

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Held on

Wednesday 13th December 2006

At

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
CIVIC HALL, LEEDS

In the Chair:

THE LORD MAYOR
(Councillor M Iqbal)

VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS

REQUISITIONED MEETING

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VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL MEETING
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 13TH DECEMBER 2006

THE LORD MAYOR: Members of Council, we will swiftly move on to the next meeting. We have done the declarations of interest already. Therefore, unless somebody has forgotten to mention any declaration of interest, we will go on to the first item, Councillor Wakefield on Waste Management Strategy.

ITEM 1 – WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Before I comment on the Waste Strategy I would like to thank you personally for being able to find the time to facilitate this extraordinary meeting. I know it is the busiest time of the year for Lord Mayors and by now you could have been on your tenth mince pie, so we are grateful for the sacrifice you have made for this afternoon's meeting.

I think I said last time that I actually believed that we did not do justice at the debate at the last Council in the move of reference back. I think it actually does reflect the need to start thinking about how we organise Council and I am delighted that there are some proposals coming forward so that we can take on the important issues that matter to the people of Leeds in a far more constructive and serious way.

I also do not think we did justice in terms of the public, particularly the people of Leeds. It seems to me that, in paragraph 5 of the report that went to there 18th October's Exec Board, there were some fundamental flaws.

First of all it made reference to 800,000 opportunities for the people of Leeds to comment on the waste strategy, yet the only evidence we have – the only piece of evidence we have – is the sample of 3,000 people. Out of that, 84% of those people argued that energy from waste was something that they would support.

I would say that was flawed in two ways. One – the sample. The actual people in favour of energy to waste is actually 0.3% of the population of Leeds. In actual fact in Liverpool, a much smaller Authority, already 12,000 questionnaires have gone out to the people of Liverpool asking if they were in favour of incineration or alternatives. I would say this for a city this size - really, are the numbers sufficient to command a mandate?

The other flaw – and I have referred to this – was the energy from waste question. In Allerton Bywater we all in favour of energy from waste and we do it. It is methane gas to energy and I think if you ask that question, there is a different connotation to a question of incineration and I am delighted that we will be aiming to use the term of incineration.

I would say this to Richard and to Steven Smith, the Councillor responsible for this – if you think you have got the right strategy, if you expect to enlist the enthusiasm and support of the people of Leeds for this strategy, if you expect the people of Leeds to pick up the environmental consequences and the financial bill

which from 2009 to 2013 comes to £57m, is it not right that you should do a proper public consultation with the people of Leeds, particularly those people who may well face the location of an incinerator in their community?

I think that is one and that would be a condition I would make on any support for the amendment that has been tabled by Councillor Carter. If we do have that debate, I think the first thing we will say is that we believe profoundly that this is a very negative strategy depending on incineration.

The reason is, firstly, the so-called recycling targets which are set at 40%. If you had read the Green Party manifesto – and I am sure David will refer to this – they actually said that they would be able to recycle 60% by 2010 – not 2020, 2010. I am sure David will stand up and justify and explain how they would do that. If you do not believe him, go to every bigger Waste Authority in this country and they all have higher targets than 40%. If you go to Greater Manchester it is 50% recycling.

The other I think rather pessimistic target is, of course, the growth. In the document there is a claim that we will continue to grow waste right through to 2020. That is not necessarily inevitable. Had you thought about other strategies and options, you could do what they have done in Greater Manchester and that is reverse that decline to -4% by using initiatives, and I am sure my colleagues will talk about that later.

What I would say is this. If you have an incinerator it is simple. It depresses, it suppresses and it actually tries to undermine recycling and reusable initiatives and the evidence is very clear. In Newcastle in 2002 when they introduced this incinerator, recycling targets actually became as low as 3% because people thought, 'What's the point? We have got an incinerator, we need to feed it, why bother recycling?'

In fact in York – as you probably know Newcastle is now run by the Lib Dems so I can understand why the Lib Dems in Newcastle do not want an incinerator – they have seen the evidence. However, in York the Lib Dems do want an incinerator as long as it is not in York, it is in North Yorkshire somewhere, so you never get complete consistency here.

I think the arguments are very, very simple and very, very straightforward. If you introduce an incinerator you spend £500m, you tie yourself to a contract for 25 years and it does not matter whether you do recycle, you have to feed that beast. You have to. You have to keep burning something and if it is not household it can be commercial and it can be industrial.

You could even get the ludicrous situation of growing trees – what they call biomass – to come in and keep that incinerator going. Isn't that something we'd be proud of?

What I would say is this, colleagues. If Greater Manchester can do it with 1.3m tonnes of waste; if Greater Merseyside can do it with 800,000 tonnes of waste – remember, we are about 350 – if Lancashire can do it with similar ones, I would say that Leeds should and must. We must not take a defeatist attitude. We must not

wave the white flag. We are trying to give hope and aspirations to future generations to engage and get involved in one of the most important issues that I think has faced this city for a very long time.

I would urge colleagues now to support our White Paper, go back to the drawing board, engage the public and have a proper, constructive debate about the future of our waste strategy in this city. I move Lord Mayor. Thank you. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR LOWE: At the last Council meeting the Labour group outlined its very cogent, I thought, reasons for opposing an incinerator in Leeds and for those of you who were not here, the reasons where it cannot be delivered by 2009/10 when the financial implications of the LATS kick in, planning permission cannot be given in time, funding of the plan is uncertain and no location has even been identified, so for all those reasons and many more, we believe that this cannot happen and therefore the £53m penalties are certain to be an issue for us.

At the Council meeting that we are at now I am going to build in some of those arguments that I raised last time and hopefully expand once more on why we think incineration is wrong.

Incinerators are injurious to health. Greenpeace is obviously working very hard on this area and they have produced a paper which I shall quote from now:

“It is widely accepted that the health effects of incinerators are poorly understood and the limited amount of studies on workers at incinerator plants and populations living near to incinerators have identified a wide range of associated health impacts. There is evidence to show that no matter how modern the plant, it will breach its emissions limits”

and, as we all know, dioxins are carcinogenic. New legislation allows incineration to exceed their daily limit of hydrocarbons. Sheffield’s incinerator has exceeded its legal pollution levels 156 times in two years. Newcastle closed down its incineration after mass ash poisoning and fines which led it to declare, ‘No more burning here’. The Crumlin Burrows incinerator in Swansea was destroyed by fire in 2004 and the owners have now gone bankrupt owing £40m. Friends of the Earth have even recently told us about a major fire at the Sita plant in Kirklees just a few months ago, so it is our contention that incineration is not safe.

