

**LEEDS CITY COUNCIL**

**SECOND EXTRAORDINARY  
MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

Held on

Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2007

At

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,  
CIVIC HALL, LEEDS

In the Chair:

THE LORD MAYOR  
(Councillor B Cleasby)

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**VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS**

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VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL MEETING  
HELD ON WEDNESDAY 12<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2007

THE LORD MAYOR: As I explained at the beginning, I do not seem to move and yet I am in a position to open the next meeting.

I did make the statement about declarations and now this may well be even more important than the licensing. Could I ask you all to be sure that - and let us do this only the once - for the three motions that you have duly declared your interests,

all of you. There may well be some personal interests that have not been declared. Councillor Illingworth?

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: I am a member of the area Panel of the West North West Homes. I am not sure if that needs declaring or not but if it does, I would like to declare it.

THE LORD MAYOR: You have duly declared it. Councillor Taggart? You are happy? Anybody else? Councillor Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: I have on the third one the fact that I am a member of the West North West ALMO.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: My Lord Mayor, the same as Councillor Illingworth, I serve on the same Panel.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. That was Councillor Andrew Carter. I duly have to ask you by a show of hands that you confirm that you have read the list and you have made your declarations. Therefore could I have a show of hands, please? Thank you.

#### ITEM 1 - PROCEEDS FROM THE SALE OF LEEDS BRADFORD INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I then call upon Councillor Gruen?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The White Paper Motion in my name on behalf of our Group is a very straightforward resolution. It goes to the heart of local democracy and accountability of councils towards the electors in this city.

In my time on Council I cannot readily remember when such a large windfall has come into the city. It is probably the first time - and we are talking here of £51m, actually trailed as £57m, £58m - which has now become available to this city.

This resolution is not about the sale - it is about the proceeds of the sale. It is about how we should consult citizens in Leeds on how this money should be prioritised and how it should be spent.

In July 2007 the coalition announced that it would spend the money on the new concert arena, it would prop up further school building by £19m - and I will come back to that - it would put £1.5m in to the city centre swimming facility - I will come back to that - it would top up highways refurbishment maintenance programmes and it said it would put money into regeneration of town and district centres. Certainly for those of us in Crossgates and Whinmoor, not a penny piece has been spent in our ward on the town centre and district centre regeneration and our schemes have been up to the Panel and not past the Panel and we wonder why that is.

Of course, the arena. How can I forget the arena? You were going to put some money into the arena.

The reason we believe you have to top up the schemes is because of the totally ineffective control of massive major programmes and projects which you have started or which you have taken over. As it is Christmas I am not going to go through the many quotes from Councillor Harris and Councillor Carter about certain white

elephant schemes that they talked about. I am not even going to talk about Councillor Proctor's projects which overran and overspent. The fact is that this money is far too important and that the Leeds' citizens have a right - have a right - to be involved and to express their views.

Nothing convinced me more that we were on the right track of democracy than when I read the Yorkshire Evening Post yesterday. Lazy journalism from a right-wing editor siding with a right-wing Tory administration is absolutely what one would expect. There is no bar on spending money on the kind of projects which are important to this city, but why is it that our colleagues just down the road in Bradford similarly benefiting from a windfall money from Leeds Bradford Airport, have decided (a) to consult the people of Bradford and, (b), to spend the money per ward and to involve local Councillors. After all, that is what we are here for. We are the champions of our local communities. Why should we not involve local communities?

It is interesting to note that as we are undergoing our JAR and CPA assessment at this very moment, and no doubt this council will have bragged to those people how good it is on consulting right across and involving our citizens, be it tenants on the different estates, be it people who are road users, but here with £50m at stake, they arrogantly decide not to consult, that they, mainly, of course, the city fathers - that still applies to the Tories and the Lib Dems in a modern setting, even with the new modern leader, deputy leader or alternative leader, whatever we are going to call you.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Temporary leader.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I think four-month leader, yes. No consultations have taken place, so we are proud to put forward a resolution that says we trust all local Councillors, even those who are supposedly independent and yet sitting with the Lib Dem Group - and that will be an interesting matter which will no doubt come up later or next year - we will consult. We will give people the power to consult and we will have a £1m programme per ward throughout the city - throughout the city - so that people can benefit from what is a once in a generation opportunity.

We will also establish a central fund in terms of Council housing. Housing is the most important issue and I know Andrew will come back to it in his resolution from a different point of view altogether, but what we all can agree on is that housing, and affordable housing, is a key issue in today's city and for today's citizens of Leeds.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Pity you are not doing anything about it.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: That is interesting, Les, and no doubt you will say later on what you are doing about it. That is the second area.

The third area - Councillor Brett talks in his amendment about playing fields. It is interesting to note that the people most eager and most keen to sell their playing fields are the Moortown Councillors. They cannot wait to talk to the banks and get rid of their playing fields, as long as the money is right. If it were not for Councillor Fabian Hamilton, they probably would have done it by now.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: What rubbish.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: MP - thank you for that! We are proposing that the money be allocated to high priorities in the council but that the people of Leeds have an opportunity to comment on how it is done. They have ownership of that money.

Your proposals is not to give me ownership but, in a Stalinist way, tell them what you think it should be spent on.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Desperate men. He cannot even keep his face straight.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: There is the clear blue water between us, Andrew. We will consult and you have not consulted.

