

LEEDS CITY COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Held on

Wednesday 2nd July 2008

At

THE COUNCIL CHAMBER,
CIVIC HALL, LEEDS

In the Chair:

THE LORD MAYOR
(Councillor F Robinson)

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VERBATIM REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF LEEDS CITY COUNCIL
MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 2nd JULY 2008

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon, everyone. I call the meeting to order. Obviously the first thing we have to take note of in Council, of course, is the dire warning for those who have not yet switched off their mobile phones or other electrical equipment. The penalty, as you well know, is a substantial contribution to the Lord Mayor's Charity.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

THE LORD MAYOR: Having done all that then, I have a few announcements to make. Welcome again to many old faces - not quite that old - and, of course, to some brand new faces to the Council. I would like to introduce the new Members, if that would be in order for you, because we would not like to think of them as being strangers to the Council after the next minute or so, would we? Again, if you would just like to indicate who you are.

First of all we welcome Councillor Ben Chastney of Weetwood. *(Applause)* Councillor Joe Marjoram. *(Applause)* Councillor Jamie Matthews, Headingley. *(Applause)* Councillor Eileen Taylor, Chapel Allerton. *(Applause)* Councillor Lucinda Yeadon from Kirkstall *(Applause)*.

The next announcement, somewhat sad maybe, is the sad death you may well know occurred of Pat Reagan and I think we all should dip our heads a little. *(Silent tribute)*.

The next thing I would like to announce is an award for the City Council and if I read it rightly, it is really red hot news from last night - and it is heavy - and our representatives were at Wembley to receive this trophy. It is really for the 2008 NHS Health and Social Care Award for our Dignity in Care Campaign, Leeds being awarded that. Congratulations certainly to all those who were involved in that procedure.

Another announcement - you may well also now be aware it is Nelson Mandela's birthday, his 90th, later this month, and birthday greetings have been sent to him on behalf of the city. I think we would all concur with that.

I think that ends my list of announcements and we will get on with the Council meeting as such.

ITEM 1 - MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON
22ND MAY 2008

THE LORD MAYOR: I call upon Councillor Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: I move that the Minutes be received, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Those in favour? Those against? Abstentions?
CARRIED.

ITEM 2 - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 2, Declarations of Interest. The list of written declarations that have been submitted by Members is on display and in the public gallery as well, so they are all in order. Secondly, to invite any further individual declarations or corrections to those notified on the list.

COUNCILLOR CLEASBY: Forgive me, Lord Mayor - I am not accustomed to this position. Could I ask for this to include for me Benton Park Secondary School and Westbrook Primary School?

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: White papers 13 and 15, personal and prejudicial in connection with my business activities, and 12 because now I am rejuvenated and free of all burden of office, it would be a terrible shame if there were no such clubs to visit again! (*Laughter*)

COUNCILLOR MURRAY: Thank you, Lord Mayor, a correction. White Paper number 11 and White Paper number 14, it is a personal and prejudicial interest for reasons which have been given.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, I note that many colleagues have declared an interest in just being governors at schools for White Paper 11. Clearly there has been different advice to different groups. Can I on behalf of any Labour governors of schools declare an interest? Most of us are governors of schools and it would be far too lengthy, I hope, to go through each one separately now but I move all that en bloc, if it is acceptable.

THE LORD MAYOR: Is that all right?

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Ditto, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Similarly the governorship on Item 11 but on the Reference Back on social care, my mother receives social care from Leeds City Council.

COUNCILLOR A BLACKBURN: My mother-in-law as well receives social care and, of course, ditto to do with the schools.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Moving on.

COUNCILLOR KENDALL; I am now a governor at Kerr Mackie School as well as Roundhay.

COUNCILLOR HOLLINGSWORTH: Governor of Brownhill and Shakespeare Primary Schools.

THE LORD MAYOR: Have we any more?

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Lord Mayor, I am given to understand some time ago that we were given advice that we did not really need to declare school governorships, unless I misunderstood something. However, could I declare such an interest if it is required on behalf of the Morley Borough Independent Group?

COUNCILLOR BALE: On social care, Lord Mayor, I declare that my daughter is a social service user. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: I sweep around - no more?

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: I declare governors for the whole of the Liberal Democrat Group.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. That is it.

ITEM 3 COMMUNICATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: I now move on to Item 3. Assistant Chief Executive.

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE GOVERNANCE): Under Communications, there are no communications to report.

ITEM 4 - DEPUTATIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 4, Deputations. Assistant Chief Executive.

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE GOVERNANCE): To report to Council that there are five deputations. The first is GMB regarding the current dispute on equal pay; the second is Friends of Woodhouse Moor, regarding the provision of park wardens on Woodhouse Moor; the third is Newton Futures Residents' Group, regarding the condition of former Council property at 9, Newton Grove; deputation four is Designated Public Places Order Consultative committee regarding the designated public places order proposed for Hyde Park and Woodhouse; and deputation five is Kirkstall Valley Community Association regarding the proposed sale of St Ann's Mills and Abbey Mills in Kirkstall.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Procter?

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I move that the Deputations be received.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: All in favour please vote. Against? Abstentions?
CARRIED.

DEPUTATION 1 - GMB

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Please now make your speech to the Council which should take no longer than five minutes and please begin by introducing your colleagues.

MR W CHARD: My Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, good afternoon. My name is Bill Chard and I am a Regional Organiser for the GMB trade union, representing over 7,000 members employed by Leeds City Council. I am accompanied by other GMB delegates.

Our delegation is here today in order to make you further aware of the fears of our members who, under the Council's proposals on the new pay structure, will lose thousands of pounds in pay cuts.

GMB members voted two to one to reject the Council's new pay and grading scheme and refuse and street cleansing workers took part in three days of strike action and participated in a continuous work to rule and overtime ban causing considerable disruption to the city's streets.

They did not take this action lightly and they did not take action purely to protect their own wages from plundering. They took action to protect others' wages too and also in support of equal pay for low paid women. Yes of course they were angry and fearful that fellow workers from Streetscene would lose up to £6000 a year; that every refuse collector would lose £4000; a year but they also wanted to fight for the 1500 mid-day school staff, all low paid women, who were losing, the school teaching assistants who work within schools with the neediest of our children. These people have been told that they will have their special needs money taken off them.

The did not only take action in defence of the Councils attack on low paid workers; they also believed in the case of the very low paid in this Authority, women working in cleaning, catering and care earning about £6 an hour - the very people who should have received equal pay from this new structure.

The GMB action has always been a twin-track approach - equal pay for low paid women and no pay cuts for other workers. Unbelievably the majority of those losing are women.

The reason that the Council had to introduce a new pay and grading scheme was because the one in use is unlawful because it breaks the equal pay legislation, which is why the Authority has already paid out millions of pounds in compensation to low paid women, but instead of levelling up going forward, it has chosen to drag thousands of workers' pay down, the majority of them women, and lift the worst paid up marginally.

However, since the agreed suspension of industrial action, some progress has been made in further re-evaluation of certain of the affected workers, which has given some hope to those disillusioned workers because these re-evaluations have led to a number of jobs that were losing now becoming neutral and others have had their loss reduced significantly. The group of losers who were behind hit for a massive £6000 a year have been reduced to a £3000 loss. Can you even begin to imagine the impact on a person going from £18,000 down to £12,000 a year - unimaginable and bitterly cruel.

There has been movement and because of those improvements I believe that there has been an increase in trust and for that reason I will be recommending to our members in refuse and street cleansing that they call off the stayed action in order that further discussions take place over the remodelling of the affected jobs with a deadline agreed for December of this year.

I believe that our members are of a mind to allow the Authority that time until then to demonstrate that they will keep to their word and restyle the losing jobs and prevent the loss. If this is not done, we are back to square one.

Unfortunately low paid women have not gained the equal pay that they deserved - they remain low paid - but the GMB will continue to prosecute those women's claims for equality through the courts and secure the compensation that they deserve.

I ask you today to ensure that no Leeds employee loses a penny as a result of the new pay scheme and request that you remove the three year progression that the lowest paid will have to go through to attain their evaluated rate, even though they may well have been carrying out that role for the last 20 years or more.

It is simply wrong that women have not received equal pay; wrong that people are facing pay cuts that could drastically affect their lives. This is 2008 not 1808, not 1908. Working people deserve better. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: I call upon Councillor Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I move that the matter be referred to the Executive Board for further consideration.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second that proposals and, Bill, can you thank your members for the excellent work they do on behalf of the Labour Party. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: I call for a vote on that. Those in favour? Against? Abstain? CARRIED.

Thank you for attending and for what you have said. You will be kept informed of the considerations which your comments will receive. Thank you and good afternoon. (*Applause*)

DEPUTATION 2 - FRIENDS OF WOODHOUSE MOOR

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Please will you now make your speech to the Council, which should not be longer than five minutes, and if you could start by introducing your colleagues.

MR W MCKINNON: My colleagues are Andy Beresford, Sue Buckle, Ellie Bailey and myself, Bill McKinnon. Good afternoon, Lord Mayor and Councillors. We are here representing North Hyde Park Neighbourhood Association, South Headingley Community Association and Friends of Woodhouse Moor and we thank you for hearing us this afternoon.

When Woodhouse Moor was purchased in 1857, it was known as "the Lungs of Leeds" but now, 150 years later, thick plumes of barbecue smoke arise from the park whenever it is warm and sunny. Every barbecue releases 220,000 times as many cancer-causing dioxins as a single cigarette. Barbecue smoke affects everyone in the vicinity and not just those in the park. Over the weekend of the 10th and 11th May, one lady who lives close to the Moor had to keep her windows shut, as barbecue smoke was causing her to experience breathing difficulties. Carelessly discarded barbecue coals cause skip and bin fires. In a recent skip fire, a bottle exploded sending shards of glass everywhere. Someone could have been blinded. If Leeds City Council continues to allow barbecues on Woodhouse Moor, it is only a question of time until there is a serious accident, and the Council could find itself being sued for negligence. By failing to stop illegal barbecues, the council is wasting fire brigade resources.

Woodhouse Moor has been neglected for many years. Badly rutted paths make the park inaccessible to wheelchair users. Tennis courts are unusable being covered with weeds and saplings and they have no fencing. The skateboard park is permanently covered in graffiti and litter and it stinks of urine. Lack of security is encouraging unprecedented levels of anti-social behaviour. According to police figures, one person is mugged there every week. Illegal barbecues are converted to bonfires with branches torn from trees. There are skip and bin fires. There is under-age drinking. Street drinkers congregate near the children's play area. There is a class A drug-dealing and consumption. Litter and broken glass is strewn everywhere. There are professional all-night sound systems with petrol generators. There is quad bike racing and public urination. The Police Community Support

Officers, when they are present, ignore all this. The result is that the park is now unsafe for children and families and if children without gardens can't play in the park, where are they to play?

Woodhouse Moor receives three million visitors every year and is the second most visited park after Roundhay, which receives 6.5 million, but Roundhay Park has over 700 acres, whereas Woodhouse Moor has just 60. That makes Woodhouse Moor the most intensively used park in the city. It should be funded accordingly.

How does spending on Woodhouse Moor compare with spending on other parks? The answer is we do not know. That is because Parks and Countryside do not produce individual parks budgets. All we know for certain is that in 2001 Leeds spending per hectare on parks was a quarter that of other major English cities. Clearly it needs to be greatly increased.

Hyde Park and Woodhouse has lower car ownership than any other ward in the city. This means that local people rely on Woodhouse Moor to fulfil their green space needs. Many do not have gardens and this makes them even more dependent on the Moor. By neglecting Woodhouse Moor and by allowing anti-social behaviour on it, the Council is depriving the residents of one of the most deprived areas of the city of the use of their only green space. The scenes we are witnessing on a regular basis on Woodhouse Moor would not be allowed in any other city and they should not be allowed here. It is time for Leeds City Council to maintain its major central park and maintain order on it. To do this it needs to:

1. Increase overall spending on parks to match that of the other major English cities.
2. Produce budgets for each of the city's parks with resources allocated to parks based on usage and the need of the surrounding area.
3. Institute regular maintenance of the facilities on Woodhouse Moor so that they are at all times fit for use.
4. Provide Woodhouse Moor with at least two permanent park wardens whose sole duty would be to maintain order and enforce the byelaws, and who would issue on the spot fines for littering and the infringement of byelaws (when this power becomes available under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act). Already, more than 360 people have signed a petition asking for permanent park wardens on the Moor.

We look forward to receiving your response. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I move that the matter be referred to the Executive Board for consideration.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Gruen?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Those in favour? Against? Abstentions? CARRIED.

We thank you for attending the Council meeting this afternoon. You will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Thank you.

MR W MCKINNON: Thank you. Good afternoon.

DEPUTATION 3 - NEWTON FUTURES RESIDENTS' GROUP

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Please, if you would now make your speech, remembering five minutes is the limit and if you could just start by introducing your fellow deputation.

MS S BALL: Sue Ball, Chair of Newton Futures; Anthony Gunns, Treasurer; and Kelly Marker of Newton Futures Residents' Group.

My Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, members of Newton Futures have come here today to present issues arising from the disposal of a property in the Chapeltown Conservation area.

Newton Futures Residents' Group was set up in 1999 to bring local people together to enhance the street environment to remedy acute drug related crime and empty housing. We have worked with the Local Authority, local Council Members, and agencies such as Groundwork Trust, CASAC and LATCH. In 2002, Newton Futures won the National Neighbourhood Award (Urban Award) which was presented to members at a ceremony in London.

No 9 Newton Grove is part of a Grade 2 listed terrace in the Chapeltown Conservative Area and consists of a very fine house, a coach house, large front garden and rear courtyard. It has stood empty since the late 1990s. During this time, Newton Futures has acted as stewards of the property, clearing the front garden and coach house of rubbish and needles, and with CASAC, gating the coach house to prevent the dumping of vehicles and use as a site for sex workers.

The Council sold No 9 through a closed tender process, which was completed by March 2005. The sale documents states that 'Refurbishment must be carried out within six months of completion' and that there can be 'no disposition of the estate should happen without a signed certificate by Leeds City Council ensuring that Provision in the Sale Transfer have been complied with.'

Since the sale in 2005, no work at all has been undertaken by the current owners. The coach house has now collapsed and significant damage has been incurred to the roof of neighbouring properties due to the negligent removal of slates by the owners.

After initially rejecting then option to buy the property back, the Council is now considering a buy back, offering the same as the original sale amount within a back-to-back agreement with a local housing association. In parallel though the owner is now requesting the wavier of the sale conditions and the Council is considering this. This would allow the current owner to re-sell the property to the highest bidder without fulfilling the six months refurbishment clause.

Newton Futures wants to know, really, on what basis would the conditions be waived and, should this be allowed, what message would this send to unscrupulous landlords?

We feel if it was reasonable to include the six month clause in the sale document, then it is indeed reasonable that for the City Council to act to enforce it. Surely any waiver would also invalidate the entire bidding process for the property, as it changes the conditions of sales. If the waiver is agreed, we would like to see the bid process opened for scrutiny.

As a grade II listed building, the coach house has now collapsed and the house is in a critical state of repair. At points in the sale process it was unclear who even owned the coach house. Its near destruction is due, we feel, to a large extent,

to the confusion over its ownership and maintenance. There also seems now to be a lack of appetite within the Council to argue for its restoration.

Newton Futures is lobbying for the rebuilding of this coach house alongside the proper level of diligent repair to the house as a listed property to ensure the conservation of the historic fabric of Chapeltown.

An Untidy Land Notice was served by the Planning Department in Jan 2008 and the Council are undertaking remedial and demolition works and charging the owner, a discharged bankrupt. How reasonable is this course of action in light of the owner's ability to manage finances in a business like way? We feel the Council needs to move quickly and expediently in securing the buy-back to restrict their liability, save public moneys as well as to get the property into competent ownership.

Newton Futures are unsatisfied with the Local Authority's handling of the sale process and their hesitation in actioning the sale conditions. The Local Authority has noted the human rights of the current negligent owners in their transaction, but we would ask you to now consider the human rights of local residents to enjoy our quality of life without battling the crime and dereliction that have resulted from the eyesore property, so we have come here today to request a satisfactory outcome for the property to be put into safe and responsible ownership within a reasonable timeframe. We want to see this beautiful building used as it should be as valued accommodation, adding to the quality and safety of the neighbourhood whilst preserving its rich urban heritage. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I move that the matter be referred to the Executive Board for consideration.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Those in favour? Those against? Abstentions?
CARRIED.

Thank you for your attendance and you will be informed at a later date of consideration of your case. Thank you for your appearance. Thank you.

DELEGATION 4 - DESIGNATED PUBLIC PLACES ORDER CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEE

THE LORD MAYOR: good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. If you would now please make your speech to Council which should take no longer than five minutes and if you would start by introducing your colleagues. Thank you.

MR M STANIFORTH: My Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, I am grateful for the opportunity to speak to you today on behalf of the DPPO Consultative Committee about the proposed Designated Public Places Order in the Hyde Park and Woodhouse area. My name is Martin Staniforth and my colleagues are Janet Bailey, Amir Kumar Roy, Mohammed Fariq and Gay Bennett.

My main today is to ask for your support to stop the Council making a DPPO in our area which will protect Hanover and Woodhouse Squares and Little London at the expense of the rest of the area, and particularly those of us who live near to, and use, Woodhouse Moor. We are a family area as well as being home to a large

number of students. All people there will be disadvantaged if the proposed DPPO does not cover Woodhouse Moor as well as other green spaces and play areas such as Rosebank Millennium Green.

By way of background, the south of our area has had a severe problem with street users, street alcoholics and rough sleepers, displaced from the city centre because of government pressure. There is also a lot of drinking on Woodhouse Moor by some students, and by underage drinkers, probably displaced from Little London. Apart from the health implications for them, the Moor becomes a rubbish dump on hot days as people walk away and leave bottles, cans, discarded hot and dangerous barbecues, even shoes (I'm sure I don't need to remind Councillors of the mayhem on the Moor in May, to which drinking undoubtedly contributed) and, of course, the play spaces in our area are made unsafe for children as a result of drinking.

We have been asking for over two years for a DPPO in the area and for it to include Woodhouse Moor and other green spaces so that the police can directly tackle alcohol nuisance when it arises, and we now have a petition signed by over 600 people asking for this. Last September the Inner North West Area Committee voted in favour of including the Moor in the area to be covered by the DPPO when it went out to consultation, but the Council continues to ignore us. Perhaps our mistake was to say that we were happy to see street users from the city centre to remain on our streets until housed, as they have nowhere else to go, so long as our parks, play areas and trouble spots were included in the DPPO and these were made safe for children and leisure use. If we had tried to exclude street users totally from the area, as other people have, we would have had far more success.

I am afraid that the DPPO consultation itself has been a sham. Apart from the fact that it failed to include Woodhouse Moor in the area to be protected, the Council has consistently misrepresented the nature of DPPOs. They are not alcohol bans. The Council knows this because the Home Office made Leeds remove from its DPPOs the phrase which said that they were. They are simply areas where the police have specific powers to deal with alcohol related trouble, but in all the press releases for this DPPO, Leeds Council has continued to refer to DPPOs as alcohol free zones. One stated, "Should the order be approved, compulsory signs would be displayed ... warning the public that they are in a designated alcohol-free zone" and that, "Leeds City Council's North West Area Management Team has been working with West Yorkshire Police to develop ... two new alcohol-free zones – called Designated Public Places Orders". I suspect that this misrepresentation alone should void the consultation, let alone the very real concerns we have about aspects of the consultation process itself, such as counting the objections, including counting some of them as support, and preparing the report for the Licensing Committee before the end of the consultation.

DPPOs are not supposed to be used to displace vulnerable street users away from their support in the city centre as has happened in Leeds, inappropriately benefiting the city centre at the expense of residential areas which can cope less well with the street users. By misusing the DPPO legislation in this way, the Council is failing to support its own recently released alcohol strategy, which makes the point that tackling alcohol abuse directly is much cheaper in the long run than ignoring it (or trying to displace it elsewhere). Alcohol abuse is estimated to cost the people of Leeds £275m a year.

Other Councils, progressive Councils like Portsmouth, have used their DPPOs for publicity about the dangers of alcohol and to tell people about the help available. They have clear protocols so that their DPPOs are enforced fairly, legally and uniformly across the city. Southampton, like Leeds, a city with a central

University, has sought public support for inclusion of its central parks in its DPPOs so that the police can more easily tackle any alcohol nuisance which occurs.

These cities do not deal with alcohol nuisance by trying to brush it under the carpet, but by using the legislation as intended, as part of an overall alcohol control strategy - and it works. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I move that the matter be referred to the Executive Board for consideration.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Those in favour? Against? Abstentions? That is CARRIED.

Thank you for attending this afternoon and you will be kept informed of the consideration which your comments will receive. Thank you again, and good afternoon.

DEPUTATION 5 - KIRKSTALL VALLEY COMMUNITY ASSOCIATION

THE LORD MAYOR: Good afternoon and welcome to today's Council meeting. Would your speech be no longer than five minutes and if you could commence by introducing your colleagues.

MR K STRATFORD: My Lord Mayor and fellow Councillors, we are a deputation from the Kirkstall Valley Community Association. The members of our deputation are myself, Ken Stratford, the Secretary of the Association, Mr Keith Coleridge and Mr Richard Simpson.

We are here to make representations regarding the future of historic mill buildings in Kirkstall and the adjoining land close to the river Aire. This reportedly involves selling or otherwise disposing of the land for the purposes of private development.

So concerned about this prospect are local people, that about 70 of them turned up at the last Kirkstall Burley Forum, many of whom wished to launch a vigorous opposition to any such proposal. We as an Association are here today to voice that opposition.

In January 2006, the Kirkstall residents received a consultation brochure from the Council. It explained that the Council had insufficient funds to pay for the refurbishment of both Abbey Mills and St Ann's Mills in Kirkstall and therefore proposed to sell Abbey Mills for residential conversion in order to fund the restoration of St Ann's Mill for small industrial units.

Many residents disagreed with these proposals recalling that both mills were originally purchased to provide public open space and preferred to see some or all of the buildings allocated for community use. People questioned the Council's arithmetic and suspected that the refurbishment costs had been exaggerated because the Council was anxious to sell.

People also pointed out that Kirkstall has no public buildings for community use. Residents were, however, reassured that at least the proceeds from Abbey Mills would be reinvested in St Ann's, and also that the Council undertook to return

both historic buildings to their former glory. The Council made an express and specific promise not to build in the riverside green space behind St Ann's Mills, where local people have waited nearly 40 years for new inner city public park envisaged in the 1972 Development Plan.