Burning waste is not safe. It concentrates the dangerous toxins by altering them into ash and gases that still need to go somewhere, i.e. landfill or airfill. We are told that newer technologies mean that air pollution is minimised but the more efficient the filter at the stack, the more toxic is the fly ash and the more ultrafine is the particular emission.

Leeds strategy purports to aspire to a zero waste position but incinerators repress recycling demand. As Keith has already said, Nottingham has two incinerators and it only recycles and composts 14% of its waste.

Incinerators are a poor way to generate energy. It takes two-and-a-half times more energy to make paper than you can ever get from burning it. If the Council runs out of waste, it will burn wood instead. Incinerators are designed to burn a range of materials and so it will be less efficient if it burns just one product. In any event, the cost of buying the wood, storing it and transporting it have not been factored into the cost of the incinerator and with global warming, how can we rely on this sort of fuel for the next 25 years? Incidentally, it does take up to two years to grow the trees that you are going to feed the beast with. That is another issue that has not been taken account of.

It will probably be a white elephant in any event because a quarter of all household waste currently is retail packaging and this is set to reduce drastically over the next ten years. Up to 30% of bottom ash will still need to be landfilled with an incinerator and Friends of the Earth have done research which indicates that 80% of refuse can be recycled if we put in the right infrastructure.

Other Local Authorities are offering leadership in this area – Manchester, Lancashire et al are having MBT and they are going to sell the refuse derived fuel. Let Leeds be another Authority leading the way in this area. Please vote 'No' on the incinerator. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. The amendment really spells out my view, which is that this is a very serious issue indeed. The issues surrounding waste disposal and protection of the environment have finally been lifted on the national agenda by all political parties. Going back to my comment earlier about Mr Brown, you cannot help feeling that he just thinks it is another mechanism for extracting money rather than transferring the burden of taxation from direct to green taxes. However, there is no doubt that this is a major issue for us, particularly since the government signed up to the European Directives and the landfill costs are going to go up significantly, whether they are for individuals and companies or for Local Authorities and we have major issues to face. Any party in running this Council would be facing the same issues.

That is why Councillor Harris made the offer to Councillor Wakefield when this was debated at Executive Board, that we were quite happy to have a forum in which leaders, their representatives, could discuss the ongoing issues as they unfold, because this is not a fixed situation. Things will continue to happen at a national and international level. We will continue to have to look very carefully at what we are proposing and we do not actually think this is a party political issue.

When I heard Councillor Wakefield speak both today and, indeed, last time we debated the issue, the Labour Opposition clearly thinks in this as in everything else there is some political mileage rather than an opportunity for us as an Authority to make sure that we get precisely the right way forward to benefit the city and everyone who lives here. That is a pity because it is increasingly, I regret to say, the impression most people are getting of the Labour Opposition.

There is an opportunity here for all party leaders or their representatives to get together in a very meaningful way. I am sure the Executive Board, if my amendment is passed, will undoubtedly accept the recommendation. It gives the opportunity for

us all to participate in the ongoing debate, because that is what it is and it will continue to be but we have to have a way forward and begin to move forward with that or we will be caught out, and being caught out means huge penalties for this city - more particularly huge penalties for all of us who live here.

I do hope that even at this eleventh hour Councillor Wakefield will agree that my amendment is the way forward and support the amendment I have tabled to his resolution. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think, Keith, at the last meeting you said that you wanted the strategy taking off the table and all to come back with a blank piece of paper in front of us. You also said why had we not allowed minutes and a congested White Paper which has now been ruled out of sight?

I just wonder where you have been for the last two years, Keith, in those circumstances, because there has been quite a wide-ranging debate and you have picked up on one of the consultation exercises.

You said that Liverpool had put out 12,000 leaflets. We have put out substantially more than 12,000 and I will just tell you some of the places that we have put them. We have put them in One-Stops, libraries, Parish Councils, Area Committees, Leeds Voice – and I am not a quarter of the way down the list there. I will not bore Council with going right to the bottom of the list. There have been a large number of consultations.

I have to say that I express some disappointment because one of the consultations was a half-day workshop at Elland Road where all stakeholders were invited, government officials, experts from the industry and councillors and, sadly, the Labour group did not turn up to that meeting.

Other methods of consultation. We have had two member seminars. Thank you, Councillor Blake, you came to one of them and thank you, Councillor Hamilton, you came to both of them but again, I could look at your group's engagement in the process. Four site visits – one member went to one site visit. There we are. I do not really think you have engaged in this until the very last minute, but we saw an example of that in the previous meetings.

The environmental consequences. If you read the report – I am sure you have – you will see that the solution proposed in Leeds at the moment is environmentally the best option. You may not believe that, Keith, of course. You have made great play about Manchester and Alison made play about Manchester. You have been to Manchester. Alison, of course, said Manchester, they are going to sell the RDF. What are they going to do with the RDF, Alison? They are going to burn it. They are going to burn it in two incinerators so there is the wonderful Manchester solution for you.

We mentioned Newcastle and the situation in Newcastle where recycling has gone down with an incinerator. Let me tell you under Labour in Newcastle in 2003 recycling rates were 3%. Still with the incinerator with the Liberal Democrats in

control, that is 12%. That is a four-fold increase in recycling, so tell me that recycling and incineration cannot work hand in glove. They work very well on the continent; they are working well under Newcastle. Perhaps the problem is with Labour.

Who else have we mentioned? We have mentioned Friends of the Earth. I made reference to this last time. Friends of the Earth say – this was in April – about Woking:

“Woking has led the way in climate change at local government level. They have used an innovative combined heat and power scheme to dramatically reduce CO2 emissions in their borough.”

That is what Friends of the Earth say about an energy from waste plant in April of this year.

Keith said recycling is set at 40%. There is no ceiling being set on recycling in this city. Contrary to the motion that has been put down, it is not the central element of our plan. Our plan is to reduce, reuse and recycle wherever possible – not put a limit on that – but at the end of the day there is some residual waste. You can talk about 25 year contracts. If you think we are not going to have a 25 year contract if it is MBT, then I am afraid you are entirely wrong.