Can I turn to the resolution from Councillor Brett? We now, of course, no longer have the Andy and Mark show - it is Andy and Rocket Rich, or Ricky.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: He is led by Mr Bean!

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: We will have some kind of partnership, lovers' statement here about how closely they work together.

Was it not the most interesting thing - we will come to schools in a minute, Councillor Harker, I would not smile yet. Is it not interesting that in this very tight vote they had for the leadership, there was a tie, there was a key question that probably rumbled who would win the dice. It was this, colleagues - this is, of course, what we would ask in a Labour Group election as well - "How would you work with Councillor Andrew Carter?" That was the key question that determined who might be the temporary leader for the next four months. No principles of values, and we will see what the national leader looks like as well.

The fact is, he has fled from his portfolio as quickly as he could, left Children's Services directionless and at the mercy of Councillor Harker and his negotiations with the Department for Education, Families and Children was so poor that we now have to prop up a school building programme by £19m. When we were in control we got the money in, we had the vision and said how it would be spent...

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: You had Education take away from you.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: ...and what schools, where they would be built and refurbished.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Peter, you lost Education.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: It was taken away from you.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: You cannot even - Lord Mayor...

THE LORD MAYOR: Now come on, since we had a spat we have been very good, you have been paying due respect to each other. If you wish to speak, ask and I will allow, but at the moment it is Councillor Gruen who is speaking and nobody else. Thank you, Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: We did not need to prop up from the Leeds Bradford Airport sale the school building programme. You have because you are incompetent in getting the money in and having reasonable schemes that are owned by the Department and therefore they give more money.

This is a sensible resolution. Those who will vote for it will see that all the people in Leeds - including Morley - are consulted. Those who vote against this resolution will say we do not think our citizens need consulting. I move. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Bloody hell! Excuse my language, Lord Mayor, but I have never seen anything like that.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I second and reserve the right to speak.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Lewis. I admire your brevity at this moment. Can I call upon Councillor Brett?

COUNCILLOR LYONS: A very good choice. The Labour Group thinks you have done very well.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Lyons. You are in the verbatim.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Happy Christmas to you, Mick, and a politically unsuccessful New Year.

I believe this is a timely motion and the performance we have just witnessed actually confirms, this is the pantomime season. Months over Councillor Harris announced how this capital receipt would be used, we have this charade. There is clearly a huge difference in the way that this side and Labour think.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: We do, you do not.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: The word “windfall” actually appears in the motion. To me a windfall is something that is unexpected, that you did not plan for, that you were not in control of. Nothing can be further from the truth.

This sale was something we carefully prepared and carried out very successfully. I would argue it was anything but a windfall.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: They shook the tree.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Peter, there were consultations earlier on this year. Most years there are consultations. They involved a lot of people and a lot of thought and it resulted in local elections where Labour did not command a majority. That is the point. (*Interruption*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen, you are the Whip. I do not expect you to be joining in.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: The first point I want to comment on is this communist share-out, this £1m for each ward. It implies, wrongly, that under our proposals all wards are somehow not benefiting. Others later on will explain very carefully to you that they all certainly are.

It is a pantomime because it is make believe. If Labour were true to themselves they could not be voting for this. I have here a leaflet attacking the administration for diverting money, supposedly, from the cash starved inner city to the wealthy suburbs. I have here something saying, “Cash for the rich. More cash for Wetherby and Harewood.” I do honestly believe that Bernard is a brilliant actor but if Bernard was true to himself, he would not be voting for £1m for some of the wards that I have just mentioned.

We do believe in devolving money to each area. It is quite clear that through the Area Capital Scheme each of our Area Committees have had capital spending. I notice from the most recent allocation and expenditure sheet that I have got, the

south inner area has had nearly half a million in the last few years and the amount actually spent is just over half, so there are some difficulties, practical difficulties, in doing what Peter's motion suggests.

Politics is about choices. This pantomime stunt will be presented, I am sure, as the Lib Dems and Tories voting not to spend £1m in particular Labour wards. The reality, of course, is that voting for this motion means you lose the arena that some of you have for years said we need. It means losing the refurbishment of City Varieties, a very popular venture. It means road repairs in every ward being put to one side.

Finally I come to Council housing - different in my head from affordable housing. Can you all remind me - how many years were labour in power?

COUNCILLORS: Twenty-four.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: How many Council houses did they build?

COUNCILLORS : None.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: How many years were they in power with a Labour Government in Westminster?

COUNCILLORS : Seven.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: How many working days have I been the Lib Dem Leader?

COUNCILLORS : Seven.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: And yet Keith Wakefield says in the press last week that what we have done in the last few days is too little and too late. I say that is enormously rich. The crisis in social housing - different, in my view, from affordable housing - has been getting worse for years. Now we have decided it is time to act. We are going to build Council houses with or without Government support.

Lord Mayor, this is not just a pantomime, it is a pathetic, political pantomime.  
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I call upon Councillor Andrew Carter to second your amendment?

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: And he is Wishy Washy! (Laughter)

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: My Lord Mayor, I second and I reserve the right to speak, which I shall surely exercise.

THE LORD MAYOR: Can I call upon Councillor Mark Harris.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Let me just deal with some of the points Councillor Gruen made. First of all, I just want to very quickly look at the Moortown issue and Yorkshire playing fields. If you repeat that outside of this building, I will sue you. If you put it on a leaflet, I will sue. There is nothing anywhere to say I have ever done, or any of my colleagues, what you are suggesting. On the contrary, in writing and in public we have consistently said we do not want Yorkshire Bank to sell those fields. We want them brought into public use. It is worth pointing out that the first application made seven years ago was under your administration

and was an opportunity by your administration to purchase those fields from Yorkshire Bank and you chose not to, so do not start that sort of nonsense.