With dismay we learned in September 2007 the St Ann's was being offered for sale and, more recently, that it was to be sold with the associated land as well.

Employment uses after 1974 included "Quick Skip" at St Ann's, and "Chromagene" at Abbey Mills. Both have left a legacy. The former left a swathe of contaminated riverside land and the latter, we believe, a large public cost for repairs.

In five minutes, it will not be possible to go into this matter in great detail. We will state here, however, that our disquiet is underpinned by broad awareness of:

- The building condition surveys in 2003
- That the land at the rear of St Ann's Mills is subject to the highest possible flood risk category – a 'zone of rapid inundation'
- That ground levels are artificially raised in this area because of unlawfully dumped waste
- That the Environment Agency's view is that such waste should be removed by the Council
- That developments on flood plains increases the risk of flooding elsewhere
- That irresponsible decisions to permit development may set precedents for elsewhere
- Other practical matters, particularly the location of sewers, interfere with the possibility of development in compliance with Environment Agency requirements.
- That there have been various attempts to find a way forward for the Mills in a purely commercial context and that these have not been economically viable.

We contend that the river valley is potentially a phenomenal environmental asset that could be restored through fostering its regeneration as public open space for the enjoyment of the people of the area and the City.

- There is potential and interest in developing a canoeing facility on that part of the river, including from the Leeds Canoe Club and British Canoe union
- There is enormous potential for increasing the amount of riverside green space and public walks
- There is potential for increasing the amount of land given over to the conservation and encouragement of natural habitat for wildlife and encouraging biodiversity in the river valley
- There is potential for a wildlife centre with interest from the Yorkshire Wildlife Trust
- There is interest in use of mill buildings for artist workspaces and community arts
- There is potential for the use of Mill buildings by the community, and no lack of expression of interest. Why not have a concerted approach to encourage utilisation of the mill buildings by the Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector?
- What about, in this context, considering the encouragement of Social Enterprises?
- Is this not an opportunity to address the lack of public buildings in the Ward that supposedly prevents the Youth Service from offering the kind of facilities to young people that are offered elsewhere?

To conclude, I would just like to say that this Association, along with other voluntary groups are willing to work with, consult and explore an approach that could

be based on the Council turning over St Ann's Mills and the land to the Voluntary and Community Sector – and the Council committing itself to cleaning up the waste contamination of the riverbank. Legal forms exist through which this could be made to work and we would be willing to work to bring together partners.

We could explore sources of funding which I will not go into here but I could list.

Our Association is currently engages in work to develop a 'Vision for Kirkstall', which will inform the Council about what people want for their area. Thousands of questionnaires have just gone out to local people. It would be a great shame if the Council commits itself to proposals for development that fly in the face of what local people want.

A wrong and bad development, once done, cannot easily be undone.

Thank you for receiving us today and we hope that you will be able to respond positively in due course. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, I move that the matter be referred to the Executive Board for consideration.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you for attending this afternoon. We will have a vote first! Those in favour? Against? Abstentions? CARRIED.

Thank you for telling us about your difficulties and due consideration will be taken and you will be informed. Thank you.

ITEM 5 - REPORTS

(a)

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 5, Reports. I call on Councillor Brett.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. This is a new scheme. I pay tribute to Councillor Mark Harris who had the original idea. As this is in its first year, I thought it might be worth explaining that all the winners of this award have been approved by all five group leaders and that there is with your papers a brief biography of the people who are to receive this award. I would urge that this be passed, which will then allow the Lord Mayor to preside over a suitable ceremony in September. Thank you. Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Carter?

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor McKenna.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Lord Mayor, may I declare a personal interest. One of the names on it is a very close friend of mine and I am involved in an organisation, Dawn Newsome, Armley Helping Hands.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Any other speakers? I call for a vote then on that. Those in favour? Those against? Any abstentions? Then that is CARRIED.

(b)

THE LORD MAYOR: 5(b), I call on Councillor Grahame.

COUNCILLOR GRAHAME: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, it is with pleasure that I present the Scrutiny Annual Report to Council. Firstly I would like to thank the Chairs and Board Members for their hard work and successes over the year. I would encourage Members to take time to look through the report and note the breadth of important work Scrutiny Boards undertake. A lot recently has been said about the effectiveness of Scrutiny and in some areas I would agree. That is why in my introduction to the report I mention the need to ensure we continue to work effectively with the Executive and they with us and to take work of value and increase our work with partners. Our action plan on page 63 details this. I hope Council supports this action plan.

Lord Mayor, I think it would be wrong of me, however, not to mention some of Scrutiny's achievements this year. Firstly, the Good Scrutiny Award given to us by the Centre for Public Scrutiny; the very successful training we ran for Scrutiny Chairs across the region and our contribution to a number of national Best Practice guides. I am pleased to add that upon a recommendation from OSC we now have the City, Regional and Partnership Board to scrutinise outside bodies i.e. police, fire, ambulance service, which should be an effective way of holding to account very important outside bodies.

I am pleased to report to Council that Leeds has a good reputation for Scrutiny across the country and we need to ensure that this continues. I commend the report to Council, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you indeed. I call upon Councillor Hyde to second.

COUNCILLOR W HYDE: I second and reserve the right to speak.

THE LORD MAYOR: To comment, Councillor Elliott.

COUNCILLOR ELLIOTT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking regarding the Children's Scrutiny Board, Children's Services. It is page 16 and I am commenting on Fountain Primary School.

The Scrutiny Board looked into the Fountain Primary School troubles that they were having and I would like to say thank you to them. The results which came out of the working group were looked at by the school governors and they took on board what had been said and acted on those and because of that the school is now moving forward very positively, which has delighted all of those concerned at Fountain Primary. Councillor Hyde was Chairman at that time and I would like to thank him very, very much for fixing that working party up and all the people who took part in it. Thank you very much indeed.

COUNCILLOR LEADLEY: My Lord Mayor, I wish to comment on part of the City Development Scrutiny Report annual report which is about flooding - that is mentioned on pages 19 and 23 because of the work of this Flooding Scrutiny Commission which sat in the 2005/06 municipal year.

It is important that flooding should be kept under a spotlight so that it does not drop off the agendas of various government agencies and bureaucracies. Even though there are people up and down the country who have not yet been able to

move back into their homes following last year's June floods, it might well be that a couple of dry years will lead to cuts in funding for flood defence works. This has happened in the past. More than likely the City Council's direct role in funding, building and maintaining flood defences always will be fairly small. The environment agency and British Waterways will be far more important. Even so, we will have a role in pressing to stop budgets being cut, either directly or by slippage from one year to the next.

There has been no progress at all on the matter of private riparian ownership, which causes ownership and maintenance liability for water courses in built up areas to be fragmented into hundreds of pieces. Only national legislation could tackle this. If the ownership of every public highway was fragmented with hundreds of householders being responsible for looking after their own few yards of road, we would say that it is a nonsense.

It is interesting that recent public responses to the local development framework core strategy document showed quite a high awareness of flood risk, so there may well be more support for new initiatives and increased spending than might be thought amongst members of the public. In Leeds we do have the option of retreating on to higher ground. New housing should not be allowed on land at high risk of flooding and existing housing might be removed gradually over a period of many years from high flood risk land as it comes up for renewal.

Flood risk should be reviewed by Scrutiny every year, especially if no-one in Leeds has been flooded out for a year or two, to keep things moving and to make sure that it does not slip out of sight. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I wish to speak on the Scrutiny Board Culture and Leisure, page 48 in volume 1 of your bundle of papers this afternoon. It is in connection with the New Leaf Leisure Centres.

I am, of course, delighted that Morley is to receive a much needed new leisure centre. I am sure that Members are aware that the current leisure centre in Morley will close its doors to the public for the final time this coming Sunday, allowing the work for new building to commence.

It is extremely welcome that there is a £15m investment coming into Morley for the new leisure centre and I must pay tribute to the user group who have worked hard on the design and consultation process of the new centre. In particular I would like to thank Sharon Guard and her staff for dealing with difficult circumstances and sometimes difficult times. You will undoubtedly be pleased to know that all the user groups at Morley Leisure Centre have found alternative accommodation, which I think is commendable and is down to Sharon in particular.

The new centre will open in 2010 and as a ward member for Morley South where the new leisure centre will be and, of course, the current Mayor of Morley, I am highly delighted that this building and development is taking place in our town and I welcome it. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR B CLEASBY: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I wish to address page 15, Young People's Scrutiny Forum, Catching the Bus. Their great efforts, Lord Mayor, have resulted in Council receiving a prestigious scrutiny award for which we should be applauding them.

Lord Mayor, could I be a little cheeky, if it has not already been suggested to you, that you consider a Blue Room reception for them so that you on our behalf could show the city's gratitude for the work that they have done. Thank you, Council.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. If I could now call on Councillor Grahame to sum up.

COUNCILLOR GRAHAME: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Considering that we are all really praising, I have got some more names.

THE LORD MAYOR: I am sorry.

COUNCILLOR W HYDE: I did indicate that I would reserve my right to speak and I thought that there were two or three other speakers, in actual fact. I just wanted to point out something that some Members of Council might not have appreciated and that was a comment that appeared on the Joint Area Review towards the end of the year. It said that:

“The Children and Young People’s Scrutiny function is also adding value, with wide representation, clear focus on key issues and performance and a good tracking system to ensure that recommendations are followed through. With good leadership of the function within Children’s Services, portfolio holders and officers are subject to regular challenge on service performance.”

This is ideal and I would just like to make a reference to the adding value and the ‘clear focus on key issues’ bit, because that, in my view, is really what Scrutiny is all about. I think at this time when we are just starting on a new round of Scrutiny Board meetings it is opportune to remind ourselves that in order to qualify for that kind of recognition, Children’s Scrutiny and probably all the other Scrutiny Boards too had to undertake a wide range of enquiries and certainly in the case of Children’s Scrutiny Board that involved getting everybody on side, in particular the ten independent members of the Scrutiny Board who played a very important role in the back-up work. A vast amount of work had to be done in Children’s Scrutiny and could not have been done without that sort of commitment.

I think it is probably true to say, Lord Mayor, that many of us would have preferred the old committee system - I know I would and I know many Members of the present Scrutiny Board would - but we are stuck with the system that we have got. We have to make it work and in making it work we have got to ensure that we have the ability to emulate the government’s instruction in the first place, which was set up on the basis of the Westminster Select Committee. If we are going to do that then we need to have the same degree of independence in our Scrutiny Boards that they enjoy in Westminster.

I would just like to make a plea at this stage for all of us to continue to work together, to work harmoniously, independently and, in the case of Children’s Services, particularly without political interest, in the total interest of the children of this city. Thank you, (*Applause*).

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. We return to Councillor Grahame for summing up.

COUNCILLOR GRAHAME: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would really have liked to have had a little bit of explanation of what this was all about because it seems to have been self-praising. I am sure all Chairs of the Boards have worked really hard and deserve praise. Councillor Hyde has praised himself. I am sure we all agree with you on function of Scrutiny and I am pleased to say that actually now your Leader, who is not here, has actually taken Scrutiny seriously - obviously wanted his

four stars - and he has appreciated what work is done on Scrutiny. I hope everybody will join with me and thank the Chairs on their work and the Members who are on the Boards and hope it continues. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: I call for a vote. Those in favour? Against? Abstentions? That is CARRIED. Thank you.

(c)

THE LORD MAYOR: On 5(c), then, Councillor Procter.

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

COUNCILLOR BENTLEY: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Back to Councillor Procter, then, to sum up. We will call for a vote in that case. Those in favour? Against? Abstentions? That is CARRIED.

ITEM 6 - QUESTIONS

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 6, Questions. I call first on Councillor Harington.

COUNCILLOR HARINGTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Leader of Council confirm his party's commitment to listening to Leeds residents and involving them in decisions that affect them?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Listening to Leeds residents and involving them in the decisions that affect them happens in Council activity every day in every locality across services, sectors, and with our partners in the city. The Leeds Strategic Plan is a recent city-wide example of where consultation with residents, additional to the annual citizens' survey, took place to determine our priorities for improvement over the next three years.

All ten Area Committees contributed their views on behalf of residents in their area and residents' focus groups representative of gender, age, ethnic origin, disability and sexual profile for the whole population of Leeds were also held.

Subsequently many Area Committees have held a range of engagement activities with residents to select the priorities that will be the key focus for local delivery, helping to form Area Delivery Plans.

Other examples include participatory budgeting pilots in West and South Leeds that are engaging local residents in disadvantaged neighbourhoods in the city in taking action to improve their neighbourhood and building capacity and capability to shape investment priorities. There is also the Face the People events, looking at issues concerned with safety organised by the Safer Leeds Partnership with the Leeds Tenants' Federation. Last year older people were consulted city-wide; young people will be the focus this year. Smaller events are being organised in some neighbourhoods through Operation Champion teams.

Also the Council has a Citizens' Panel of approximately 1,800 residents recruited to broadly meet the 2001 census demography. It is used for a short survey about the Kirkgate Market in late 2007 and a full survey on transport and travel about Leeds in mid-2007. We also had a Have Your Say section on Talking Point, a web-based consultation portal that shows current or forthcoming consultations and, where

relevant, includes links to on-line questionnaires to complete. It also gives details of community events to attend and get involved in and provides full arc information including consultation results.

So, Roger, I have got my reply in first - yes, we certainly believe in listening to residents and involving them in decisions, but I suspect you are going to give me your take on where we have gone wrong.

THE LORD MAYOR: Is there a supplementary?

COUNCILLOR HARINGTON: Yes, thank you very much, Richard, and congratulations on having all those measures in place, but could you tell it why it is that the delegation to Council concerning goldfish led to a paper being raised at the following Executive Board, whereas a delegation concerning burial for Muslims led to no paper being raised ...

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Too predictable.

COUNCILLOR HARINGTON: ...even though the delegation took place 18 months ago in January 2007? Yes, I know, a working party has been set up.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Which you serve on.

COUNCILLOR HARINGTON: Which I serve on. However, it is now four month since the last meeting and the one before that was three months before that and therefore seven months since any Muslim was invited to discuss this issue.

Is it not the case, Richard, that if you want to be involved in decision making and to have an effect on the decisions that affect you, you are better off as a goldfish than a Muslim? (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR BRETT: A wonderful piece of theatre, Roger, but if you want a serious answer - which you will get, I will look into it and get back to you - this forum and this particular way of asking the question is not a way to get an instant answer. I will look into that and get back to you.

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Executive Member for Children's Services like to comment on some of the key messages from the now published Joint Area Review of Children's Services in Leeds?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Yes, I would. As many of you on the Council know, the JAR was carried out last year between November and December and was a very intensive, focused period that Ofsted and the Audit Commission were looking at our serves and the results, after a lot of studying on their part, came back to us recently and it was sent to the June Exec Board. At the July Exec Board we will be expecting to provide our action plan in response to it.

In terms of the response that I am able to offer right now, I can say the first response is to say a very big thank you to all the people who have worked in Children's Services, not only because of the extra work they had to put in for the experience of the JAR investigation but also, of course, for the day to day work that they put in to make sure that the real evidence was there to make sure that our JAR meant that this Council was rated "Good".

I think it is worth pointing out that Leeds came at the end of the JAR performance which meant that other Authorities went before us and it also meant that as each Authority went by, the regime of checking actually got more and more

intensive and more and more critical, so that for Leeds to actually achieve "Good" actually means that our staff were achieving very good.

To highlight those areas where the inspectors were particularly praiseworthy of our staff, they mentioned how our young people with disabilities are cared for and that is mental disability as well as physical disability, the way in which our Children's Services are managed, which particularly responds to our innovative model which is there at the Children's Services Directorate. Also, the support that we give to carers, the work done to minimise the effects of family breakdowns which I am sure you will appreciate affects the performance, for instance, of some of the issues that we are going to be discussing later in the day, and also, of course, very importantly, that children and young people are getting involved to shape their own services, because if we are not providing services that children are willing to take on board, then we are wasting our money. One thing that we will not do on this side of the Chamber is waste money.

Praise was also given to recent improvements in our GCSE exam results and the way in which various organisations involved worked together in the children's partnership to ensure that our outcomes get better each time.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Is there a supplementary there?

COUNCILLOR MATTHEWS: Yes, thank you. Could you tell us, please, then, how the actions and learning from this inspection will be taken forward?

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: For the future Ofsted did point out that our prospects for improvement were also very good and, of course, all Members will pay particular attention to the action plan which will be presented to the July Executive Board, which will give full appraisal of all the issues that I have mentioned as well as those which offer further challenge. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR MARJORAM: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Would the Executive Member for City Development explain what impact the Planning Bill will have on democracy and local accountability?

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: My Lord Mayor, can I first welcome Councillor Marjoram to this Chamber and wish him a long and successful career in Local Government.

Turning to the question and for the sake of those who have not yet included this Bill in their essential reading for the smallest room in the house, the Planning Bill currently before Parliament will create a new infrastructure planning permission the purpose of which is to remove any effective say of Local Authorities on major planning applications on power stations, electricity pylons, pipelines, motorways, airports, rail lines, rail freight interchanges, reservoirs, sewage, large incinerators, hazardous waste facilities. It is also going to be given powers to build on the Green Belt, demolish listed buildings, compulsorily purchase land and ignore planning rules and guidance. In addition the new National Policy Statement will determine planning rules on set locations for specific types of development from airport expansion to hazardous waste through to nuclear power.

However, there will be no proper Parliamentary ratification of these statements. The Commission will just follow those statements to the letter. It will mean the Government will be able to enforce any development without any semblance of democratic accountability.

The Planning Bill also transfers responsibility for regional planning from unelected regional assemblies to unelected Regional Development Agencies. Even our local MPs are not sure that this is the correct thing to do. During the third reading four of our MPs, including your MP Paul Truswell, voted against this Government on the amendment as put forward, as did Colin Burgin, but Fabian Hamilton was loyal to the end and supported the Government. Even when the amendment was completely defeated, neither Paul Truswell nor Colin Procter voted with the Government. Maybe turkeys do vote for Christmas after all.

To sum up, this new bill will have a disastrous effect on democracy and local accountability. This new central planning quango combined with the National Planning Statement dictated by Ministers with no say for Parliament, will abolish any pretence of democratic accountability in the planning process. Not even the last minute concessions that Labour rebels - or freedom fighters, depending on what stance you have taken on this Bill - the voices of local residents, environmental groups, elected Councillors and MPs will be ignored. For all this talk of a new politic one year ago, Gordon Brown does not trust the people. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Have you a supplementary? No supplementary. Thank you. Councillor Rafique.

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Will the Executive Board Member for Environment and Neighbourhoods reassure Council that crime prevention and reduction remains a priority for this administration?

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I confirm the answer is "Yes", Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. There is a supplementary, no doubt.

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: Thank you. Yes, Lord Mayor. Does the Executive Board Member for Environment and Neighbourhoods agree with the statement by former Shadow Home Secretary David Davis that CCTV cameras are of no use for the prevention of criminal acts?

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Thank you. The answer to that is, "No". *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Right. Councillor Downes.

COUNCILLOR DOWNES: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Prince Henry Grammar School in Otley is celebrating its 400th year. Would the Executive Board Member with responsibility for Learning like to comment on what this Council has been able to do to help in this important year?

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to begin by congratulating Otley Prince Henry's on their 400th anniversary. This is a highly successful school. I was reading the most recent Ofsted report and on leadership and management it said:

"Excellent leadership by the Headteacher sets a very high example and clear direction. The excellent work of the governing body challenges and supports the school. Leadership and management by other key staff, including that of the sixth form, is very good."

Yes, it is a very good school and I am very pleased that I am going to be with the school on Friday evening at the start of their celebrations. I am also looking

forward with anticipation to 10th July when important visitor or visitors - and I have not been told who yet - will be at the school to open the new extension to the school's eleven new state of the art science rooms, the new administration facilities and the main entrance and corridor, all of which this administration was able to achieve for the school. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: All your own money.

THE LORD MAYOR: Is there a supplementary? No supplementary, right. I call on Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Board Member for City Development confirm the cost to the Council of pursuing its Private Street Peddling Bill?

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: When seeking Exec Board approval, the worst case scenario of £60,000 was reported. It was anticipated that this would fall roughly equally in the two financial years 2007/08 and 2008/09 - £30,000 each, that comes to £60,000 - and would be funded from within the existing budget without the need for any new money.

To date from the commencement of the process in August 2007 to the end of February this year, excluding VAT, just over £15,000 and a further £1,500 has been spent since February to this month. Up to date advice from the London agents indicate that the overall cost will be contained in the original budget figure if the Bill proceeds to Royal Assent and, based on continued opposition in the first House, a petition in the second House and the continued sharing of costs, the estimate is that the total costs of promoting the Bill to Royal Assent would be in the region of £42,000, which was the average total cost of promoting each of the Leicester, Liverpool and Maidstone Bills to Royal Assent, each of which attracted a petition in one house.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. A supplementary?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Yes, Lord Mayor. Given that Councillor Anderson is Chair of Scrutiny, which makes him a very fair-minded person, and given that the YEP has actually quoted the cost at £100,000, would you, Barry, join with the Labour Group in condemning Christopher Chope and the Tory backbenchers in blocking this much necessary Bill for this city and would you, at the same time as condemning Christopher Chope, also congratulate John Battle and Paul Truswell for actually speaking on behalf of Council's Bill in Parliament? (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR ANDERSON: Yes. No, I do not condemn. What I will do is I will pay tribute to Paul Truswell and John Battle for promoting it, because it is something that is vital to the city. That is why the Executive Board agreed it. As to the other things no, I cannot agree at this stage because there is more happening behind the scenes that needs to be looked into in terms of the Bournemouth situation.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Barker.

COUNCILLOR BARKER: Could the Executive Board Member for Corporate Services please advise Councillor of the current areas of development within the PPPU?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Council may recall that this unit was established some six years ago following the closure of the Leeds Seven

Schools project. It subsequently transferred to the Chief Executive's department three years ago where its capacity has expanded, along with the portfolio of projects it has undertaken and delivered.

The unit is currently commissioned to provide guidance and support on 16 projects in education, housing, social care, waste and infrastructure, with two projects already closed and finished off this year, Swallow Hill Community College and the Independent Living Project, and a further two, the New Leaf project and the Joint Services Centres scheduled to close in the next six months. There are several further schemes in the pipeline.

The combined secondary school project was recently short-listed for an award for best operational school and last month the 4Ps awarded the unit with their customer services award for the delivery of the Independent Living Project and praised it as an example of a highly successful public private partnership. It has made a real contribution to the people of Leeds.