At the end of the day there is going to be some waste and it does have to be disposed of. I personally would rather see it disposed of in one site rather than producing this wonderful commercial compost which cannot go on your garden. It can be used to fill motorway embankments or you can actually put it into landfill and I suspect we will see a large amount of it going into landfill and that is exactly where we do not want to be. Support the amendment. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, the most striking thing about the Councillor's motion is its lack of inspiration. What he seems to have missed is the truth of the City Council's waste management strategy. That truth has been published in 10,000 copies of Team Talker, which is the voice of the Chief Executive's unit. The relevant edition even bears an image of Councillor Mark Harris – which is a sign of authenticity as sure as that of Colonel Sanders on a tub of southern fried chicken! It is headed, “Consultation backs waste from energy” and presumably by this process coal is shovelled into large furnaces and when the ash and clinker are riddled at the end of each day, it is found to have made itself into articles such as part-worn motor tyres and threadbare three-piece suites covered in orange and brown striped dralon of the type that was popular in the 1970s. In that way the incinerator and those who benefit from landfill and those who support recycling can all be satisfied.

Shall I tell you what Labour's leading waste management strategy was when they controlled it in Leeds and throughout West Yorkshire? Even thinking back to the days when Councillor Brian North was Chairman of the Waste Management Authority, it was not right-on recycling – it was landfill, millions of tons of it, and most of it in Morley, whether in the long valleys beside Gelderd Road and Dewsbury Road or in our enormous stone quarries or in disused railway cuttings. There were times

when Morley took more than 90% of all the municipal waste in West Yorkshire and some from Greater Manchester.

I have got to say that we have had enough of that. Anyone should be able to see that there are practical and economic limits to recycling, though we should do our best with it – we should recycle as much as we can. Burning rubbish is nothing new. It can be done cleanly with the heat energy as a useful by-product so it is one of a number of ways forward. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Beverley – can I say it is his maiden speech.

COUNCILLOR BEVERLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. May I first of all begin by saying what an honour it is for me to be stood here delivering the first speech by a British National Party Councillor in the history of this Chamber.

I have come here today actually to support the Labour Party motion. Supporting the Labour Party is not something I make a habit of in my everyday life but nevertheless today I have come here to support this motion.

When we won the Morley South seat back in May, the various Councillors from the old parties said, 'Well, they have got one seat, they have got no power, they are not going to have any say on the Council.' It has actually got its advantages being a single Councillor on this Council. What it means is I am not part of the official Opposition. I do not have the need to oppose every single thing that the administration puts forward. I am not part of the administration so I do not need to keep in with the administration. I am not about to be given a seat as part of the administration in the near future, I do not think. What that means is, basically, there is no whip whipping me, telling me what to vote on, which way to go. I can vote on every motion on its own merits and vote for what is right for my ward and for our people in general.

I would like to argue against this energy from waste programme and against incineration. It has been claimed that this is a kind of environmentally friendly option, it is better than landfill. It is better than landfill but it is hardly a green option, is it? It is nowhere near as good as recycling and I feel that we should be doing a lot more to promote recycling.

There are various cities around the world that are aiming for zero waste status. What that means is that every bit of waste they produced will either be composted, reused, recycled. I think that would be a much better way for us to go as a city.

Some of these cities are even aiming to achieve this by 2020. That is not a long way away, is it? Even if these cities do not actually achieve it, the fact is they will be a lot closer to achieving it than we will. Is it not typical of us in this country and Blair's third world Britain that we are so far behind in so many fields including in the field of recycling. The fact is, if we have this incinerator built it will act inevitably as a disincentive for recycling. How can we push recycling when, at the same time, as has already been stated by Councillor Wakefield and previous speakers, these incinerators constantly need more waste being brought to them to keep them going?

We cannot, can we? It is going to be a disincentive to recycle and it is going to be a major step backwards for us in that respect, I think.

Just to conclude, I would like to support this motion. I believe we should look at alternative options so I support this motion. Thank you. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR RUSSELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. We agreed to support the idea of the setting up of a working group as the most effective way of reviewing the situation and coming up with a sensible way forward on how to deal with the waste that our city generates. This in my humble opinion is the biggest issue to face this Council in a long time and what we decide will affect this city for decades and will have implications for all of our parties long after many of us have left this Council Chamber.

Bearing that in mind, it is important that we set aside the politics and sit down together and act in a constructive way to come up with viable solutions to the massive challenges we face and solutions that we can all accept.

During the period of talks over the content of the waste strategy, we have fed into the process constantly and been constructively critical where necessary. During that time, let us ask what the Labour group have done. They took one paragraph from the consultation document which referred to two weekly bin collections and then went and accused the administration of putting this into operation when the administration had already rejected the idea. It must have been sore for Labour members sitting on the fence for so long on this issue. This point is highlighted by the fact that Councillor Wakefield did not vote for or against the waste strategy when it came before the Executive Board, but rather abstained. It is better to have no opinion than to express an opinion at all on this matter, I suppose, if it gives you scope to see how to play it later.

We believe that were Labour in power in this city they would have already adopted this waste strategy and we would definitely be building an incinerator. For us, this just clearly shows what this is all about for them. It is about politics and making political capital from the issue. It is not about the environment at all. Labour has been very quiet in what they would do with the issue of waste and I am wondering why. Could it be because they know that the solutions that have been proposed by their government would not be popular and could potentially be disaster for this country? One of their solutions is contained in a leaked letter from David Milliband to Gordon Brown and it was printed in The Independent on 29th October this year. It was on the subject of eco taxes and I quote:

“Differential charging for waste at household level can have a significant role to play.”

I have got to admit, I was slightly puzzled by the motion. Labour want us to explore the alternatives to incineration. I have got to ask, what do they think we have been doing since we started looking into the matter? Labour's refusal so far to take part in a process where all the parties work together for the benefit of the future of the city of Leeds so that they can play politics just goes to show why they are not in power and why they should not be in power in Leeds. Thank you. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR McARDLE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I first of all extend a personal thanks to you for attending the Stephen Lawrence awards at Morley Town Hall on 22 November, taking time out of a busy schedule and cancelling a previous engagement. I am extremely grateful to you. Thank you very much.

I have spoken many times on waste management and I am sure a few members will know I have a keen interest in this. I have always attended the waste seminars and put my two-penn'orth in whenever I felt it has been necessary.

I think this is all about balance and compromise and the best way forward. We have to cover all options and opportunities and monitor all the actions that this Council take on.

In terms of recycling, we have reached just under 25% in terms of a sort collection. As from February certainly in Morley North and four other wards we will begin a brown bin composting scheme, which is another option or another way forward. That, I estimate, will take out around 50% of the landfill that goes into either corrupted sort bins or black landfill bins. It will also prevent a lot of fly tipping, I think, by residents of this fair city.

