year £536,928 was spent on direct award support which resulted in 3,617 direct awards from the scheme. Now this scheme was originally designed to help people once every 6 months when they really needed it but we know that people are not only in need of support every 6 months, once every 6 months, they need it far more frequently. They find themselves in total crisis and I'm sure a lot of us have met these at our surgeries, on the doorstep in our email boxes, on the phone. Our ambition is to be a compassionate city with a strong economy where everyone benefits from inclusive growth but how can we achieve it when it's a constant cycle of poverty, debt into the next generation. What legacy is that leaving for the future of this country. Leeds City Council can only do so much, we need the Government once and for all to wake up, show that they care and take action. Thank you.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cunningham.

COUNCILLOR CUNNINGHAM: Thank you Lord Mayor. The main headline of our Best Council Plan is tackling poverty and reducing inequalities in the midst of the ongoing pressure of austerity we are at least safe in the

knowledge that as a city and as a Council we are doing everything that we possibly can to reduce the impact of poverty particularly the likes of food insecurity on our residents. We can be proud of the way that we are working in partnership with teams internal and external to the Council ensuring that our residents are always at the heart of what we do. The Leeds Food Partnership Group works inclusively with all the sectors of the local food system, they have also received the Sustainable Food Cities bronze award for the work that they do. The Leeds City Council Internal Food Group which supports the Leeds Food Partnership Group produced a family food leaflet providing information for people at risk of or experiencing food poverty. The Council supports the Leeds Leeds Food Aid at Work which helps deliver a joined up approach to the emergency food provision at a local level. At the centre of this is our partnership with FareShare and since April 2015 FareShare Yorkshire and the Food Aid Network have provided the food parcel service for the Local Welfare Support Scheme. We are the only Local Authority represented on the West Yorkshire Food Poverty Network which brings together food providers from around the Yorkshire region and in that we are recognised as been unique in our support of food provision in Leeds. In 2018 we provided £82,500 from the Social Inclusion Fund to the Leeds Community Foundation allowing them to develop the Healthy Holidays project providing activities and a meal for schoolchildren during the Easter and Summer holidays. It was a huge success and was repeated in 2019 with over £150,000 distributed to 38 third sector and voluntary organisations to deliver projects through the school holidays.

We can list achievements and measures we are taking to support our citizens despite the continuous pressure on our funding and I can also provide local examples of this work in practice. In my ward of Armley this week I visited and will be supporting a new volunteer led welfare and food support scheme and chatting to some of the children on my estate. One of the highlights of their summer break wasn't planning to be away on family holidays but be able to bring home apples and bananas from the Healthy Holidays Programme. This is 2020 not the 1800's and our Government needs to recognise the impact of food poverty on our communities and as a Council on behalf of our residents we should not have to be pleading, please sir can we have some more.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Smart.

COUNCILLOR SMART: Thank you Lord Mayor. Improving energy performance in homes and reducing fuel poverty is vital to our residents been able to live worry free while moving forward in our ambition to address the climate emergency. It is the ambition of our city to ensure that all homes in Leeds are of a decent standard and that everyone in our city can afford to stay warm. We are currently in the sad state of affairs that this needs to be a consideration for our Council. We know that living in a cold, damp home can have a detrimental effect on the health and wellbeing of our residents particularly those who are vulnerable due to their age or pre existing health conditions. Working with the Affordable Warmth Partnership which I chair we intend to fill the ambition by raising living standards across the city through

improving energy efficient efficiency and reducing fuel poverty. There is no one single method to suit everybody and we must remain mindful of our residents needs after all they should not have to worry about being able to keep warm in their own home. The collaborative approach we have adopted between Local Authorities, Health Providers and non statutory organisations to reduce fuel poverty will enable us to address this in the most appropriate way. As an Affordable Warmth Partnership we have 4 main objectives in order to achieve affordable warmth across our city. These are increasing energy efficiency, reducing fuel poverty, improving health and wellbeing and enabling residents to benefit from renewable energy. We have already undertaken area renewal schemes in Cross Green and Holbeck, the Warm Homes and the Warm Homes funds have helped over 500 households with first time central heating. Help for a further 840 properties is planned by 2021.

Leeds City Council along with our partners in the third sector and other agencies have been working incredibly hard to bring people in our city out of fuel poverty. Our ambitious Affordable Warmth Strategy is doing everything it can to tackle these problems but we need serious national investment in order to ensure that nobody in Leeds is living in fuel poverty. Thank you.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Almass.

COUNCILLOR ALMASS: Thank you Lord Mayor. Our Prime Minister, Boris Johnson, says that actually there are 400,000 fewer children in poverty than there were in 2010. We'd love to believe him but unfortunately the facts and the figures are otherwise and the facts are that we have more than half a million more children in poverty compared to 2010. One of the 5 key strength of our Best Council Plan is that in Leeds we are proud to put people first. As human beings we cannot stand back and watch people suffer. Then there are those who are suffering in silence, those who through pride do not ask for help and to the outside eye make out everything is okay and tell their families it is just a phase they will get through. Food insecurity is defined as a state of being without reliable access to sufficient quantity of affordable nutritious food. During 2018/2019 more than 2% of all UK households used a food bank. This is the 5th largest economy in the world and this equates to more than 1.3m people utilising a food bank. Based just upon this data and just to localise things and statistics, Leeds Food Aid Network shows that more than 33,640 people accessed a food bank in 2018/2019. This was an increase of 21% from the previous year and equates to around 4% of the Leeds population meaning Leeds has double the national rate for food bank usage. These figures are only half of the story considering it doesn't even take into account the church's, community centres, home service food banks and are not recognised with official charities and data. The sympathy to somewhat lacking regarding, the sympathy is somewhat lacking regarding food banks when it comes to this Government too.