The Chief Officer is also currently working with other Local Authorities and other public sector organisations to share the lessons we have learned and to support our common objectives of improving the public realm through the delivery of complex public sector investment. Our congratulations are therefore due to Dave Outram and his outstanding team. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Supplementary?

COUNCILLOR BARKER: Thank you very much for that. Can you tell me how much money do officers estimate the PPPU saved the Council in the previous financial year 2007/08?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Yes, Lord Mayor. The unit has recently completed their work with the National Audit Office, Partnerships UK and the 4Ps. The outcome of this work concludes that in closing our Building Schools for the Future contract in such a short time, 15 months, the Council was some 26 months faster than the sector average, so in establishing the unit to do this work we not only saved time, we saved huge sums of money, as the cost of procuring a Building Schools for the Future contract has been established at a nationwide average of £5.6m, whereas in Leeds it has cost us £3.2m - a huge efficiency saving of nearly £2.5m.

More significantly, in completing the negotiations so quickly and starting work on site we avoided approximately 5% of the building costs and the inflations costs that go with that in that period. On a fixed funding set at £270m, we have saved, with the schools and the Council, in excess of £25m that would have otherwise been lost due to rising costs. The combined saving can be estimated at £30m - a sum we should all be proud of.

Whilst the purpose of the unit was initially to secure additional investment, it is now as important that the unit delivers best value, continuous improvement and delivering projects as quickly and as efficiently as possibly and whilst the unit cost £4m last year to operate, the saving on Building Schools for the Future alone is far more than the unit has cost since it was established and I trust everyone in Council will agree we are seeing excellent value for money and very good practice. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Brett. I call Councillor Lowe.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: Does Councillor Brett believe like his predecessor that if his administration has made a mistake they should apologise and take the appropriate steps to rectify the problem immediately?

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Brett to reply.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am told that Members who have been on this Council far longer than me - 35 years in one case - tell me that they cannot remember a single instance of a Labour Leader in this Council apologising for anything...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: You are wrong.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: ...whereas my predecessor, Councillor Harris, apologised whenever he thought, Lord Mayor, that an apology was required. I take a similar view. If I make a mistake I will apologise but only after full investigation and certainly not in response to a supplementary question. Thank you. *(Laughter and applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Is there a supplementary?

COUNCILLOR LOWE: Just before I move on to the supplementary I would like to correct you because in 2003 when Keith was Leader I distinctly remember in this Council Chamber he apologised to Andrew Carter for not inviting him to a multi-agency meeting to talk about community safety. *(Laughter)*

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Big deal.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I was not here then.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: Your colleague was here then and so was I and I can tell you about it, so maybe you might apologise for getting that wrong.

By way of supplementary, will you confirm whether or not you think you should nor should not, if the Council has made mistakes in relation to the thousands of pounds that have been raked in motorists by enforcing unlawful traffic and parking fines in the city, are you going to follow the example of other cities, some of whom are Liberal Democrat led, and refund every penny of that to the general public?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I was actually briefed on this and shown the press from, I believe, April. I think the instance that the Councillor might be referring to where I believe she got fined has led to a letter back, so in that particular instance I suspect that if a mistake was made - and I hope she will accept it was not mine - in that case it has already been put right. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Rhodes-Clayton, please.

COUNCILLOR RHODES-CLAYTON: Could the Executive Board Member for Learning tell me how Leeds has fared in delivering the Positive Activities for Young People scheme, please?

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. The Positive Action for Young People began in 2003. The funding is from Government and is guaranteed until March 2011. The initiative in Leeds is managed and delivered through the out of school activity team within the integrated Youth Support Service and I would like to congratulate them at this point on the work they do.

The project has established itself in Leeds as the main preventative work offered within the anti-social behaviour processes. Referral also made through partnership working with the Anti-social Behaviour Unit, Youth Offending Service, police, Education Leeds, social care. The positive activities for young people provide individual key workers to support young people and encourage these young people into positive activities within the arts, sports and culture. The achievements for 2003 to 2007 include the delivery of 330 projects. We have worked with over 8,000 young people and a further 1,224 young people have received key worker intervention. I think we have every reason to be proud of the service that is being provided here in Leeds.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Supplementary there? No supplementary. I call on Councillor Lyons.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Thank you very much, Lord Mayor. Can the Executive Member for City Services tell me where his administration plans to site their proposed incinerator?

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. A couple of months ago I was watching a film - I do not know if anybody has seen it - called Groundhog Day (*laughter*) and I cannot help but think that this question has a ring of familiarity about it.

I remember coming on to Council about five years ago and there are some new Members sitting here today and I am sure that whoever is sitting next to you will be pointing out various people around the Chamber, the characters. I well remember somebody pointing out the character of Councillor Mick Lyons to me in those very early days and I was told that he was a man with a view, a man who would express his view forthrightly and woe betide you if you got in the way of him when he was expressing his view, and he would drive it right through to the bitter end. Of course, I came to know him in the months following and found out that he was a pussycat really. (*Laughter*)

I am standing here wondering why this question comes up and I will tell you what the motivation is.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: You never answer it.

COUNCILLOR SMITH: You will get an answer. I wonder if the motivation for Mick is guilt, because a number of years ago - and he has already told us - he sat on the Planning Committee which put an incinerator into South Leeds and he did not vote. That is more the pussycat than the lion. I wondered why he did not vote.

If you look at the planning consent...

COUNCILLOR LYONS: You said I did.

COUNCILLOR SMITH: ... it actually allows Liverpool - Liverpool - to export its waste to Leeds, to be dealt with in Leeds. I think that is why Mick feels a little bit guilty, that he did not oppose that planning condition at the time. He is concerned, I believe...

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Answer the question.

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Remember the sins of the fathers, Debra! (*Laughter*)

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Stop waffling and answer the question.

COUNCILLOR SMITH: I think he is concerned that Leeds does not import waste from other areas and I can assure him that that will be the case, that Leeds will deal with Leeds's waste and we will leave Liverpool to deal with Liverpool's waste.

If I go just a little bit further round and I am looking at you now, Keith, a few months ago in this Chamber....

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: It gets dark about nine o'clock. We might be finished.

COUNCILLOR SMITH: If you have asked a question you will get an answer. I believe it was you who said there was no alternative at the time.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: We are in the fifth set already.

COUNCILLOR SMITH: There was an alternative. You could have said to Liverpool again, "You deal with your waste."

COUNCILLOR: We want Barry back to answer the question.

COUNCILLOR SMITH: So what is the view over there?

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: What is the answer?

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Mick cannot make his mind up; neither can Keith because here we have Keith's address to the electorate at the election:

"Dear colleague

Labour will hold a referendum on whether there should be an incinerator in Leeds."

Can't make his mind up. Can't make his mind up so he is not really interested in whether it would be right but whether it would be popular. He would actually waste hundreds of thousands of pounds of Leeds taxpayers' money on a referendum which would not be binding on the Council in any event.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Listening to the people.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Listening to the people. Ask Richard. He has told you, listening to the people.

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Indeed, and what is Keith listening to when he listens to you lot?

COUNCILLOR: Is that it? Is that just a preamble?

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Let me assure Councillor Lyons that the Council has not selected the technology for its residual waste treatment solution and it will undertake a procurement exercise which is neutral on technology.

Moving on to the sites, if you had paid attention you would have seen the site report which was produced just a few months ago which identified four potential sites in Leeds. It is a public document, you are welcome to look at it. Preferred sites, there is no compulsion. Someone may well come forward with something else.

To answer his question, the answer is...

COUNCILLOR LYONS: They do not know.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: You cannot make your mind up but you might do.

COUNCILLOR SMITH: ...we will make the choice at the appropriate time. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: We will just have the supplementary, yes.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Thank you very much, Lord Mayor. I hope I do not get shouted down again because he has spent five minutes just saying nothing except how good I was and still am. *(Laughter)*

I am glad Councillor Smith is feeling better because I had to ask the questions to one of these people last time and I am sure from your sick bed you told him what to say. What you have just said today - absolutely nothing.

As far as we are concerned we want to know - and I have just listened with interest to Councillor Brett.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: What is the question?

COUNCILLOR LYONS: If I give the question as fast as I got the answer we would be waiting a long time. *(Laughter)*

I listened to Councillor Brett on consultation. What I am asking Councillor Smith to inform me why recent consultations on waste strategy held at twelve venues across the city did not include East Leeds.

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Can I just have the last sentence, please?

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Didn't hear?

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Just the last sentence, sorry.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Could you inform me why the recent consultation on the waste strategy held at twelve venues across the city, why it did not include East Leeds. That is where you propose to build your sites so why did you not consult?

COUNCILLOR SMITH: You know better than I do then. There has been some consultation recently. There has been a city-wide survey.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: No, not at East Leeds.

COUNCILLOR SMITH: There has been a survey and there has been a survey in South Leeds.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: The question was East Leeds.

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Sorry, in the area that you are referring to.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: No, there has not.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you then. We have finished that as a topic now because we have come to the end of question. The remaining questions, of course, will be answered later in writing.

ITEM 7 - RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD.

(a)

THE LORD MAYOR: We now move on to Item 7, Recommendations of Executive Board. Councillor Brett.

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

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: The vote. All in favour? Against? CARRIED.

(b)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Brett again.

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

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

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Those in favour? Those against? CARRIED.

(c)

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Brett again.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Again, I move in terms of the Notice.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Those in favour? Those against? Any abstentions this time? CARRIED.

ITEM 8 - RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STANDARDS COMMITTEE

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 8, Recommendations of the Standards Committee. I call upon Councillor Campbell.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I move in the terms as set out on the paper?

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I second, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. It is really just to ask for a bit of clarification. Certainly here in Morley we have opposition from ---

COUNCILLOR: You are in Leeds.

COUNCILLOR FINNIGAN: Here in Morley we have had a long and unpleasant campaign of regular complaints which emanated either directly or indirectly from the British National Party in Morley. All of these complaints have been investigated at great expense to the taxpayer. All of them have been found to be bogus and without foundation. I am curious to know what the Standards Committee's views are on how they are going to control these frivolous and inappropriate complaints.

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think I would agree with Councillor Finnigan that the function of Standards Committee is not to deal with frivolous complaints from either members of the public or opponents within political parties in an attempt to discomfort a member of this particular Council. Unfortunately there are a number of occasions when that happens and that is regrettable. There is obviously a legal framework which requires an investigation to be made when a complaint is made.

For Councillor Finnigan's benefit, there has been a change in the regime relatively recently to move away from the National Standards Committee dealing with these particular items and refer it back to the Local Standards Committee, so there is now a much more local input earlier on in the process.

I think he will be pleased to know that we, at the Standards Committee this week, agreed to the principle of effectively setting up a sub-committee which vets the complaints we have received in an attempt, I have to say, Lord Mayor, to weed out the frivolous before we even get into that process.

Having said that, I still appreciate that Members who are reported to the Standards Committee and often do not actually know why they have been reported, it has an unfortunate on them in that it does cause them some anxiety and I think actually, I make the plea, that if you feel minded to report any Members of Council to the Standards, you do actually think through your process and do not do it in the heat of the moment. As I say, I am hoping that effectively the committee which will vet the applications will now actually weed out most of the frivolous ones and certainly allow Members to get on with their job. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I will call for the vote. Those in favour? Those against? Any abstentions? No. That is CARRIED.

ITEM 9 - RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE CORPORATE GOVERNANCE AND AUDIT COMMITTEE

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 9, Recommendations of the Corporate Governance and Audit Committee. I call on Councillor Bale.

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

COUNCILLOR CAMPBELL: I second and reserve my right to speak.

THE LORD MAYOR: No other speakers. I call for the vote. Those in favour? Those against? Abstentions? That is CARRIED.

ITEM 10 - MINUTES

THE LORD MAYOR: Item 10, Minutes. Councillor Brett.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Lord Mayor, I move the Minutes be received.

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

- (a) Executive Board
- (i) Central & Corporate

THE LORD MAYOR: Any comments? Councillor Coupar.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to move a reference back on the Executive Board Minute 22 page 300. The adult social care budget is reported as delivering balanced budget when in fact to achieve this, the administration had to rob Peter to pay Paul. They rely on money being vired across on reserves and predicted savings ere not achieved rather than having a planned, achievable budget. This was last year's budget.

Even more worrying is this year's budget, which includes income from increasing charges to vulnerable people in January. I have real concerns that to achieve this budget you are rushing through the consultation and decision to increase charges for adult social care.

I am making a plea to all Members of Council, whatever their party, to think about this reference back seriously. Many of us in this Chamber became Councillors for the same reasons - to help the people in our Wards who we represent and to help make Leeds a better place. This poor excuse for consultation will not achieve either of those things.

The proposals going to consultation are not if we should increase charges but how much we should increase charges.

THE LORD MAYOR: Could I just stop you there for a moment?

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE GOVERNANCE): I am just seeking to clarify the Minute that you are referring to. Minute 22 is about the financial performance outturn 2007/08.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Yes.

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE GOVERNANCE): If you look at the Minute, there are five elements to the resolution.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: That is right.

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE GOVERNANCE): (a) is that the report be noted; (b) is that £300,000 be transferred to the contingency fund in 2008/09; (c) is that the additional contributions to and the creation of earmarked reserves of £3.8m in respect of the HRA be agreed as outlined in the HRA report; (d) is the creation of two new General Fund earmarked reserves as outlined in paragraph 3.5 of the report; and (e) is about right to buy capital receipts.

I am not sure from what you are saying at the moment which of those particular bits of the Minute you are wanting referring back.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: We could even refer the report back so that it is not noted, can we not?

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE GOVERNANCE): No. All you can do - the only bits that could be referred back are elements (b), (c) or (d) where the Executive Board agreed to do something. You could ask the Council to refer back any of (b), (c) or (d) so that Executive Board could reconsider those particular elements that they have agreed.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Am I right that in (b) there is £300,000 to be transferred to the contingency fund?

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE GOVERNANCE): Yes.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: In (b)? Can we refer - we are asking that that be referred back to Executive Board for reconsideration and in fact it might help with the consultation process. Can the time be re-allowed?

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE GOVERNANCE): I am just clarifying that your comments are in reference to (b), that the £300,000 be transferred to contingency fund.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: You have never clarified it before.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: It has never had to be clarified before, Lord Mayor, when we are moving a reference back on Minutes.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Can you stop doing their bidding, please?

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Outrageous.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: We have never had this before in all the years of Council we have sat here, that an officer starts clarifying things on behalf of the administration. Outrageous.

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE GOVERNANCE): With respect, I am trying to clarify for Council the Minute and the discussion that Councillor Coupar is putting forward.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: I think that has been done, has it not, Lord Mayor? Can I continue now, please?

THE LORD MAYOR: We will proceed then and with a bit of luck two minutes will be extra.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: No, the full amount of time.

THE LORD MAYOR: That is what I mean, extra time, two minutes.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I am adding, not subtracting. Are you happy with that? Thank you, indeed.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Thank you, Lord Mayor, for that clarification and for extra time.

I will repeat what I did say that Members did not seem to be listening to, that I am making a plea to all Members of Council, whatever their party, to think about this reference back seriously. I would just like to reiterate that one to you.

The proposals going to consultation are not if we should increase charges but how much we should increase charges by. The options included...

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, this is not about charges. This Minute does not refer to charges in any way. If this Minute is referring back £300,000 that is one issue, but charges are dealt with by a separate reference back later on in these proceedings, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, with respect, if that money were available and had not been used in the way it has been used...

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Yes.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: ...then it would have been available for the type of things my colleague is pointing out and that truly is part of the reference back that you were mistaken in how you handled that amount of money. Why do you not just listen, Councillor Brett, listen and then respond? That is how we do things in Council.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, right.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: We refer back to the correct Minute.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Go back on holiday.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Nice suntan.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I know.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Very amusing, Peter.

THE LORD MAYOR: Right.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. You know the interruptions will not make any difference to what I am going to say, Councillor Procter, so if I were you I would just be quiet and listen.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Exactly. You are not speaking on the Minute.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: I am speaking on the Minute. If you had spent the £300,000 more wisely on consultation, then we would not be in the position we are going to be in now, if you would listen, for increased charges, would a service like Homecare, attending a day centre, receiving a meal or transport as well as other services. Our elderly and disabled and other vulnerable people in our communities who use these services will be affected by these proposals.

The time scale for the consultation is all too rushed, due to lack of funding. The first we as Members of Council heard about it was when the documents for Executive Board were published. It seems to have been pushed up the agenda to ensure that Executive Board can make the decision in October and by January service users will be paying for the increased charges.

This so-called consultation was due to start in the middle of June and end in the middle of September and I have yet to speak to one service user or group or organisation that has been consulted yet, and we are now into July. If you, the administration, want an open and involved debate, which it sounds like you do not, that truly is consultation. This is not the way to go about it. Consultation should be meaningful and transparent and not just a box-ticking exercise. How can that happen when such a short period of time has been allowed for it?

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Has she got the right speech? She has got the wrong Minute.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Remember that to receive adult social care services you must have substantial or critical needs to start with. Many of the service users may not understand or may be confused by what is being asked of them, especially those who receive home care and are elderly. They may need help from their families to be fully involved in the process. At the height of summer when relatives and carers might be on holiday, it makes it more difficult. If you had had the extra £300,000, you might have been able to lengthen the consultation.

Why should this happen now? Surely a decision to increase charges for the most vulnerable in our city should be given the time and commitment it deserves and allows. The proposals should have come to Executive Board much sooner if the time scale for implementation was so tight. You know, I could be cynical and say that it was not brought before the election for political reasons.

Another reason I am concerning about the timing is that the Government are also conducting a consultation and national debate on the very future of how social care should be funded. It seems odd that Leeds would choose now to increase charges when we do not know the outcome of the national debate and the expected green paper.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: This is nothing to do with the Minute.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: The options put forward in the report are too narrow.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor...

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: It gives the impression that to implement the lowest increase would not be worth the financial gain and to implement the highest increase would be too severe, therefore pointing to the middle option. Given the limited consultation that is due to take place and the way the options are being put forward, it appears that the decision is already made and the consultation is a fudge, just paying lip service to those who will be affected by the increased charges.

I am asking members of the administration to search their consciences - they might have difficulty finding it - on this issue. If the charge increases go through it will affect all of our Wards. We all have elderly and disabled people who need the help of social care. They deserve to be involved properly in this process.

I know many of you are not happy with these proposals and this is your chance to do something about it. I remember the depth of feeling in this Council chamber the last time Fairer Charging was debated, when many of the current members of the administration spoke passionately about the fairness or unfairness of charges.

THE LORD MAYOR: Could you just draw to a close.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Red light. Sit down.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: I have nearly finished, Lord Mayor. This time, Lord Mayor, we are demanding fairness in the consultation process. It is not too much to ask for. I urge you to follow your consciences and support this reference back to enable Executive Board to set out fairer consultation of the issue of such magnitude. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think it is pretty obvious that this issue is probably one of the most important ones since 2003.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Which issue?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: The issue of the £300,000 from contingency, John, listen. Let me explain. You listen. Let me explain why.

We have got three Executive Boards in one Council meeting and, frankly, the real Minute, which we all know we will never talk about. What I would put to people here, I will put it to Councillors Procter and Carter and Brett, why do we not now move that Minute up properly and debate that reference back instead of having to twist the words of the Chamber? You are happy to do it.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: This is what you are doing, is it not?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I take strong exception. When we have just had half an hour of abuse of questions time, not one person was corrected who was abusive. Suddenly, the first time in my time we have had somebody interrupted on a Minute when everyone stretches the Minutes to suit the purpose. That is the first time ever. I do not think that is acceptable. What is more, this is so important, John, to the elderly, to their dependants and, indeed, to us as local Councillors, that we should have taken this as the first item on the Executive Board, as we asked for.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: As we have done.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: You have not. You are going to get it again, Peter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: We will not reach it.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Because, there is something else more serious about this - this is three Executive Boards in one afternoon and the item that we all want to discuss and talk about is the last one. That is not acceptable in my view and I think it is wrong and that is why we are right to bend the Minutes about the £300,000.

I will tell you something else about the importance of this. People go on about us being champions, connected to people and so on and so forth. When it went to Executive Board the Executive Board actually, through Andrew Carter, said they had no ownership of this paper, it was an officers' paper and they were likely to disagree and yet were refusing, or trying to debate a paper that has no ownership from Councillors, no ownership from the administration, no ownership from the voluntary sector, the public sector, no ownership, above all, from the elderly or indeed their dependants.

I think that is extremely bad practice for democracy. If we are not careful - because we are quite capable of using our imagination - the Government is going to take six months plus a Green Paper which may be another three months.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: We know.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: We are taking in the consultation from now to mid-September when it is cut off during the summer period, when people are on holiday, dependants are on holiday, it takes a lot more and as yet - and I have checked this - no member of the voluntary sector dealing with the elderly, the neighbourhood teams, the people who work directly with people, have been consulted. We are now in July.

I will tell you where we are going to go if we are not careful, if we do not handle this discussion properly. We will go back to 2003 and we will go back to the shouting and the promises that were an utter disgrace in this Chamber.

Let me remind you of some of them - this is in 2003. Councillor Carter said, not only was it wicked and wicked, this increase in charges called Fairer Charges, "We shall call another Council meeting on May 2nd and we shall revisit the issue again." Councillor Carter promised to reverse Fairer Charges, and so did Councillor Harris, who is nodding in agreement. What is more, when we said this is in relation to other Authorities, actually Councillor Harris said, "I am certainly not interested in suggesting that something is wrong and we should copy it nevertheless because since when has copying bad practices opposed to good practice been a clever thing to do?" Dear old Councillor David Blackburn said - and I actually believe him - "I am going to join the administration and I will reverse the charges." You did, David. Actually I have got you on verbatim and it is still there.

I tell you, if we are trying to railroad this through in two months of consultation, I think it is wrong. It is wrong for those people who work with the elderly, it is wrong for people who work both in the voluntary and public sector, and it is wrong for local democracy.

I say to you, we know we are not going to get this reference back because you are all being disciplined. I understand that - we would do the same. I actually say to Councillor Brett as Leader of the Council, can he stand up and say to us that he will review the consultation time so that people who are being affected can be properly consulted, which includes us, and we can have a proper debate and discussion here? I do not think we are going to agree with you, Councillor Brett, but I do think it is right for us, it is right for the old people who deserve better than this treatment. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, may I just make a point in response to Councillor Wakefield in terms of the proceedings of Council? Councillor Wakefield you are aware as much as any member of this Chamber is that the functionality depends on the agreement amongst the Whips. We can all come here and have complete chaos in this Chamber or we can do as we do at present, we can seek to agree an Order Paper in the full knowledge of what we come in here to debate.