I think we need to keep a balance, keep all our options open and in this instance I will be supporting the motion of Councillor Carter.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor McArdle, for your contribution.

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: First of all, Lord Mayor, I would like to record the fact that I serve as a Director of Leeds Organic Growers, which is a community composting scheme in Kirkstall – or is trying to. I do not think it is relevant, Lord Mayor, to what I have got to say, but I just did not want people to think I was keeping it from you.

Speaking to the motion, the thing which concerns me about the strategy which has been proposed is that it locks the Council for a very, very long time into outdated technology. We cannot get out of the contract for an incinerator and other options would allow us to escape more readily from the particular method of treating the waste.

It also locks us into bringing all the waste together at one point, Lord Mayor, which I think is a thing which is also very difficult to change if other options become available in the future. There is no incentive to reduce the quantity of waste because we have to feed the beast regardless of what other activities are going on and it will be difficult for the Council to adapt to new government legislation and European initiatives which minimise the quantity of waste generated. If packaging regulations are changed to reduce the amount of packaging, we shall still have to burn the same amount of material regardless of anything that is done nationally or in Europe.

The main reason why I am concerned about this proposal, Lord Mayor, to get energy from waste, is that it will be difficult to exploit new technology. There is a real prospect in the years of duration of this contract that advances in biotechnology will

allow us to treat waste at a lower temperature, treat it whilst it is still wet without burning it and with less fuel consumption, less risk to the public.

If Leeds is to move forward this is an area where we need to be strong, where we need to be resourceful and show our initiative and if we are locked into burning our waste, we will not be able to look at new biological treatment methods and we will not be able to move with the times and fully enter the 21st century which I sincerely hope we will do, Lord Mayor.

In conclusion, I hope that we will not look at the incineration option at all. It is a blind alley, it is not the way forward. We will look at new technology, innovation and more environmentally friendly methods of treating and minimising the amount of waste this city generates, Lord Mayor. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Blake, did you want to speak?

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to refer back also to our last Council meeting where Councillor Blackburn announced that he was going to support our reference back on the grounds of conscience. Is he in the room? He has gone again. The reason he said he was going to do this was because the central part of the waste strategy as presented to us is based on the mass burn of a significant part of our waste, i.e. incineration. He did not object on the grounds of the impact on the environment or on the potential impact on the health of our citizens.

I have to say, Councillor Russell, to have a go at Councillor Wakefield for what he actually said in Exec Board is a bit rich when we all know that Councillor Blackburn, for whatever reason, failed entirely to show up at Executive Board when this issue was being discussed.

What is greatly disappointing, Lord Mayor, is that despite his party's complete opposition to incineration, his group have not actually contributed any alternatives to the strategy. I am not aware of what higher targets they would have been demanding, if they had, indeed, been demanding any. All the targets for recycling, as we have said repeatedly, are disappointing, they are unadventurous, unambitious or, indeed the targets for waste minimisation. They seem to be going along with everything in the strategy that will lead to incineration because they have failed to work up credible alternatives.

I would like to quote another Green Councillor from York, who has said, and I quote:

"You cannot express concern about global warming while at the same time recommending the burning of waste."

David keeps telling us how concerned he is about global warming but if he is, where are the proposals for the alternative waste solutions? I can only assume you have not got any.

I would also like to know whether the Greens and Councillor Smith as well have been around the country talking to a wide range of Local Authorities who are looking at alternatives. You keep talking about Manchester but there are many other Authorities who are well down the procurement route - such as Lancashire - looking at establishing MBT plants. Have you found how why so many other Authorities have much higher recycling targets? Have you discovered why and how Local Authorities such as Manchester and Lancashire have already moved to negative growth in their household waste stream when we are not even looking at going to zero by 2020.

Also, have you considered the impact of DEFRA's latest announcement which shows a decrease of 3% in the total amount of collected waste, municipal waste, in England, in 2005/6?

I would like to know, as Councillor Illingworth, the impact of going down a solution that serves to develop a single facility serving the whole of the metropolitan area – one of the largest met areas in the country – this is in my view a great weakness of the policy. Just, for example, estimates show that a facility taking 547 tonnes of waste to be burned each day by road will result in 250 lorry movements a day in daylight hours, which means one lorry every two minutes. How many of us would support that level of additional movement through our communities? I think not many of us.

Lord Mayor, we still have not been given any information from the site selection exercise that has been carried out by our Development Officers working with consultants. I would like to ask Councillor Smith directly if he has been briefed. If he has not, how on earth can we assess the risk to this Council of being exposed to Landfill Tax if we do not even know if we will be able to find a suitable location for such a facility?

Lord Mayor, there are alternatives to incineration. There are other large Authorities well down the procurement route to achievement. Why should Leeds be different? Let us support this White Paper put down by Councillor Wakefield and get down to working out those alternatives before it is too late. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Wakefield to sum up.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to quote another representative – and it might be worth commenting personally to congratulate Councillor Russell on his maiden speech, by the way. It was not? Sorry. It felt like it. Let me quote Caroline Lucas:

“Incineration discourages recycling, damages the environment. With threats ranging from nuclear waste to greenhouse gases incineration can play no part in a truly sustainable waste management strategy.”

Guess which party Caroline belongs to? I do find it rather sad that neither the Leader nor, indeed, the other senior member of the Green Party has not said

anything in this debate today and, in fact, has walked out and actually asked a very new member to take on and savage me in the way that he did. (*Laughter*)

I want to talk about Councillor Carter's offer of peace and exploration of ideas. He says that and Councillor Smith stands up and tells you, "We have got the strategy right" and spends five minutes rubbishing any other idea. Where are we? Is it that we have got an open mind? Do we want all parties to discuss alternatives? Or is it, as Councillor Smith is telling everybody up and down in Rothwell, we have got the right strategy. 13th October, Evening Post – "We have got the right strategy." Where is the debate? Where is the discussion? Where is the open mind?

I have to say that I believe the Labour group has taken us very seriously, Councillor Smith. We have spent time. We have spent time with the Friends of the Earth. We have spent time with the environmental groups. We spent time visiting and contacting a range of Local Authorities in this country. In fact, I cannot think of any other issue where we have actually taken the time to go out and explore ideas. Although we do not agree with everything that Friends of the Earth or other Authorities say, there is one thing I think that they are absolutely right on. This is a white flag to environmental initiatives for the community. We are missing, as Councillor Illingworth said, a range of opportunities to engage communities in community enterprise in reusable and recycling activities as they exist in this city today.