Another issue about Moortown, district and town centre money. Moortown has not had any, either, so do not start suggesting the political partiality on this.

You would not list all the terrible catalogue of overspends that you say this administration has logged up on the capital programme, but equally you do not list yours and, just for the benefit of everybody, I will remind you of the overspend of all time, 300% overspend on the South Leeds Stadium itself. Instead of £3m, £12m was spent on the stadium itself. Do not start lecturing us.

Finally, I come to this insane charade about the £51m. Let me remind you about Sharp Lane. Sharp Lane, when the agreement was made to sell it by your administration for a price of £65m, your administration made that decision. £65m by my maths is more than the £51m which you say in living memory is the largest single sum of money to come into the city. You sold a huge tract of public land for £65m. You did not negotiate. You did not where the money would go. You did not speak to anybody about it. Do not now come this pathetic line with us, the great defenders of the public purse and the people of Leeds, who must be consulted.

I have never heard such drivel in all my life. This is the worst type of political opportunism imaginable. You should look to your own record and your own actions before you start trying to unload this con trick on the people of Leeds. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. My colleague Councillor Wilson said when Peter got up, that in medieval England at Christmas we used to have a court jester. Unfortunately nowadays it is reduced to a second-rate comic. Then Councillor Lewis got up and he said, no, it is Punch and Judy.

I think, Lord Mayor, there are certain irrelevancies, perhaps, in Councillor Gruen's comments when he talks about building a consensus. If there was a consensus I would have thought this would have been official Labour policy and the Leader of the Labour Group would have actually raised this particular point but no, not a word from the Leader of the Labour Group. Presumably we will get a word later on. Not a word from his deputy, even though I do know that his deputy has been wandering the city at public meetings pledging to give £1m to various groups of people.

What I want to ask is why, if you are pledging to give £1m, why are you proposing to cut spending on my ward because, quite frankly, if you look round the city and you say we are going to spend £1m, every ward in this city has got at least that and more this year out of this administration.

I will do it quite simply. We talked about road repairs. Richard talked about road repairs. I will use a good example. If you say we want to spend this money on something else, on giving everybody £1m, that would actually mean that in Armley the half million pounds projected to spend on road repairs next year would not happen. That is obviously what you are voting for. You are obviously saying to the people of Armley, "We do not want road repairs."

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Additionality, Colin.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: I am quite happy that the Council have earmarked this windfall - windfall if you want to call it that - actually I think we really ought to say to the administration how well you did to negotiate such a damn good

deal for us because if it had not been that we were prepared to negotiate a good deal, this amount of money would not be coming to the city.

What you are saying to us is we do not want an arena. I have sat in this Council Chamber when members of the Labour Party have stood up and voted for and seconded and proposed motions about actually getting an arena into the city. What you are saying to us now is, "We do not want that. We do not want Leeds to be a destination. We do not want Leeds to get that headline figure that says, 'Leeds is a place to go, we attract the top quality organisation, the top quality acts, the top quality'". You are saying you do not want that to happen.

Peter rather cruelly, I thought, accused the Evening Post of being right-wing, reactionary, was it, narrow-minded, bigoted - that is the word. I am repeating that just in case you were not sure how to spell that. I have to say, notwithstanding the pantomime knock-about here, actually what the Evening Post said reflects what people in this city believe. It says this money must not be thrown away.

Let us look at Labour's record. Labour is absolutely fantastic at throwing money away. Mark has raised it - we can all raise a number of examples of where money has been thrown away, money has been wasted. I would not trust them with £1, never mind £1m.

This is the accurate reflection on Peter - it is not my quote - it is a reactionary, right-wing bigot, apparently, who said this, "It would be madness to let this opportunity slip through our fingers, a blunder we would surely rue in years to come." Right? I will sit down at that point because I cannot say any more. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR GABRIEL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Funnily enough I was actually reading the Inner South Area Committee's budget report and I had actually withdrawn my comment, but now Councillor Brett has actually said a falsehood, I just thought I would actually say that we have committed all our Area Committee, it is ringfenced. The only money that is not actually spoken for is the £50,000 that we were supposed to spend on a conservation area which we have not any of in the area, or on car parking. We are waiting to clarify with the office where that money can be spent. I expect an apology for the Inner Area Committee. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Show that you are a big man.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Isn't he going to apologise?

COUNCILLOR HARINGTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. "I have of late", said Hamlet in a fairly well known play, "but for reasons I know not forgone all custom of exercise" or, as it might be said in contemporary terms, "I have been meaning to go to the gym, I meant to take up jogging, I meant to take up cycling, swimming, I meant to pump iron or whatever, but somehow or other I never got round to it, know what I mean?"

The result, as his mum put it, "Our son is fat and scant of breath" and, as she began to think about it, and not a lot of people know this, she realised that this was true not only of her son but of most of Denmark, where they lived. In faith, many were fat and scant of breath, or at least plump and breathing rather more heavily than they ought as they tried to get up the stairs, so something needed to be done. She was worried not just about the health of the country generally but also the prowess of her sporting teams. In 1608 - although our story takes place a long time back - they might even lose to the English, God forbid.