It was not made clear yesterday at the Whips' meeting that this issue at this point in time was tied in to the future reference back comment that we have. If there had been a single reference back that had been tabled, if it had have been made clear, if it had have been explained to all of the Party Whips that that is what you were seeking to achieve, the usual channels, as they are described, normally try to facilitate such debate.

What we did agree at the Whips' meeting yesterday was that we would have a future paper that would consider the option of having all reference backs at future meetings debated at the beginning of the business. That is what we agreed. That was what was requested. We did not actually agree anything in terms of the changing of this Order Paper, nor was it requested.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Is this in reply?

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Indeed.

THE LORD MAYOR: As a Whip? Yes.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Not only did I raise this yesterday at the Whips', I actually wrote to all the Whips last week and I copied in Miss Jackson last week and I said this, that when we have such a heavy agenda, a reference back should automatically be taken first as the first piece of business on the Executive Board Minutes.

I explained yesterday that in a year, probably, the Opposition refers back, say, four, five times - not more than that - so it is not anything trivial. It illustrates that we feel very strongly about an issue for us to actually move a reference back. Because you present the Order Paper every single time there is a Council meeting in the same way and you hide...

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: No we do not.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: ... social services at the bottom every single time, we never get to discuss adult social services.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: It follows the Minute Book.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: We do not discuss it because it never comes up in time.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Yes we do.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Go back and look. We have looked. Les, with respect you do not know what you are talking about. On this subject you do not know what you are talking about. This is a matter between the Whips.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I know this, you should sit down. It is not the time.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I know Andrew Carter is not here and you are trying to behave like him, so just pipe down for a second, Les, and return to your same avuncular self. The issue was raised yesterday. John, we agreed to have a paper and take it back.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: No-one objected to it.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: However, I indicated that for this meeting I actually said, if you are not careful it will lead to a special meeting of Council because we feel very strongly on this issue.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Exactly, but that does not reflect what is happening today.

THE LORD MAYOR: It seems to me we have got both Whips on their feet virtually and I think surely this could be resolved. I find it difficult to resolve...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Lord Mayor, I have asked for a statement and we might resolve it and move on if Richard as Leader of the Council would stand up and agree to look at the consultation period so that there is longer for it and bring it back here.

THE LORD MAYOR: Are you prepared, Councillor Brett?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: That simple request.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I am certainly prepared to do what I can to avoid the charade we have just had. Were we to move forward on a reference back, I am not clear what it would mean if it were passed. Were we actually referring back a budgetary paper which led to a surplus of £3.8m, helping us to carry on in a very difficult year with our budget, or are we actually talking about referring back something quite different?

The way this has happened is, to say the least, unfortunate and I will do everything in my power, Lord Mayor, to prevent having this sort of charade again.

Where that leaves us with where we are at this point in time I am not clear.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Promise to extend the consultation period.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I am not going to do that.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Right.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: We are in a situation, Lord Mayor, which is very serious, where we know that we have a very tight budget and if we are looking, as some Members on this side seem to be at a notional £300,000 surplus and think that that can in any way help with the major difficulty we are having with adult social services, they are wrong. We are in the middle of a consultation period.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: You are not.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: It has not started.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Nobody knows about it.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: That period has been agreed. If you wanted to tackle the outcome of that consultation which is likely at some point to lead to a decision, the procedures for you to challenge that decision in due course are quite clear, but to challenge something before the consultation is anywhere near complete, what you are saying is we should not have started a consultation and I cannot agree with that.

If, Lord Mayor, I am being asked by Members opposite to deal not with what is on the Order Paper but what they have deemed the Order Paper means to them, which is something rather different, I am bound to refer to them the papers that many of them will have seen about the adult social care charges and it is quite clear the Leeds in comparison to many other nearby Authorities, almost all, is an outlier. We do not charge as much as many others.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: We are not on about that.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: This consultation is about looking at those charges. We are not taking decisions.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Brett, please, I think we are straying a long way and I can see hands up everywhere. My difficult task is hopefully to resolve this with your good help. We are not getting anywhere near that, are we?

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: We are trying to help you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: I have several people who are speaking and whether it is relevant to the topic immediately and how to resolve it I am not certain, but in order of preference there is Councillor Lyons, Councillor Harris, Councillor Atha.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: He has summed up.

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE GOVERNANCE): Councillor Brett was responding to a specific request from Councillor Wakefield, so it is not summing up.

THE LORD MAYOR: That was the response. Councillor Lyons.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Thank you very much.

THE LORD MAYOR: Bring some light on it.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: If we are going to speak and nobody is going to listen we are might as well go for tea, but if we are here to solve a problem which the majority of Council and Councillors think should happen, irrespective of which party, what we are talking about is trying to extend the consultation period. We are not arguing about owt else at this particular time. I was at that Whips' meeting and it was made perfectly clear that as far as we were concerned, the Labour Group, that we wanted this reference back moving up and Peter Gruen is quite correct in what he said and to be fair to John, he was going along with us as far as he could, but it was not...

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: You guaranteed last night that it would be Keith who spoke.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: ...possible under the way that you do things, so what we are asking, without Liz jumping up and saying we are going to call a special Council meeting to discuss it properly without our Chief Legal Officer butting in - first time ever in 28 years that I have known it and I have never known it across the country also. I think it is a disgrace, but nevertheless I would ask that the other side, what we want is simply to say we extend the consultation period. That is all we have got to say.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Confusion in the alliance. If Andrew Carter were here, my God.

THE LORD MAYOR: I hope give people a fair chance of speaking. Councillor Harris.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to make three points, if I may. First of all, because reference was made to that famous budget debate and the point I made, it is correct that is what I said. My conscience was

troubled then, it is troubled now and, for what it is worth, not on this issue since I have stood down as Leader I have told the leadership that on matters of conscience they may have trouble whipping me. This is not one of those issues and Richard in due course may comment on the current financials, but I would remind everybody what we found on the first day we took over. Within an hour of me becoming Leader Alan Gay was in my office telling us there was an £18m black hole in the social services budget. We did not know that in that budget debate. You did. In the knowledge of that it was then impossible, as I have said time and time again, to fulfil the reversal of Fairer Charging.

Now, two other points raised today. I am interested by Councillor Coupar saying she remembers well that debate. Councillor Coupar was not a Councillor then. She may have been in the public gallery. If she was I will stand corrected but I do not see how she could have remembered it.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Yes I was.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS: Finally, Lord Mayor, on matters of procedure, it is correct that now in my 25th year here I have never known an interruption of this nature from an officer unheralded by the controlling group and this is why, because when we were in opposition and put forward amendments, we were not so inept or gormless as to make the mistake you did. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: My Lord Mayor, I wish to move an adjournment of Council for ten minutes for the Leaders and Whips to meet. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Is there a seconder?

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Seconded, my Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Is that Council's view? Would you vote on that suspension? Those against? CARRIED. In that case, ten minutes.

(Council adjourned for a short time)

THE LORD MAYOR: Council is reconvened. I call on Councillor Gruen.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Lord Mayor, never let it be said that we are not reasonable. With leave of Council I would like to withdraw the reference back under the Central & Corporate agenda that we have just been discussing.

THE LORD MAYOR: Is that seconded?

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Seconded.

THE LORD MAYOR: Seconded by Councillor Lyons. Could I have a vote on that? All in favour? Thank you. Against? Abstentions? None. That is CARRIED. Councillor Procter.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Can I move the suspension of the relevant Council Procedure Rules to allow Item 10(vii) on page 10 - the reference back, that is, only - to now be debated.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Seconded. All those in favour? Against? Abstentions? That is CARRIED.

(vii)

THE LORD MAYOR: I call Councillor Coupar

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to move the reference back in terms of the paper, page 10.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I second formally, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR HARRAND: Lord Mayor, I am not sure that all the people would understand the constitutional process but we are where we are. I also want to say, nobody has ever approached me about extending the consultation period. I am quite willing to discuss it. I am happy to propose that the consultation period which would have expired at the end of the last week in September now be extended to the end of October. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Bravo.

THE LORD MAYOR: I call for a vote. Those in favour? I am sorry, the reference back.

THE ASSISTANT CHIEF EXECUTIVE (CORPORATE GOVERNANCE): Perhaps I can just clarify, this is a vote on the reference back of that Minute to Executive Board.

THE LORD MAYOR: I hope there is no more confusion.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, I wonder if the Labour Group or the Opposition want to withdraw the reference back in light of the statement that Councillor Harrand made.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: We are assuming that the statement made by Councillor Harrand is fully endorsed by the Leader of Council and by the Executive Board.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Yes, it is.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Thank you for that reassurance.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I can confirm.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: In which case, we will not pursue the reference back any further.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: You have got to move withdrawal, Peter.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: I move that in those terms.

THE LORD MAYOR: Seconded, is it? Yes. We are going to have a vote. Those in favour of it being withdrawn. Those against? Any abstentions? Right, that has been voted on. CARRIED.

We have Councillor Grahame, if you are ready.

COUNCILLOR GRAHAME: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on page 283, Minute 213, Progress Report on the PPP/PFI Programme in Leeds. I am

speaking specifically about the Swarcliffe PFI and I wonder if Councillor Brett can assure me that the credits £200,000 are there for Swarcliffe? We were told last September that these credits were there and we could put some improvement projects forward that would benefit Swarcliffe, the Ward Members and the residents' group to choose where the money would be spent and what on. We put ideas forward and were told "No" by officers. Eventually we put some ideas forward which were accepted. On 7th November we had a press release to assure people things were happening and good news about the PFI and yet to date we still have not seen these credits.

I have asked where this is shown in the budget because if they have not been spent they should still be there and showing somewhere. I am told about the sinking fund and it is actually nothing to do with the sinking fund because that is for the term of the contract, yet the PFI lighting scheme that accrues credits, they have been brought into the Council's budget and I believe it went into the Parks and Leisure budget and has been spent.

Can you assure me that that £200,000 is still there ringmarked for Swarcliffe and can you show me where it is in the budget? Thank you.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking to Minute 232 on page 289, the numbering strategy and the Golden Number. I think many of us certainly on this side of the Council Chamber will welcome the decision by the Executive Board to abandon the 0845 numbers. We welcome this U-turn and acceptance of Labour Group policy. We look forward to many more U-turns and acceptance of Labour Group policy but I think it would be churlish not to congratulate the administration two years after we have first raised this coming round to our way of thinking.

However, I think there are some hard facts behind this and the hard facts are that in the lifetime of these 0845 numbers £30,000, according to the Council's own figures, has been ripped off people of Leeds ringing the Contact Centre - often ringing the Contact Centre because they have not received a service that they are entitled to and should have been delivered in the first place.

We would like the administration to apologise for ripping people off and we would also like the administration by way of apology - and they know they have got it wrong because they have reversed their policy - to organise a redistribution of the £30,000 to the community of Leeds, money they should never have taken in the first place, money they did not need to take. If the 0113 numbers are the right strategy as set out in 232 paragraph (a), for those anoraks over there who like to read the Minutes, that the 0113 prefix is adopted, that prefix has been available all along to the Council's number. We want an apology and on behalf of the people of Leeds we want our money back. Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to comment on page 300, Minute 19, Business Plan, with particular reference to the grass cutting contract.

Steve Smith mentioned a feeling of Groundhog Day and I have that feeling of Groundhog Day about the grass cutting contract, because every year at this time we go through the same palaver of talking about this contract and the utter failure of the contractors to deliver across the city.

I will just give a few examples from across the city, problems on our side and I am sure you have all had the same problems.

Scott Hall Road, central reservation, not cut for ages. Utter disgrace on a main road into the city. Wrenthorpe Crescent in Ardsley and Robin Hood, missed four times for grass cutting. Swillington Lane, grass up to three foot high. Chaucer Avenue in Pudsey, not cut for eight weeks. Poplar Way in Armley, round about the same. Ryecroft Green sheltered housing, community garden, enhanced service, has not been cut for eight weeks. I am very concerned particularly that places with an enhanced service are clearly getting a worse service than the places that are getting a standard service.

You cannot say any longer this is an issue about teething problems, we cannot go back to the maps and say, "Why has this area been left out?" People cannot understand we should have had that in the contract earlier on. The day for those excuses has long gone. We should be in a position where this contract is just rolled out steadily without any problems and they just get on with it.

I particularly want to make mention of where our contractors have done a job that kind of goes beyond what I think they should have done. I could not believe it when I first heard this when one of the residents of Ryecroft Green sheltered housing said, "I woke up in the early hours of Sunday morning and looked out of my window because I heard this noise and there was a guy on a lawnmower." I thought this sounds a bit peculiar, I do not believe this, because in Pudsey there is a kind of folklore about guys who get on lawnmowers and large agricultural vehicles under the influence at certain times, so I thought it is one of those stories. He went on - it was actually our contractors who were out on the Stanningley bypass cutting the grass outside the sheltered housing scheme at two o'clock in the morning - lights shining into people's bedrooms, all these poor people coming out on the balconies - four tower blocks there - all coming out shouting and screaming, "What are you doing cutting the grass at this time?"

COUNCILLOR: The usual colourful language!

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: They come from Swinnow, they do not use bad language down there. It is utterly unbelievable that you should do that. What concerns me more is that you are planning to do it again. Regardless of all the complaints that have come into the Council about that - and it has not affected just Swinhoe, it has also affected parts of Armley, I think it is Park Spring, that area of Armley, Stanningley Road that has been badly affected as well. You are planning to do it again later on in this month.

I would say to you, please, as Leader of Council, do not listen to the people who you have consulted, do not listen to the Highways Department, because the Highways Department are not concerned about people. They are very nice but they are not concerned about people. Do not talk to the police about when you are going to cut the grass. Talk to the Ward Councillors, talk to the people who live in the locality.

I would ask you now to give a commitment, Richard, that you are not going to cut the grass in the early hours of Sunday morning in a few weeks' time and inflict that on the city again because your officers are clearly saying that that is your intention. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. In speaking to Minute 19 page 300, I am making particular reference to the Mission Statement of the Council - I am sure you all know it all off by heart. I just would like to comment particularly on the recent announcement to staff in the Authority that this administration has abandoned its commitment to setting up a sports trust to manage the leisure centres across Leeds.

We had all been led to believe that this all-singing, all-dancing Trust would be up and running on April 1st of this year. If I can take you back to 2004, both the Liberals and the Conservatives called for the establishment of the trust and castigated us for not introducing one. Both groups predicted large savings to the Council and sums of up to £2m to invest in our sports centres. Furthermore, they promised swift action, once in power, to set it up. The trust would come into place immediately without delay and to illustrate this, in February 2004 in the verbatim of Council, Councillor Andrew Carter outlining his budget amendment said - and I quote:

“If officers are telling me it will take twelve to 18 months to set up this trust, I think we had better find some people who can set it up a damn sight quicker.”

We told you at the time that you were wildly exaggerating the benefits, that you were not taking all the risks into account and that experience elsewhere was patchy and fraught with difficulty. Councillor Atha himself told you at length about the folly of depending on VAT and the complexity of the rules, but did you listen? Did you take any notice at all? Of course not - of course not.

Where are we now? More than four years later - four years, not the twelve or 18 months promised - the trust abandoned, our sports centre income down by £400,000, expenditure going through the roof, in total we are looking at budget pressures of over £1.2m, leading to massive staff uncertainty and this against a backdrop of £30m PFI credits going in Morley, which we have heard about, and into Armley, and a potential opportunity to bid for Holt Park. ‘Budget instability’ is how it is described and I have to say, there is not a Plan B in sight.

Here we are, four years later, no sports trust but it seems to me a whacking bill of at least £275,000 and that is a conservative estimate, over a quarter of a million pounds that you have spent in those four years on consultancy fees and costs in an attempt to set this whole thing up - money wasted, much needed investment and opportunities missed. All the result of this administration pursuing a policy that had “risk” written all over it.

Can you tell us where we are going to go from here? How are you going to address this budget shambles? What can we expect as a result? Running down of facilities? Closure of sports centres? We all remember the South Leeds fiasco. Reduced opening hours? Even more increased in charges? Who knows?

Lord Mayor, this is shameful and, as a result of your arrogance and complacency, our sports centres are now at serious risk and at a time when we should all be working to improve health, to increase opportunities for exercise and physical activity across the city we are now facing a drastic reduction in services.

Just let me make one thing clear. All of us on this side of the Chamber will fight tooth and nail to protect our services and our sports centres. You are responsible for this. Tell us what you plan to do and how you intend to improve sports facilities in our communities. If there is ever an area where Narrowing the Gap should be paramount, this is it. Councillor Brett, I hope you will assure us that you will protect our community sports centres and do everything to encourage sport for all wherever possible. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: Lord Mayor, I would like to speak on Minute 20, page 300, the Corporate Assessment Report, and specifically how the Council engages with residents on key issues in their communities.

The reports states that the Council effectively engages with local people and partners to ensure that it is meeting the diverse needs of the whole community. Unfortunately, however, if we take two recent Council consultations, we would have to question whether this is actually the case.

In the consultation on the natural resources and waste development plan and also the consultation dealing with the rubbish that is not sorted for recycling, a number of errors have been made that need to be addressed.

Firstly, I cannot believe, as Councillor Lyons pointed out earlier and Councillor Smith did not seem to know the answer to, that the Council decided in its wisdom to hold twelve exhibitions across the city on the waste strategy but missed out Burmantofts and Richmond Hill and nearby Temple Newsam Ward. The views of people living in areas of Otley and Horsforth, for example, who were included in the exhibition...

COUNCILLOR: He does not know his south from his east.

COUNCILLOR OGILVIE: ...are always welcome. Didn't anyone over there think it might be useful to hear from the people in those communities who will have to live in the shadow of the proposed waste treatment plant?

I must say the natural resources and waste development plan consultation document did ask a number of pertinent questions, such as what are the key issues around the waste strategy; should we look for the lowest impact on the local environment in terms of emission, smell, noise and health; should we choose a site that has the minimum impact on local communities and business?

Why does this consultation say it is not seeking views about what technology should be used? How can we possibly have a thorough discussion on the waste strategy and on issues such as noise and smell when comments from residents and community organisations on technologies are still out of bounds?

If the council is really serious about engaging with people on issues that are central to their communities, should we not be having an open discussion with the people of Leeds about every aspect of waste management, including what technology should be employed at the plant?

I ask Councillor Brett, if you really believe in community engagement, when are the people of East Leeds going to be given the opportunity to be listened to instead of being ignored? Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak on Minute 22 page 300 in relation to the ALMO and the £22.8m in reserves which we are told is there to deal with legal liabilities. I would love to know what legal liability is going to cost that.

First of all, before I make my central point, I would like to thank all those colleagues here across the Chamber who serve on ALMOs, along with the independents and tenants. In actual fact I think they do an excellent job trying to do what we set off to do with ALMOs, make them more local and responsive. I know they put a lot of hours into that particular area of work.

There is no doubt in our mind there are some tenants who have been let down with Decency Standards. There is absolutely no doubt. Some people who lived in their homes for 20 and 30 years have been promised stuff only to be told they

cannot have it. They have even been told to choose the bathroom or the kitchen and then they have had a letter saying, "You are not going to have it." I think that is only right, to put that on the table in this Chamber, because I do not blame the ALMOs, I blame the political head of the strategic landlord, Councillor Carter.

All we got when we raised it about a woman in Kippax - that is Councillors Parker, Lewis and myself - was an email from Councillor Carter criticising us for raising that publicly in the press. In actual fact he said during an inspection - it has not been in the press during the inspection. The inspection finished last Friday.

By the way, this Councillor Carter is the same man who, when he only got one star for Supporting People, came to the Chamber and he said, "I could have got two stars, I could have easily got two stars. I could have ramrodded it through but I will tell you what, those people are far more important to me than the Audit Commission." This is Les, standing up for the weak and the poor.

He went on, "Lord Mayor, I will take nothing from that lot" - I presume he meant us and not the Liberals - "I will only look after the poor and the weak in this city and to hell with the lot of them." That was Les, standing up for the poor and weak. I will tell you what, Les, if you can stand up for the poor and weak, what is wrong with us standing up for the tenants in this city for a fair deal?

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Because you do not do it very well, that is why.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: It gets worse. It gets far, far worse and I would like you to comment. There is a woman there who has been 13 years and local Councillors - not Councillor Carter unless he is going to visit her - was told to pick the bathroom and the kitchen. She received a letter from the ALMO that said this:

"Following a recent survey undertaken to your home the following components have failed the Government's Decency Home Standard and will be replaced."

She got this, the scheme was going to start in January and finish in September 2008 and it was going to be replacement of bathroom, replacement of kitchen and rewiring. She was denied both the bathroom and the kitchen, despite being promised. It gets worse. I would like Les seriously to take this seriously, because there was a press release from Leeds City Council that almost accused this woman - well, did accuse her - of telling untruths. The press release said this - and I am not accusing you, Les, I want you to comment because it is very serious when a Council office starts to abuse the truth and abuse tenants just to cover up what I think is a social injustice.

The press release said this:

"Due to the limits on the money available for Decency we have to review all the work we were hoping to carry out and have to defer any major work. We have many customers such as Mrs Heseltine who have poor decoration and old units, but these do not fail the Decency Standard."

That is a downright lie. She has been told her kitchen and her bathroom have failed and yet she has not had the work done and has been accused of telling untruths.

Les, I do not blame you. I would like you to comment and I would like you to comment and make sure that these tenants who deserve a fair share of the Labour

Government's money dedicated to tenants in Council houses get a fair share and do not get abused by this Council and this Council's press office. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR JAROSZ: Lord Mayor, I would like to speak on Minute 22 page 300, and specifically the finances of the Council which are supported by charges and Council tax and increasingly supported by increases in charges like those at Beckett Street car park opposite St James's Hospital.

As many of you know, there was a call-in on this issue at Environment and Neighbourhood Scrutiny Board last week. Due to the tight turnaround of these call-ins - and I would as an aside with that Council could look at this because it is very difficult certainly in City Development Scrutiny we had a call-in and we did not feel that we had sufficient information because of this tight turn round to make an adequate decision. Unfortunately the Environment and Neighbourhood Scrutiny Board, I was unable to attend because of a long-term engagement before that. However, I gather from speaking to colleagues that Councillor Hanley spoke very eloquently in outlining why plans for yet another price increase at Beckett Street needed to be reviewed. Unfortunately, like last year, his efforts were in vain. The new prices at Beckett Street, described as "inflation busting" by the YEP, is at 11%. It also hits an unenviable figure and we are now talking about an hour's stay at Beckett Street not just in pence but in pounds.