I think basically I would say this. The debate is much wider than the environment. It is about faith in human activity, and belief that. We believe that we can engage and enthuse and enlist the support of the communities in Leeds to do reusable, recyclable and re-environmental strategies. I think that is a must. What this strategy is actually saying, we do not trust you, we do not believe you can do it and that is why we are going for incineration.

I would say this above all, before we even move an inch towards all party, I think it is only right and proper in a democratic society on an issue so important, as Andrew Carter said, to this city and to the people, that we engage in open and honest consultation with the people of Leeds, particularly those who are going to be affected. How can you say all party when none of us know the location?

I would say this. Support our White Paper. We will support your party providing it goes alongside widespread consultation with the people of Leeds. The future generations of this city deserve it. It is only right and proper and we need to leave a legacy where we can demonstrate not only that we have been listening and responding and so on, but we try to do our best for the future environment of our city. I move, Lord Mayor. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we have a vote on the amendment made by Councillor Carter, please?

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Can we have a recorded vote, please?

THE LORD MAYOR: We will have a recorded vote. Can we have a seconder please? Yes.

(A recorded vote was taken on the amendment in the name of Councillor Carter)

THE LORD MAYOR: 91 members present. 54 in favour of the amendment by Councillor Carter and one abstention, 36 against. Therefore that amendment is CARRIED. Therefore it becomes the substantive motion. Is that going to be a recorded vote as well? Yes.

(A recorded vote was taken on the substantive motion)

THE LORD MAYOR: 91 members present again, 54 members voted 'Yes' in favour of the substantive motion in the name of Councillor Carter, 37 abstentions and zero against, so therefore the substantive motion is CARRIED.

ITEM 2 – ALMO REVIEW

THE LORD MAYOR: We will move on it Item 2 on the Agenda Paper. Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, thank you very much and I am glad that as Council has progressed we are back to the more normal hostilities and familiar ground.

There can be little doubt, Lord Mayor, that the ALMO review from beginning to so far has been a total shambles. It started as a shambles with a huge democratic deficit where Councillor Les Carter proposed to move ahead without even taking a paper to the Executive Board, believing that the command structure was still firmly in place and he could just do what he wanted.

Throughout we have seen few and late papers to the Executive Board and the only thing that has distinguished these papers is the total lack of information and the total lack of any coherent way forward in terms of giving information to the Executive Board. That is not, of course, the only subject matter in which the Executive Board these days seems to accept a paucity of information.

Throughout the whole of the Children's Services agenda we get papers which are hugely long, hugely detailed, say absolutely nothing and delegate everything to the Chief Executive. What a wonderful life we now have in the Chief Exec's department. He can fill any post he wants, only has to write 55 pages to the Executive Board and say nothing.

The timing of the review is also totally politically motivated. There was no need for the review when it first started. The financial figures have never been brought forward properly. The boards have asked for financial justification and have never received any justification.

The breakneck speed of what can only be called continuing political gerrymandering is breathtaking in its absolute deceit. None of the ALMO wishes seem to have been taken on board. All six boards said that they thought the size of the boards was too small and they should have 15 or 18 directors. Ignored. Nearly

all of the boards said there should be shadow boards dealing with the strategic issues leaving the existing boards to get on with the day-to-day operational matters. Totally ignored. All of the boards said, "You are moving ahead too fast. It should be end of March with an orderly transfer from one board to the next." Totally ignored. All the boards said they wanted an involvement in the senior management team appointments and the Chief Officer appointments. Totally ignored.

So much for consultation. So much for a total democratic deficit.

We move to the recruitment of board members. I do not know how many of you have seen these application forms. It is actually a matter probably for a Scrutiny enquiry, I think. Councillor Pryke, you would be well versed in that, I am sure. You would have to be an Einstein to fill these forms in. They are ten pages long. They are off-putting and frightening and we have had experience of board members saying to us – and I could name names but I will not because it would be embarrassing to those individuals – "We are not going to apply because we cannot fill the forms in."

I very much hope that it did not come from Les and I do not think it did, but the sheer arrogance of the people who put together those forms and expected tenants to fill in these forms is scandalous – absolutely scandalous.

Then we have had no coherence and no consistency in the appointment so far of tenant and independent board members. A protocol seems to have been set out of who should be involved, but our information – of course only second hand or third hand – is that none of those protocols have been properly honoured.

Then we move to the reserves. Councillor Carter does his quarterly trek round to us all and implores us and says, "We want to wind this down properly and you know what you have promised to carry forward. We are not going to tell you how you are going to spend that money. We could keep it all to the strategic landlord; we could all give it to one ALMO; we could distribute it evenly to all the ALMOs; we could pay some debts off. We are not telling you what we are doing with it but please, all of you, stack up all your reserves and do not spend any money."

Enter my young friend Barry. Where is Barry? Barry stands up for the independence of ALMO Chairs and ALMOs and he spends money as if there was no tomorrow. His reserves have been depleted so fast...

A COUNCILLOR: That is why he did not get north-west Leeds.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Perhaps, but there is light at the end of the tunnel because Barry can turn to his friend David and David is going to give him a sub, I think, so there we are. Perhaps that is the way to keep the reserves going.

Then we come to the viability of the ALMOs. What Councillor Carter inherited was two star ALMOs going for three star, £350m, £400m extra into this city and what he has done is, he has threatened the viability, threatened the CPA assessments and turned the ALMOs potentially into a one star rather than a three star outfit. That is the measure of the success so far.

Lord Mayor, my colleagues will put flesh on the bones of some of the themes I have set out, but this has been an undemocratic shambles. It has been political gerrymandering of the highest order. So far we do not even know which members or how many members or what configuration are to be appointed and it is something that this coalition should be deeply ashamed about. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. If I can take people back to the establishment of the ALMOs, those of you were here will remember that we were very keen to do this on a non-party political basis, a non-partisan basis and we realised that the big change we were making was actually to transfer power out of the Council to independent boards, or boards with independents and tenants on. That was quite a big cultural change that we were making. We were actually quite relaxed about that as an administration. We were not there saying, "We must retain the maximum power through this process, we will ensure that our people will be in the key places."