So, something needed to be done in terms of providing space for profitable exercise and in Elsinore, the town where they lived, they were definitely short of pitches, especially in inner city Elsinore in the part known colloquially as the Hill of Hares. Come on, keep up!

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: We are, it is just not funny.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: You should never try and rescue a lost cause.

COUNCILLOR HARRINGTON: The queen, as she was, also noticed that there needed to be more done for parks. Certainly wondrous work was done in parks by many, many stout persons working therein, but they were grievous short of finance and so they were not able to reach the celebrated Green Flag Status - in fact 54 billion was needed in order to reach this. Also this would pay for more people on site so that the innocent citizens could be preserved from footpads, rogues, Councillors and other low life living in the city.

This money needed to be provided. It was agreed that it should be, although some people said the lady doth protest too much. It was agreed that it should be provided but was it to be or not to be?

However, it so happened that the Elsinore flying ground was to be sold off. Of course, there had not been any flying yet but that was put down to the Council. Once it was sold to private hands then there would be the necessary initiative so before you knew where you were there would be flying before you could say "EASEL".

So the money was found and there was a great improvement in public health and so it came to the great day when Hamlet, after lots more exercise, was able to take on the great champion fencer, Laertes, as his name was. He was asked how he felt about it and he said, "Well, I reckon after all the Council's excellent sports strategy and parks and green space strategy, I will be able to do him in the third with a hit, a palpable hit."

Of course, he was the victim of yet more sporting hype and Hamlet lost, due to illegal substances being used by Laertes. However, as Baron Coubertin put it a long time ago, "It is not the winning but the taking part that is important." It is, of course, the taking part that we are trying to encourage and money well spent in green park and pitches strategy would inspire more people to take part and become a less fat and less scant of breath city and also nation, so that maybe England would be able to qualify for the 2020 football championship. Thank you, Lord Mayor.  
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am not going to do owt from Shakespeare, thank God. In fact, I have got to say, if I was thinking of supporting the motion you have probably put me off!

I have got to say, Councillor Gruen's motion, I would love £1m to spend on my ward, I would love an extra £1m to spend on my ward. I think we all would.

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: You have got your chance. Go for it.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: £15m on Council housing - great. I seem to remember reading in the paper, two faces over there and one down there, that actually we are going to build some Council housing, so what are we talking about? With playing fields, great, but in my ward I am getting one new school. My residents on one particular road in question, Greenhill Lane, which is top of the list, is getting

resurfaced and we are doing something about City Varieties. For a number of years I sat on the Board of that. Have you ever been in the place? It has needed something doing for years, and Bernard knows that. It would give us the opportunity to do something about that.

It is great having £1m to spend as we want to but I am getting other money spent on my ward from the capital programme. Does that have to go so we can do that? If that is what the case is, I am not voting for that. Thank you, Lord Mayor.  
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. My colleague, Councillor Campbell, has already talked about how relevant this particular plan is. I have to also, given the news of what happened to the airport and the amount of money we got back, I have to say it is a little bit late, as well as being irresponsible in terms of the arena, as Councillor Brett has just said.

I have to say, we are used to our capital programme being littered with projects that the previous administration committed to but failed so ineptly to deliver. I have to say, it has been left to the safe hands of this administration to ensure that the ambitions of this city actually do get delivered. We have already talked about the arena.

Talking about local priorities, Lord Mayor, people care about the area that they live in. They care about the roads, the schools, the parks and the local shopping centres that they use. I have to say all of these areas have been included in the plans for whether you call it a windfall or whether you call it the airport investment fund, whatever. Those are the areas that we have prioritised in this administration which proves that we actually do have the local priorities that local people do. It might not be the same priorities that local Labour Councillors have and I have to say I think that is the biggest attraction to members over there, that they quite fancy getting their sticky fingers on £1m that they can play with and hopefully try to politically manipulate the areas where they might be more vulnerable in the next couple of years.

I have to say, if you want to look at the facts and see who is the most effective at making sure that money is spent locally and, more importantly, that money is spent fairly, I will give you the example of the highways maintenance figures.

In the last year that Labour were in power the highest amount that was spent on roads in any particular ward was £219,000 and that was in the ward of Calverley and Farsley. I am not sure if that is because you had a nice quiet chat with Councillor Wakefield, Councillor Carter, but I assume that Les Carter was not on speaking terms at all because it was zero that was spent in Addle and Wharfedale in that year.

Lord Mayor, since then every single ward in this city has benefited from over £1m-worth of highways investment. Almost every ward in this city, Lord Mayor - almost. I have to say that the big winners are Armley, City and Hunslet, Horsforth, Roundhay and Gipton and Harehills, so I think you will agree, quite a mish-mash there of areas of the city.

The four that were under £1m, but only just, were the likes of - these are the losers in comparative terms - Wetherby, Harewood, Ardsley and Robin Hood and Morley South.

Morley South is a particularly good example because I think it is worth noting that although Morley South came in the bottom four of the cumulative amount that

has been spent on our highways since this administration took power, it is worth actually looking at the minutiae so that our Morley members can make a judgment as to which solution is best - either the one which delivers or the one which promises.

Let us have a look at the figures. In the last year that Labour were in power in Morley South you got £52,000 on roads. The following year, which was the budget that Labour had set, it went down to £33,000. Since then it has been each year £127,000, £206,000, £263,000, £310,000. *(Applause)* My Lord Mayor, money talks. This administration delivers. We spend in the suburbs as well as in the city centre and, more importantly, we spend fairly across all communities. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I regret having to correct Councillor Brett in his first speech as Lib Dem Leader but really I cannot allow you to get away with what my colleague called falsehoods in the way that members of your group and this group often do on the issue of housing.