Since 2004 the charges have risen by 50%. It seems a long time ago since Councillor Golton was criticising the then Labour administration in 2003 for increasing the price of an hour's stay to 40p. Incidentally, this was the first price rise that had been seen at Beckett Street for six years.

Who will this decision hurt? People in every Ward in the city. I know many people in my Ward in Pudsey who certainly have no option but to travel to St James's on a regular basis for ill health.

It is OK talking about public transport but it does take a long time for people from my side of the city to get to St James's if they are to go by public transport. Of course we should be putting pressure on the NHS Trust to cut or at least not increase parking charges at its car parks for a significant period, I doubt if there is any member of the Chamber who would disagree with that, but let us control the controllable. Beckett Street as a Council owned facility is certainly something we have influence on. We owe it to the people in our cities to do all we can to keep costs down where we can.

I do notice that the Liberal Democrats in their 2008 manifesto speak of offering universal support for the vulnerable throughout the city. This is the perfect opportunity to live up to this mantra. Perhaps Councillor Brett thinks we should all get on our bike, even to bike up to St James's, whatever condition we are in.

As I say, live up to your mantra but it looks like once again this administration is failing in its promises. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR A McKENNA: Lord Mayor, I am speaking on the Financial Performance Outturn report, page 299 Minute 18, safeguarding vulnerable adults in Leeds.

This report outlines the financial position of the Council at the end of the last financial year. I am well aware how important it is to balance the books but I want to question the priorities of this coalition. Do you think that we should take all necessary measures to keep costs down? Is that why you did not fund Relate? Do

you not think if you had funded them you would have saved money later down the line? Do you not think that sometimes we need to invest now in order to save in the future? Do you not think that this is a key to the good financial management?

I just wanted to quote from someone who seems to share my idea of planning for the future:

“Politicians are the ones who take taxpayers’ money and write billions of pounds-worth of cheques to deal with the cost of family breakdown, whether it is social cost like crime, antisocial behaviour or legal costs like the Family courts, so I think politicians have a responsibility to the taxpayer and to society to do what they can to bring these costs down.”

The speaker then went on to say:

“Relationship support delivered in the right way to the right people at the right time can play a major part in doing just that. The cost of social breakdown has been estimated at £20b, yet the annual budget of Relate, the organisation that does this so much to stop breakdowns happening in the first place is only £24m. Does that not demonstrate how priorities are wrong and how vital and difficult a subject this really is?”

I could not have put it better myself and this is exactly what I have been saying to Council time and time again over the past year. Who is this mystery man and whose words echo those of the Labour Group during our campaign to get Relate’s funding reinstated? I want you to prepare yourself because you are going to have a little bit of a shock. My ally is none other than the Conservative Party Leader, Mr David Cameron, and there is his five page speech that he made about Relate.

I can only assume, Les, that in Andrew’s absence you will be distancing yourself from Dave’s comments. After all, it hardly reflects what you decided were the priorities of Leeds City Council. Perhaps you will take this opportunity to effect a change of policy of the Conservative Group.

I do not want to stand here and make this personal but I do want to underline just how important this issue is at a national level - so much so that the Conservative Party policy on the future of social action on voluntary sector, they are committed to making it a multi-year funding the norm for organisations like Relate.

I never thought I would be standing here praising the Conservative Party policy, and I am quite sure you will be commenting on this later, but I have always maintained this is not a political issue. I am quite prepared to give credit where credit is due. It is just a shame that you cannot when it comes to local support, which is why I have written to David Cameron asking for his comments on the situation here in Leeds.

However, there is a chance of a degree of redemption for all of you. I am sure you are aware that Councillor Jim McKenna, Mark Dobson and I ran the Jane Tomlinson Run for All to raise money for Relate and many of you sponsored us and I would like to thank you for that. Relate is extremely grateful. It is not too late to give money if you would still like to.

The Labour Councillors since June have given £1,600 in MICE money and sponsor. I would like to think and I would ask that all Councillors from Wards

contribute from their funds in the same way. After all, Les, it is virtually Conservative Party policy now to support Relate and we all know how important it is to toe the party line.

I would like to give you this final thought from my new friend David Cameron, which I hope will help you to make the right decisions at next year's budget meeting:

“Family relationships are not a secondary issue; they are an absolute political priority.”

Thank you. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, earlier today I bought the Evening Post - a wonderful newspaper with wonderful reporters.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Never tells a lie.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: You see the headline - all of you will see the headline - “£22m homes cash anger.” This is all about Councillor Wakefield deciding that the £22m which is held by the ALMOs is not being spent correctly.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: You are the landlord. Stop dodging the responsibility.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Not being spent correctly. You will remember that Councillor Wakefield and his colleague said of ALMOs, when ALMOs had to be given arm's length and we got the money to them but the capital programme for housing is with them, not with the Council.

What angered me even more, because I thought hang on, it is now some nearly 20, 30 years since I did not have to protect Peter Gruen in this Council Chamber, but once again he is under attack by his Leader because the chairman of this ALMO is none other than Councillor Peter Gruen...

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Shame.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: ...who leads the ALMO, who sets the agenda, who actually sets the capital project. Let me say this...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: What are you doing as a landlord?

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: ...he does an excellent job.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: So Keith thinks he should fire him!

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I know, I am very worried because Keith and Councillor Lewis may get rid of him. At the moment he is battling hard to get two stars for this and we are all working together.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Oh yes. I am worried.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: The email he refers to, this vicious email to him was not even an email to him, it was an email to Peter but obviously he had to run to his Leader to say, “See what Les Carter has said about it.” That is by the way.

Let us talk about the actual money itself.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Talk about the press release.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Well, let us talk about the press release. The press release is an ALMO press release. It is not ours.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Leeds City Council.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: It is not done by Leeds City Council. It is an ALMO press release and I will quote from the newspapers. It tells you here, read it, it is there.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Leeds City Council on the head of this.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: It may well be. It may well be. It could be anything on the head of it, I do not know. Does it say Leeds City Council or does it say the ALMO? Our press unit have done it for years for all sorts - Area Committees, some of your Area Committees come under the press unit...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Leeds City Council.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: ...and so does the ALMO. The press release is an ALMO press release, it is not a J L Carter one, because I will tell you this, it would have said a lot of different things and it would have attacked you, Councillor Wakefield, who do not understand finance, nobody understands finances over there, there are members of the Government who do not understand finance and we are now in a credit crunch and they tell people like him.

Let me tell you what - he talks about £22m. He then talks about legal costs. Let me tell you ---

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: You are desperate.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Let me tell you, £12.2m are in respect of FRS 17. They will not understand what that is but it is a requirement by Government on our audited accounts to put a figure in for pensions costs.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Waffle.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Waffle, he says. The man is a complete loony if he thinks that is untrue!

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I know it stands for that.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I worry about you, I honestly worry about you if you do not think that £12.2m is the correct figure for FRS.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I worry about Mrs Heseltine. Why don't you?

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: You are barmy, but let me go on. Let me go on. I personally - let us look at Decency for a second. I am not a surveyor. I have never set Decency in anybody's house. The standards are laid down by your Government, not by us. The standards are laid down by your Government and they are not very high, I will tell you that. Huge sums of money might be involved but they are not very high. When they say "This particular home does not fit Decency", it is not me that is saying it. It is the criteria laid down by their Government...

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Take responsibility.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: ...and it is laid down there. I just want to go on and say further, personally - this is a different thing - it is not my responsibility. I would say this to the Chairman of this ALMO. They wrote out something like up to 40 letters incorrectly to people promising them something and they have not fulfilled that. I am going to suggest to Peter for his capital programme, I suggest to Peter that he accepts that fault, we have £5.3m which would be over and above Decency which that ALMO could use and that he uses that to actually do this lady's kitchen, not because it is not decent and because it should be done; because you made a promise and you have broken it. Thank you, my Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR GRAYSHON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak on Minute 232 page 289, Central & Corporate Numbering Strategy and the famous Golden Number. I am sure Members will remember the last time this was discussed I spoke and that I was not really going to speak on it today. However, I do think I should enlighten Members with regard to the Corporate Call Centre. I did take some time to go to the Corporate Contact Centre and spent some time with Paddy Clarke and his staff. You will be pleased to know that I looked at their telecasting device which tells us how many calls are in a queue and how long people have been waiting and it all seemed to me to be running in an acceptable way, an acceptable line.

The thing that does concern me are the comments about the £30,000 which in inverted commas, have been "ripped off" from the citizens of Leeds. When I met Paddy Clarke down there I did ask what happened to the money which is generated by a non-geographical number, i.e. 0845 or whatever but not the 0113 number, and he very kindly told me that it is used to offset the cost of the outbound calls of Leeds City Council from the Contact Centre. For example, you get a bill for £2,000 from Kingston or whoever; however your revenue generation is £500, then you pay £1,500, so in essence the money has been given back to the citizens of Leeds, otherwise they would have had to pay the full amount of that cost.

What I would say is that we have an 0113 prefix; however, on page 290 we do still make reference to the Silver and Golden Number so I assume that we will also be having intelligent network routings as well.

Really I think that it is important to note that the money has not gone into the Contact Centre's Christmas party fund, it has actually been used to defray the cost and whether this will actually assist the people who some of our colleagues are concerned with because they had not set up for a particular option with their telephony provider, remains to be seen. However, I would point out that some of the figures that they mentioned in this Council Chamber on some of the packages were not correct and certain individuals in this Council Chamber were not speaking *salve veritate*, shall we say. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to speak on page 300, Minute 19, and follow up the minutes that Councillor Blake made in relation to the sports trust.

I was a little surprised to see Councillor Blake quoted in the evening paper when the sports trust issue was covered a week or so ago and I was scratching my head as to why she should be the person to cover it. As far as I was aware, Councillor Harington was the spokesperson for the Labour Group on matters to do with sport and the like, so scratching my head and again surprised today that Councillor Blake stands up again and gives a forthright condemnation of everything that we in the administration have been trying to do with the sports centre stock in the city.

Then it suddenly came to me - I know why Judith is the person standing up and talking about it. She is trying to dig herself out of a almighty hole, that is what she is trying to do.

Question - what position did Judith hold when the Labour Group were in administration?

COUNCILLOR: Five years ago.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Five years ago, exactly, yes. She was the Executive Member for Learning and Leisure, which encompassed the sports centres and what I understand is that she had knowledge of a report that dealt with the rationalisation of sports centres in this city and yet did she share it with anyone in this Council Chamber? No. No-one at all. Councillor Blake knew a series of sports centres that were earmarked for potential closure and yet did not tell anyone, and the fact of the matter is that those issues that were raised by officers then are the same issues that are there now except they are five years worse than then.

The simple fact of the matter is that we have got 23/24, depending on how you categorise our sports centres, across the city that have had historic levels of under investment in them over not just five years but over something like 30 years, to be quite frank, and I think successive administrations have been more bothered about building new facilities than maintaining existing ones and that is something that clearly cannot continue.

The reason why it cannot continue is the public, the people who those centres are for, are voting with their feet and, to put it quite simply and quite bluntly, they are not visiting our centres in the numbers that they used to do and that has led in the last six to eight to nine months to a dramatic turn for sports centre income. It has led to a dramatic change in people actually joining the Council's gym programme, the Bodyline Gym Programme and there is something like 800 people who did not renew their membership in January - that is out of a total membership of 10,000, so it is a significant proportion of people who are choosing not to go to our leisure centres.

It is not a new subject or a new issue, it is something which the Scrutiny Board looked into I think it was a year or so ago and tried to get to grips with the very difficult issue in terms of trying to get people through the doors of our sports centres, active and into sport.

The thing that you realise is that when faced with competition from the private sector, what we offer in the Council is not such a particularly good offer. It used to be the position where the private sector was hugely expensive compared to the Council offer. That is no longer the case. There is often very little difference from private leisure facilities in fancy hotels with swimming pools - with swimming pools, I may say - compared to Council owned facilities, so yes, the sports service does face challenges in the weeks, months and years ahead.

Councillor Blake had a huge level of detail. Quite an amount of it was wrong, I have to say. Perhaps she should have waited for the Executive Report that is coming out in July when we can more fully cover it, but the fact is that the financial position is far worse than she has articulated and that is why it was deemed inappropriate to continue with, at this moment in time, a sports trust because when you look at the numbers, the benefit compared with the risk did not, frankly, stack up. That is to do with the economic downturn. That is to do with people spending less money in our sports centres, with fewer people coming through the doors. That is a concern, surely, to all of us. We need to improve the stock that we have, improve the facilities so that we can encourage more people to come through the doors of our

sports centres, more people to join the Bodyline Gym Programme. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR EWENS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I just want briefly to refer to the comments that Councillor Ogilvie made earlier about waste disposal. He missed a grand opportunity at the Town Hall presentation two or three weeks ago where all the modern techniques and ways of disposing of stuff were put up for discussion and for information and I think that if people are going to be criticising what is done about waste disposal, then perhaps they should aim better to inform themselves. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR G HYDE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Page 300, Minute 22. I thought I had better stand up, having listened to this rhetoric from my colleague Les Carter across the way about the ALMOs. Interesting.

Firstly, MRA is capital and capital receipts which are separate, provided by the Government and the Council. RS 17 is revenue reserves which we have to do legally, so Les is wrong. Actually the south-east ALMO or east-north-east ALMO cannot use its revenue reserves unless it has permission from the client to do that. Also, actually, it is the client, colleagues, that change the Decency Standard to Strictly Decency from Decency and all ALMO boards, at the beginning of this year in February, received a letter from the Neighbourhoods and Housing Department.

Les, you have missed it, mate.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: No I have not.

COUNCILLOR G HYDE: You are slightly wrong in what you are saying and I think it would be better if you were briefed a bit better because my board has issues about money being taken away under our MRA which has been held up by the client and my board is in dispute at the moment with the Neighbourhoods and Housing Department about that and we are asking that through our accountants. There are a number of issues.

MRS 17, which is the pensions fund, which we all have to pay, comes out of revenue reserves and all Wards have to hold it by the general account. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: I call now on Councillor Brett to respond.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Lord Mayor. I am aware of the time and if I spend five minutes now there will be five minutes and then we will stop and then I have a full summation, so I am getting nods that I am right in that and it would seem sense if I sit down and we will then have a few comments at least on development and I will then use my ten minutes to deal with things that have been said, with your permission.

THE LORD MAYOR: I think we need Council's permission for that. Those in favour of that statement? Anybody against it? Abstain? Right, thank you, that is CARRIED.

(ii) Development & Regeneration

THE LORD MAYOR: We go on to Development and Regeneration. Councillor Blackburn.

COUNCILLOR D BLACKBURN: Lord Mayor, this is a fairly quick one. It is page 302, Minute 26, regarding LEG1. I have got to say I welcome the move

forwards we made over the period of time with LEGI but there is just one concern I have and that is to do with West Leeds. All I am saying is, and I am not being over critical here, but we need to get moving in West Leeds, we need to get our Catalyst Centre in West Leeds. This is a great opportunity and I think that would be shared with all the other West Leeds Councillors. It is the first time we have had anything like this in our area of the city and all I am saying is really we need to get moving with this catalyst centre particularly taking into consideration the current economic climate. Thank you, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: Page 295, Lord Mayor, the Deputation from Leeds Girls' High School. As you all know, Leeds Girls' High School are due to vacate their current occupancy in July 2008 and move to premises in Alwoodley. They are going to leave behind a sports hall, a swimming pool, tennis courts and playing fields.

Local residents came to us in January asking for us to set aside those facilities for the local community and the Council received representations also from five of the local primary schools. There are a lot of Councillors in here who will probably know better than I the problems that those schools have - Rosebank, Quarry Mount, Brudenell and Spring Bank. That area of South Headingley is identified in Leeds UDP as the second most deprived area in the city for green space after Harehills. There is little green or recreational space locally as the majority of the surrounding streets are terrace with little gardens. This means there is no space for children to play and to exercise.

As well as health benefits, playing sports, participating in sport has other benefits such as improving leadership, team work and it also helps with community cohesion. The five local primary schools want to use the playing fields as they have no playing fields of their own. Shire Oak Primary School spend 50% of their budget on swimming to pay for transportation to Kirkstall swimming baths and the school only has a small sports hall which cannot be used for much of the day as it is set out as a dining hall.

Brudenell have to set aside 90 minutes for a 30 minute swimming session at Kirkstall and they spend a massive £2,380 per annum getting there. That school, again, only has a tarmac playground which obviously limits the kind of sports that the children can play.

Rosebank also uses Kirkstall for swimming lessons and it has trouble booking, apparently, because of the number of schools who now want to use that facility now that the Olympic pool has closed and there is refurbishment work going on in Armley. They have to rely on external facilities to meet the Government's guidelines which currently stand at two hours of PE each week for the pupils.

Transporting pupils by bus to the playing fields or swimming pools also eats into lesson time as well and we are all after improving standards in school and this does make a big difference. This land will be in walking distance of all the schools.

Education Leeds support the plan apparently to acquire the playing fields for use by the school but, you have guessed it, there is no funds available for their purchase or their upkeep, so not a lot of joined-up thinking there then.

The Labour Group believes that this land should be used for school as designated playing pitches. Schools are not allowed to use undesignated playing fields, as you know, and ownership of the school by a third party would not guarantee access for local people.

We all love RoSPA - they gave us that wonderful report on why we should fence in lots of the rivers. They reported that 39 children died in 2005 between 0 and 14 years - they drowned. You should not waste the opportunity. You should take control of this pool for the use of local people. The Government are introducing free swimming for the over sixties - I am sure that there will be a revenue implication on that as well. How much better would it be to teach children to swim than to have to spend the £27,000 it took to fence in Wharfe Meadows, and that was, again, against the wishes of local residents.

This administration does not seem to listen to local residents and that is when they actually can be bothered to consult at all. To the deputation I would just like to highlight one thing - what has happened to the playing facilities at the former Miles Hill Primary School, which is in my Ward? Despite this being an area being in the bottom five per cent of the most deprived areas in Leeds, despite the high levels of antisocial behaviour in the area and despite area management highlighting the area as an intensive neighbourhood management area, the fields, the Muga and the hard surface are locked behind huge great big fences and gates and the children cannot gain access.

Former school playing fields are supposed to be protected by Government legislation for eight years after a school closes, so we are going to call on you on behalf of the residents of Leeds and highlighted - because we are all waving Yorkshire Posts round at the moment - Let us Play, we are calling on you to save our playing fields and save our sports facilities for the local residents to actually use. Thank you. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am speaking on Minute 5, page 295, to begin with. Lord Mayor, I am very disappointed in this Minute. It seems the Council is intent upon weakening a very strong negotiating position. It appears to many of the city residents that this Council has just shot itself in the foot.

There is concern, Lord Mayor, that Leeds Girls' High School has friends at court and that the Council is adopting a needlessly ineffective stance that will allow the school to succeed in the subsequent planning appeal.

Lord Mayor, this school is surrounded by protected playing pitches. It is also surrounded by deprived inner city schools with no playing pitches. South Headingley has been identified as an area in particular need of recreational open space and the local south Asian population is a group in particular need of greater opportunities for physical recreation.

Why spoil a good hand by downgrading the hockey pitch into informal green space, which the Minute suggests? That may lack the full playing pitch protection if this case goes to appeal. Why do this when the Council does not need to do it? The land is entirely suitable as a junior pitch, ideally suited to meet the needs of the surrounding schools.

Of course, Lord Mayor, this is exactly the same stunt - exactly - that allowed Leeds University - and here I have got to declare a personal interest, Lord Mayor - to get away with some disgraceful behaviour in relation to the Boys' Grammar School pitches only a short distance away. *Mea culpa*. The best I can say in mitigation for the university is that Leeds City Council and Yorkshire Forward were into this one as well.

Lord Mayor, the desire of Leeds Girls' High School to make a large capital receipt is totally irrelevant for the planning process. The needs of deprived inner city children are highly relevant.

The report suggests that it is contrary to Council policy to maintain single sports pitches like the Chestnut Avenue site. This assertion in the report was utter nonsense because pitches are required by the School Building Regulations and the vast majority of our primary schools have singleton sports pitches, including all the new schools we have built in the PFI, Lord Mayor.

I move on to Minute 24. The deputation today has recorded our local disappointment that having promised less than 18 months ago to retain the green space behind St Ann's Mill the Council now wants to sell it. Lord Mayor, over the years Kirkstall has contributed significant assets to the public pot but we have received precious little in return. Yesterday the City Development Scrutiny Board agreed to release Minute 24 for implementation but the debate made clear that the valuations given to the Executive Board behind closed doors was seriously in error. It appears the existing Use Valuation had been copied incorrectly from the original report. Instead of the large positive figure report to Members, a much smaller negative figure should have appeared. The Development Value was also wildly in error because the valuer was apparently unaware that most of the land lies within the Rapid Inundation Zone identified in the Leeds Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. The SFRA is our adopted Council planning policy and it says, and I quote:

“Future redevelopment within areas denoted as the Rapid Inundation Zone should be avoided. These areas post a direct risk to life in case of catastrophic failure of the flood defence system. Any future development within these areas must ensure that the future structural integrity of the raised flood defence can be assured throughout the lifetime of the proposed development.”

Lord Mayor, the Council formerly leased this land to a skip hire company called Quick Skip, who used the site as a waste transfer station and shunted much of their rubbish directly into the River Aire. Large quantities of refuse and builders' rubble remain on the site. These have raised the ground level, causing officers to imagine this land might be above the flood level and could therefore be used as development land.

The Environment Agency has made it plain that unlawful dumping cannot be used to bring land within the development envelope. They expect the Council to remove the rubbish that is permitted to accumulate so that the flood plain can function in its proper manner and thereby protect the more valuable buildings in Leeds City Centre.

Lord Mayor, I am seeking some specific assurances from the Leader of Council.

One, if this land is sold will it be sold as a planning brief in line with normal Leeds City Council practice?

Two, will the planning brief reflect our adopted Council planning policies?

Three, will the Council remove the unlawfully dumped builders' waste that has accumulated on site and restore the ground level to its native condition?

Finally, Lord Mayor, will the Council consider the use of these buildings for a Visitor Centre with Yorkshire Wildlife Trust, for community enterprise and for use by local community groups? Thank you, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. According to Council procedure we now go to Councillor Brett.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I will try and get through the various comments that have been made, but forgive me if I do not deal with the reference backs.