Actually when it came to looking at the workings of it, we would have a situation where perhaps, if you picked exactly the same number of tenant board members as independents as Councillors, you would have had an imbalance in terms of the value of the vote of a tenant voting in, say, Bramley as opposed to Pudsey. So what we did was, we put in extra tenant reps. We were quite happy actually to have an imbalance in favour of tenants, so our boards are actually tenant heavy and more tenant heavy, I think, than probably anywhere else in the country. We were relaxed about that. We were not obsessed about our control over the process. We could quite happily work with a system where tenants had a big say, independents had a big say because it was not a political process.

You compare that, though, with this time around. What have we had? Les, you have gone through a process where you have restricted your ability to manoeuvre and you have been concerned only to have a small number of councillors involved, so we have gone from the model of a four/four/four – the Housing Association model. That actually gives you less room to manoeuvre than if you, say, stuck with a five/five/five arrangement that Peter mentioned, or a bigger arrangements, because these are quite big organisations. Where you have the possibility of looking towards, say, area committees as being the people who can apportion seats on the main ALMO boards – now it has got to be done through the whips, the opaque process which we know will work against us.

If you look at where stock is, there is a huge imbalance in this city between Inner East - where there are a lot of Council properties – Outer East. You will have the process of putting people on those boards based on the wards and this Council's political make-up. What you will do is, you will actually disadvantage a lot of the tenants in the city because you will ensure that their representation is of Councillors who actually have no interest in Council housing because there is not any Council housing in their ward, or very little. You have the same position in the south where nearly all your stock is in the Inner City and the Inner South, not in the Outer South, but you will twist the process – you check the numbers, I checked them - do your homework and look, Stuart.

That is what you have done. You have seen this as a process where you can be vindictive and you could ensure that the Labour representation on those few ALMOs will be reduced as far as you possibly can. I find that a great pity, because we have always taken the view of ensuring that there should be all voices heard, because you are still the strategic landlord. You do not need to use the process in that way. ALMO boards do not work politically. They do not. I have not had a moment's concern that somebody like Barry could be Chair of an ALMO and I would not have a moment's concern that somebody like Ronnie Thearlman could be chair of an ALMO. That would not be a concern at all. On Leeds West ALMO, I probably agree more with Anne Blackburn than I do with my colleague, Ted. That is the way it works. It is not about party political division. I am desperately saddened that that is the way you have used it.

You have done similar in terms of tenant reps. What is that question you have put on the form? "Are you a member of a political party?" What are people going to think when they read that question? It is fairly obvious – "Have you ever been or are you a member of a political party?" I do not want to know. We in this city have handed over huge amounts of power to other organisations and we do not ask that question but we ask it of tenants. I have to say why? Why are we doing that, other than to try and dissuade people from standing? We should not be asking that question. I am deeply saddened that you have used this opportunity, when we politically have said there are good reasons for having fewer ALMOs, to then politicise the process in this way. It does not bode well for the future.

What it means is actually you will prolong and enforce the politicisation of the ALMOs in a way that is totally unnecessary. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Like other colleagues I think it is right just to talk about the politics of the ALMOs for a moment. Can I start by being sincere and genuine in thanking members of the opposite parties here – that is people like Amanda Carter, Andrew - who have both served on Leeds West Board - Anne Blackburn, Frank and I know our colleague Denise served on it – in addition to people like Richard and to Alison who have been there for most of the time. It has been non-political. It has been about getting the job done – a big job – a £400m, £500m investment into desperately needed Council homes in this city given to us by the government.

We were not there to kick each other about politically. We were there to involve external, independent, professional, perhaps business people to bring quality to the boards and we were there to bring tenants from all sorts of political life - and perhaps from no political life – who had a genuine want in getting the job done.

That has worked. The six ALMOs became two star organisations. The tenants' contribution has been absolutely fantastic. There has been very, very little falling out across the boards. There has been the odd disagreement. I like to think that I have contributed perhaps a little to the success of that board and I have to say publicly that I have learned a lot – learned a lot from fellow board members and I have learned a lot from the officers and I am very grateful for that.

When this review first started, one of the first casualties was the Chief Officer of the Leeds West Board, who resigned almost immediately. He gave his reasons to the Housing Director and those reasons were that he was worried for his own job, his own mortgage, his own family commitments, that if we were going to destroy, change, whatever the six ALMOs, where does that leave him as an employee? He is loyal, he has been here for many years and, of course, he did what we all carry the responsibility to do, he protected his family and he moved. We have lost a second Chief Officer in the same way.

Lord Mayor, the acting Chief Officer of Leeds West Homes retires this very month from our employment and he has worked for this Authority for 33 years. He said at our board meeting – and I am sure others will confirm it – that the last four years have been his happiest and, he feels, his most productive in helping the people of this city. I think like me, like others he shares the great concern that the ALMO structure will disappear.

We are appalled at not just the way you are treating Labour Councillors - I have asked for a meeting on three or four occasions to discuss with colleagues the make-up of the boards. The meetings have either been cancelled or curtailed. I was told by other whips that the issue of the Labour Councillor and other representation on the ALMO boards would be discussed last night. That was not the case. Cancelled. We are now told that this will be discussed at a Member Management Committee meeting the second week in January, yet the new Chief Officers of the organisations have been told that the boards will meet pre-Christmas. What an absolute fiasco.

Lord Mayor, my colleague made reference to the money and the expenditure. This Authority decided that they would stop £20m-worth of money coming into the ALMOs in this last year or so. That money has been stopped because we have not received capital receipts. We have been told that the money will be repaid in 2008/09 or whenever and no doubt there will be people on this side that will think this guy sat near to me, Keith Wakefield, will be the fellow who will have to find that £20m. We have been told that the £5m in West Leeds does not make any difference because we will get it eventually.

Let me explain to you that if you are a tenant on the Broadlees or the Fairfield or if you live in a Council house in Pudsey, Armley, Wortley – all of those jobs have been delayed this year and that is £5m-worth of work that this company was quite capable of doing within the cost structure that we had. That is an absolutely appalling, disgraceful thing to have done.

I will close, Lord Mayor, by saying that we are desperately concerned about this administration. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Yes, I have had the honour to serve on Leeds West ALMO now for some time. I was not there when the ALMO started. I found it very interesting and very worthwhile and, yes, I think certainly on West Leeds ALMO but I know on all of the ALMOs that a lot of tenants have benefited from the money and from the repairs – for the work, I should say, on the houses that they have had done. So, the six ALMOs have done a lot.