I think you were a science teacher in a previous life, Richard, if I read your bio. Right. Can I give you a history lesson? When Labour took over the administration of this Council in 1979 or whenever it was - 1980 - when Andrew was Chair of Housing and was building 2000 properties - before my time - a year, or that was his promise. Councillor Kevin Gaunt came in as Chair of Housing promising to deliver 3000 properties per year.

Labour actually had a very good house building record. I suggest you go to places like Holbeck, Armley, Middleton, Meanwood and you can see the properties that we built in the mid-1980s. They were absolutely spot on as first class Council housing - the best, I think, that the city has ever seen apart from perhaps one or two little bits probably in the Kirkstall area.

Why did we stop building? This is quite interesting, is it not? Might it have something to do with Margaret Thatcher?

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: No, never. I cannot believe it. It is fantasy.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: I know it is hard for you to accept on that side but we were keen to build Council housing throughout that period at a time when - and we had a very difficult time, we had to demolish some of our estates, you may remember the white houses at Crossgates, the white houses at Harehills, at the Bullers, we had the white houses at Meanwood and we had huge battles over the issue of would we be able to replace housing for the residents of those homes with Council houses and the answer very firmly came back from the Government, "If you build Council housing with your HIP allocation, we will penalise you for every penny you spend on it." Ronnie remembers that because Ronnie was involved in that.

Let us not pretend that Labour just sat back and did not build Council houses. We built Council houses as long as we could. Can I correct that report that went in the Evening Post the other day that said that we had not built houses in this city for 30 years - we were building them 14 years ago. Go and look on Meanwood Road and you can see the last ones that were built.

COUNCILLOR McKENNA: Wonderful houses.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Absolutely spot on. Our record is also very good in terms of affordable housing and I am surprised Christine has not mentioned this to you, because we had Leeds Partnership Homes which built 4,000 properties, which worked its way through...

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: When was that?

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Les, shut up.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: When was that, Richard?

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: ...which worked its way through the Government's restrictions and allowed us to use Council land and put the value of that into building affordable housing.

Again, it is the lack of history that we get from the other side. Can I perhaps remind you of a few other things? I have worked for Leeds Federated Housing Association back in about 2001 - perhaps a bit before. They, along with a lot of other social landlords had huge problems letting their properties, and that included the Council. There were streets like Westminster Crescent on Malton Moor, housing association owned, that were completely empty and just boarded up. We had huge issues, as did every other large Local Authority in the north of England, down as far as Stoke-on-Trent, in letting properties. If we had thought that we should build at a time like that we would have been mad, and we did not have the money because the first priority had to be to refurbish the properties that we had. That is now happening, thanks to our initiative on ALMOs and I am very proud of it.

I do not begrudge you your appearance on the front page of the Evening Post. I do not get upset about that. It is lovely to see it.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Oh yes you do.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: No, no, I am not like that, Andrew. It was great to see you there, all cuddled up together, working for Council housing. It did not actually say how many or how much. As I say, this White Paper is very clear about a sum. Let us see a sum from you. Please, just give me one answer - give us a sum. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR MORTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. As is always the case on these occasions it is a matter of taste, but I would argue that selling the airport is probably one of the best things the administration has done. From a classically Liberal point of view, what on earth is the point of us owning an asset that can operate not only as successfully but more successfully in the private sector?

Although that is not what we are discussing today, I would just make one point to the Labour Group, that perhaps we should, because you are critiquing the way that we are spending the money. I have sat through a number of Council meetings where you have rather given the impression we would not have this money to spend had you had your way. It is all very well saying we will spend it on this, that and the other; there is a lot of press coverage, there are a lot of statements in this Chamber that we should not have sold this in the first place and perhaps that is worth reflecting on.

I am in favour of selling the airport but perhaps for slightly different reasons. The enormous projected growth of air travel I am sceptical will happen, simply because I think we are going to have to come to terms with the problem of the enormous amount of carbon we have in our atmosphere. That is going to be the challenge of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century if indeed we get to the second half of it. I hope I am wrong about this and that carbon trading will come in and that this enormous expansion that makes the sale so lucrative will not happen and at that point let us get rid of it while it is worth what it is and let the private sector take the hit.

Let us, for the purpose of this discussion, assume that I am wrong about it and if we do not act promptly we do have an explosion of short-term travel. That is going to put more carbon dioxide into our atmosphere and we have a moral imperative to make a slightly different critique potentially than you are doing.

I am delighted that we are going to spend money on an arena. I introduced motions back in the dim and distant past about it which were voted down by you. I am glad that we are having it, it is a city-wide disgrace that we do not. I am also happy about the swimming pool - we need a replacement.

My critique, if there is one, is slightly different to yours and I think it is disappointing as an opposition that you have not made it, that if we are generating funding from the sale that will cause this taboo, that will put more carbon, that will contribute to an environmental emergency, we need to make sure that we are spending and that these projects, which are excellent, are absolutely world class examples of low carbon building and low energy usage. I think it is a pity that that is a critique that you did not make and I might have had more sympathy with you.