Councillor Grahame, I am told that the £200,000 credit is still available. I will ask for confirmation from officers to you so that that is quite clear and I am told that there is this year an additional £100,000 which is there for you due entirely to Councillor Les Carter. (*Interruption*)

Councillor James Lewis is perhaps quite forthright in his views about 0845 numbers. Somewhere in what he said there was a well done that we had changed our mind. What I have to say to him is that at the time when the original decision for an 0845 number was made, it was our view at that time that was the right decision, so you will not get an apology from me about something that was actually done by somebody else that I believe was the right decision.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: So why is it wrong now?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I would like you to do your best, reminded as I am of the wonderful speech that Councillor Finnigan made outlining not one, not two but maybe a dozen different arms of the Government that use 0845 numbers and ask you, please, to do everything you can to convince your own Government of the error of their ways over what they are now doing.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Are we getting our money back?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you for the comments from Councillor Grayshon on the same topic.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Are we getting our money back?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Councillor Richard Lewis.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: I take that that is a "No".

COUNCILLOR BRETT: I am told that there are some very particular problems about the Stanningley bypass which you might be aware of which I am told involve, if you wanted to cut the grass in the normal way you would have to close the bypass and there would be just a few traffic problems that we might prefer to do without. That is why at a rather unusual time the grass cutting has been done, but I am sure Councillor Smith will be very happy to talk to you further about that.

As to your remarks about "You should consult the people who live there", I have to say you picked the wrong street because I live on Scott Hall Road and I have not noticed the grass has not been cut there.

I think Councillor Blake's remarks have in large measure been answered by Councillor Procter. I would just like to reinforce what I think John said, which is that the money we have spent so far on the Trust has not been wasted. The scheme is not abandoned. It is going to be delayed but at some point in the future we do seriously think that there may be a prospect of getting a sports trust going but the current circumstances with the credit crunch mean now is the wrong time to be doing that.

Councillor Ogilvie, the waste development plans. Councillor Pryke - and clearly you could not be expected to know this but it is a crucial part of our consultations as local Councillors with our residents - as Chair of the Richmond Hill forum - a public forum, 500 people are invited to it every time and we have had significantly large numbers of people there - three times Councillor Pryke has put the waste issue on the agenda and we had had discussion. We had officers present. There has been a large postal survey in Cross Green so it is totally incorrect to say that the area nearest to the four sites we have abandoned and made no attempt to consult with people. Sorry, not true.

The situation with regard to the ALMO. Again, I think you had an answer but the money I am told, Councillor Les Carter has told me - have I got this right? - it is not capital money, it is revenue money and that is what we have just been told.

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: Do you believe him?

COUNCILLOR BRETT: The officers have informed me. Councillor Jarosz, the situation about car parking near St James's. For all of us who have residents as I do and Councillor Taylor does, many residents living cheek by jowl with the hospital, on-street parking and parking generally is extremely difficult. We recognise that. I have to say you characterise the horrendous 11% increase - which actually is ten pence - in a very different way from what perhaps I would have done, but I do accept that the transport from Leeds West to St James's Hospital is difficult and that is a real issue which at some point we need to address to improve the access of everybody in Leeds to this major hospital.

As for patients getting on their bike, I think you need to read the article. It is saying no such thing about patients. I am merely saying that people like myself who may have short journeys to work will on some occasions feel it is the right thing to cycle.

Can I congratulate, turning to Councillor Andrea McKenna, both Andrea, Jim and Mark for taking part in Jane Tomlinson's run and for completing it and for the money that they have raised for what I would accept is a good cause.

That does not divide us. I am not saying and never had that Relate is somehow, because the Council decides not to fund it, an organisation which we do not think is worthy. I am pleased that you have, as it were, put your legs where your heart is and have raised some money for a charity that you clearly feel deserves support. The difference I would say is that yes, to early support. We on this side fully endorse the idea that if there are individuals who are vulnerable we do need to support them early on in their difficulties. Where perhaps we differ is the suggestion that everything that matters must be funded fully by the Council and at that point I think we would disagree.

The helpful comments from Councillor Ewens and Councillor Procter and Councillor Les Carter I am not going to spend any more time on. I am thanking them for what they have said. Councillor Blackburn, I agree we need to make progress on the Catalyst Centre in Leeds West. I think that will be happening.

Can I spend a little bit of time on Leeds Girls' High School, where I think the remarks we have heard certainly totally misrepresent what local Members have been actively trying to do. Let me start by saying that unlike what some local residents have said to me and to Andrew Carter, we as Leaders cannot - and indeed I think would be told must not - interfere with the planning system.

At the end of the day what we have with Leeds Girls' High School is a major site in private ownership. If Leeds Girls' High School choose - and they may well do soon - to come up with a plan, it will have to be processed in the normal way. Whatever our Plans Panel does, it is always possible on appeal that Leeds Girls' Grammar School may get some things that everyone in this Chamber will not like.

It is totally wrong to characterise local Councillors and myself and Councillor Andrew Carter as wanting somehow to grab a green space. We are trying to preserve that green space for community use. We are trying to preserve access to the swimming pool but, as I said a few minutes ago, the planning procedure may mean that we do not succeed.

I have to say, Councillor Illingworth, that some of your remarks in connection with Leeds Girls' High School I do find difficult to comprehend. In characterising us wanting Leeds Girls' High School to get a large capital receipt, whether we want to or not that is clearly what they would wish. That does not stop us from wanting to get the best deal for the local community and I would agree with many of the remarks that have been made, that that does include having access to the green space and to the pool.

I am confused, John, by your final remarks about St Ann's Mill. You seemed at the end to be saying that despite various things being done that you did not approve of, from where we are now on what you characterise as a flood plain had community use, that would somehow be all right and I am not sure that I agree with that.

Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. I shall now call on a vote on the receipt of the Minutes. All those in favour? Those against? Any abstentions? Then that is CARRIED.

Now we adjourn for tea.

(The Council adjourned for a short time)

THE LORD MAYOR: We are back in session again.

ITEM 11 - WHITE PAPER MOTION - UNACCEPTABLY HIGH LEVELS OF TRUANCY

THE LORD MAYOR: On to White Papers. Item 11, White Paper Motion - unacceptably high levels of truancy. I will ask Councillor Mulherin to propose it.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Young people have always played truant from school and for a wide range of reasons, from problems at home with their family or social issues to a disinterest and dissatisfaction with school or a fear of bullying. We will all remember children that we went to school with who played truant. I, for one, can vividly recall two boys in my class being dragged back into school by their ears and literally having their heads banged together for bunking off when I was at school.

If it is a perennial problem, why are we drawing particular attention to it today? I will tell you why, because in some schools in Leeds now the problem has grown completely out of control. When the Evening Post can justly write headlines like "Leeds Schools Truancy Disgrace", we should all be concerned and we should all be asking why the problem in Leeds is so acute.

If we drill down into the facts behind those headlines, the situation in Leeds is even more shocking. The city has eight schools ranked amongst the worst for truancy in the country, with two schools - City of Leeds and Woodhouse and Primrose and Burmantofts - in the top three worst in the country.

The DCSF is currently targeting 18 Leeds secondary schools for their high level of persistent absentees. Let me make it clear that a persistent absentee is a child who misses more than 20% of their time at school - that is more than one in five of their school days being lost. In every one of the Government's 18 target schools in Leeds at least 9% of the school population are classed as persistent absentees.

Even worse, when the DCSF identified these targets, they found three schools in Leeds where the problem was so acute that more than 20% of the school population were identified as persistent absentees. That is at least 422 pupils missing more than 20% of their schooling in the three worst secondary schools for truancy in Leeds alone.

The overall absence rate in Leeds in 2006/07 was the second highest level in the region and the eighth worst nationally. The equivalent of 750,000 school days are lost every two terms by young people in Leeds. Across Yorkshire Local Authorities reduced overall absence by just under half a per cent from 2005/06 to the 2006/07 school year, but Leeds only reduced its overall absence rates by 0.25%, only half the Yorkshire-wide reduction.

We have to ask why are we falling behind neighbouring Authorities in tackling this issue and why does it matter that so many young people are missing school?

It matters because truancy adversely affects young people's prospects and has detrimental effects on the wider community. Research shows that there are clear links between poor attendance and low educational achievements and persistent truants are more likely to be out of work, education or training when they leave school.

Recognising the seriousness of the problem, Councillor Harker noted in the press earlier this year that missing just 17 days in one school year can lead to a drop of an entire grade at GCSE. The impact of truancy on exam results can easily be seen. Nationally only 13% of truants achieved five or more good GCSEs in 2004 compared with 60% of non-truants. One in four persistent absentees left school without any GCSEs in the same year.

You may have noticed that some of the worst affected schools are in inner city areas like Woodhouse, Burmantofts, Seacroft and Killingbeck, and they draw their pupils from neighbourhoods suffering from high levels of deprivation. This is no coincidence. It is recognised nationally that pupils eligible for free school meals, one of the key indicators of social inequality, have three times the rate of unauthorised absence of other pupils. You would think, then, that greater resources would be concentrated on tackling truancy in these areas, yet in one of them in the Seacroft/Manston family of schools, the successful multi-agency team that is highly valued by school heads is currently being dismantled by the administration opposite, with the Youth Service element already cut and the social service funding about to be withdrawn at the end of this financial year.

Surely a multi-agency approach working with the families of young people who are vulnerable to truancy is exactly the sort of response that we should be promoting, not dismantling.

Perhaps we should bear in mind the guidance given to Ofsted inspectors on school attendance, which states:

“High levels of social deprivation should not be taken as an excuse for poor attendance. Inspectors should remember that it will be necessary for these learners to have a high attendance to access opportunities in later life.”

It is equally clear that those children who are not in school when they should be are more vulnerable and are easily drawn into crime and antisocial behaviour. The 2002 MORI Youth Justice Survey of young people showed that those who play truant are more likely to offend than those that do not, two thirds, or 65% of truants having offended, compared to less than a third of those who have not played truant. This link between truancy and crime was reiterated in more recent Youth Justice Surveys.

Given the consequences of truancy both for the truants themselves and their communities, tackling truancy in our most deprived neighbourhoods should surely be a key element of the Council's strategy to narrow the gap. The Government through the DCSF has recognised the importance of tackling the chronic truancy in our schools. As I stated earlier, the DCSF have identified 18 schools in Leeds for focused work in this area and has given those schools additional resources to improve their monitoring of attendance - the first stage towards tackling truancy.

In January this year the Government introduced new technology to those schools, ensuring automatic alerts to parents and pupils when a young person's attendance at school is not registered. Again, this is exactly the sort of practical measure that we would, I hope, all support in tackling this issue. There are, of course, a whole range of measures available to tackle truancy from reward schemes in schools for pupils with exemplary attendance and tailoring education more to the needs of the individual pupil, so that those who are more interested in vocational learning have those opportunities, to penalty notices for prosecution of parents where other measures have failed.

Members on this side of the Chamber believe that using the full range of measures available to tackle truancy effectively will not only see a significant improvement in the educational outcomes for the individual young people concerned, for the schools that they attend and for the city's standing in educational terms; it will also see a reduction in the number of youth related crimes and the number of school aged youths who are the victims of crime when they are playing truant.

We cannot continue as we are with so many young people in this city failing even to attend school on a regular basis, with all of the consequences of that for their own prospects and the knock-on effects for their communities. I urge you to support the White Paper we put forward with its call for the Executive Board Members to work together to investigate this issue and to make tackling truancy a real priority in Leeds. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: Yes, Lord Mayor, I would like to formally second and reserve the right to speak.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. To move an amendment, Councillor Harker.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: I share with the party opposite concern about absence rates. This administration is concerned about all absence but particularly about the unauthorised absence rates in the city and have been working hard over

the last four years to work with all agencies to see a reduction, and I can report that in the last five years there have been an extra 67,000 school days attended in this city. We are getting young people back into the classroom. I repeat the figure, 67,000 days more schooling.

I do believe that we do use all the methods that were outlined by the last speaker and I refer to the JAR report which said that our policies in Leeds were robust and were having a positive impact on attendance. Over this academic year we have seen a reduction of unauthorised absence and I want to pick up the 18 high schools that were referred to. Yes, two of those schools were named as the worst two in the country. Unfortunately the management in those schools miscoded their return to central Government - not something that you could blame any officers of Education Leeds or the Children's Unit for because, of course, that work has been delegated to the schools by central Government.

Attendance is a priority for this administration. In 2004, four multi-disciplinary behaviour and educational support teams were established and their work has been a success and is informing a review of the attendance policy which is about to come out for consultation. Following the advice we got in the JAR inspection and from other people - and particularly from Government officers who come up to monitor attendance in the 18 high schools who are our worst performing high schools - Leeds has been labelled at an Authority which is doing the most imaginative work to get children back into school - in fact all Authorities have schools in this table and all Authorities have schools being monitored and other Authorities are being directed to Leeds to see the multi-agency work that is going on.

The attendance strategy we have been working to dated 2006/08 is currently being revised as a multi-agency approach with the police, with other departments in the Council, with the voluntary sector - anybody who we believe can help us to improve attendance in the city.

There is a commitment to improve attendance and to reduce persistent absence. The review would use the findings of a piece of research which was commissioned by Education Leeds on our behalf. In September this plan will go out for wider and further consultation and it is at this stage I would encourage all the political groups in this Chamber to invite Education Leeds and Rosemary Archer's team to come and talk to them about the new draft policy, to drill down into it, to examine it, to criticise it, to look for areas where it can be changed. I challenge every single Area Committee in this city to set aside time in their programme to drill down into this new attendance policy and to relate it to the schools in their area, the schools they know well, apply the general to the specific and I think if we were to do that in September/October, then all Councillors in this Chamber could put into the new policy useful idea.

As I have already said, this administration recognises that truancy leads to low educational attainment, crime, antisocial behaviour - they are all linked - and that these problems do need tackling in a multi-agency approach.

This Council needs to be aware that attendance management is one of the functions that Government gave to schools to manage and I know from going round the city where school leadership is robust and the governors with the management teams work with Education Leeds and the Children's Unit, we get inspirational leadership, secure systems and procedures on attendance, an innovative curriculum so that the children enjoy their learning, and high quality learning. This sort of leadership is to be found in some of our most complex and challenging schools.

Reference was made to parts of East Leeds. I would suggest that Councillor Mulherin perhaps goes to Carr Manor High School, who again, for the second term this year, have substantially reduced absenteeism and particularly absence which is not sanctioned.

The Authority sets the attendance targets, and they are high, along with DCSF. All the criteria we use are in line with those targets. Our attendance schemes are working with all our schools but sometimes their advice is not acted on by governors and the management teams in those schools, and that has got to stop. It is the governors and the management teams who run the schools.

Our attendance people are always vigilant in inspecting the schools, making suggestions, putting forward ideas with regard to accurate record keeping and taking action where necessary.

Part of the advice would be that every school should have a policy for contacting families on first day of absence. This is good practice and practice that we recommend to all of our schools. This is happening in those 18 high schools which are in the DCSF - I cannot get used to this new acronym for education - funded programme and, as I have already reported to Council, for the second term the reported figures which arrived on my desk on Monday show a reduction, a substantial reduction, in all 18 schools.

At this point I also want to make something else clear to Councillor, that parentally condoned unauthorised absence is widespread and it is something we have got to deal with, so I am pleased that the role of parents and carers is being taken as key in attendance. Work with parents strengthened in 2007 with the Parents' Support Advisers. We now have 53 Parent Support Advisers working with families who condone absence, working alongside our other 78 attendance officers.

Alongside early intervention with parents there are legal sanctions which this Council does not hesitate to take. I have a list of them here but I am not going to waste time in reading them out. I would also point out - and I understand why families in Leeds perhaps are on their fortnight's holiday this week. Yes, it is a cheaper time to go on holiday and as the economy perhaps moves towards depression prices are going up, people are more tempted to take their holiday during school time when prices are cheaper. That is unauthorised absence. It racks up 20 absences in this half term and turns that child or children on holiday currently into persistent absentees as labelled by the Government and the new Government rules say that we have got to count them as that.

I have already mentioned the role of school governors in attendance and I hope that all school governors in this Chamber take their responsibility to ensure that their schools are dealing with absence seriously. I notice that I am running out of time so I am going to actually---

COUNCILLOR LYONS: We know that.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: I am not running out of time in that sense, we will be here for much longer. The attendance teams working with our schools are doing an absolutely amazing job and I have to say that since we came to power absenteeism in our schools has fallen every single year. (*Applause*) I do not have to admit, as I did when I got the portfolio, that we do not know where 2,000 of our 16 to 18 year olds are. (*Applause*)

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

COUNCILLOR J BALE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Truancy and the issues that underlie it and the problems that it leads to it seems to me is one of the most serious problems facing our society. I do not want to deal with issues of attendance management. The administration has robust processes in place; we are making excellent progress, as has been said.

I would like to touch on some of the underlying factors that apply everywhere, not just in Leeds, but that we can tackle, I think, in Leeds.

Truancy has always been a problem to some extent. Councillor Mulherin talks about people having their heads banged together for it. I guess that for most of us regular attendance at school is just a normal sort of expectation. I do not think that was because education was particularly fun or because our schools were the most brilliant. It was just a normal expectation and I think families and children perceived some value, some need for education and skills and some potential disadvantage if they did not attend school and make reasonable progress.

Why have things got worse? They have got worse over the years. It certainly has not been because of a lack of interest in education by politicians, national politicians. Indeed, I think there has been an indecent level of interest in education by national politicians, much of which does not actually align with normal party political stereotypes. The Atlee Government after the war opposed Local Authorities that wanted to go comprehensive because it believed that grammar schools were the best route to social mobility. Twenty years later the Labour Education Minister vowed to destroy every expletive deleted grammar school in the country and ten years after that the Conservative Secretary of State more or less achieved that. Later on Conservative City Technology Colleges were opposed by Labour who immediately reintroduced the idea as City Academies and claimed the big idea. Through all of that we have the development of the national curriculum which now runs to 635 pages. I wonder why Sweden manages with 21 pages.

Through all of that and in spite of all of that political interference - perhaps because of all of that - things have got worse for many families in our country and for the least advantaged people that link that I spoke of, that perceived link between education and prosperity and fulfilment, appears to have been broken.

Family disintegration clearly has played a part, a major part, especially the diminished role of fathers in parenting their children, I believe, and there is now unfortunately among many people a lack of any perceived link between education and prosperity and well being and that, I think, is a great pity.

Governments of both persuasions have lauded their ability to increase the participation rate in higher education from 7%, I remember, in 1970, to close on 50% now, but for the 50% of the children and young people who do not go to university, it seems to me that the relevance of education to a good and fulfilling life is less clear than at any time in my lifetime, and I think that is a great pity.

The vocational diplomas, I believe, have an enormously important part to play and I think there is room for complete cross party support for that strategy, but the way in which those vocational diplomas are implemented is absolutely crucial and I think it will have to challenge what has been the dominant educational idea in Britain for half a century of the all-purpose local comprehensive school. I think we have to see a different approach, one which recognises this diversity, one which recognises that family and children want to make a choice. Even the most disadvantaged youngsters can be intelligent consumers in other walks of life. I think we want to turn them into intelligent consumers in education.

I would challenge us as a Council, how can we help to recreate that link for the 50% of kids that do not go to university, that link between education, learning, skills, prosperity and well being in life. I support the amendment, Lord Mayor.
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor I thought that was a very interesting speech because when this White Paper first came to me I must admit I read the first two paragraphs and did not read the third.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Is that because you cannot read properly?

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Yes, Neil. If you do not want to take the debate seriously just say.

When I first got this I personally thought it was good and then I read the last bit where it says would I have a meeting with the Chief Executive of the Executive Board from the members of Learning Environment and Neighbourhoods. Why? I will tell you why I ask you why. Why do I need to meet with him to discuss a way forward when I can tell you now that there is so much work has been done in this area already that it would be meaningless for us to talk about it? What we want is action.

Let me give you some idea. Youth Underclass and Social Exclusion. Have you read that? Have you, Lisa? No. You barely know they exist. Monitoring an Evaluation of the Safer School Partnership Programme. Have you read that? No. The Drivers of Social Exclusion. Have you read it? No.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: I have.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Somebody has, that is good. Exclusion Unit and the Breaking of the Cycle. There is lots and lots of evidence taken by very intelligent people which shows this link. I do not need to talk to Richard to know there is a link. We know there is a link with deprivation and some of the crime that is going on in this city. We know that, we are not stupid.

I listened very carefully to your speech. You spoke for ten minutes and 30 seconds - and I timed you on this - 30 seconds on solutions, the rest of the time you explained what the problem was very well, you explained it beautifully and why it matters, you explained that beautifully, but you hardly put a solution on the table. The only one you did talk about was rewards. You said let us give children rewards. I always wonder why the children who are behaving themselves and going to school, why they should not get rewards. You did not really put anything on the table.

I know you are frightened of this character over here because you nearly lost your seats, so you are now trying to come into these areas and trying to find what you can do, but if you said, what are we doing in this city, let me just tell you, this is our side. The City Centre Truancy Sweeps. In the last year we did 456 City Centre Truancy Sweeps. You may not know that because this is done via the Safer Leeds Partnership and your representatives never turn up to it so they are never there to talk about it. Even your new one who has just been appointed on the 10th failed to turn up on the 26th. They never turn up so you do not know these things are going on. I understand that.

Data sharing with the ASBO unit. That is another part which we are doing. Fixed penalty contracts - they are being done. If you had said you want more of these, if you had said you want parents really punished for not letting their children go to school you might have gone some support from me but you did not say that.

You look what you actually said. You spoke for about ten seconds - you look through your speech and say, "I said this, I said that" - it was mealy mouthed if you did.

Lord Mayor, the area which I cover, Safer Leeds, picks up the tragedy of these children and it is a tragedy because these children are coming from some of the poorest families in the city and those children are not going to go very far. They are going to have other children and they are going to do the same and that is the tragedy of the whole thing. It is not one generation now, it is more than a generation. It is passing that on to generations. That is why I found what John said here very interesting. What it was trying to say is there are other ways of treating children. They cannot all be treated the same. They are individuals, they all want different things. We will not go soft on our side, I can assure you. We will be as hard as nails on taking all these actions that are being taken but at the same time we will try and think of schemes which will encourage and champion children. The problem with many of these children, they have had no leadership ever, no leadership ever and it is very interesting, there was a television programme the other day about the Scouting Movement and they went into the very poorest parts of this country and they showed leadership to children and I think that is missing at the present time. I think that we have somehow got to get back to show true leadership for children and that is what children want. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR W HYDE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Just two short points in support of the amendment. We recently have published figures on unauthorised absence showing that we are doing particularly well in getting the message across to parents of primary school children. In 2002/03 Leeds unauthorised absence was at the same level as the national average. Since 2004 there has been a year-on-year improvement every year getting an odd percentage point better and in 2006/07 the Leeds percentage was 0.48 against a national average of 0.52, so we are making good progress at that level. Whilst we are making progress in many ways at secondary level, I have to admit that the trend has not been replicated on the same scale at secondary level where currently we are a full percentage point higher than the national average.