Now we are going to three, it has been decided through ballot that we go to three and I think, despite what you say about the process or whatever we are where we are and I am concerned about the tenants and I am concerned as well about the staff. I think we have got to get on with it now. We have all got to work together as we work certainly very well together, I would say, on my particular ALMO. I think we have got to get on now because then, as soon as the new boards, whatever they consist of, are up and running, then we can get on and get more work done for the tenants because to me that is what it is all about. Thank you. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR HAMILTON: Thanks, Lord Mayor. Could I just very quickly respond to Ted's remark about whips last night, because as I recall the issue of ALMOs was brought up under Any Other Business and I explained that there would be a meeting of the Management Committee imminently to allocate the members of these new ALMO boards and that, of course, is a public meeting which has all party representation and Ted said, "Fine", so I am not quite sure what this issue about having no discussion at whips last night is concerned because Ted seemed quite happy with that response and no further discussion.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Hanley on a point of personal explanation.

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I explain to Martin that I have referred this matter to Councillor Proctor on three and possibly four occasions and asked for meetings. That is what I have done, Martin. The meetings were requested for various days last week and each time they were cancelled I was told by the secretary in the Labour office that Councillor Proctor – and I know John has just walked back into the Chamber – had said that this is a matter that would be decided at the whips' meeting at five o'clock. That is what the situation was, that is what happened and it was then that you told me that the meeting would take place some time, I think you quoted the second week in January. That is what happened, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Lord Mayor, I am going to have a lot of things to answer and I am not going to be able to answer them all and certainly the red light will come on. Let me just quickly go through one or two of them.

First of all do nothing. "Do nothing", was said over here. That is what the cry was from the other side. Most of the members do not believe you can do nothing. The organisations would go bankrupt if you did not do something and that is what happened, so it was not that.

Let us go a little bit further. Let us talk about this application form which was so difficult to complete. I got attacked by Councillor Wakefield in the corridor saying, "You", he said, "have designed a form and you have lost all our tenant representatives."

Let me give you the facts. Let me give you the facts, Councillor Wakefield. Thirty-three people could have applied for the positions. Three we have not heard from. Two were unfortunate, they cannot continue because of ill health of either themselves or a partner. That has destroyed it, that has gone away. With help, he

says. Let me tell you about the form. The form was virtually their form with a few amendments.

My Lord Mayor, Peter Gruen talks about rushing. Let me just tell you, this highlights the difference between a civil service and a businessman. Do you know when we started this? September 2005. Not last week – September 2005, when the first paper went to the Council's board. What a nonsense to say it has been rushed. There has been consultation galore since then. What has happened is, neither Ted Hanley nor Peter Gruen want to lose – and they think they might lose – their position as Chairs of these particular organisations. That is what is irritating them. That is what is getting under their skin.

Let me tell you about the appointment of independent members. I do not know who is going to be the independent members. No elected member of this Council should know who they are going to be, because what we did to make it more independent, we said the new Executive Member for the board plus a Council official would do the interviewing. We have not been involved. We have not been putting pressure on. They will be looking at those for the talents they can bring and it is the same with the actual tenants.

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: Nonsense.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: You say that, Ted, but I am not taking much notice of this fellow. You viciously attacked one of our officers the other day and you need to apologise for that at some stage and I shall bring it back to you. You viciously attacked one when he was not there to defend himself and you should be reported to Standards for it.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Hear, hear.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: My Lord Mayor, the elected members – I am wonderful at gerrymandering, aren't I? One of these places will not have one Conservative on it. I did a good job there, didn't I, Andrew? I did a wonderful job there, a wonderful job there. There are going to be something like – can I just tell you a little bit – they are all talking about what boards should represent, how big a board should be.

Let me tell you. Apple Computers – how many directors do you think they have? They have eight. Google – they have nine. I have got to admit, MacDonalds, they do appoint more. They do not just have twelve, they have 13. Bradford and Bingley have ten members. Carillion have nine members. What they do not understand, what they do not see is, it is a board. Underneath that board will be the real people who count - and this has never been there before because they never did it – are the panels which are going to have a lot and a majority of tenants on it, so do not let them tell you that this has removed tenants. Tenants are going to be more involved than ever before.

I know what you are doing. Ted reminds me of a Japanese soldier being found in the Pacific Ocean who does not know the war is over! He really does not know when to stop banging his head against the wall.

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: It is not over, believe me.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Well, there you go. This is interesting. He said it is not over. I am going to run out of time. He says it is not over. That means he is going to gerrymander at some stage in the future. He is going to start breaking things up which have independently been appointed. Ted, you are on dangerous ground because the government will not accept it, even though you run to them asking them to do it. He runs to the government saying, "Oh, don't take any notice of Councillor Carter for supporting us." They know it is right. Gruen wrote to every tenant in his area saying, "They are going to do stock transfer." Lies, lies, lies.

Do not believe a word they say. Vote the thing away. By the way, can I say this to everybody – merry Christmas and a happy New Year. (*Laughter and Applause*)

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Lord Mayor, I wonder if I may bow to your greater knowledge and that of your officers and ask for some legal advice? From what I have had to sit and listen to from proposers of the White Paper and those on this side, it does appear to me that the information that has been supplied to us that Councillors Hanley and Gruen simply have a personal interest does appear to me on the face of it to be wrong and, in fact, should be a prejudicial interest. If that were the case I find it rather bizarre that they have been allowed to put forward a White Paper and therefore speak on it, Lord Mayor.

THE LEGAL OFFICER: Declarations are entirely a matter for individual members, as I think you have heard me say before. It is entirely a matter for each member as to what they wish to declare.

COUNCILLOR MCKENNA: That is two faux pas today.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Andrew Carter.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. It is interesting because eventually we get down to the nitty gritty and we find out what it is really about, and I have to say I have a lot of sympathy with Councillor Cleasby's last comments, which seem to be to strike a chord with members on all sides.

Of course it is up to Councillors Hanley and Gruen to decide whether they should declare any sort of interest. It is also interesting that this has gone through a very long procedure - it has been at Executive Board – and I have to say that members opposite have been largely supportive of what we have been doing but many of them, of course, have said privately, "We have a bit of trouble with two of our members" and we have heard them in full flow today, which draws you even nearer the conclusion that it is a job preservation programme that Councillors Gruen and Hanley are talking about.

The interesting thing is that Les referred to Ted going down to London. I think the civil servants must have wondered what the hell was going on when this fellow poled down there and they were certainly extremely puzzled because far from not

wanting us to rationalise the number of ALMOs and get them on a firm financial footing, they were saying, "Why not one ALMO?" Do not forget this is the same government that wanted us to stock transfer the whole lot. We made clear we would not sign up under any circumstances and that remains our firm policy.