Recently we've had a Tory suggesting that people use food banks struggle with managing their budgets and who can forget Work and Pensions

Secretary as responding in the Chamber stating that food banks are a perfect way to try and marry the challenges that people do face at difficult times in their lives. Is it any wonder food banks are on the increase and the right help and support is not available to those who are suffering. It feels like a broken record but changes need to be made and they need to be made now to reduce the number of people feeling this wrath of austerity. Thank you Lord Mayor.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis to sum up.

COUNCILLOR LEWIS: Thank you, thank you Lord Mayor. I'm not quite sure I can sum up all those contributions in the 3 minutes I've got so I particularly welcome everybody that's spoken on the Best Council Plan and certainly the range of contributions I'd show on the backs of our ambition particularly grateful to those members of other parties that support and praise the work we're doing, that's particular valuable. There's a couple of points that I do want to pick up, you know when Councillor Buckley was speaking I think, wouldn't it would be wonderful on a lovely Sunday afternoon like today we spend in here to have a walk in the countryside, my mind is starting wandering at that point.

But in terms of the other comments in terms of Councillor Firth's comment on golf and I think he's left the Chamber but I'm sure someone will pass it on to him but as of, in the dark as Councillor Firth and others will now having been in the meetings as Temple Newsam ward Members and officers are working around a solution to Temple Newsam that really does include the golfing fraternity, the picture painted there's only one thing being looked at and that's it I think is completely inaccurate.

I think just to sum up everything we've been talking about, you know looking forward over the next 5 years is what the Best Council Plan is. I think I'll just finish on other things that will and that may not mean we reach our ambitions. I think the first one in particularly references those Members that mentioned the planning system, you know as reading the, I was flicking through the Telegraph a couple of weeks ago, it's got ...

(Background talking)

I know, I know, I know. I was flicking through the Telegraph and I'm surprised this hasn't been raised by a Conservative Member because I now every one of them will be reading it but I was surprised to see that the Housing and Local Government Secretary wants to take all planning powers away from Local Councils because we're not giving enough planning approval so something like that you know anything we want to achieve through the planning system to be completely lost if the Government strips away our planning powers.

On the things that Councillor Groves and others mention. No we won't go to meet our aspirations on transport if we don't have an investment and

control over our Local Transport Service. I think some of us have been arguing for the railways to be publicly owned for much longer and for a very long time.

And I think finally the thing that's sort of hovered over this meeting all afternoon is austerity whether that's the money for public services so we can deliver things we want to do or also the impacts on people's lives, they don't have enough money because of poor pay or the benefit system and that will have an impact on it.

So I'll leave it there because the one final thing that would make us the best city and that would be having a Premiership Football Club so I'm going to shut up so we can all go and watch the match. Thank you Lord Mayor.

(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: We'll now go to a vote. *(A vote was taken)* That's been CARRIED.

**ITEM 5 – RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE GENERAL PURPOSES
CTTEE – PAY POLICY STATEMENT**

THE LORD MAYOR: We'll go to Item 5. Councillor Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Can I move in terms of the notice.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis.

COUNCILLOR LEWIS: Second Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: We'll go to a vote. *(A vote was taken)* That's been CARRIED.

ITEM 6 – REPORT ON APPOINTMENTS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 6 Appointments. Councillor Dowson.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: Move in terms of the notice Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Scopes.

COUNCILLOR SCOPES: Second my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: We'll now go to a vote. *(A vote was taken)* That's been CARRIED.

ITEM 7 – REPORT ON ATTENDANCE

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 6 Attendance. Councillor Dowson.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: Move in terms of the notice Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Scopes.

COUNCILLOR SCOPES: I second my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: We'll now go to a vote. *(A vote was taken)* That's been CARRIED. My brain's going.

ITEM 9 – MINUTES

THE LORD MAYOR: We have run out of time to hear comments and the Exec Board Members minutes.

COUNCILLORS: Aww

THE LORD MAYOR: Aww. But we do need to dispose of Item 9 so I know ask the Leader to move the minutes to receive.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Gives me enormous pleasure to ask you to agree to move the minutes as per the order paper.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Dowson.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: And it gives me an equal amount of pleasure to second Lord Mayor.

(Laughter)

THE LORD MAYOR: *(A vote was taken)*. That's been CARRIED.

Thank you for your whatever, patience, thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: It's alright I did it on purpose.

CITY SOLICITOR: I know.

CHIEF EXECUTIVE: You'll have to watch it on telly.

THE LORD MAYOR: One more to go, yeah.

(The meeting closed at 6.50pm)