Also to comment on the reference to targeted Government funding. Clearly targeted Government funding is always welcome and I am the first to admit that, but I think we need to be honest with ourselves. I cannot accept that Councillor Mulherin seems to believe that this is wonderful support by the Government. At best, Councillor Mulherin, it is a robbing Peter to pay Paul exercise. Central Government is doing us no favours at all, Lord Mayor, in withdrawing NRF funding.

I do not know whether all Members of Council are aware of the implications of NRF funding but there are a lot of projects aimed at tackling truancy that are being funded in this way and with the withdrawal of this funding stream it is likely that some of these projects may have to be reviewed. I am hoping that they are not as vulnerable as they might at first seem. There is things like Forest schools, Body and Soul, engagement with Rhinos, Connexions Youth Project, Sports Academy, Signpost Project - all these are NRF funded and an alternative funding source will have to be found otherwise they will not be able to be continued, so we are not really getting a lot of extra support from central Government.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: We got a lot from Maggie's Government, didn't we, on this?

COUNCILLOR W HYDE: Finally just a comment on the statistics. I wonder, Lord Mayor, whether anybody has actually pointed out to Mr Balls that there are now twice as many school days being missed as his Government promised ten years ago? Against this kind of background, how can it possible make sense to take

funding away from projects that are having a positive impact on reducing truancy? Members opposite would do well to raise these issues with their Members of Parliament I think. Thank you, Lord Mayor. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Like you did.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. I call upon Councillor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I have to say I completely understand the reaction from Councillor Carter in terms of his anger in terms of the work that has been done cross-agency to approach this issue. I have to say I approach this motion with sadness, to tell you the truth because I do think its partisan threat is unneeded and I did try and find some silver lining in there in that maybe they have got a point, maybe there is something that we have not seen on this side of the floor in this joint administration that we are not doing and maybe they have got some decent suggestions to offer, so I actually read the motion and the first one asks us to make tackling absence a priority.

Has she actually read the Children and Young People's Plan? This is a plan that has been put together through consultation - I know you are very keen on consultation.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Yes, we have.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: It is a three year plan and it goes up to 2009. It has tackling attendance as a core priority in there with commitment from all of our partners.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: It does not work.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: In terms of the last one which talks about getting together and reporting back to us in autumn, did you actually put that in because you knew that the revised Children's Services Attendance Strategy is actually going to come out in September 2008 and you just thought it will look like we have got a victory there? That is just plain cynical. If you did know that is going to happen, you should not have put this thing forward in the first place because this offers no value whatsoever to the children of Leeds. It is not actually adding any kind of input, any kind of effort to what we are trying to achieve in this city and the outcomes for our children.

The point about education is that you only achieve things by working together and partnership is central. I have to say one of the best partners that this city has - hold on, Richard - is the Government. It is only through working in partnership with the Government that we have actually been able to achieve what we have been able to achieve in this city, I have to say.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Well done.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: It is Government of your party. Children's Services, I know you believe in Children's Services so you should know this. Children's Services is statutorily obliged and accountable to the Minister. Unlike any other department here in the council it is scrutinised, observed and monitored to a degree which no other department is actually subject to as well. We actually have our agenda set in Whitehall and we, as I say, are checked regularly to make sure we are delivering that agenda. We are delivering your party's agenda.

We have been judged by JAR to be doing that really good, so if you come in this Chamber and talk about condemning what we are achieving, especially when we have attendance figures which are the highest that the city has ever actually achieved and you call those unacceptable, what was it like when you were in charge? *(Applause)*

I was watching a programme last night on Channel 4 - call it research - it was all to do with street weapons and the Street Weapons Commission, the first one was very interesting, it was chaired by Cherie Blair. The second part was not and it took place in Manchester. One of the people on the Panel you might recognise - he was called Gus John. Gus John - anybody? That is the kind of partnership and joint working cross-party that actually might achieve something for people. To actually put forward a motion like this which offers no solutions, offers no hope for our children - in fact counteractively points out which schools there are which do not achieve the same attendance levels as some of our other schools is actually doing the same thing as Ed Balls did in terms of his National Challenge. He is identifying schools which have issues, does not talk about how they are trying to overcome those issues and your motion, for instance, the same as his does not talk about what added value there is in schools so that even if they are not getting five GCSEs for 30% of their pupils they are actually providing a decent education for their children.

Your motion also does not talk about what kind of plan is in place in our schools that have attendance challenges. It does not talk about the success that has been achieved so far and wishing them on to do well. No, all it does is condemn them to be classified as not good enough and for those areas where those schools are - and you pointed out the relationship between poverty and attainment, you pointed out the relationship between poverty and breakdown in families, you talked about poverty and attendance and how that affects how many GCSEs people have and their future life chances and the programme last night pointed out that the gangs in our society feed on these children.

If you actually do not admit that your Government's policies in terms of...

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Red light.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Lord Mayor Golton.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: I will return to this theme in the child poverty debate then, but you have not helped our children at all through this motion.
(Applause)

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Lord Mayor, as my colleague Councillor Mulherin pointed out, there is a correct correlation between truancy and crime. Young people who are habitual truants are more likely to turn to small level crime, drug and antisocial behaviour and alcohol abuse and vandalism. Councillor Mulherin has correctly pointed out that two thirds of truants offend compared to one third who do not and who are not regular truants.

I know positive steps have been taken towards tackling this through the attendance strategy by Education Leeds and by working with the Safer Leeds Partnership. It is a well known fact that tackling truancy is a significant tool in preventing antisocial behaviour and low level crime. Truancy Sweeps have been taking place across the city and whilst this is a useful way of targeting specific trouble spots for youths truanting when they should be in school, Les, but this is not regular enough. This is not regular enough to prevent truancy which is still being a major problem in terms of petty crime such as graffiti, vandalism, robbery and general intimidation of local residents.

We, my colleagues on this side, believe that if truancy is tackled effectively, then we will see a reduction in the number of youth related crimes and the number of school aged youths who are the victim of crime when truanting from school.

We could do far more in terms of tackling truancy, abuse issues and behaviour problems. With the right support system in place from the start and early detection of potential problems, we can put the welfare of these young children and their parents at the forefront of our agenda.

What we need is a new way of dealing with the root cause of crime and antisocial behaviour and truancy is one of those areas we need to concentrate on, particularly with the younger and I think we have got to start earlier than high schools, probably in primary schools.

Les, you are quite right, it should not be about one size fits all. I think it is about listening to your people who are subject to truancy and crime and it is about talking to them. I wonder out of two or three people there yourself, Richard and Stuart, have you actually spoken to and listened to young people who are subject?

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I never talk to people, no.

COUNCILLOR RAFIQUE: Very few. We should be make better use of the preventative measures at our fingertips, such as preventative contracts, working with families and carrying out prosecutions where necessary.

Shockingly I think back in the last year, the last three months of 2007, there were over 1,200 crimes committed by youngsters under the age of 18 and this includes obviously after school hours as well.

I am sure you will all agree that what we need to do is intervene quicker when problems first arise instead of waiting until it is too late. Instead of spin, rhetoric and headlines what you guys really lack is real action and a better understanding between the left and right hand. There is no clear lead on this issue from the politicians who are very much responsible for this very important and crucial issue. The problem is you guys are too soft and you are too confused on this. Thank you, Lord Mayor. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: Thank you, my Lord Mayor. Some people may now know this but, Councillor Harker used to be a teacher and I was talking to someone who he taught at City of Leeds High, actually, and rated him very much as a teacher. Where has he gone? He is over there. This is the only good bit I am going to say about him. Although he expressed surprise that Richard was a Liberal, when I told him, because he said "I thought he was more of a Labour man myself with the kind of views he expressed."

Lord Mayor, some of you may know for 18 years I was a member of West Yorkshire Police Authority, eventually becoming its Chair, and for most of those 18 years I used to visit prisoners in cells. Police Authority members do not undertake that role now, somebody else does it. Some research was commissioned by the Home Office which showed that over 50% of all prisoners in police cells had a drug habit of some sort and over 50% had not got basic literacy skills and then if you look at the same kind of survey work in prisons, this is exactly the same. This is borne out, of course, by Jeffrey Archer when he went to prison because in his memoirs he writes that he spent a lot of time helping prisoners write letters to relatives, and Jonathan Aitkin did the same, so they both did two good things when they ended up in prison themselves.

It seems to me there is a clear link between people not being able to have the basic tools which you can get in learning which give you access to qualifications and all the rest and we know by looking at the primary schools, where often they seem to be so good and everything so happy, something is going seriously wrong by the time they get to 11, 12 and 13. I think a lot of our truants, because they feel not part of what is going on with everybody else, feel it is not for them. That is a big issue. It is not an easy one to solve.

Mention has been made of the Eleven Plus. I passed the Eleven Plus and I feel sorry for everyone in my school who did not, because the vast majority of my school friends failed the Eleven Plus, sadly, and we had a sort of apartheid because you never saw them again, you went to different schools and you had different levels of friends and they were branded failures at the age of eleven. When my brother failed the Eleven Plus he felt pretty bad about that for at least another ten years of his life. I am glad it was Margaret Thatcher, amazingly, who as Education Minister swept away the Eleven Plus in the vast majority of England and Wales when she was Secretary of State - one of the few good things she ever did, that woman.

Of course, children do not start or stop developing at the age of eleven. We all develop at different ages, do we not, throughout our lives and the comprehensive ideal is a superb one. We see in Leeds some excellent examples of the comprehensive school ideal working well. I think it is disgraceful that two of the worst schools in terms of attendance in the country are here in our city. It is a disgrace. We should be ashamed of the fact that we have got apparently 18 badly performing high schools.

What I see from the administration, with the greatest respect to individual charms and abilities and hard work of particularly people like Richard who I do know cares about children and education and the remarks made by Councillor Carter, added up together they add up to complacency.

On the one hand they are saying, "It is nothing to do with us really, what can we do? The headteacher, school governors, it is up to them" and on the other, "Actually look at our stats, look at the way we have been regarded". Actually when the recent assessment took place, nothing Leeds was doing was quoted as excellent. It was either poor or good, nothing was better than good, and that is not good enough. That is not good enough for our children.

I have been on this council for 28 years now so the children currently at City of Leeds and at Primrose - and I used to be a governor at Primrose many years ago - they are the children of people who we regarded as a problem when I was a young Councillor starting off in 1980 and it ain't good enough.

Here we are with Leeds a successful, booming economy and yet thousands of our young people feel excluded from that, they feel apart from that, it is not for them and yet in the inner city we have rising crime rates and all the other problems that go with it.

No-one is saying there is any easy overnight solution but what we want from our politicians is leadership. We want people who understand the problems and have got some vision and can work in partnership with these schools and all the other agencies to make a real difference.

What I was hoping we would get today from Richard - and we may yet from another speaker - is an acknowledgement of what the problems are - and I have outlined some of them and John Bale has and one or two others as well - giving us a

promise, for example, that during his time on the Executive responsible for education we will not have two of the three worst in the whole country in Leeds, that he will work night and day to make sure that we turn those situations around. We all know about statistics in Leeds. Because we have got so much prosperity in the outer areas it masks what is going on in the inner city and yet every child is important. We as an Authority are letting down too many children in this city and we have a duty to feel passionate about it and do something about it. We are not in power, we wish we were because we would show that passionate leadership.

What we want from the Liberal Democrats and the Tories, most of whom represent outer Leeds, is that they care about these issues as much as we do. Thank you very much, my Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: It will be a bit more subdued, I am afraid. Only 13% of persistent truants achieved five or more A* to C in 2004 compared with 60% non-truants. My own daughter, Rosie, achieved 100% attendance at her high school for the last four years at Intake and for that she was rewarded with eleven As, seven of them A*, and she is now at Cambridge reading economics, so the power of education is absolutely immense. We need to empower all young people and we want to give them all the key to their own future and unlock their own potential.

Last year 54,000 primary and 30,000 secondary school days were lost due to parents taking their children on holidays during school time. These children's chances of achieving the Every Child Matters Outcomes are being severely compromised by this fault. What is this administration doing about that? What action are you taking against those parents and how are you holding them to account?

Schools are working hard to turn the tide of truancy and it is not fair to say that because they did not fill the forms in properly that it is their fault that they are in the top - the two that we have mentioned already, it is their fault because they did not fill the forms in for Government correctly. I do not think that is very fair to say that when they are working almost single-handedly to turn this situation round.

Intake High School where I am Chair of Governors has already improved attendance by 2% since last September when we were dubbed the fifth worst school in the city. We have done that because of the leadership of the school, the governors, headteacher obviously, staff, parents, pupils. We have not done that because of leadership from Education Leeds.

The cost of failure to deal with truancy is absolutely immense. We have heard from lots of colleagues about what that looks like. It is not just the human cost, of course, it is the social cost. Crime, graffiti, antisocial behaviour are all linked to high levels of truancy. We know from the Children and Young People's plan that there are worrying links between attainment and crime and that this is much worse for looked-after children and for the immigrants and this is also picked up by the JAR.

In 2007/08, just one example of how it impacts in the social setting, the Graffiti Team carried out over 3,000 jobs clearing rubbish from our streets and I think of that over 280 were racist graffiti, so clearly it is not something we want our citizens to be experiencing and there is a real link between graffiti, low level crime and drugs so it is something that we really need to be doing something about.

Our citizens deserve cleaner, safer streets and our children and young people deserve the life that they always dreamed about. We need to take responsibility for this problem and I think that your leadership is lacking. Let us make a difference to our kids and to their futures. Please act now. Please vote in favour of this White Paper. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I think on the last point I will start - lack of leadership, Richard - lack of leadership. We have a problem. It has been recognised. We have recognised the social costs of it, we have recognised the human misery of it where under-achievers go on not to benefit from the fruits of our society like we do and you seem to blame the parents who condone it; parents who take their children on holidays...

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Don't you? Don't you?

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: ...school governors and miscoding of numbers. I never heard so much rubbish in my life. I have actually, Richard, I did at the last Children's Scrutiny when I accused you of being complacent and evasive and you have continued that. Alison is absolutely right, you are in power and we need to see some leadership.

The only person who rose from the controlling group was John Bale and he put forward some ideas. I do not necessarily agree with his ideas but at least he was putting some ideas how we might actually tackle some of these problems and how we might change the education system for the better.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: We have not had an idea from your side.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Maybe he should be doing your job. Maybe when Andrew comes back we might ask him should we do a job swap because clearly, Richard, you do not seem to be up with it. You fail all the time, you wobble and you wobble.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Personal attack as usual.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: I am not going to repeat everything, it has been accepted but the only thing I would go on to say...

COUNCILLOR HARKER: 67,000 extra school days.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: ...the only thing I would go on to say, your failure to create a suitable strategy to deal with the problem of truancy is leading to problems for young people in later years. Later years. The less time a person spends at school the less he or she comes away with skills - self-evident but what are you doing about it?

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Reducing the number of absentees.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: According to Leeds' own figures, 39,439 young people are in the age of 16-19. Of these, 9,503 are on some type of benefit - nearly a quarter - nearly a quarter.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: You lost 2,000 of them.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: You are very good at miscoding and over-estimating. You did with the Youth Service.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: You lost 2,000 of them.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: 50% of them were not being attended to but you questioned that was done and they probably were not accurate and they could

be distilled down to far less than what you should be doing. Do not talk about figures, Richard. You know nothing about figures.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: 67,000 more school days.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: The JAR also highlighted the number of looked after children and I think this is particularly sad, because for the looked after children, we have a special responsibility, have we not? Have we not? Yes? Lots of these go on to become NEETS - I hate the word NEETS, I really hate it but I cannot think of a better one - not in education, employment or training. If you are 16 or 19 to be a NEET - it is awful.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: We are reducing it.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: The only trouble is it might become popular, like ASBOs. "I have an ASBO, I am hard, I am a NEET. I am something special." You are not doing anything.

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Yes we are.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: The answer was under our administration. You stopped that because your failures, Richard. Your failures, children who leave who under achieve and lack of skills. We were dealing with it. In April 2006 the Jobs and Skills Department lost the right to administer New Deal in Leeds - your failure. This led to a drop in £6m of funding to deal with the problem of under achievers at present and future under achievers.

The department we set up had previously helped 60,000 people to work and 9,420 into jobs specifically through the New Deal - Tom Murray. Well done, Tom. Are you sat there? I cannot see you with my glasses on, I cannot see that far!

This has meant the department is cutting back in the services it offered and closing centres like West Leeds, East Leeds Family Learning Centre and embarking on a reorganisation of staffing levels. They are also cutting back on the range of services on offer concentrating on your new idea, job shops in certain neighbourhoods. I did attend one, actually, in my Ward and one of the things they were doing is, they said, "Come and have your bumps felt on your head" and so they give you a massage. That is a wonderful substitute for training and skills, is it not, Richard?

COUNCILLOR HARKER: Jobs and Skills isn't mine.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: I bet you are really proud of that. "Would you like to come and feel my bumps and see if I can get a job?" Not surprisingly the Labour Group are of the opinion that you certainly are not doing enough to help people who have missed out through education. They always say you only get one chance of education.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Time. *(Interruption)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor McKenna.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: I will bow to you and I will sit down.

THE LORD MAYOR: Do that, yes. Thank you indeed. *(Applause)*

Councillor Ewens.

COUNCILLOR EWENS: Thank you, Lord Mayor. You people make me so angry. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: Passion, we want passion.

COUNCILLOR EWENS: Shut up a minute! *(Applause)* I came on this Council because of education. Of course I care about it.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: You are failing then.

COUNCILLOR EWENS: It is 44 years since I first tried to get vocations education into schools for 14 year olds when the school leaving age was 14. I have been at it ever since. *(Laughter)* All right, you think it very funny - I do not.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: I do not think it is funny.

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Carry on, Penny.

THE LORD MAYOR: Could I ask you to restrain, please.

COUNCILLOR EWENS: You are having a go at City of Leeds School of which I am very proud. We have introduced the first lot of building trades apprenticeships. They start work this September. It can be in cahoots, if you like, with the College of Building. We are the first diploma in Leeds because of it. We started it. We have expanded it. We have got 450 children involved in it.

We have a steel band *(interruption)*. Oh, you think steel bands are funny. You do not know what steel bands do for people. I will tell you, because the second time I ever spoke in this Council I spoke about music and it is the most inclusive subject there is. You learn team work, you have to memorise things, you have to obey discipline, you learn all the skills you need for work, you really do, and I am fed up with people having a go at City, I really am.

I would like to think that some of you instead of talking about ASBOs and the police and bringing in other people, look at what the children are doing and what the teachers are doing. You have not mentioned how much the teachers put in. We now are the only learning federation and the PC cushions and soft furnishings keeps an eye on us, they think we are doing a good job. We have a new curriculum which will lead children *(interruption)*

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Just keep going, Penny.

COUNCILLOR EWENS: We are introducing a new curriculum in accordance with the need to go on to mixed education for GCSEs, vocational training and the new diplomas and that means that we are changing it. I have been to the presentation. For the first three days of the week they follow the basic curriculum in Years 10 and 11 and they have an appropriate curriculum to lead to it in Year 9. In Years 10 and 11 they have a choice. They can sit physics and plumbing, they can do vocational for two days or they stay in school for two days if it is not suitable.

Do you not understand, it is not only five bloody A-Cs that counts?
(Applause)

Everybody is good at something - everybody is good at something and we have got to enable people to be good at what they can be good at. They will not all choose the same. What is more we now have our own NEET committee within City

of Leeds so that we can anticipate people who might be NEET children - not in employment, education or training for those of you who do not know - but for the children that we think could go that way, partly because they do not attend. If we could make school more attractive then we will cut the non-attendance. (*hear hear*) (*Applause*)

What you are failing to understand is that you do not get children into school by being punitive and giving them instructions. You get them into school by making it more relevant and more attractive so that they all want to come.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: Why aren't they going then?

COUNCILLOR: There's more going now than under you.

COUNCILLOR EWENS: I am sorry, you are being trivial.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: No I am not.

COUNCILLOR: Yes you are. Yes you are.

COUNCILLOR EWENS: You laugh at me for my mention of a steel band. They are invited to play for international people visiting this country, they have gone to the national championships three years running and nobody takes any notice of what we do well. You all think we only do things badly. Well, we do not. Why can't you start encouraging people? (*hear, hear*) (*Applause*)

You start to be more positive and Neil Taggart, don't tell me we need more enthusiasm - I have got it. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: For my next speaker, I hope that you show some respect and sympathy because it is his maiden speech and so I call upon Councillor Chastney to speak.

COUNCILLOR CHASTNEY: I think it would be remiss of me not to start, at the very start of my entire council proceedings, by simply thanking Councillor Ewens for her comments just then. I think they were fantastic, very passionate and I was actually quite disappointed that it actually got to that stage of proceedings and discussion.

I really did not intend to speak and I am just making one simple comment, really. The comment on leadership I thought was very unfair to come across. I make one simple comment from my early observations of being one of the Lead Members now, which I am very privileged to be on Children's Services. We have had one meeting that I have now had the great privilege to attend from the Leeds Partnership and all I can say is that I was there, Councillor Golton was there, we had Education there, Richard was there, Councillor Feldman was there and yes, it did include the children. The children were invited, they turned up so they were included to tackle that earlier question of do you even speak to the kids. Yes, of course they do, yes of course we do and that was one of the most positive things about it all.

I have not yet got confirmation of this so I sincerely apologise if I have got this incorrect, but I have been informed that whilst on this side we were actually in attendance at the last Leeds Partnership, that we do not believe that there was actually attendance from the opposing party, so I thought I would just clear that up. Thank you. (*Applause*)

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I am glad not to follow Councillor Ewens anyway! A fantastic speech.

I was hoping this was going to be an opportunity to have a really constructive debate about this and I have to say I am very disappointed by the approach of the Labour Group. (*Interruption*) You seem to have forgotten what happened when you were in charge of Education in the city and why Education Leeds became in the first place.

We can see that our performance has improved year on year since this administration took control. The figures are there - do not dispute them. The issue is clear. If children are not in school they cannot learn. If they are not engaged in education, they cannot gain the skills and knowledge they need to succeed as adults. Yes, we all understand that but we have to do something about it. The economic and social costs of educational failure are enormous and growing.

The problems and challenges we are talking about are not unique to Leeds and that is the point you seem to be missing. They affect the whole country. More than half of pupils in this country, over 350,000 young people every year, still fail to get five good GCSEs including English and maths.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Penny says don't worry about that.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: 128,000, which is one in every six children, fail to get a single grade C at GCSE.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: Is this the Tory press office speaking?