I can sit here listing how I can spend £1m in my ward. We all could. I understand the point you are making but that it is not the best critique that you could have made today and that is why I would say to the administration - and I am sure in due course that will be taken on board - let us address the real challenge which is not spending it differently, it is spending it in a way that is going to help for a long-term sustainable future for Leeds. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think this debate is rather interesting. To suggest that we give each ward £1m as some kind of Christmas bonus seems to be - we have had a pantomime so let us go back to Chitty Chitty Bang Bang. It is bit like Robert Helpmann when he played the Kid Catcher - free sweets for everyone. The children are obviously taken captive by this nonsense.

I am obliged to Councillor Golton for referring to Morley South and the road situation and I am all too well aware that the road situation has improved in recent years and that is down to a lot of work by my Council colleague, Councillor Judith Elliott, who has carried out a number of discussions with local residents.

However, I do not recall any Council houses being built in Morley during the 1980s. I think the last Council houses that were built in Morley were actually by the former Morley Borough Council and were in Morley North ward. I think it is an example, although probably not an intended example, of the inequalities which residents of Leeds have suffered when the Labour Party were running the City Council.

I think to spend the money in the way that has been suggested in Peter Gruen's White Paper is a bit of short-termism, because if Leeds is to continue to be a regional capital, it needs to have the facilities of a regional capital. The Evening Post has done a survey, what do you want in Leeds - we want an arena. Is there arena there for the likes of Kylie, Madonna, whoever else, Andrea Bocelli, to come and sing? That is what we hope will happen but let us not forget that we are discussing an arena at which to put on sporting events. Ricky Hatton seems to have rekindled favour in boxing at the moment, although he got his ears boxed the other evening which is just one of those things - if you put yourself up for that kind of thing, you will not always win.

I do agree with what Councillor Morton has said that the money needs to be invested in something which is going to bring long-term benefits to the city and much as I like Peter Gruen, I cannot see that his proposal...

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: It is a personal thing.

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: It is not a personal thing, I can assure you! The money needs to be invested in something which is going to bring the long-term benefits to Leeds and I really believe that an arena will do that, not only for the pop events we saw earlier this year - the shenanigans when Robbie Williams appeared at Roundhay Park and the problems that caused city-wide with education. We need an arena, we have got this money which we have acquired by the sale of something. Let us ensure that that money is invested wisely, that it brings benefits to the city of Leeds long-term and helps the city develop into what it is and what we want it to continue to be, and that is the regional capital of the north of England. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It is quite funny sat here listening to Peter Gruen waffle on and try and encompass so many of us in his comments. I am sure part of his approach is to goad us into standing up and making a contribution. I have to tell him that it worked in my case!

When you hear him talking about some of these projects, facilities, he talks about an overspend. I think it is quite rich, Lord Mayor. Councillor Harris pointed out the issue of the South Leeds Stadium but Councillor Gruen needs to reflect, and indeed some of his colleagues do, on just what this administration has done since we came into power.

I think that the thing that really gets up their nose, each and every one of them, is that a number of the things that we have achieved they would have loved to achieve. They would have loved to have done them. Bernard, I will come to all your issues in a minute. They would have loved to have been there delivering these projects but the fact is they had not got the balls to do it. They just had not got the mettle there, they had not got the mettle to get on with it, to grasp the challenge and actually implement these things.

I do not think that is a point of personal explanation on Bernard's part, Lord Mayor! *(Laughter)*

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: What is between your ears, Bernard?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Procter, I do think you should offer an explanation. *(Laughter)* I was thinking in terms of the Armouries and I am hoping you were too.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, not if it takes up my time I will not. That is the real issue, Lord Mayor. I have just scribbled very quickly a list down here of all of these issues. The Carriagework Theatre. Was it one of your ideas to actually pursue the Carriagework Theatre? When we came into office you were still dithering about. The thing was being constructed but you did not know if you were actually going to...

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Rubbish.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: It is true. I actually went and spoke on the stage of the old Institute building, Bernard was in the audience hearing me speak to the people who were there because you people had not got the guts to tell them that actually they were going to lose it - maybe, maybe not, we will see about it. We were

the people who were getting the letters at the time but we pulled off a move of that nature, moving out one of the largest community arts organisations into a purpose-built venue that we have successfully delivered and also facilitated the construction of a museum, a thing that in 20-odd years none of you people managed to deliver for this city.

In addition to that, we have opened a resource centre as well down by the Armouries. It is interesting, is it not, that so many people are, "No, no, you have not done that." Peter Gruen accuses me and my colleagues of even wanting to open the local village fete. We are in the paper all the time, he complains, opening things. Yes, that is because we have done so much in the last three-and-a-bit years since we have been in office. Why did they never open anything? Because they did not do much at all when they were there, Lord Mayor.

When you look down the list, Lord Mayor, of some of our other achievements - and I am only confining my comments to some of the areas where I have some responsibility, there are many more that are covered by colleagues right around this side of the Chamber. What about libraries? How many libraries did you build in the last ten years? Look at what we have managed to achieve - a new library at Tingley, a new library at Holt Park. I know it sticks in your throat that we are going to build a new £1m-plus library in Garforth as well. You are furious that we have managed to get the money, are you not, to build a new library in Garforth? Not a single comment of congratulations do we get from you at all.

What about the new 50 metre pool, officially opened yesterday - a royal seal of approval of that fantastic flagship facility and what do we get from members opposite? Do we get praise from you? No. What were you doing about the international pool when you were in office? You were keeping your heads below the parapet trying not to deal with the difficult issues of the day. We came into office, dealt with those difficult issues, went ahead, built the pool, opened the pool, we have got Olympic divers training at that facility right here, right now. That is what sticks in your throat, that is what you do not like.