Once again, crocodile tears in large measure from Labour in particular, or rather the two councillors in particular and Labour in general.

It struck me all through this afternoon, I have been puzzling, really, why we have been here this afternoon after we had the debate on the licensing legislation, although that was interesting because when Labour dropped their first clanger, Councillor Gruen could not contain his glee, he was grinning from ear to ear at the discomfiture of his successor who presumably was responsible for making a complete hash of the resolution.

Then as it progresses what do we see? We see a pretty pedestrian couple of speeches from Councillor Wakefield and then some fairly forceful political stuff coming first of all from Councillor Blake, then later on from Councillor Gruen, then Richard Lewis very uncharacteristically saying a few things that he knows are not correct and completely not the case – presumably speaking to another audience altogether – so I think, ladies and gentlemen, you begin to get the picture. This, if you will pardon the loose use of language, is a Labour beauty contest – who is going to take over from Keith Wakefield next May or sooner?

Then, as an added sideshow, we get Councillor Lowe and Councillor Hanley speaking. They tell me Councillor Lowe and Councillor Hanley are going to lock horns for the Parliamentary candidature for West Leeds. Presumably, therefore, Councillor Hanley has given up all hope of a peerage, having signed that letter. He will stick at it. He may get his peerage in the end, you never know.

My Lord Mayor, the picture is very clear, is it not? We are here this afternoon not to debate serious issues but for them to flex muscles one to another so that they can work out who is going to be the next leader of the Labour group and that is why the people who spoke were the people who spoke, because they are all the ones who will be the contenders. That is why Keith finally got his act together in his final speech and got out of first gear. That is the reason why.

My Lord Mayor, we have consulted the tenants through ballot as we promised. We have negotiated, we have discussed and we have consulted because, at the end of the day, the one thing that matters is that the ALMOs are put on a firm financial footing, not just for now but for the next ten and 20 years so that that government, if it ever gets elected again nationally, cannot make us divest ourselves of all our Council houses and put them in the private sector or the voluntary sector. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen to sum up.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Do you know, that was the pantomime of the Christmas season by Councillor Andrew Carter and we should all be very thankful for his political posturing.

This year we have had an exemplary Lord Mayor. The one before was biased politically and the one coming is politically biased. We know that already without even going to it.

I think you misunderstand the difference between Area Committees and the whips. It is a constitutional issue and I therefore hope that Nicole is going to insist that if you do go through the whips, then the constitutional changes are properly made.

Richard talked about the ALMOs having been non-political. Give me one example of a political decision on the revenue or the capital programme or anything that has not been done properly in consultation where each of the areas of each of the ALMOs have been properly considered.

Again, you misconstrue political vis-à-vis independent. The Audit Commission told us when we got our two stars we were not sufficiently independent of the Council, and that was correct. We were not. We had a £1m recharge, for example, in South-East Homes and just like the traditionalists we were, we had not broken it down properly, we did not know whether recharges worked, we did not know why they were too high and we let the department simply recharge year after year after year. It was not about politics, it was about independence.

Now we have been sufficiently independent to be able to name our own companies. We wanted to call the new South-South-East Aire Valley Homes or something like that – not South-South-East, not West-North-West but no, they could not even agree that we can do that.

Councillor Blackburn, thank you for your contribution about getting on with it. That was very helpful. There have been so many inconsistencies in process. Les, you would not know, because you are a broad brush Les we have always known and loved – or known anyway – but if you ask your officers – not the same officers have been doing these interviews, different officers have been doing the interviews with different roles, not the same in every case. There have been major inconsistencies.

When you talk about Google and the number of directors, this is about consultation. All six boards came back to you and wanted you to increase the size of the board. Nothing to do with Google or MacDonalds or whatever fanciful. You simply did not listen.

Andrew, I have prepared a new page of what I was going to say to Andrew, but here it is – totally blank because there is nothing worth saying. There is nothing worth saying apart from people flexing muscles at each other – I thought that was the Lib Dem context rather than ours. Therefore I do not think I need to reply to anything that you have said.

The fact of the matter is, there has been procedural gerrymandering. There has been political gerrymandering and we think there has been financial gerrymandering by taking money out of the ALMOs and putting it back into the centre and possibly giving it back to us at some future date.

We are leaving our options open but we believe there is a real cause for an enquiry, an independent enquiry into how this has been handled by yourselves. A real enquiry. When you came in you said, "We have now seen the books" and we had an enquiry about God knows what.

One more thing, Les. You mentioned that I wrote to every tenant and that was wrong. Councillor Carter tried that trick did he not? He tried that trick and referred it elsewhere and got absolutely nowhere. We have a totally clean bill of health. There is nothing that we should be ashamed of in what we have done. These have been well run companies. They have done very well indeed for this Council. We will have you back here Andrew on your own turn of planning sooner than later and then you will see where you are.

I move the White Paper because there has been widespread gerrymandering.
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: We will call for a vote for the motion in the name of Councillor Peter Gruen. All those in favour? Those against? Any abstentions? One abstention. Therefore it is LOST.

ITEM 3 – GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS IN SOME COUNCIL OWNED ORGANISATIONS

THE CHAIRMAN: Councillor Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I move under Provisions of Council Procedure rule 14(10) that the motion in my name relating to government arrangements of some Council owned organisations is withdrawn?

COUNCILLOR HANLEY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to consent to the proposed withdrawal as the seconder of this motion.

THE LORD MAYOR: Are we all in favour? I am sure you are. Unity again. Any abstentions? No.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Could I share some good news with you and Council? I was fortunate enough to be selected by Morley Model Flying Club to go to Coventry to receive a national trophy on behalf of the club. This, Lord Mayor, is the fourth year that Morley has won this national trophy. (*Trophy exhibited.*
Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Cleasby, can you repeat again, please? Some of the members have not heard you. Start again.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: This is a national trophy for model flying won for the fourth year running by Morley Model Flying Club. The club have brought great credit to our city this year in particular because there are twelve competitions throughout the year. This year with four competitions to go we had amassed so many points we had actually won the trophy, which is the first time.

Lord Mayor, I wonder if you would be so kind on behalf of Council – I will supply the details – for you to write to the club and congratulate them. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Members of Council, can I just thank everybody for their contribution and also invite everybody for tea in the banqueting hall, including members of the public – we have got three – and also I wish you all a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year if I do not see you beforehand. (*Applause*)

(The meeting closed at 3.05 p.m.)