COUNCILLOR LAMB: No, it is not. Several of your Members have said that we are not doing anything about it.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: No, you are not.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: OK, I will give you an example. We have heard quite a few good examples from Councillor Ewens already. What about the Armley LAZER Revolving Door programme? Do you know about that one, Councillor McKenna?

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: We had (*inaudible*), me and my colleagues.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: It is achieving great things. It is a collaborative approach between the Youth Services and the West Area Management Board. It takes places in the Armley LAZER Centre. Do you know about the Revolving Door Programme? Yes, well done.

COUNCILLOR J McKENNA: I live across the road from it.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: It is a partnership work which is going off within this city. Well done, Councillor McKenna. In two years they passed almost 100 young people and in some cases pupils who were persistent truants before now have 100% attendance. This is the kind of thing that we are doing in this Council in this administration which is showing signs of results. That is why we have seen 67,000 more school days in this year than we had in the last year.

Councillor Rafique, I would have thought you would have known what was going on in all the partnership work as you are an employee of Education Leeds. I

would have thought you would have had a better idea of the partnership working that is going on in the city.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Is he?

COUNCILLOR LAMB: He is, yes.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Really?

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Did you not know that, Les?

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I did not know that.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: More than ever young people need to be well educated and highly skilled to succeed. The Government's official estimates showed there will only be 600,000 jobs for manual workers by 2020. It is clear that our education system is failing to prepare its citizens for a world economic climate which is growing more competitive and less forgiving of failure with every month which passes.

This gets to the heart of why this White Paper needs to be amended. The administration and Education Leeds have a huge role to play in reducing unauthorised absence and improving educational outcomes. Parents, carers, governing bodies and young people have to recognise their responsibilities as well. There is a great deal of partnership work already taking place, as I have described, as Councillor Ewens has described, Councillor Golton has described, Councillor Les Carter has described, Councillor Richard Harker has described.

COUNCILLOR COUPAR: It is not working though.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: It is working. The figures are improving year on year. There are more people in school than when you were in power.

COUNCILLOR DRIVER: As a generalisation it is but not in specific cases.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: Ultimately, this is an issue for us all to deal with. I do not believe that there is a single member of this Council that does not recognise and is not committed to tackling these problems. The economic and social costs if we fail are enormous. I urge all Members of Council to support this amendment to fully engage the attendance strategy development process. It is crucial that each member feeds into the discussions their own unique local knowledge. The solutions to this problem must be localised, best practice must be shared and most importantly the needs of specific young people, families and communities must be met.

That, Councillor Taggart, is showing leadership. This administration is committed to cutting the levels of truancy. We are committed to tackling crime and antisocial behaviour (*interruption*). I am glad you find this subject funny. It seems every time someone contributes from this side you find the issue of truancy and educational failure funny. I do not find it funny. (*Interruption*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Can we calm it down, please.

COUNCILLOR LAMB: You can see clearly on this side there is a great deal of passion about tackling this problem. There are a great deal of people with experience who want to see education in Leeds - (*Interruption*) I will carry on because you have interrupted me so much (*Applause*) - and are committed to cutting the levels of truancy and tackling the crime and antisocial behaviour. We are

improving the educational outcomes of all young people in this city. It is not only what I believe. (*Interruption*) I commend this amendment and urge all Council Members to do the same. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: We need a whip or something here. Councillor Atha.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: A disgrace to the Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Can I just say a very short speech. I do not think anyone here can but be move by what Penny Ewens said and how she spoke and I think we ought to pay tribute to that. There was real passion, real concern and real determination. I just think without any hypocrisy at all, all of us would admire enormously that degree of commitment which she demonstrated.

What I do think is sad is that if what I have been told in the community, the school to which she has given so much attention, energy and commitment is scheduled to close. I do not know whether this is true...

COUNCILLOR: Why start a rumour?

COUNCILLOR ATHA: ... but to the Executive Board Member, if this is untrue the sooner it is made explicitly clear it is not happening, because once the word goes round, Penny, as you know from our experience elsewhere, once the word goes round that it is going to close, it has more or less closed itself. I think that is unfair if that school is serving the needs of a particularly deprived group of people and so in protecting it you would, certainly have my support but if those rumours that are now circulating carry on going...

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Where?

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I have been told in the community.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Who? Who, Bernard? Who has told you?

COUNCILLOR ATHA: When you have a surgery - I will tell who when that becomes relevant but are you suggesting it is untrue, because if it is untrue for God's sake say so and that is the matter finished.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: You are the only one who suggested it.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: Give way.

COUNCILLOR ATHA: I do not want to do that because I have more interest in the school than scoring party points and silly beggars who have just been elected doing this. That is pathetic. I was following the line given by Penny and if quite frankly we play silly beggars with kids' lives, then in fact we should not be here at all. If it is not true and in the confines of this room, do say it is not true because if you don't it will close it anyway and I think that would be grossly unfair and it would be something which we would criticise you most strongly for as it falls within one of the most deprived areas of the city of Leeds.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you for those words Councillor Atha. Councillor Lyons.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Thank you very much. It is all right, good knock-about this when you are talking about things, but when you are committed, like most of you are, to education, a very emotional subject especially to parents and

grandparents and everybody else. What Bernard said is that there is a school suspected of being closed in that particular area.

I know of one that is going to be closed down and this Council is not doing a thing about it. Mount St Mary's Primary School, the one that is the best they have achieved in the worst area of this city is being closed down. It is a Catholic school so it comes under a different category but it does not matter, we are talking about children and absences. What will happen when they close that particular school down is that we will get a bigger percentage of absenteeism. If people are going to stand up and say that it is not going to close down, I have just been talking this morning to this the diocese that said that it is going to close down, so I would ask you all to say when we are talking about education and we are talking about truancy and we are talking about the well being of people, it is the whole of Leeds and it will be a big mistake to close down a school that is one of the best in the country on achievement in one of the poorest areas and I want to say that we take all these into consideration when we are getting on about truancy and whether we care or we do not care. I think everybody in this Chamber cares and a lot of political knock-about but what we are simply saying is there is a truancy problem and there is 20% and we should be getting there faster.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Lyons. Councillor Pryke.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Very briefly, how dare Councillor Lyons call part of my ward the worst in the city? You did not say the poorest, you said the worst. Please retract.

COUNCILLOR GRUEN: There is more passion.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: Lord Mayor, I am going on figures given to me by Leeds City Council on the wards that has been given out by Area Committees to say which is the worst in the city and that is the worst.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Mount St Mary's Primary School is not in the most deprived area by any measure. You should retract if you have got any honour.

COUNCILLOR LYONS: I have been given information, I should have brought it with me. You check up on it and you do not worry about whether they are closing schools in your ward because you have not said nowt yet.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you, Councillor Lyons.

COUNCILLOR PRYKE: Furthermore, Lord Mayor, I am also a governor of the City of Leeds Primrose Federation, like Councillor Ewens. I will attest the school is improving all the time and the attitude of the Opposition running schools down is absolutely appalling. Councillor Atha is the first person I have ever heard to suggest that City of Leeds might be closing down. He knows how damaging such a suggestion could be and he made it because the reporter from the evening paper is still here and he knows the damage that he is doing by that. He should be ashamed as well. *(Applause)*

Before I finish, Primrose School has a catchment area of Burmantofts and Richmond Hill and Harehills which are seeing the fastest reduction in crime in the city, so your facts are wrong. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Brett.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Lord Mayor, after a slight interlude when officers have checked the facts I am rising to say very simply to Councillor Atha, there are no plans to close City of Leeds School. *(Applause)*

COUNCILLOR ATHA: Great.

THE LORD MAYOR: Does Councillor Dowson wish to exercise your right?

COUNCILLOR DOWSON: Briefly, Lord Mayor. I am not going to repeat everything that has been said because we want to move on, but one thing I do want to say is, how children actually start in their education and the education we actually give their parents is very important too. With that I am very sad to announce that Sure Start are actually short of funds. Their ERDF funding ran out in December and as far as I am aware Leeds City Council have not yet come forward with funding. They have just actually, Sure Start Mellow Valley, have just pulled out of one of my schools on the Miles Hill estate, the Beck Hill estate, the former Miles Hill caretaker's bungalow, that area management put £20,000 into actually doing up, they have pulled out of there, and if rumour is right - we are into rumour now - they have also pulled out of Ebor Gardens Design Base and is it Alston Lane Seacroft? If that is not true - I hope it is not true because Sure Start is one of the jewels in our crown. We need to get parents trained, we need to get children into education as soon as possible. Sure Start needs to be protected. Thank you.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. At last we get back to the proposer, Councillor Mulherin.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Thank you, Lord Mayor. Let me start by saying I welcome the recognition of the administration that this is a serious problem in Leeds. We are all agreed on that. We are also agreed it requires a multi-agency approach. However, where we differ is that you seem confident that doing more of the same will resolve the problem.

Richard, I am sorry to say that you seem to be passing the buck to school governors and school management and to parents and not taking any of the responsibility for this issue and the leadership in terms of tackling this issue yourself.

Les Carter, you talked and emphasised punishing parents and prosecution.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: Never said it.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: That is a last resort and I did in my speech make reference to a whole raft of strategies to tackle truancy. I did not go into detail on them because actually I think most of us here are aware of what we are actually are doing at the moment one way or another, whether it is rewarding schools or tailoring education - and some schools are better at it than others - tailoring education to the needs of the pupil and ensuring that learning is personalised so that it is actually more attractive for those disaffected young people to stay in school.

If we are getting to the stage where we are actually taking parents to court and prosecuting them, we are actually failing them earlier on. Scouting, quite frankly, is a laughable answer.

Efforts to target the number of groups of young people are working nationally. Overall the absence has fallen from 6.68% to 6.49% and we can directly hear from the Government report that came out in February this year, overall absence in 2006/07 stood at 6.49% - that was the lowest rate on record. I say that for the benefit of Councillor Hyde.

On average 58,000 more pupils were in school each day in 2006/07 than would be the case if absence rates were still at the level of a decade ago. That is directly from the Government statistics that were produced in February this year.

While targeting persistent absentees working nationally, we have yet to see improvements and attendance rates in Leeds. Richard made reference to some figures that he has received, I think, earlier this week. We have yet to see those figures but I will go back and say that there has been substantial deterioration in attendance at the three schools that I have mentioned earlier which had 20% absence, persistent absence rates. That is the Central Leeds Learning Federation, whether you are saying that is down to them miscoding, incorrectly recording the data or not, what we should actually point out again is that it is our Government who are actually ensuring that that information is properly recorded from now on and if there is a problem with the recording, why does it take the Government to intervene and not this Local Authority?

COUNCILLOR HARKER: We told the Government.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Breaking the cycle of deprivation is the real issue here. If you look at the figures for truancy in the worst performing schools in Leeds you will not see a trend of consistent and continuing improvement in attendance rates and it is those schools that we are flagging up that need that focused attention. If you look across the whole board in Leeds we do have successful schools and I think we should all acknowledge that we have got schools which are not having truancy problems. If you look then that they actually lift the whole picture up, so the figures that you produce, Richard, when you say that actually as a city we are improving attendance rates, it may well be correct but in the schools that are the most in need in the areas of highest deprivation, we are not doing that.

There is no evidence yet that the implementation of the Leeds Strategy is actually working.

If we look back at the Leeds picture, we need to note that the new national target for reducing persistent absence in two years' time will be to get that target down below 5%. In Leeds we require the city to halve its percentage of persistent absentees in order to meet that target from its baseline of 9.8%. We heard from Alison about her experiences at Intake High School where her school governors and management are turning around their truancy problems in the absence of the leadership and support they should be getting from the administration opposite.

Stuart, Councillor Golton, you claimed that the Joint Area Review found Children's Services to be really good. Actually, in terms of the key area, not the 14-19 strategy in this city, the bit that actually will really directly impact on the truancy rates in secondary schools, it did not find it to be really good; it found it to be merely adequate.

COUNCILLOR GOLTON: They found our attendance strategy to be good.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: She is not interested. They nearly lost to the BNP. They will take her seat.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: It condemned you for not supporting these young people to do better. The Children and Young People's Plan that you referred to again, Councillor Golton, the priorities agreed for 2007 make no reference to

truancy, no reference to improving attendance. The changes to the plan for 2008/09 do, but quite frankly that smacks of locking the stable door after the horse has bolted.

COUNCILLOR: Like your motion then.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: Councillor Ewens, I think we all respect the passion that you bring to this subject and your real commitment to education but we did not on this side of the Chamber attack City of Leeds School, the teachers or the management. We did not attack the teachers or the management or the pupils of the other school that you mentioned.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: One of your Members said that the school was going to close.

COUNCILLOR MULHERIN: We pointed out that the high levels of persistent absence at both schools were appalling and that they needed to be tackled and that greater support needed to be given to those schools and those areas to actually resolve the problem.

Both schools, incidentally, City of Leeds and Primrose, are part of the same Central Leeds Learning Federation and it was actually Councillor Harker who passed the buck on to the management of these schools in terms of them failing to actually record the registration correctly.

I would also say that how you can offer leadership when you think that one in five pupils not attending for a fifth of the time is a trivial matter.

In summary, passing the buck to school governors, to the management, to parents is simply not good enough and on this side of the Chamber we firmly believe we need better, stronger leadership from this administration to take schools forward and to ensure that there is better support given where it is most needed. We need a stepped changed improvement in school attendance and efforts targeted on those worse affected schools and most deprived areas. Quite frankly, more of the same will not achieve what is required.

That is why this side of the chamber will not be supporting the amendment to the White Paper because basically if we are doing a school report we would be saying in terms of what you are providing to the schools, you could do a lot better.

I urge you to support the original White Paper. (*Applause*)

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. We now, of course, go to the vote. We will vote on the amendment of Councillor Harker. Would you care to show those in favour? Those against? I feel that - yes. CARRIED. I will not tell you by how many.

We come on to the substantive motion now, with the amendment. Those in favour please show. Those against? Abstentions? Again I believe it is just CARRIED.

ITEM 12 - WHITE PAPER MOTION - CONTROL OF LAP DANCING CLUBS

THE LORD MAYOR: We go on to Item 12, the White Paper on the control of lap dancing clubs. It sounds a bit different to what we have just been through! Let us have some more experience. Councillor Blake.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Lord Mayor, there seems to be a mass exodus from the Chamber. I will be very brief, looking at the time. One of the reasons this White

Paper has come to the fore is because the Minister responsible for licensing, Gerry Sutcliffe, has written round all Local Authorities asking for their views on the current legislation covering the licensing of lap dancing clubs.

I think the clear point about this White Paper is that we need to make it clear that Local Authorities need much more of a say about whether lap dancing clubs should be granted a licence in their areas. Roberta Blackman Woods actually introduced a Ten Minute Rule Bill into the House of Commons in June and is proposing some changes to the legislation to make the anomalies that currently exist get sorted out.

The actual situation is that we have a system that covers London that is different to other Authorities around the country. Under the 1982 Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act, it is only London that can categorise lap dancing clubs as sex encounter establishments. However, if premises even in London have a licence for a pub or a bar or a restaurant under the Licensing Act, these premises are exempt from the 1982 Act. This situation is clearly not acceptable and the advice that is coming through legally from the Object Campaign Group is that we could lobby to get the 1982 Act amended to make sure that we can designate such premises as they do apparently in London.

Lord Mayor, the situation Leeds is well documented. I do not need to go into details. Just walking into the city centre of Leeds we see the number of these establishments. At a city centre conference we were talking about how we can enhance the city and I have to say the comments about walking out of Leeds city station straight into an area that has a proliferation of these clubs is making a really impossible statement for our city and how we want to take it forward. Young people pass these clubs on a daily basis and I would urge you all to support the White Paper to take this ten minute rule bill forward.

I hope we will have all party support for this and I know the Members who sit on the Licensing Committee and Panels have a real problem when they deal with the applications coming forward in terms of what is at their disposal to useless objections. I would like to say on behalf of our group that we will be happy to accept the amendment in Councillor Brett's name and I will move so that we can get on with the business. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you indeed. Councillor Wakefield.

COUNCILLOR WAKEFIELD: I second formally and reserve the right to speak.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you very much. Councillor Brett to move the amendment.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I welcome the spirit of Councillor Blake's motion and agree absolutely that lap dancing needs to be controlled. I am aware that both Leeds and my party were well represented on the Chamber of the House of Commons on 18 June when there were twelve Members present. Vince Cable was present, John Battle was present and Greg Mulholland was also present, so I am pleased that both Leeds and the Liberal Democrats are taking this seriously.

My amendment is not about trying to ban lap dancing. It is about strengthening the controls on it. The numbers of lap dancing clubs may be controlled by the economics of the situation and I am told that some in Leeds are not doing very well, but what we simply cannot do at the moment is to control where lap

dancing establishments may be. The rule as I understand it is that it is very straightforward for almost any establishment in Leeds to get the necessary licensing and if they have the licensed positions, we cannot control this, so the current situation is that it could be at the end of any street in Leeds.

I urge you all to vote for the amendment to strengthen Judith's motion and to pass this motion. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you. Councillor Wilson to second.

COUNCILLOR WILSON: Thank you, Lord Mayor. I would like to second Councillor Brett's amendment and I would like to say a few words myself. I think I am going to get this wrong this afternoon because in light of what has gone on all afternoon I am going to personally agree straightaway with Judith's White Paper - Councillor Blake. I also am Chair of the Licensing Panel and am pretty sure that the Licensing Panel with a man would agree with it also.

Two of the members of that Panel have been very vocal on this topic for quite some time and that is Councillor Feldman particularly and certainly as well as Jack Dunn and myself, we have felt very strongly about this issue because under the present legislation we have neither the ability to control or check on the locations, as has been already said, where these establishments are going.

I can tell Councillor Blake that at the last meeting of the Liquor Licensing Panel we did ask the Legal Officer to draft a letter to the Minister expressing our dissatisfaction with the existing legislation. The existing legislation gives us practically no powers whatsoever. In fact, any pub or club at the end of your street who has an entertainment licence has the ability to have dancing or putting on music, has the possible ability to change it into a lap dancing club, so that is clearly very unsatisfactory.

As you have referred, Councillor Blake, London does have a slightly different set up to the rest of the provinces. They have the 1982 Act and it is the Sex Encounter Establishment Act. Now that in itself is not the answer to everything. I think that it should be strengthened beyond what they have in London.

The facts are these, that the existing legislation is extremely open-ended, there is no strength to it whatsoever and the position in Leeds is that we have nine lap dancing clubs at the present moment in time - five converted in 2005, three converted in 2006, one converted last year and the one that is the largest one that is on the horizon is the one that is going to open in the station forecourt.

The Members Bill - it is a Private Members Bill that is being proposed and we understand that unless she gets time allowed this will probably fail, so it is important that this Council do agree and that we do send a letter from the full Council to both the Minister and all the MPs and that it will be given Government time to proceed.

What I will say about the existing lap dancing clubs in Leeds is that none of them have been reported by the police over the time that they have been operating and the licensing section also had no adverse reports, so for all we have the lap dancing clubs in Leeds, they have not been creating any great disturbance as such and yes, I think that we do need the extra legislation so we can control and contain. I think that is the words.

I do agree with you - perhaps I am going against the run of things this afternoon but I think you are right. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE LORD MAYOR: Because of the time situation now we go back to Councillor Blake to sum up, or whatever.

COUNCILLOR BLAKE: Thank you very much. I think it is a very powerful message if we can send an all party message back to the Minister as he has requested to hear our views.

THE LORD MAYOR: Thank you then. We vote straightaway, voting for the amendment of Councillor Brett. It was accepted. Those in favour? I will not ask for any against. Abstentions, no. CARRIED.

The substantive motion then. Those in favour? Against? I think that is no abstentions That is just about CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY.

ITEM 13 - WHITE PAPER - FISH MIGRATION

THE LORD MAYOR: We are now voting almost on the next White Papers straight through. Item 13, White Paper Motion on Fish Migration in the name of Councillor Illingworth.

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: Lord Mayor, I would like to seek the leave of Council to accept the amendment.

THE LORD MAYOR: You accept that?

COUNCILLOR ILLINGWORTH: Yes, if Council agrees.

THE LORD MAYOR: Does Councillor agree? AGREED. Thank you. Councillor Lewis?

COUNCILLOR J LEWIS: I second that, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: No amendment. Let us get, it is a substantial motion, the amendment has been accepted. We are voting now on the whole motion. Those in favour? Against? Abstentions? That is CARRIED, I think again unanimously.

ITEM 14 - WHITE PAPER MOTION - UNACCEPTABLY HIGH LEVELS OF CHILD POVERTY AND LOWER LIFE EXPECTANCY

THE LORD MAYOR: We move on to 14, Unacceptably High Levels of Child Poverty and Lower Life Expectancy. Councillor Brett.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Lord Mayor, I move the motion in my name.

COUNCILLOR J L CARTER: I second, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Councillor Lewis, the amendment.

COUNCILLOR R LEWIS: I move the amendment, Lord Mayor.

COUNCILLOR YEADON: Second.

THE LORD MAYOR: We vote then for the amendment in the name of Richard Lewis. Those in favour? Those against? Any abstentions? I am afraid it is LOST.

We go to the substantive motion in the name of Councillor Brett. Those in favour? Against? Abstentions? I think it is just CARRIED again.

ITEM 15 - WHITE PAPER MOTION - PLASTIC CARRIER BAGS

THE LORD MAYOR: Motion 15, White Paper Motion, Plastic Carrier Bags.

COUNCILLOR BRETT: Lord Mayor, I would like to accept the amendment on this motion.

COUNCILLOR SMITH: Seconded, Lord Mayor.

THE LORD MAYOR: Second the amendment but I understand it has been accepted.

COUNCILLOR TAGGART: It has been accepted, yes. A nice man is Councillor Brett, we all like him.

COUNCILLOR LOWE: I second and reserve the right to speak! *(laughter)*

COUNCILLOR J PROCTER: Lord Mayor, I would like to make it clear that our Group intends to have a free vote on this matter.

THE LORD MAYOR: The vote then on the amendment of Councillor Taggart. Free vote. A few are slow at winding up somehow. Thank you, those against? The amendment is CARRIED and that becomes the substantive motion.

Those in favour of the substantive motion? Again, I think the ayes have it. Thank you. Those against? Those abstaining? None, so that is CARRIED.

Before you all get up and disappear rapidly, I thank you for your attendance. It has been a little tempestuous but never mind, we will look for calmer waters on another occasion. Thank you and have a good week. *(Applause)*

(The meeting closed at 7.12 p.m.)