Lord Mayor, Councillor Carter will deal with the issue of the arena. He has dealt with it superbly over the last few months. Of all issues, that is the one - that is the one - they were desperate to deliver and they failed miserably, Lord Mayor.  
(Applause)

THE LORD MAYOR: It does appear during that it was indicated to me that Councillor Carter might like to speak, so I shall be very generous and fair and ask either of the seconders of the motion and the amendment, would they wish to speak, as they reserved the right. Councillor James Lewis, do you wish to speak?

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am still waiting to see the picture of Councillor Proctor closing Oulton library appear in the newspapers. I am quite happy to come down and take a photo next to the closed Oulton library, John, and tell people exactly what you are doing in that part of town.

I feel like, at times, when we had Councillors Golton, Brett and Campbell on their feet, actually what we are watching is the opening salvo not just of Councillor Brett's temporary occupation of the Lib Dem Leader's role - and he was so puffed up with his own self-importance I thought he might rise up on his own current of warm air and float away. I think it is appropriate if we are talking about airports we should be talking about flying.

What Councillor Campbell and Councillor Golton seem to be saying is that money that has already been spent has only become available because of money

that the Council is yet to receive, and I think that kind of accountancy is worrying and I am glad we have got officers like Alan Gay to keep an eye over the Council's books if that is what the political leadership is coming up with.

I think David Morton made some interesting points. He made an ideological argument for the city Council not owning the airport and it is a point of view. It is in contradiction of his colleague Ryk Downes, who makes a compelling for greater public control over public transport. It is an interesting point of view that big infrastructure projects like airports should not have public involvement for organisations like this, so I find it slightly ironic on the one hand they are arguing that a major piece of public infrastructure in this city should be in private hands, yet they are arguing for a massive amount of public money to be spent on the arena. There seems to be very little consistency here.

The other thing that has come out in this debate very, very clearly to me, is there is a complete difference of view here between this side and the various parties over there. We trust the people of Leeds to make decisions about where money should be spent, whereas that administration - isolated in the lavish offices at the top of the Civic Hall, driving from their homes in the leafy suburbs into the Civic Hall and back again - are completely out of touch with what people in Leeds want.

I know in the last few weeks the Labour Party have been asking the people of Leeds some big questions about some serious issues, serious events happening in Leeds. I think it might be quite interesting to reflect on some of the responses we have got.

We had a response from Woodlesford, a lady in Woodlesford, who said that enough money has already been spent in the city centre, it is about time we had some money spent round here. I think that is quite important. We have had another lady in East End Park said, "This area is neglected. Nobody does anything for us." I think there is a clear contrast. We want to give these people some resources and we want to give them control. We do not want to hand down decisions, we do not want to announce, "This is what is happening to you whether you like it or not." We are putting people first and you are just lost in your own pet vanity projects.

I support Councillor Gruen's White Paper and I trust the people of Leeds.  
(*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: My Lord Mayor, as Councillor Gruen mentioned the press I thought I would start on that subject. I saw a most disturbing in the newspaper a couple of weeks ago but looking at the benches opposite I cannot possibly believe it is true. The headline said there was going to be a shortage of turkeys this Christmas. (*Laughter*) My Lord Mayor, I have never seen a bigger bunch of turkeys ready for stuffing in all my life! (*Applause*)

My Lord Mayor, I have been in this Chamber for many years. I have never witnessed from a member of Council moving a White Paper resolution such a half-hearted, misjudged attempt at political gimmickry.

It said it all when Councillor Gruen sat down. We watched very carefully - about a third of the Labour members applauded. Most of them looked miserable as sin, as well they might. I just have to pose the question, on an issue like spending so much money would you not think the Leader of the Opposition would have been speaking in the debate? Of course, the Leader of the Opposition is on record as saying - and it appears nowhere in Councillor Gruen's White Paper - "Spend the money on flood defence." Councillor Keith Wakefield had a letter published in the Evening Post and in it he said, "I cannot think of a better legacy than to spend some



of this money on flood defences.” Have you heard any mention of flood defences, or is this the single, transferable spending pledge? They can all say what they want wherever they want - you bet your life they can, you bet your life they will.

My Lord Mayor, on the issue of highways, Councillor Golton has covered very well. I have to point out another couple of points, and that is that we will be spending in most wards of the city - in all wards of the city - between £300,000 and £600,000, I think it is, on highway repairs next year in every ward in this city. In their last year of control they spend £3,649,000. Next year we will spend £14m. *(Applause)*

Why are we doing it, Councillor Gruen? Why are we doing it? We are doing it because actually you, when you were last in power, consulted the people of Leeds and we consulted the people of Leeds subsequently and the number one issue on the top of their list was the appalling state of the roads and footpaths because of the £60m backlog you lot were leaving behind you. Keith Wakefield said, and I quote, “Highway maintenance was not our priority.” If the people of this city want to go back to that agenda, they are welcome to but you know and I know that they do not.

Councillor Gruen, one thing he has not addressed at all is where is he going to get the money from, because our £2 billion including housing capital programme over this next four years is £43m short at the moment, a gap I believe we can close. If you add another £51m to it, which is what he is proposing, where does it come from? Of course it does not, does it, unless you start to sell even more of the Council’s assets. Bye bye Miles Hill, Jane. Bye bye everything, because that fellow is going to have to find £50m and find it quick because he does not stipulate whether he expects to spend the money in one year or in four. Is he actually saying this 51 million quid is going to be spent next year, because if it is that means cuts - it means no arena, it means the road programme is back to where it was under them.

If he is going to spread it then the £1m for the wards, £250,000 a year for four years - we are spending four times that amount now. My Lord Mayor, anybody who votes for that fellow’s resolution wants their head examining unless, of course, he believes that he is going to get some money from somewhere. Perhaps an anonymous donation from somebody in the north-east. Perhaps Ted could put us in touch with somebody! You cannot miss Ted’s head anywhere and there is was, next to Mr Abrahams, up there in Sedgefield. Ted, give him some advice and tell him where he can get some money from. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Can I start by thanking Andrew yet again sticking to a leadership role and making the kind of speech that we would expect the Leader of this Council to make - above the fray, sensible, forward looking and for the benefit of Leeds citizens. Andrew, yet again you have not risen to the occasion.

It was interesting as James Lewis observed that we had a plethora of Lib Dem speakers. We had the former Leader, still trying to be the Leader, we had the wannabe leaders who did not quite make it, and we had the four-month interim Leader who did not understand about housing, who did not even follow the traditional follow new Leader role of thanking his predecessor for all the hard work he had done. What a disgrace. I really feel sorry that your efforts within your own group are not appreciated.

Your speech suddenly no longer the burdens of office - there you were, bounding along like a young lamb, making a splendid speech even though it attacked me, but I did appreciate it.

We have always said, have we not, that this does not mean losing the arena. It is a total fabrication. It is a nice one to hand things on to. When Bernard was

Chair of the Grand Theatre they raised money. They went all over the place to raise money. Now suddenly you come along and you say, "We have got to top up." Let us look at these projects. Let us look at these Leeds projects.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: He raised money? I do not think he did.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Let us look at the Leeds projects. The Grand Theatre, £4.1m cost increase. Roundhay Mansion - my favourite topic - £1.456m increase, and delivered bugger all up to now. Delivered nothing.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: You wanted offices. Offices.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: If you start talking of falsehoods, the three Roundhay Councillors election after election stand up and promise what a wonderful Roundhay Mansion we are going to have.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: It is. It is a wonderful mansion.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: It has gone nowhere under your stewardship John - it has gone backwards.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Keith, you have nothing to fear if this is the best he can do. Blown himself away.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Colin Campbell talks about whether Leeds should be a destination. Isn't it interesting that under the planning leadership of the Council we now suddenly have headline after headline, week in, week out, about what a dire state Leeds City Centre is in in terms of planning. Every single headline...

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: A disgraceful state.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Hang on, Andrew. Overheated, empty flats - I do not make it up, it is in the headlines every single night almost, that Leeds is running out of steam, Leeds is running out of vision. You have lived off our vision for four years and you have not used your own vision.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: You have blown yourself away, thank goodness.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Let me go to some quotes, because I have been told that I have not quoted Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Is that written by the same reactionary editor, by the way?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I have not quoted Councillor Wakefield. I am going to quote him. He said, "At no point have the people of our city had an opportunity to say how they would like this windfall to be spent. This is nothing short of bewildering, given that every single penny of this money is that of the hard-working Leeds taxpayer." He also said, "This is a substantial amount of money. It will be used to top up existing Council spending commitments and cover overspends on new projects." He also said, if you want me to quote more and more of Councillor Wakefield I am very happy to do it. He also said that, "Bradford Council have announced plans to distribute funds from their cut of the airport sale to each ward in their city."

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: £100,000.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: "Bradford Council have already set up plans to distribute funds in each part of the city. Why can't we do the same? Why can't we trust our people?"

That is all we are saying - trust people and get them to say what they think the money should be spent on.

Let us talk about flooding. We had a debate on flooding last time and we uncovered for the public and put into the public domain the fact of how much underspend there was in terms of flooding in your time. Talk about cuts - Andrew was saying there will be cuts. Sadly under your administration there have been fantastic cuts in social services and social care year in and year out - year in and year out.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: You are holed below the water line. Sit down.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I make this proposition that next year, because it will be your budget in February - you will make further cuts.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I wish we could cut you out.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Councillor Brett, my final statement to you. When you said we are not going to talk to the people, we are not going to listen to the people because they had their say at the last election. So they did and you lost seats. We had 40 and now we have got 44, so the people are listening to us and the people will continue to listen to us and very soon, Councillor Brett or Councillor Golton, or Menzies Campbell over there, very soon it does not matter which Leader it is because you guys are going to be sitting over here and we will be over there. I move the resolution and call for a recorded vote. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Five have clapped this time, Peter. That is a bit better. One more than before.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen, could I just check, did you call for a recorded vote?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I did, yes.

THE LORD MAYOR: Is that seconded? Thank you. In that case, Chief Executive.

*(A recorded vote was taken on the amendment)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I have the figures now. Present 89; 'Yes' 51; Abstentions 0; 'No' 38. That is CARRIED and becomes the substantive motion.

COUNCILLOR A CARTER: Move recorded vote, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTOR: Seconded.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Chief Executive.

*(A recorded vote was taken on the substantive motion)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I am going to take the vote as recorded. Present 85; 'Yes' 51; Abstentions 34; Against none. Therefore that obviously is CARRIED.

I now declare this meeting is closed.

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